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BAREFOOT BASH WINDS DOWN SEMESTER

East Carolina University students took the opportunity Thursday to head outside for an afternoon's distractions from the last few days of class and next week's final exams.

The annual Barefoot on the Mall event at ECU traditionally signifies the end of spring classes and beginning of summer for students.

Thursday's event featured food, games, music and inflatable obstacle courses.

The event, held from noon until 6 p.m., is in its 30th year.

Students heard from four bands and a DJ, including Wrong Way, a cover band for the Virginia Beach rock outfit Mae and Georgia Sublime.

Around 5,000 students enjoyed the activities on the mall in the middle of the main campus at ECU.

Students vied for free T-shirts, enjoyed bull riding and checked out the bands playing on a large stage.

The event raised money for the Pitt County Children's Miracle Network with $1 iPhone raffle tickets.
Annual Med-Law Classic held at Minges

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector

A team of Pitt County doctors left cadavers on the court Thursday night, defeating local lawyers, 40-38, in the 16th Med-Law Classic in Williams Arena at Minges Coliseum.

The annual charity basketball game is a chief fundraiser for the Pitt County Health Education Foundation, a non-profit creating grants to aid children and families.

Despite the Litigators’ nine-point cushion at halftime, and a lead that lasted through most of the second half, the Medicators had the stronger start and finish.

They pulled out the win by nailing a three-pointer in the final 20 seconds of the game.

Though several lawyers took shots in the time remaining, sandwiched by times out, they sank none.

“I love playing basketball,” said Medicators coach and physical medicine rehabilitator Clinton Faulk, who also scored the most points on either side. “But it’s also nice to give back to the community. Most of us don’t have the time to do a lot of that.”

It was Faulk’s third year in the game. The doctors have the better record “by far,” organizer Kelly Baxter noted, winning the first 10 or so contests, but the lawyers have stepped up their game over the last few years.

Attorney Daniel Entzminger certainly dressed the part — matching knee socks and headband, no tee under his purple jersey — and scored the second most points for his team. Though he wasn’t designated coach, he shouted from the bench plenty and said the loss was a tough one.

“I’d rather get blown out than lose by one point,” he said, but added it was nice to “get together, get some exercise and do something great for the community.”

Assistant District Attorney Brian DeSoto was the top scorer — and also committed the

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most fouls — for the Litigators, but was injured during the last minute of the game.

“They really get into it,” Baxter said. “It’s amazing. I think this is their chance for long, lost glory.”

Ticket sales, individual pledges, local business sponsors, raffles, and gameday donations were lumped together in a sum that will go toward everything from cochlear implants to eyeglass programs, nutrition and maternity programs.

Baxter said the crowd was smaller than in years past, but still expected to meet their goal of raising more than $50,000 for PCHEF. She estimated the organization has raised over $1 million since its inception 20 years ago.

The event also featured kids’ games, a celebrity shoot-out between media personalities and a halftime show by local BMX pros.

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ECU's Friends of the School of Theatre and Dance to host a picnic and theater performances to raise money for scholarships.

The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University's School of Theater and Dance will hold a scholarship fundraiser Saturday.

But this won't be your typical black-tie affair. You can call it an anti-gala.

That's right, an anti-gala.

Formal wear is not required. "We wanted to try something different," said Jeff Woodruff. "Wear your shorts or jeans and bring the kids." Woodruff is the managing director for the School of Theatre and Dance.

ECU's Friends of the School of Theatre and Dance will hold its "Friends and Family" scholarship fundraiser at 5 p.m. Saturday on the grounds in front of McGinnis Theatre and will include a family-style picnic and performances in McGinnis Theatre.

The event will raise money for the School of Theatre and Dance's scholarship fund and will include hot dogs for the kids, sword-fighting demonstrations and activities by the Storybook Theatre.

"And gallons and gallons of sweet tea," Woodruff said. At 7 p.m., performances by ECU students and faculty will be held in McGinnis Theatre.

"There will be excerpts from some musicals, dance performances and a couple of faculty choreographed dance pieces," Woodruff said. "It's really a good intro to all the different kinds of things we do."

The School of Theatre and Dance produces several theater productions during the school year and a summer theater series that runs June through August.

Tickets are $30 for adults and $15 for children and can be purchased in advance by calling the ECU McGinnis Theatre box office at 328-6829. Tickets will be available at the event.

In the event of rain, all activities, including the picnic, will be moved indoors.
Deep-sea secrets resurfacing at ECU

Recovered artifacts thought to be from Blackbeard’s sunken ship will be shown

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Want to see a wine bottle that may have touched the lips of the feared pirate Blackbeard?

This weekend the public will have a chance to view many objects that researchers believe to be from the Queen Anne’s Revenge, the flagship of Edward Teach, aka Blackbeard, that ran aground and ultimately sank in 1718.

The objects from the ship and parts of the ship itself were underwater for nearly 300 years before the ship was found by Florida-based Intersal in 1996. It is the oldest shipwreck found in the waters off North Carolina’s coast.

More than 300,000 individual pieces have been recovered from the wreck and many of those pieces will be on display Saturday at Open Lab Day from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at the QAR Conservation Laboratory on the West Research Campus of East Carolina University.

Wendy Welsh, QAR assistant conservator at the lab, said that researchers are nearly certain the ship belonged to Blackbeard.

“If you ask anyone who works for the project, they will tell you they are 99 percent sure, but we have not found the smoking gun yet,” Welsh said.

“That is why we want the public to come out and see the artifacts and decide for themselves.”

Welsh said the best way to confirm that the ship belonged to Blackbeard would be to find something with “La Concorde” written on it.

La Concorde was the name of the ship before it was taken over by Blackbeard.

She said researchers could be sure it belonged to the famous pirate if anything with “Protestant of Caesar” written on it could be found at the site of the shipwreck.

The Protestant of Caesar was another ship commandeered by Blackbeard before he took the Queen Anne’s Revenge.

The shipwreck was found in the Beaufort Inlet about a mile south of Fort Macon, Welsh said.

Most of the objects on display will be in tanks.

The objects must remain in water until the salt can be removed to maintain them.

Several pewter plates, ceramic pieces, ship timbers, guns and cannon implements and other artifacts will be on view, Welsh said.

Archaeologists and conservators will discuss artifact treatment and study and answer questions.

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TWO CRISES DISRUPT LOUISBURG'S PULSE

By Josh Shaffer | Staff Writer

It's a long 35 miles from Raleigh to Louisburg, much of it a two-lane ride past horses, tractors and a hand-painted sign offering cauliflower for sale. As the seat of Franklin County, the town has always stood proudly outside the Triangle's economic hum. But now a pair of crises threatens to stop its tiny heart.

Louisburg College, an anchor since the 18th century, could lose its accreditation over shaky finances — a loss that would jeopardize North Carolina's only private two-year college.

Franklin Regional Medical Center, the only hospital for thousands of the rural poor and Franklin County's No. 3 employer, has seen a damming report about the death of a elderly patient in elective surgery. It comes just as the hospital wants permission to leave for a more affluent and populous spot farther south near the Wake County border.

Even the town's annual international whistling competition has moved to Japan for a year, and though organizers promise its return, they call it very expensive to put on.

These are the types of institutions that keep small towns alive as tobacco crops fade and textile jobs flee, and townsfolk in Louisburg believe both the college and the hospital will survive these rough patches. Keeping them alive, though, will be tricky at best.

"I'm cautiously optimistic," said Boyd Sturges, a town council member and attorney for the college. "I'm a lawyer, and frankly, I wouldn't have wanted to live in a dying town."

Louisburg sits along the Tar River, its population split roughly half and half between black and white — just 4 percent Hispanic.

Median income there rises only to about $36,000, well below household totals in the Triangle, and a large chunk of the town's citizenry rides the two-lane highway outside of Louisburg for work in the Triangle.

But ask regular people on the streets there and they'll brag about the new Super WalMart arriving soon, or the 100-year-old houses being renovated.

One of those along North Main Street belongs to Melissa Tegeder, 40, who chose Louisburg after she and her husband —

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then-boyfriend — lost their homes to Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi. Now she cares for their new child while he commutes to the Triangle.

"It was just so charming," said Tegeder, whose in-laws live in Holly Springs. "Of course, it was a great buy."

Great buy is an understatement. The Tegeder's bought their 3,400-square-foot home for about $120,000 — a sliver of a comparable Raleigh price. It has stood just north of downtown for more than a century and had been carved up into apartments, so the patch-up work has been extensive.

"It's a good payoff," she said.

Near the county courthouse, the town of little more than 3,000 supports an independent book shop and coffee house. There's a British-style ale house down the street and a barbecue lunch buffet on the main street.

But the college is the town's center, and it has problems. The school caters to students who can't yet compete at a four-year school but want a more enriching, full-time experience than community college offers.

But tuition costs about $20,000 a year, placing the college at a competitive disadvantage for two-year students who could just attend a cheaper, state-supported equivalent and forgo a dorm experience.

In December, the school got notice from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools that its finances merited a six-month warning period, and that its accreditation could get pulled without a turnaround. Then in March, President J. Michael Clyburn left his post after less than a year, not long after he cut 20 jobs at the college to help stave off a deficit estimated at $2 million.

"We kind of feel like he abandoned us," said student Vanessa Weidrick, 18. "Things were too tumultuous, and he got scared."

Sturges, who is counsel for the college, predicts the school will go on probation at the end of the warning period — accreditation intact. The school has already cut staff, held a successful fund-rais ing party at First Citizens Bank in Raleigh and named an interim president, Rodney Poth, who had previously been a vice president.

Hospital convulsions

The hospital, meanwhile, has been burning up newspaper headlines in both Louisburg and Raleigh.

A recent report found the hospital acted improperly when a 76-year-old patient complained of chest pain and having no feeling in his arm before a knee replacement surgery.

There is no written proof that the man's complaints got to the surgeon or anesthesiologist, and he died after his December operation, said the report from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, which threatened the hospital's funding. That threat was removed after hospital officials submitted a plan of action that included the replacement of top medical administrators.

That has hurt the reputation of Franklin County's only hospital, but the town is also faced with the possibility of it moving to Youngsville. Franklin Regional and Rex Healthcare have partnered on the move, and a decision from the state should come late this month.

Sturges predicts this proposed move will also fail. On Monday, members of the state's legislative black caucus will protest the move. The state has already turned down the hospital once before.

State Sen. Doug Berger, who represents Franklin County, agrees. The hospital has a historic obligation to serve the rural poor, he said, especially when aided by the UNC Health Care System's wholly-owned subsidiary, Rex Healthcare.

"There's no question a hospital can thrive in Louisburg," he said. "The hospital has just been stubborn about having a broader vision and a broader obligation."

Without the school, without the hospital, townsfolk agree Louisburg will wither.

But people there will tell you they are country-tough, sturdy enough to survive in the Triangle's shadow.

Staff researcher David Raynor contributed to this report.

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Holster-packin' students protest

Across U.S., 29,000 back right to carry gun at college

BY ERIC PERRERI
STAFF WRITER

CHAPEL HILL - The holster attached to Jason Blatt's hip all this week is small, black and innocuous.

It is also empty. Blatt, 23, is a second-year medical school student at UNC-Chapel Hill, and though he is licensed to carry a concealed weapon in most places in North Carolina, state law keeps him from doing so on any college campus.

By wearing empty holsters this week, Blatt and 29,000 other college students across the country are making public their belief that such prohibitions are misguided. It is the second such protest organized by Students for Concealed Carry on Campus, which has about 25 members at UNC-CH and about 300 at N.C. State. Blatt is UNC-CH's delegate to the national organization.

"I can carry almost anywhere in the state," said Blatt, a Hendersonville native and graduate of Vanderbilt University. "But if I walk across Franklin Street onto campus, I'm committing a felony."

Blatt was reared by parents he describes as "moderately anti-gun." Still, his father taught him about gun safety and responsibility early on. He owns several guns, which he uses for target and sport shooting. He carries a concealed handgun much of the time when he isn't on campus, but occasionally he runs home and leaves it if he's headed for a bar, movie theater, or other the public place where concealing a gun is against the law.

When he does carry his Kahr P40 pocket pistol, it is tucked in a holster in his waistband, further concealed by clothing. If someone asks about it, he deflects the question. He never shows it off. Yosemite Sam, he is not.

Blatt understands that many folks reflexively fear guns and, by extension, gun owners. But his essential argument is this: Properly licensed, responsible gun owners follow the rules aren't dangerous ones. "Someone interested in shooting up the place isn't worried about getting expelled or ending up in jail," he said.

The holster Blatt has worn this week looks like

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a cell phone holder. Still, he has gotten a few questions around campus. When asked, he produces a data-heavy fact sheet pleading his organization's case.

In the United States, just 11 universities allow concealed firearms on campus — Utah's nine public institutions; a Virginia community college and Colorado State University, Blatt said.

On college campuses, officials often say they support current law because guns can present danger and because even knowledgeable, licensed gun owners aren't trained for a violent, tense situation where the use of force is necessary.

"Any good that would come would be outweighed by the potential for bad," said Randy Young, a spokesman for UNC-CH's public safety office.

Blatt acknowledges he doesn't know how he would react in a worst-case scenario such as the Virginia Tech massacre. But he knows he'd be essentially helpless without a gun.

"It would at least increase my odds for survival," he said.

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T-rex is chicken's relative

NCSU scientist took part in find

BY DAVID RANI
STAFF WRITER

A group of scientists including N.C. State University paleontologist Mary Schweitzer have discovered new scientific evidence that the cowardly chicken has a ferocious relative: *Tyrannosaurus rex*, the meat-eating dinosaur that stood 15 to 20 feet tall.

In recent years scientists have hypothesized that birds descended from dinosaurs, but that theory was based on an analysis of their similar bone structures, said Schweitzer, who has a joint appointment at the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences. But the study, published in today's issue of the journal Science, provides corroborating data.

The linchpin was soft tissue samples that Schweitzer obtained from the leg bone of a T-rex discovered in Montana in 2003. Scientists at Harvard used protein fragments from that sample to determine the similarities, at the molecular level, between the extinct dinosaur and today's chicken.

The first pass of their analysis, announced a year ago, indicated a link. The research reported today takes that analysis further by comparing protein sequences.

"It validates our previous idea," Schweitzer said. The same techniques were used to show, as expected, that the mastodon was a relative of today's elephants.

The important thing, scientifically, is having a tool to trace molecular evolution, which Schweitzer said is the key to the tree of life.

Their analysis, by the way, put the T-rex in the class Archosauria, along with the modern-day chicken and the ancestors of today's alligators. That may explain why alligator tastes like chicken.