THE DAILY CLIPS

May 1, 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
Three early-morning incidents prompt patrol

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector

Greenville Police are searching for two suspects in a series of three early-morning armed robberies that occurred between 12:20 a.m. and 2:15 a.m. Wednesday, a department official said.

A suspect arrested in a nearby home break-in on Eric Court later in the morning has not been connected to the robberies, said spokesman Cpl. Kip Gaskins. Further investigation is being made to determine if a connection exists, he said.

Officers arrested John Nembr, 25, of 332 Haven Drive, and charged him with breaking and entering and possession of stolen property.

The first robbery happened in the 1000 block of Brownlee Drive at about 12:15 a.m. Wednesday according to written police reports. Two men walking on the street were approached by two suspects who took a cell phone and wallet at gunpoint, according to the police report.

The second robbery happened at about 12:47 a.m. when two male East Carolina University students walking in the 400 block of South Eastern Street were robbed of $11 in cash after one of the two suspects pointed a gun at them.

Then, at about 2:15 a.m. the third robbery occurred when a 20-year-old ECU student walking at Fourth and Jarvis streets was robbed of $90 in cash at gunpoint, the report stated.

A command meeting was held at about 9:30 a.m., Gaskins said, to decide a strategy for dealing with the three robberies. Officers on the street were alerted and a patrol was set up around the area where the robberies occurred, he said.

Shortly after 10:30 a.m., a resident saw Nembr coming out of a neighbor's home on Eric Court with electronics equipment in his arms, Gaskins said. The neighbor first called the police to report the situation, then grabbed a shotgun and approached the suspect.

Nembr then dropped the goods and ran away through a wooded area, Gaskins said.

Gaskins said officers already searching the area for the robbery suspects spotted Nembr getting on a bus and stopped it to arrest him. They said they discovered several handguns under Nembr's bus seat, later identified as the homeowner's property.

Gaskins did not endorse the action of the neighbor to pursue the burglar but he credited his willingness to call the police and become involved for a speedy capture of the suspect.

"Community involvement and cooperation with police to affect an arrest is something we love to see. This man knew his neighbor and knew the suspect did not belong there," Gaskins said.

Nembr was questioned at police headquarters, then held at the Pitt County Detention Center on $50,000 secured bond.

Investigators examined evidence and facts to find common links among the three robberies, Gaskins said. All involved walking victims confronted by two black male suspects — one reportedly nicknamed "JoJo" — with handguns.

Gaskins characterized the robberies as "crimes of opportunity," not aimed at any particular person or type of person.

"They strike at people they see walking around late at night or in the early morning hours. We'd like everybody who is out walking at that time to pay close attention to their surroundings and to who's out and about," Gaskins said.

No robbery suspects have been identified and Pitt-Greenville Crime Stoppers has offered a $5,000 reward for information leading to an arrest.

Michael Abramowitz can be contacted at mabramowitz@coxnc.com and 329-9571.

See ROBBERY, A7
Student's analysis: Clinton's plan best

By Brock Letchworth
The Daily Reflector

An East Carolina University medical student says she believes the health care plan of Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton would be best to address the country's needs.

As part of an individual health policy elective, Ginny Stewart recently analyzed the health care proposals of Clinton, Sen. Barack Obama and Sen. John McCain. Stewart said Clinton's plan offers the best solutions for providing health care coverage to 47 million uninsured Americans and cutting health care expenses.

"I think every physician has a responsibility to have some level of awareness of health policy issues that affect their practice and their patients," Stewart said. "After four years of medical school, I realized this was an area I was deficient in so I designed an individual elective this month with health policy.

"I looked at the three campaigns and I was really undecided. But because health care is one of my biggest issues in this election, agreeing with Sen. Clinton's campaign kind of pushed me toward her."

Stewart, 30, said many of the patients she sees each day do not have health insurance, and she believes many of the chronic health conditions they face could have been prevented if they had health insurance and health care earlier in life.

Clinton's plan is similar to Obama's in many ways, Stewart says, but her proposal would require health care coverage for all Americans while Obama mandates it only for children. Under Clinton's plan, people can keep their current plan or, if uninsured, they can choose a plan from choices Congress receives under the Federal Employee Health Benefit Program. In addition to the private options, Clinton's plan says Americans can choose a public plan similar to Medicare, Stewart said.

"I think Sen. Clinton's plan would be the most effective because it is the most comprehensive," Stewart said. "I think to lower health care costs and insurance premiums, everyone is going to have to be insured. We are living in a country where everyone is required to have auto insurance, but not necessarily health insurance.

"I believe that health is a human right. In order to extend that right for everyone to have health care, they should have some sort of health insurance or coverage."

McCain's plan does not provide comprehensive coverage, and would be the least effective of the three proposals, Stewart said, adding that American is one of the few industrialized nations that doesn't have comprehensive

See HEALTH, B3

HEALTH
Continued from B1

health care coverage.

Stewart said she also was fond of Clinton's strategies for getting businesses to provide health insurance. The plan would provide tax credits to small businesses that provide health care to defray the cost of coverage, and large businesses would be mandated to provide health insurance or contribute to the cost of coverage.

Clinton's plan would also lower national health spending by $120 billion annually, Stewart said, by creating initiatives to reduce diseases, using paperless health information technology, ending insurance discrimination and implementing smart purchasing initiatives to constrain excess prescription drug and managed care expenditures.

Clinton's proposals for strengthening Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), which provides money for children's health care coverage, also appeal to Stewart.

Stewart says none of the candidates' health care plans will come to fruition if something isn't done to address the economy, however.

"Sen. Clinton has the most conservative economic views of the three candidates," Stewart said. "She has a plan to straighten out our economy, and that is important too. If we can't do that, it doesn't matter what type of health care plans we have."

Brock Letchworth can be contacted at 329-9574 or bletchworth@coxnc.com.
Pirate statue stolen from bookstore

The Daily Reflector

One of the many new pirate statues modeled after the East Carolina University mascot and on display at Pitt County businesses and organizations was stolen on Tuesday.

The University Book Exchange, located at 516 Cotanche St., reported that its purple and brown statue, valued at $2,500, was taken from its perch outside the store. The statue was one of 16 similar creations of the Painted Pirate Community Art Project from the recent annual PirateFest.

Other crimes reported to the Greenville Police Department:
Universities' going all out for recruits

By Michael Rubinkam
The Associated Press

WILKES-BARRE, Pa. — Wilkes University badly wanted 18-year-old Nicole Pollock to be part of its freshman class this fall — so much so that it made her the star of her own ad campaign.

The small, private school in northeastern Pennsylvania plastered Pollock's name on billboards, pizza boxes and gas pumps — and even aired a commercial on MTV — in hopes of getting her to enroll. As one message put it: "We just hope you're on your way to Wilkes University next year."

Mission accomplished: Pollock recently picked Wilkes over her hometown University of Scranton. Even better for Wilkes, the ads put it on the radar screen of many of Pollock's college-bound classmates.

The quirky $120,000 ad campaign, which also featured seven other students, helps Wilkes stand out in a crowded college marketplace. It also demonstrates the lengths to which some colleges are going to reach today's media-and-marketing-savvy teenagers, who are just as likely to shop for a school on the Internet as to rely on glossy brochures and college fairs.

Increasingly, schools are using podcasts, virtual tours on YouTube, live chats and other interactive technologies to get their messages out.

Wilkes' ads, now in their second year, are focused on the university's traditional recruiting area in northeastern Pennsylvania, as well as the Allentown-Bethlehem region to the south, and the Philadelphia suburbs, Long Island and Binghamton, N.Y.

The school finds out this week just how successful its campaign has been. Thursday is "decision day," the deadline for high school seniors across the nation to notify the college of their choice they plan to attend in the fall.

"This is pretty trendsetting and forward-thinking," said Nancy Costopulos, chief marketing officer of the American Marketing Association, which runs a yearly symposium for colleges and universities. "It positions Wilkes as an innovative and fresh kind of school."

The university picks applicants from markets where Wilkes wants to promote itself and who have a "mix of talents and determination," said Jack Chielli, Wilkes' director of marketing.

Applicants featured in the ads must consent to have their names used.

The ads are the brainchild of Philadelphia marketing firm 160over90, which had a mandate from Wilkes to convey the message that the school gets to know its students personally and pays close attention to their needs.

To do that, the agency conducts in-depth interviews with participating students, their friends and families — learning their hobbies and accomplishments, their hopes and dreams, their likes and dislikes, even their nicknames.

It uses the information to design highly personalized ads that are placed where students are most likely to see them: on pizza boxes and billboards, atop gas pumps, in movie theaters and malls, and on MTV, VH1 and Comedy Central.
ECU study:

Video games ease stress, improve mood

The Daily Reflector

Video games have come a long way since Pong, but an East Carolina University study indicates we may soon enter the era of prescription Peggle and therapeutic Tetris.

A six-month-long, randomized, controlled study measured the stress-relieving and other mood-lifting effects of so-called "casual" video games, according to an ECU news release. The three puzzle and word games used in the study, Bejeweled 2, Peggle and Bookworm Adventures, are all made by PopCap Games, a developer and publisher of casual video games. PopCap underwrote the study and provided copies of the games for research purposes. "I've conducted many clinical studies in the area of recreational therapy in the past, but this was the first one seeking to determine the potential therapeutic value of video games," said Carmen Russoniello, the ECU professor who directed the study. "The results of this study are impressive and intriguing, given the extent of the effects of the games on subjects' stress levels and overall mood."

Researchers monitored test subjects' heart rate, brain waves and mood before and after playing, and the study found potential therapeutic applications of casual games as a means of addressing serious mental and physical disorders. ECU's Psychophysiology Lab is planning to start clinical trials in the fall to gauge the games' medical potential.

To make sure games really were having the noted effects, researchers compared subjects' changes in stress levels and mood to changes in a control group that experienced a Web-based activity similar in physical and mental nature to the game-playing groups. Full results of the study will be presented at the Games for Health Conference in Baltimore on May 8 by Russoniello, associate professor of recreational therapy and director of the Psychophysiology Lab and Biofeedback Clinic at ECU's College of Health and Human Performance. The study results also will be published in a peer-reviewed journal later this year.

Parents shouldn't be fooled, though — the study results don't give kids a new excuse for playing their favorite game. The activity may be good for improving mood, but "so is candy," Russoniello said. "Everything should be in moderation and balance."
About the ECU study

The Daily Reflector

The East Carolina University study described on Page D1 was conducted between October 2007 and April 2008. The control group, tasked with surfing the Internet looking for journal articles, had 31 subjects.

The experimental groups consisted of 31 subjects who played Bejeweled 2, another 29 subjects who played Bookworm Adventures, and 36 subjects who played Peggle. The study included the collection of data during a 5-minute baseline period and 15 minutes of game playing or, in the case of the control group, Internet surfing.

"Granted, this study was a first step and much more needs to be done before video games can be prescribed to treat medical conditions," said Carmen Russoniello, the ECU professor who directed the study. However, the results "confirm anecdotal evidence that people are playing casual video games to improve their mood and decrease their stress, and herald casual games' potential in health promotion...."
Congressional 'freedom fries' sponsor has primary challenge

By KEVIN MAURER – 17 hours ago

BEAUFORT, N.C. (AP) — The walls at Cubbie's diner used to be plastered with pictures, stickers and campaign signs for Rep. Walter Jones, who championed the eatery's idea to serve up "freedom fries" in the days before the start of the Iraq war.

But the Republican soured on the war soon after it started, and now there's a new banner hanging above the grill: Joe McLaughlin for Congress.

"Walter abandoned us," said Cubbie's owner Neal Rowland. "Walter hopped on the bandwagon. But when the heat got turned up, he hopped off."

The diner's decision to support Jones' opponent in next week's primary reflects growing discord with the seven-term congressman in this coastal North Carolina district, home to the Marine Corps' Camp Lejeune and other bases. Though many Americans agree with his position, Jones represents a district where his anti-war stance could cost him his job.

Last year, Jones was one of a handful of Republican congressmen to vote in favor of a timetable for troop withdrawals. One of the others — Maryland Rep. Wayne Gilchrist — lost his primary in February to a challenger who said the vote showed a lack of support for the troops.

Jones solidified his stance as a war supporter five years ago, when Cubbie's served up the first hot batch of "freedom fries" as symbolic protest to France's opposition to the war in Iraq. Inspired, Jones pushed for "freedom fries" and "freedom toast" in the U.S. House cafeteria, too.

Jones' views on the war changed soon after, as he began sending condolence letters to the families of every American service member killed in Iraq. His increasing anti-war efforts over the past two years have placed him further at odds with the Republican Party. He wrote to President Bush to oppose the 2007 boost in troop levels and was one of two GOP congressmen to vote against the administration's terrorist surveillance program.

"We are in our sixth year of a war that Rumsfeld and his advisers thought would be a three- to six-month war," Jones said. "Any war strategy has to have an end point. You've got to have a definition of victory."

His opponent, McLaughlin, took notice. A former Army officer at Fort Bragg and county commissioner in the community that surrounds Camp Lejeune, he has already raised twice as much as Jones' 2006 general election challenger, a local television meteorologist with no previous political experience. As McLaughlin campaigned door-to-door near the Marine base, he found the war was usually the first issue to come up.

"Our Marines and sailors are fighting for a noble cause and he doesn't get it," McLaughlin told Terri Aubuchon, a Republican small business owner he met while canvassing recently. They talked about Jones' desire to withdraw American forces from Iraq.

"If we pull out there will be chaos there and chaos eventually here. You've got to find a way to get out of it and leave it better than you found it," Aubuchon said. "It is always going to be an issue. There are so many people that hate us."

Jonathan Morris, who teaches political science at East Carolina University, said lawmakers who cross party lines on divisive issues often face strong primary challenges.

"There's no issue that's more divisive right now than Iraq," Morris said. "Walter Jones
Congressional 'freedom fries' sponsor has primary challenge

By KEVIN MAURER -- 17 hours ago

BEAUFORT, N. C. (AP) — The walls at Cubbie's diner used to be plastered with pictures, stickers and campaign signs for Rep. Walter Jones, who championed the eatery's idea to serve up "freedom fries" in the days before the start of the Iraq war.

But the Republican soured on the war soon after it started, and now there's a new banner hanging above the grill: Joe McLaughlin for Congress.

"Walter abandoned us," said Cubbie's owner Neal Rowland. "Walter hopped on the bandwagon. But when the heat got turned up, he hopped off."

The diner's decision to support Jones' opponent in next week's primary reflects growing discord with the seven-term congressman in this coastal North Carolina district, home to the Marine Corps' Camp Lejeune and other bases. Though many Americans agree with his position, Jones represents a district where his anti-war stance could cost him his job.

Last year, Jones was one of a handful of Republican congressmen to vote in favor of a timetable for troop withdrawals. One of the others — Maryland Rep. Wayne Gilchrest — lost his primary in February to a challenger who said the vote showed a lack of support for the troops.

Jones solidified his stance as a war supporter five years ago, when Cubbie's served up the first hot batch of "freedom fries" as symbolic protest to France's opposition to the war in Iraq. Inspired, Jones pushed for "freedom fries" and "freedom toast" in the U.S. House cafeteria, too.

Jones' views on the war changed soon after, as he began sending condolence letters to the families of every American service member killed in Iraq. His increasing anti-war efforts over the past two years have placed him further at odds with the Republican Party. He wrote to President Bush to oppose the 2007 boost in troop levels and was one of two GOP congressmen to vote against the administration's terrorist surveillance program.

"We are in our sixth year of a war that Rumsfeld and his advisers thought would be a three- to six-month war," Jones said. "Any war strategy has to have an end point. You've got to have a definition of victory."

His opponent, McLaughlin, took notice. A former Army officer at Fort Bragg and county commissioner in the community that surrounds Camp Lejeune, he has already raised twice as much as Jones' 2006 general election challenger, a local television meteorologist with no previous political experience. As McLaughlin campaigned door-to-door near the Marine base, he found the war was usually the first issue to come up.

"Our Marines and sailors are fighting for a noble cause and he doesn't get it," McLaughlin told Terri Aubuchon, a Republican small business owner he met while canvassing recently. They talked about Jones' desire to withdraw American forces from Iraq.

"If we pull out there will be chaos there and chaos eventually here. You've got to find a way to get out of it and leave it better than you found it," Aubuchon said. "It is always going to be an issue. There are so many people that hate us."

Jonathan Morris, who teaches political science at East Carolina University, said lawmakers who cross party lines on divisive issues often face strong primary challenges.

"There's no issue that's more divisive right now than Iraq," Morris said. "Walter Jones
Deaths hit NCCU hard

School suffers 8 since Jan. 4, 2007

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM - Each time Geoffrey Cooper enters the Campus Echo office, he passes a photo of a smiling Demita Smith, the slain N.C. Central University student for whom the college newspaper's newsroom is now named.

It is a sobering reminder that even the young are mortal.

"Every time I walk past that picture, it gets to me," said Cooper, now the Echo's editor in chief.

Since Smith's death Jan. 4, 2007, the school has been visited by death again and again. Eight NCCU students died in the course of the 2007-08 academic year. The causes ranged from car crashes to homicide. No two deaths were connected.

Two of the dead, seniors Cannon Tyrell Fuller and Cassandra Freeman, will receive degrees posthumously at graduation Saturday.

"In all my years in higher education, I've never experienced this number of student deaths," said Frances Graham, NCCU's interim vice chancellor for student affairs. "It's really unbelievable, actually."

At Duke, three students died this school year, including Abhijit Mahato, the graduate student shot dead in his apartment. At UNC-Chapel Hill, four students died since last summer, including the student body president, Eve Carson, who was shot dead this year.

At NCCU, a small campus of 8,300 students, the deaths seemed at times to come in bunches, as when three students died in February. Two students died in wrecks, and four others died from what the university called "health complications."

NCCU draws heavily from Durham high schools, and four of the students — Freeman, Larry Leathers, Sean Roach and LaRisha

Support staffs strained

The effect on NCCU's student services and mental health support staffs was profound, Graham said. Some university officials spent much of the year in condolence mode, gathering information, sending flowers, notifying grief counselors. The campus was host for two memorial services and a funeral this year.

"I think our counseling center is exhausted," Graham said. "It will have record numbers this year."

Keith Anderson, who heads the mental health best practices task force for the American College Health Association, said an unusual number of deaths in a short time may force some introspection.

"It's an unusual event for people in the prime of their lives to die in these kinds of numbers," said Anderson, a psychologist at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. "It will get people thinking about their own mortality."

One NCCU student, LaTreese Curtis, was a homicide victim. Curtis, who lived in Raleigh, was found stabbed to death in late January beside Interstate 540.

The most recent to die was Fuller, a popular senior who died unexpectedly in early April while working at a group home in Creedmoor. Students held a memorial for him at Campus Crossing, the off-campus apartment complex where he lived. A group of 30 students, faculty and staff members piled into buses and cars to attend his funeral in Cherryville.

Cooper, the Campus Echo reporter and editor, said he struggled recently to persuade Fuller's friends to speak to him for a newspaper article. His death shook a lot of students, Cooper said.

"This is a real tight-knit place," he said. "When a death happens, you cannot avoid it. Even though we're from all different places, we're one big family."
UNC-CH insider on short list to become new chancellor

BY JANE STANCILL 
AND ERIC PERRINI 
STAFF WRITERS

The search for a new chancellor at UNC-Chapel Hill could be concluded next week. At least one person approached for the job is an insider who has spent 15 years as a chemistry professor and administrator in Chapel Hill.

Holden Thorp, a North Carolina native and UNC-CH alumnus who last year became dean of the university's College of Arts and Sciences, confirmed Wednesday that he had interviewed for the chancellor's position. "I'm very interested," he said. "It's the best job in American higher education."

He referred other questions to the office of UNC system President Erskine Bowles, who is likely to recommend his choice for chancellor to the UNC Board of Governors next week for final approval. Bowles could not be reached for comment.

Nelson Schwab, a UNC-CH trustee and chairman of the search committee, declined to discuss candidates but said his committee had finished its work and forwarded names to Bowles.

"I can't talk about anybody," he said. "The process is going forward. We hope we can get an announcement going shortly."

So far, the search for a successor to retiring chancellor James Moeser has been top secret. Members of the search committee have signed mandatory-confidentiality agreements.

It was unclear Wednesday how many people had been interviewed.

jane.stancill@newsobserver.com 
or (919) 556-2464
Tutorial pushed for preserving public records

The managers in charge of state and local government agencies should make sure that employees who handle public records know which ones must be saved, a state advisory committee concluded Wednesday. Gov. Mike Easley's e-mail panel also endorsed creating a computerized training tutorial and quiz for government workers who need or want it.

The committee is expected to vote next week on the recommendations to ensure that government workers understand the requirements of the state Public Records Law.

But the panel didn't reach a decision on how to improve the state's disparate and inadequate e-mail archiving systems.

"There are probably few more important subjects in the long run than public records," said Franklin Freeman, a senior aide to Easley who heads the panel.

Easley formed the committee in response to criticism of his administration's destruction of e-mail concerning public matters. Under the administration's policy, each employee can decide which e-mail messages to delete and which to save.

The News & Observer and nine other news organizations have sued Easley over the policy, which they contend is illegal.

Several panel members said the state can't afford to save every government e-mail message, and human discretion can't be removed entirely. But they said more records could be kept longer than the 30 days that's automatic now.

"It's very important that the public feels that their government is transparent and they have the opportunity to know what's going on," Freeman said.

The group, minus McCrory, agreed in principle to recommend requiring agency heads to provide testing and training for employees who work with records.

A 40-minute online tutorial for government workers could be ready in a few months and would cost the state no more than $30,000, said George Bakola, the state's chief information officer.

"If we can do anything in state government for under $30,000, let's do it," quipped panel member Ned Cline, former managing editor of The Greensboro News & Record.