THE DAILY CLIPS

April 14, 2009

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
ECU student among 16 killed in holiday weekend accidents

The Daily Reflector

Monday, April 13, 2009

An East Carolina University student was one of 16 people killed on North Carolina highways during the Easter holiday, according to the highway patrol.

John Patrick Althin, 19, of the 1400 block of Cedar Lane, Greenville died Friday after he was thrown from his pickup truck when it overturned on Hart Road, about seven miles west of Snow Hill, said Trooper B.R. Beaman with the State Highway Patrol. An ECU spokeswoman said Althin was a La Grange resident who was a first-year student at the university.

The accident happened at about 4:30 p.m. It appears Althin's Toyota Tundra ran off the right side of the highway and as he attempted to regain control, he overcorrected and the truck went into a skid and then flipped twice on its right side, Beaman said. Althin was thrown from the vehicle, he said. It doesn't appear he was wearing a seat belt.

He was transported to Wayne Memorial Hospital in Goldsboro where he was pronounced dead.

Althin's accident occurred less than a mile from the location of a fatal accident that occurred Thursday night, hours after the holiday driving period began.

Annie Chase Mooring, 80, of the 1500 block of Gurganus Road was struck and killed while crossing a highway at 9:40 p.m., Beamon said.

No charges were filed in that incident because evidence indicates the driver could not see Mooring, who was dressed in dark clothing, he said.
ECU's Storybook Theatre to perform 'Willy Wonka'

By Kim Grizzard
The Daily Reflector

Tuesday, April 14, 2009

Forget Johnny Depp's rather dark chocolate performance. At East Carolina University's Family Fare series, "Willy Wonka" is a sweet story.

ECU's Storybook Theatre will perform the stage version of the story, based on Roald Dahl's "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," at 7 p.m. Friday in Wright Auditorium. Storybook Theatre Director Patricia Clark has designed "Willy Wonka" to be a treat for kids.

"Some parents have had some reservations about the darkness of the Johnny Depp movie," Clark said. "The stage version, it's much happier. It's filled with hope. It's not scary."

"Willy Wonka" tells the story of Charlie Bucket, a poor kid whose life was turned upside-down when he found a single golden ticket in his favorite chocolate bar.

ECU junior Von Lewis, who plays the title role, said he tried to steer clear of both Gene Wilder (who starred in the 1971 film version) and Johnny Depp when creating his Wonka character.

"I've watched (the movies) before, but I didn't watch them recently," Lewis said. "I didn't want that to contaminate my idea of the character. (The director) kind of wanted a majestic Willy Wonka instead of a crazy Willy Wonka."

So Lewis, a musical theater major from Vanceboro, decided to look elsewhere to bring a touch of magic to his character. He studied the movements and mannerisms of several children's magicians.

The result, choreographer Janet Cox said, is quite charming. Cox, of Washington, N.C., said some of her young dance students, who will perform as tiny Oompa Loompas in the play, were fascinated, not frightened, by Lewis' character.

"I'm completely convinced that there was nothing in it that would scare children," said Cox, whose daughter, McKenna, is a member of the cast. "This is very upbeat. (Clark) has gone to great lengths to make sure there is nothing frightening in this show."

Costume Designer Leigh Margaret Manning, a junior from Charlotte, said the Oompa Loompas "look more like a Dr. Seuss book," with blue hair, red, green and purple clothes and yellow neck ties.

"This is a children's show," Manning said. "I wanted to stick with the primary colors. They're supposed to be happy."

One of the difficulties Manning faced in clothing such a colorful cast was not created by well-known film versions.

"The most challenging thing about this is that in the book and the script are described specific costumes," she said. For example, Dahl describes Wonka's wardrobe as a purple coat and tails.

But a larger challenge was the size of the cast; 43 characters appear on stage.

"It's one of the largest casts we've ever had," Clark said.

Audiences may recognize several cast members from "Jungle Book," which Storybook Theatre performed last fall.
Storybook Theatre has previously performed another one of Dahl's stories, "James and the Giant Peach."

"Roald Dahl is such a great writer," Clark said. "I think his writing appeals to multi-generational audiences. It appeals to families."

If you Go

WHAT: "Willy Wonka"

WHEN: 7 p.m. Friday at ECU's Wright Auditorium and 2 p.m. April 25 at the Turnage Theater in Washington, N.C.

TICKETS: $6-9 at ECU, $3.50-$10 in Washington

CONTACT: 328-4788 (ECU) 975-1191 (Washington)
Divided and falling

Blue Cross Blue Shield, under fire as the plan's claims processor, now has its key talking point well practiced. The plan's problems are accurately predicting and paying for rising medical cost, issues that have nothing to do with administering claims, Blue Cross officials repeat over and over.

One of the state's two largest employee groups, the State Employees Association of North Carolina, has run radio ads criticizing Blue Cross and questioning legislators' direct control of the plan.

Blue Cross, in turn, spent $100,000 on radio ads attacking the state employee group and its head, Dana Cope.

Legislators, meanwhile, seem to fall back on the same old solutions that got the plan in trouble in the first place. They propose raising employee costs on the front end, and so discourage them from seeking preventative care. They want to jack up premiums for dependents, making dependent coverage uncompetitive and driving out healthy people who could keep overall costs down.

Legislators are stuck here, in part, because state employees and their political allies, including Gov. Beverly Perdue, are so dug in on blocking any premiums for employees. Those employees currently pay no fixed monthly amount into the plan.

If they did, dependent coverage could be provided cheaper; more healthy people would be enrolled in the plan.

Blue Cross is dug in too. The company and its $4-million-a-year CEO show no interest in taking a hit. They reject any talk of renegotiating a claims contract whose cost, on a per-member, per-year basis, has roughly doubled in four years.

Isn't it grand that we're all in this together?

Scott Mooneyham writes about North Carolina government and politics for the Capitol Press Association.
Editorial: Projected cuts

Monday, April 13, 2009

North Carolina’s dire fiscal crisis will foist difficult choices on nearly every entity that depends on public dollars for its operation, and the member schools of the University of North Carolina system are no exception. East Carolina, for instance, faces deep spending cuts and the possible loss of jobs as a result of revenue collection that has not kept pace with costs.

Yet, as Raleigh lawmakers work to craft a budget for the coming fiscal year, they must recognize the impact that spending reductions will have on higher education in North Carolina. With student populations projected to rise significantly in the coming years, the state must be careful about eliminating faculty positions and other decisions that will harm the academic environments they deserve.

Officials at East Carolina and other UNC schools are preparing for significant funding cuts in the next budget, reductions that were suggested months ago when the extent of the state’s budget shortfall first became clear. Former Gov. Mike Easley directed all state entities to ready themselves for cuts of 2-5 percent.

Even that will no longer help the state make ends meet. Gov. Beverly Perdue has told universities to expect cuts of 7 percent or greater, reductions that virtually assure the loss of some positions, including faculty. She and UNC System President Erskine Bowles have engaged in lively debate about the most appropriate way to handle the funding reductions.

Last week, East Carolina officials said the school might stand to see 150 positions dissolved in this budget crisis. A hiring freeze has been in place since October and the school is studying a reduction in administrative stipends, but there may be no way to avoid the loss of some positions. One expects that vacant positions will be eliminated before staffed positions, but that may not preclude some individuals from receiving pink slips.

Each part of government will be asked to do more with less. Universities are no exception, nor should they be. This should be an opportunity for the state’s institutions of higher learning to strive for greater efficiency and eliminate extraneous spending.

However, East Carolina expects to enroll 27,000 students in the coming years and the university system projects to have 300,000 students by 2017 due to population growth and the cost difference of attending public universities rather than private colleges. Raleigh should look very carefully at the potential harm that might result from deep spending cuts in higher education and seek to minimize them.

Copyright 2009 The Daily Reflector All rights reserved. - -
Roberts' N.C. Central visit to be low-key

BY ERIC FERRERI, Staff Writer

Comment on this story

DURHAM - Presidents and politicians come to town amid great fanfare.

But when the nation’s top judicial officer visits a local campus? Not so much.

John G. Roberts Jr., chief justice of the United States, will visit N.C. Central University’s law school today. He will slip into town quietly, avoid the limelight and the cameras, and spend most of his time not before a crowd but with small groups of students and lawyers. His schedule will be tightly controlled, and the media - aside from one campus newspaper reporter - won’t be allowed in.

But for students, the visit is a rare opportunity. Roberts is on campus to preside over the school’s moot court competition. Once done with that, he will take a stroll around the school.

"He'll walk around the law school and make a few pop-in visits," said Raymond Pierce, the school's dean. "We don't even know what classroom he'll walk into."

Roberts, who joined the nation's high court as its chief justice in 2005, visits just a handful of law schools each year. Two years ago, Pierce met him at a judicial conference in West Virginia and asked him to speak at NCCU.

Roberts told Pierce that he doesn't usually give speeches but he'd preside over a moot court competition - in which teams of law students argue a case on appeal to a panel of judges.

"I looked to the people standing around and said 'you heard that, didn't you?'" Pierce recounted.
Roberts will meet with students, preside over the competition and hold a U.S. Supreme Court Bar swearing-in ceremony for about 20 NCCU law alums, said Pierce, who doled out most of the 120 seats in the NCCU courtroom to students through a lottery, leaving plenty of alums and professors alike disappointed.

The U.S. Supreme Court will provide Roberts' security. Kathy Arberg, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Supreme Court, declined to discuss specifics.

NCCU is imposing the media ban for the moot court exercise, an attempt to keep the courtroom environment as normal as possible, said Delores James, the law school's development director.

Roberts customarily meets with students privately, Arberg said.

Roberts visits about six or seven law schools a year, often to preside over moot court competitions and occasionally for other reasons, Arberg said.

He does not get paid for his appearances, and NCCU is paying his lodging and travel expenses using money donated by the Raleigh-based John William Pope Foundation.

Roberts, who will follow his NCCU visit with a trip to the University of Louisville later this week, does try to spend most of his campus time interacting with students, Arberg said.

Roberts' visit is a coup for this small but well-regarded law school stuck between Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill, two institutions with law schools boasting larger reach and profile. Duke has hosted U.S. Supreme Court justices at least a handful of times, and two chief justices have spoken on campus, William Rehnquist in 2002 and Earl Warren in 1963.

In the last decade, UNC-CH has hosted associate justices Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Sandra Day O'Connor.

NCCU has hosted just one in its history, associate justice Potter Stewart in 1980.

If the six NCCU students chosen for the moot court competition today never argue a case before the U.S. Supreme Court during their careers, they can at least say they took legal fire from the nation's chief justice. Roberts will be joined on the panel by Allyson Duncan, a former NCCU law professor who sits on the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals, and Henry Frye, a former member of the North Carolina Supreme Court.

"It's really a grilling," Pierce said. "It's an intense questioning by the judges."

Dominique Williams, a third-year law student, is one of NCCU's six participants in a case involving whether the government should be allowed to medicate a man in order for him to be considered competent and able to stand trial.

"We all have put in long nights and endless days," he said. "It's a great honor, so we've prepared very hard to make the university proud."

Bryan Nye was a second-year law student at the University of Kansas last year when Roberts presided over his moot court competition there.

Nye was wound pretty tight until he attended a question-and-answer session with Roberts before the competition. Seeing Roberts in person, joking and approachable, put him at ease.

"If you get to hear him speak, you'll realize he's brilliant, but also, he's very personable," Nye recounted recently by phone from his home in Kansas. "He's not out to get you as a law student."

eric.ferreri@newsobserver.com or 919-932-2008
Pack supporters await decision on Yow's successor

EDWARD G. ROBINSON III, Staff Writer

RALEIGH - Nora Lynn Finch spent more than 30 years as part of the N.C. State athletic department.

Her ties to the Wolfpack women's basketball program run deep. And when asked on Monday about the school’s ongoing coaching search for Kay Yow's successor, the question hit home.

Finch called the coaching search process "emotional" and "personal." But she said she did not know if interim head coach Stephanie Glance remains a candidate for the head coaching position, one the school must fill after the loss of its legendary coach who died Jan. 24 after a long battle with breast cancer.

Finch considers Glance and her staff friends. She said they are people of great integrity, but she knows N.C. State athletic director Lee Fowler must make the decision he feels is right for the program.

"Sometimes having a difference of opinion on those matters becomes more personal than it should," Finch, the ACC's associate commissioner for women's basketball and senior woman administrator, said. "That doesn't mean that personally I'm not going to feel a loss for my friends not being there, but professionally I will support the university's decision.

"Whoever that coach is going to be and their staff, the ACC is going to help in their transition to the ACC. We're going to do all that we can."

Fowler, who did not return phone calls on Monday, has said he expects to make a decision by April 21. Mark Kimmel, a university spokesman, denied requests for player interviews and
said school officials would not comment before a decision was announced.

Tahira Bell, mother of Wolfpack sophomore forward Tia Bell, said they had received little information regarding the process.

"We are in the dark," Tahira Bell said.

Glance, who served under Yow at State for 15 seasons, has drawn the support of coaches around the country. Those coaches watched from a distance as she became the leader of the program in the wake of Yow's death.

Former Elon coach Brenda Paul, who knew Yow for 25 years, admired the way Glance handled the pressure of Yow's passing.

"What happens to that staff that has been there through this?" Paul said. "I know that N.C. State is a wonderful place that embraced Les Robinson when his time as a coach was over. How will they embrace Stephanie if they choose to hire someone else?"

North Carolina women's basketball coach Sylvia Hatchell has stated clearly that she believes State should honor Yow's request that Glance replace her on the bench.

"Over the last couple of years, we had several conversations about that," Hatchell said on Monday. "She told me face to face that she wanted Stephanie to succeed her. It's not that I'm against anybody else, but Kay and I have been friends for 35 years. ... My loyalty lies with Kay's wishes."

Boyd Boswell, 76, an N.C. State women's basketball season-ticket holder along with his wife, became a fan of the program when Yow left Elon and joined the school in 1975. He doesn't miss many games.

"I don't get into the politics of the school too much," he said. "I was hoping that Stephanie would keep the position, but I understand if that's not possible. She did a good job.

"I think she's proven she can do a good job. I look at her assistants and wonder what will happen to them."

Still, he said, "we'll be fans regardless."

edward.robinson@newsobserver.com or 919-829-4781

Read The News & Observer print edition on your computer with the new e-edition!

Related Content

• N.C. legislators pay tribute to NCSU's Yow

© Copyright 2009, The News & Observer Publishing Company

A subsidiary of The McClatchy Company
N.C. legislators pay tribute to NCSU's Yow

Basnight calls her 'a coach of life'

BY DAN KANE, Staff Writer

RALEIGH - The state legislature Monday night honored Hall of Fame basketball coach Kay Yow, who led the N.C. State University women's team to 680 victories before a long, public battle with breast cancer ended with her death in January.

Yow's accomplishments, which include coaching the U.S. Olympic women's basketball team to a gold medal in 1988 and a trip to the NCAA Final Four, filled a two-page resolution honoring her. Several of Yow's family members, top NCSU officials and a dozen of her players attended as the resolution passed unanimously in the House and Senate.

Lawmakers praised Yow for being more than a tremendously successful basketball coach. They cited her devotion to the young women she coached, her efforts to bring parity to women's sports, her deep religious faith and her courage in battling breast cancer.

"She was a coach of life," said Senate leader Marc Basnight, D-Manteo. "She loved so very much her players, as we all know, but she also had a deep underlying love of humanity. ... She wanted to make certain that we all succeeded."

Sen. Linda Garrou, D-Winston-Salem, said she met Yow only once, but what the coach told her then stuck with her.

"She said her life's goal was to dig deep wells for the others who follow after us to drink,"
Garrou said.

Yow, 66, a native of Gibsonville who began her college coaching career at nearby Elon University, died Jan. 24 after a more than 20-year battle with breast cancer. She is one of six women's college basketball coaches with more than 700 victories, and she was selected national coach of the year eight times. She was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2002.

dan.kane@newsobserver.com or 919-829-4863

Read The News & Observer print edition on your computer with the new e-edition!

© Copyright 2009, The News & Observer Publishing Company

A subsidiary of The McClatchy Company
Average college credit card debt rises with fees, tuition
By Kathy Chu, USA TODAY

As college costs soar, students are charging more educational expenses to plastic, helping boost credit card debt to record levels.

A new study to be released Monday by Sallie Mae, a college-financing company, finds that the average undergraduate carried $3,173 in credit card debt last year, the highest level since Sallie Mae began collecting this data in 1998. In 2004, the last time the study was done, students carried an average of $2,169 in card debt.

The higher the grade level, the greater the card debt, according to Sallie Mae. In 2008, college seniors with at least one credit card graduated with an average of $4,138 in card debt, up 44% from 2004. By comparison, freshmen’s average credit card debt jumped 27% to $2,038.

The study — which had a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percentage points — relied on March 2008 credit bureau data, the latest available to Sallie Mae. Because the economy has deteriorated since then, “It’s likely that 2009 (card debt) could look a little bit worse,” says Marie O’Malley, Sallie Mae’s director of consumer research.

The findings come as college costs are surging. In the past 10 years, tuition and fees at public four-year colleges have climbed 50%, to an average of $6,585 a year, according to the College Board.

Lenders are also pulling back on private loans, making it harder for some students to pay for college. Student loans backed by the federal government, however, are still readily available.

Credit cards are the “lender of last resort,” says Kalman Chany, president of Campus Consultants, a college funding adviser. “If (students) can’t get private loans, they turn to credit cards.”

Sallie Mae’s research suggests that more students are paying for educational expenses such as books and school supplies with credit cards. And they’re doing so more often: In 2008, students charged an average of $2,200 in educational expenses to cards, up 134% from four years earlier.

These findings are unscientific because they’re based on a poll — separate from Sallie Mae’s analysis of credit bureau data — of 292 private-loan applicants. Nevertheless, the results mirror those of other industry surveys.

“The message is clear,” says Edmund Mierzwinski, consumer program director for the U.S. Public Interest Research Group. “Students are carrying more debt on credit cards, and more students are paying for education on credit cards.”

Find this article at:
http://www.usatoday.com/money/perfi/credit/2009-04-12-college-credit-card-debt_N.htm