THE DAILY CLIPS

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For thousands of jazz fans in eastern North Carolina, he’s known as “TomtheJazzman.”

For more than 23 years, Tom Mallison of Greenville has made a weekly trip to WTEB studios, the home of Public Radio East in New Bern, to spend five hours sharing the music that is his passion as “TomtheJazzman.” His broadcast offers a cornucopia of jazz styles interspersed with wit and wisdom garnered from more than 40 years in broadcasting.

Mallison recently donated to East Carolina University’s Joyner Library thousands of LP jazz recordings he accumulated during a lifelong endeavor that began at the age of 12. The recordings span a variety of the sub-genres of jazz, including ragtime, Dixieland, bebop, free and fusion.

Many of the more unique recordings have been used to create the “TomtheJazzman Collection” housed in ECU’s Music Library. Others, mostly duplicates, have been sold to create an acquisitions fund for the support and enhancement of the collection.

“The TomtheJazzman Collection will provide students and faculty the opportunity to research and understand the evolution of jazz and gain a greater appreciation for the art that is jazz music,” said Larry Boyer, dean of Academic Library and Learning Resources.

A 1966 ECU graduate, Mallison has carved a niche in the jazz world, gaining fame as a writer, presenter, award-winning broadcaster and advocate for the genre. Showing a similar passion in supporting his alma mater, he has served on a number of ECU support organizations, including chair man of the Robert Wright Student Government President’s Society. The East Carolina Alumni Association recognized his dedication to the university with the Distinguished Alumni Service Award in 1998.

Jazz lovers can view the collection online at http://catalog.lib.ecu.edu/ then search for “TomtheJazzman.”

ECU student to study Arabic in Tunisia

East Carolina University graduate student Nathan Lean has been awarded a U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarship to study Arabic in Tunisia during this summer.

Lean, a native of Goldsboro, will travel to the Centre d’Études Maghrébines in Tunisia for an eight-week program of classes in Modern Standard Arabic and Tunisian dialect.

“I am honored to have received this scholarship,” said Lean, a master of arts candidate in ECU’s International Studies program. “The opportunity to travel to Tunisia and immerse myself in the study of the Arabic language and North African culture is thrilling. This program will help fulfill the goals of my academic career.”

While working on his undergraduate degree at ECU, where he majored in piano performance, Lean took a global understanding course that he says changed the direction of his life and made him more globally aware. In 2006, he won a Global Understanding Scholarship from ECU to live and study in Morocco. While in Morocco, Lean partnered with the United States Embassy to develop a music
program that sent him traveling throughout the country giving concerts.

The Critical Language Scholarship is one of the most prestigious language scholarships in the world and is part of the National Security Language Initiative, a U.S. government interagency effort to expand the number of Americans studying and mastering critical need foreign languages.

**Clinic helps recovering substance abusers**

Project Working Recovery, a clinic assisting individuals in choosing, getting and keeping a job as a means to sustain recovery from addiction, has received state licensure as a substance abuse intensive outpatient program.

The clinic is a service research project of the Department of Rehabilitation Studies in the College of Allied Health Sciences. It is funded by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust and recently received a $25,000 grant from the United Way of Pitt County.

“This award will help us transition to a self-sustained program,” said Dr. Paul Toriello, associate professor and codirector with Dr. Steven Sligar, assistant professor.

The program helps recovering substance abusers with resume preparation, job searches, mock interviews and other work-related skills, a complement to standard substance abuse treatment.

The project is staffed by coordinators Tracie Campbell, Leigh Atherton and Stirling Schweibert, and case managers who are master’s degree students. Progress is tracked with a database custom designed by Dr. Xiaoming Zeng, assistant professor of health services and information management. For more information, go to http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/rehb.

**State music therapy association meets**

The ECU Music Therapy Program hosted the Music Therapy Association of North Carolina spring meeting April 24 at the ECU School of Music. In attendance were professional and student music therapists from across the state and music educators and world music students from Pitt County and ECU.

A five-hour continuing education workshop was conducted by ECU alumnus Dr. Michael Rohrbacher, director of music therapy at Shenandoah University in Winchester, Va. He brought a large gamelan “orchestra” from Bali, and participants learned to play and understand the role of the gamelan in Balinese society, as well as make applications to therapeutic and educational environments.

A gamelan is a musical ensemble from Indonesia, typically from the islands of Bali or Java, featuring a variety of instruments such as metallophones, xylophones, drums and gongs; bamboo flutes, and bowed and plucked strings. A gamelan is a set of instruments as a distinct entity, built and tuned to stay together.

Dr. Barbara Memory, director of music therapy at ECU, coordinated the meeting and workshop.

**Library hosts traveling exhibit on surgeons**

Laupus Library is hosting a national traveling exhibition on African-American academic surgeons through July 28.

“Opening Doors: Contemporary African American Academic Surgeons” celebrates the contributions of black academic surgeons to medicine and medical education through the stories of four surgeons and educators who exemplify excellence in their fields and mentor young physicians and surgeons.

The exhibit was developed and produced by the National Library of Medicine and the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture.

The exhibit is located on the library’s fourth floor in the Evelyn F. Laupus Exhibit Gallery and is open during normal hours, posted at http://www.ecu.edu/cs-dhs/laupuslibrary/hours.cfm or call 744-2219.

**Upcoming events:**

- Monday — Community Forum on H1N1 Influenza, 5:30-6:30 p.m., Brody Medical Sciences Building auditorium. Experts will discuss the risk of the H1N1 influenza virus and how people can protect themselves and their families. See www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm for more information on this event and other ECU upcoming activities.
Wanted: A chance to teach

Education graduates facing difficult job market

By Brock Letchworth
The Daily Reflector

Sunday, May 10, 2009

Kelly Harvell spent the past nine months working with kindergartners at Falkland Elementary, cultivating her love for kids and strengthening her classroom skills while taking the final steps toward a teaching license.

The 21-year-old Raleigh native has known most of her life that she wanted a career in education.

"My dad is an educator and I have always liked working with children through camps and various things like that so it just seemed like the right fit," Harvell said.

But after graduating from East Carolina University on Friday, Harvell is among more than 400 ECU education majors facing a job market they expect to be highly competitive due to proposed state budget cuts that might eliminate thousands of teaching jobs.

Harvell said she has yet to secure a job for the 2009-10 school year. An ongoing hiring freeze will likely continue her search until late summer at the earliest.

"There is so much uncertainty," Harvell said after filling out her licensure paperwork last Thursday. "It is like my life is at a crossroads right now and I'm not sure which way it is going to go."

Most teaching hopefuls say they realize their field isn't the only one with job uncertainties. But some say the dismal outlook for next school year doesn't reflect what they have heard much of their lives about teaching shortages.

"They say there is always a need for teachers, but I have been told by plenty of recent graduates to be ready to be unemployed," said Erika Welch, a 21-year-old from Durham who interned this year at Elmhurst Elementary. "I have heard it from several who graduated in December as well as May graduates from last year. They still do not have jobs and it is really scary."

The economic downturn motivated Welch to apply for graduate school where she plans to extend her education while waiting for the job market to improve.

ECU Director of Teacher Education Vivian Covington said most graduates have not been as willing to jump right back into school.

She said recent conversations with school representatives have indicated that there will be jobs available for new graduates, but the wait for them will likely be longer as the state budget process plays out.

North Carolina remains one of about eight states with population growth, however, and Covington says that could help the cause.

"There is definitely population growth," Covington said. "Now whether the funding will be there for the jobs, I think that is the key. But the population is there and things in the state are set right to keep education as an area where there is a need."

East Carolina, like all public universities in the state system, is under a mandate from the general administration to produce 920 new teachers annually starting in 2012. Covington said ECU produced 759 new teachers last year.
About a third of them participated in the alternative licensure program which helps people from another field acquire their teaching license.

Covington said ECU’s alternative licensure program has traditionally been one of the largest in the state, but there is concern that the state of the job market could decrease the number of applicants.

“We are wondering if people will continue to retool to teaching if there are not teacher jobs out there,” Covington said.

Some organizations which provide financial support to prospective teachers in exchange for specified amounts of time in the classroom also have been contacting university officials lately, Covington said, as they consider altering certain requirements.

“They have been asking us if we are hearing that jobs are scarce because they might want to put something in place to help people during these times,” Covington said.

Pitt County Schools Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Delilah Harris said Pitt hires about 100 new teachers each year. She said the district’s first priorities are teachers previously employed here who were given reasonable insurance but not guaranteed jobs for the next year.

It is still not clear how many positions will be available next year in Pitt County due to the uncertainty of the state budget and other variables such as retirements and transfers, Harris said.

The areas with the most need for teachers continue to be special education and middle and high school math and science, she said, adding that elementary education typically produces the most applicants.

Timara McCollum, 24, has realized that during her job search and said she feels fortunate to have a second-grade teaching job lined up for next year in Lenoir County.

“I look at it as a blessing,” said McCollum, who just completed her master’s in elementary education and spent the past year interning at Wahl-Coates Elementary. “I think any of us would take anything we can get right now, especially with the current economic situation.”

McCollum said she remains optimistic for others.

“I feel like it will start to get better,” she said. “Sometimes when you have that initial fear, people hold tighter to their purse strings, but I think that will eventually start to change and it will be better. There will always be kids to educate.”

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Education

Alan R. Bailey, an assistant professor at East Carolina University, served as one of the jurors for the American Library Association’s 2009 Coretta Scott King Book Awards competition.

Bailey is an education curriculum librarian in the teaching resources center at the J.Y. Joyner Library at ECU.

The Coretta Scott King Book Awards, started 40 years ago, are presented each year by the ALA’s Ethnic Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table to encourage the artistic expression of the African-American experience via literature and the graphic arts.

The American Literary Association is the oldest and largest library association in the world, with more than 65,000 members. Its mission is to provide leadership for the development, promotion and improvement of library and information services and the profession of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all.

Jane Austen Behan, Pitt County Schools arts education program and services director, and Pierce Egerton, an attorney in Greensboro, presented an arts advocacy session at the "North Carolina, State of the Arts: A Statewide Conference Addressing the Arts in 21st Century Learning" in Raleigh.

Under the umbrella theme of "Imagination, Creativity and Innovation: Educating Children for Their Future," the conference highlighted practices, programs and partnerships that are successful in defining and demonstrating 21st-century skills development through the study of the Arts.

Behan was also a speaker and panelist for "Creative Conversations — Addressing Images of Diversity in Arts, Film and Media" a forum outlined by the national arts advocacy organization 'Americans for the Arts.'

The event was sponsored by ECU’s College of Fine Arts and Communication and organized by Gloria J. Bailey, director of diversity and outreach.
ECU office partners with Town of Aurora on new MMI initiative

"The initiative proactively targets communities with direct technical assistance products that will help provide capacity in administrative management, policy analysis, strategic planning, project management and program development," Flowers said.

"The university's objective is to assist in building communities that are more fiscally responsible, more economically viable, and more capable of effectively delivering public services."

The Town of Aurora is already engaged with OEIED on several fronts. The town has been provided a project management consultant to assist with general administrative management duties and to help coordinate community and economic development projects. The town will have access to appropriate ECU faculty, staff and students, as well as a menu of technical assistance services that include: budget development and preparation; fiscal analysis and revenue projection; policy writing; policy analysis; program evaluation; general research and analysis; fiscal impact analysis; strategic planning facilitation; strategic plan development; comprehensive planning assistance; grant writing and technical assistance; community survey research and design; feasibility study assistance and preparation; economic impact analysis; community design assistance.

ECU's Office of Engagement, Innovation and Economic Development actively aligns, supports and celebrates ECU faculty, staff and student engagement with industry, government and communities to address pressing regional needs. This engagement not only makes ECU a partner in enhancing the region's economic vitality and quality of life but also improves education, research and innovation, and scholarship across the campus.

The OEIED Web site is http://www.ecu.edu/oeied.

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East Carolina University's Office of Engagement, Innovation and Economic Development (OEIED) has partnered with the Town of Aurora to pilot a new Municipal Management and Innovation (MMI) initiative that leverages the resources and expertise of ECU's faculty, staff and students on behalf of small, low-wealth, limited resource and limited capacity municipalities in eastern North Carolina.

Aurora, in Beaufort County, is the first MMI community under this initiative.

"The Municipal Management Initiative is a tremendous asset to Aurora and is an exciting resource for small towns in eastern North Carolina," Aurora Town Clerk Sandra Sartin said. "ECU is providing access to services and support that many small towns find difficult to access, and almost impossible to afford. We feel extremely fortunate to be a part of this initiative."

Kenny Flowers, the OEIED's director of community and regional development, said the MMI initiative is grounded in the premise that many eastern North Carolina municipalities lack adequate staff and administrative capacity to effectively respond to the basic fiscal, policy and programmatic needs of their citizens, which limits their ability to provide effective day-to-day management and delivery of public services.
May 9, 2009 Darts and Laurels

Saturday, May 09, 2009

Laurels — To Mother’s Day on Sunday, and the opportunity to show appreciation for the women who mean so much in our lives. Though the tradition of a day honoring mothers goes back centuries, the modern incarnation in the United States is credited to Anna Jarvis, whose campaign won the support of President Woodrow Wilson in 1914. Jarvis is responsible for carnations being the flower of Mother’s Day.

Laurels — To East Carolina University commencement exercises this weekend, the 100th spring graduation in the school’s history. About 3,400 students applied for receive diplomas, a figure that includes graduate, doctoral and medical students. Friday night’s ceremony at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium will be followed by department ceremonies throughout today.

Laurels — To North Carolina officials in the Council of State and other areas of state government who are accepting voluntary pay reductions in light of the massive budget shortfall. With state workers seeing a 0.5 percent pay cut before the end of the fiscal year on June 30, it seems appropriate that all who receive a North Carolina paycheck should share in the hardship.

Darts — To Doug Fox, the now-former chairman of the state’s Alcoholic Beverage Control board, who resigned this week after distributing a racist e-mail about President Barack Obama. Such behavior has no place in reasonable society much less in public office. It is simply unbelievable that this type of nonsense persists in North Carolina and elsewhere. Citizens are right to expect better.

Laurels — To the National Association of Letter Carriers’ annual food collection, happening today — at your mailbox. Greenville postal carriers will be accepting nonperishable food items left near mailboxes and will donate those items to the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina. The association hopes to top the 16,000 pounds of food collected last year, but will need your help to do so.

Darts — To tornado warnings — and one tornado — that came through the area this week. Strong thunderstorms throughout the week brought heavy rain, some hail and high winds, creating one small twister on Tuesday. Thankfully nobody was hurt when that tornado touched down near Calico, but one house was severely damaged in yet another frightening weather event in Pitt County this year.

Laurels — To the $500,000 check presented by East Carolina head football coach Skip Holtz and Drew Steele for renovations to the Elm Street Gym. Three years of fund-raising efforts preceded the presentation, which will ultimately see the center renamed for Steele and remade into a multipurpose accessible recreation center. That is an impressive accomplishment, given the difficult economic reality the community faces.

Compiled by Brian Colligan, editorial page editor of The Daily Reflector. Contact him at 329-9507 or via e-mail at bcolligan@coxnc.com

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Al Clark: Some of the best commencements are held in the living room

By Al Clark
The Daily Reflector

Saturday, May 09, 2009

Across town and the state this weekend, graduation ceremonies are sending young people across college stages and stadiums while proud and expectant parents watch, hope — and cry. Another of the great rites of passage you can't let slip by.

But sometimes, it just happens that way.

It did for me years ago when I simply went home from Carolina after finishing the last of final exams. My parents couldn't come to graduation, and I didn't want to stay for it.

And so it was for my oldest son, who finished his degree this past week but will not be with his UNC Class of 2009 at commencement exercises today.

It just didn't work out for us to be there. I was OK with this, and his mom was, too. But still, she would have loved seeing him among the crowd of blue and then taking his picture at the Old Well. There would have been tears.

And on Mother's Day, too. What a gift that would have been.

So, what to do? Well, my son and I cooked up a plan to salvage the moment.

This past week he went to the student store and bought his Carolina blue cap and gown. Meanwhile, I have downloaded to my computer an appropriately formal rendition of "Pomp and Circumstance" from I-Tunes. From there, the plan is still a little vague as I write this on Friday morning. But it's supposed to go something like this:

Sunday morning I will get everyone up and make sure my son is suitably fitted into his cap and gown upstairs. Then I will turn the speakers up and let loose with the music. At that point, he will march down — maybe I could get his younger brother and sister to precede him (that will be a trick). At that point he will join me on our "stage" in the living room.

I will take my UNC diploma, which is still in its mailing tube from 39 years ago, and I will hand it to my son. It works since his name is on it, except for the "Jr." part. Flip the tassel, and it's outside for pictures. There's no Old Well, but we can stand in front of the dogwood tree that I dug up as a seedling from my parents' yard years ago.

Sounds like a good plan. After all, I'm sure it's been said that some of the best commencements are the ones you hold at home. That's particularly true when it's Mother's Day. But you might ask, is this little ceremony the only present mom gets? Well, of course not. My new Carolina grad had the answer:

A UNC national basketball championship T-shirt — what could be better? Especially since she had asked for one.

So wherever you are this weekend, congratulations to all, the moms and the sons and daughters — including my own — who have reached another of life's special summits. From here the paths appear uncertain or dizzying in their direction, but when pursued with confidence they will lead you to your best.

And to fellow moms and dads, a question: Isn't it when it hits you, from out of the "blue" (or the purple and gold), that the bittersweet recognition that your child has now grown can simply take your breath away?
It's that kind of weekend.

Al Clark is executive editor of The Daily Reflector. He can be reached at aclark@coxnc.com.
Final curtain call for East Carolina graduates

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector

Saturday, May 09, 2009

The 48 graduating seniors at East Carolina University's School of Theatre and Dance shared the limelight together for a final curtain call at McGinnis Theatre before they headed off to pursue a variety of professional careers.

All the world might be a stage, but many graduates will head directly to New York, Los Angeles or Chicago to seek their fame, professor and program director John Shearin said.

Dancers usually have their eyes on a particular dance company in any of a wide range of cities. Others will follow the highway, like the design and production graduates who will begin work in road productions for professional musicians, Shearin said.

Most dance and theater education students are usually placed into teaching positions and know where they will be teaching next year before they graduate, Shearin said.

"We make all students well aware of how competitive a career their profession is," Shearin said.

While there have been some significant theater closings in mid-size markets, the current economic crisis should not be a hindrance, Shearin said.

"Actually, the entertainment business tends to do well in time of economic recession," he said. "I guess people want escape from the pain of daily living, so they look toward the arts for part of their relief. On the whole, the business is pretty healthy."

A college education is important to a prospective performer's resumé, Shearin said.

"In a practical sense, performers without knowledge of history, culture, art and music are limited in their ability to fill the 'given circumstances' in a play or a character," he said.

Tim Edmonson, himself a fine arts degree holder, came from Rose Hill with his sister, Joslyn, to watch his daughter, Amina, graduate cum laude in costume design.

"I just want her to have a career in something that she enjoys, and I can see from the way she acts that she's happy with her choices," Edmonson said.

His one piece of career advice: "I told her to get a Web site," he said. "The way the world is connected now, you can live anywhere and be in touch with all of it."

Costume design specialist Caitlin Booth said she is ready to begin her pursuit.

"I've worked so many places over the summers, I not only feel qualified, but ready to do it," she said.

Grifton native Shavonne King got her degree in dance education and was given the Latham Award for excellence in student teaching. She hasn't lined up a job, but would like to put her skills to work somewhere in the Pitt County school district.

"They've all been excited about the possibility of having me ... but they just don't know if they will have the money to support the program," King said.

This is the first year in recent times that education jobs have been scarce, a real concern to Dawn Clark, director of ECU's dance education program.
“North Carolina now requires an arts credit for graduation from high school,” Clark said. “That gives me hope that administrators will realize we have wonderful educators, fully licensed and prepared to provide a wonderful K-12 education.”

All the graduates made the full commitment to their training at East Carolina, and are prepared to succeed, Shearin said. They knew, going into the program, that college life has always been different for theatre and dance majors because of the huge production schedule they carry, he said.

“We have a T-shirt here that the students designed,” he said. “It reads, 'I can't — I have rehearsal.'”

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East Carolina celebrates 100th spring commencement

By Josh Humphries
The Daily Reflector

Friday, May 08, 2009

Thousands crowded into Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium on Friday night for the 100th spring commencement at East Carolina University.

About 1,000 of the 3,400 students who graduated this year attended the ceremony with their friends and families.

It was the first Friday night commencement in recent years and the weather was cool and breezy for the crowd who came to cheer for the year's graduates.


"Ambition clearly should be a driver in all of our lives for the good," North said.

"Your purpose, your direction and meaning forming a triangle. Your challenge is to take this conceptual triangle and keep it in harmony."

North paraphrased Henry David Thoreau when he said "In the long run, one only hits what they aim at."

"You have established in your time at East Carolina the values that will lead you," North told the graduates.

Individual departments and colleges will hold recognition ceremonies today beginning at 8 a.m.

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Fraternity closer to rebuilding after fire

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector

Friday, May 08, 2009

Alumni sponsors of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity passed a major hurdle last week in their efforts to replace the “Back House” annex lost in a Jan. 30 fire on North Summit Street.

The Greenville Historic Preservation Commission gave its approval to build a new structure on the property that was cleared last month behind the main house, commission chairwoman Candace Pearce said.

The fraternity submitted a reconstruction plan that fits the standards of the commission and the U.S. Interior Department, she said. At the commission meeting on April 28, the fraternity was awarded a certificate of appropriateness and allowed to proceed to build the addition.

The project will be the first example of a completely new infill since the commission was established in 1988 and affords the commission its first opportunity to get completely involved in the process with a property owner, Pearce said.

“It’s the first time we’ve been able to get involved with an owner in time to help them understand the guidelines they must pay attention to when they build,” she said.

The fraternity would like to have the new house ready for occupation by the beginning of the fall semester, city planners and frat sponsors said.

The cooperative planning among the alumni sponsors and various government agents should speed the construction process, she said.

“They’ve done an amazing job of adhering to the many codes that guide construction in an area like this,” she said. We are using their work as a model for proper infill and construction in a historic district. They’ve done about as outstanding a job as you could ask, considering all the codes they have to deal with.”

Fraternity spokesman Benjie Minton said the organization knew right away what picture it had in mind for rebuilding the property.

“We basically knew what we wanted it to look like, but we needed their input on how to do it,” Minton said. “The final project was essentially molded through negotiations with the HPC. That’s why it was approved so quickly; they told us right away what needed to be done to get it built.”

The fraternity’s approach to the rebuilding process was smart and efficient, Pearce said.

“When you’re dealing with government, you can get bogged down and stall,” Pearce said. “But they explained to us that they want to do the right thing, and we explained to them that we want to help them do that. It makes it a whole lot easier than arguing and fighting over these things.”

The house and property are part of a national historic registry district and a zoning overlay district, with the commission as the ruling authority for both. All demolition and construction must be given its approval and follow strict guidelines to preserve the historic flavor of the neighborhood, Pearce said.

In March, the fraternity followed recommendations to remove the remains of the old structure. An architect with expertise in historic areas surveyed the neighborhood to establish its exact historic characteristics and background, she said. He then determined which portions of the property and its structures contribute to the historic value of the neighborhood and which do not.

Those portions that contribute to the historic value are subject to commission construction guidelines,
Pearce said. Those that do not contribute are of no concern and can be done with as the owner wishes.

Two small outbuildings that stood between the two houses are all that now stand on the rear of the property. One was allowed to be removed and the other will remain, Pearce said.

The planning department and the city asked the fraternity to rebuild the new structure on Summit connected to the main house on Fifth Street to prevent it from being rented separately at some later time, Pearce said.

The plans include lighting fixtures and street lamps that match the historic architecture of the rest of the neighborhood while providing adequate security light to the property.

They will, as closely as possible, replicate the original Back House that was destroyed in the fire, Pearce said. That will require wood siding and roofing that matches the original architecture, including exposed rafter tails.

The fraternity hired architect Richard King and contractor Charles Lewis for the building project, Pearce said. She doesn't have concerns about the short timeline for completion, she said.

"As long as everyone knows what they're supposed to do and they follow the guidelines, it should move along just fine," she said.

Chief building inspector Les Everett reviewed the plans with the contractor and architect to try to expedite the permitting process, he said.

"Reviewing plans and requirements early with architects, government planning agencies, contractors and oversight professionals can make all the difference for someone wishing to complete a project quickly and properly," Everett said.

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Humber House renovation helps join past with present

By Ginger Livingston
The Daily Reflector

Friday, May 08, 2009

When the state Department of Cultural Resources started renovating downtown Greenville's Humber House, officials weren't expecting to repair termite damage. They weren't expecting to install a fire escape. And they certainly didn't expect to install a fire sprinkler system.

The $1 million-plus spent renovating the 4,500-square-foot structure, the location of the agency's Eastern Offices of the Office of Archives and History, is an example of how the past and present can be successfully joined, Jeffrey Crow, the department's deputy secretary, said.

"The house is a perfect example of the rewards of historic preservation," Crow said.

More than 100 people attended Friday's dedication of the renovated building, including Dr. J. John Humber, son of the late Robert Lee Humber Jr., a state legislator and one of the founders of the N.C. Museum of Art.

"I remember my father would be up until 11 (p.m.), 1 (a.m.) in the morning and talking long distance to New York about the purchase of the paintings," Humber said following the ceremony.

Robert Humber Jr. convinced the General Assembly to spend $1 million to purchase artwork from the Kress Foundation, which collected pieces from post-war Europe. It became the foundation for the museum.

Along with repairing termite damage and installing fire safety equipment, the restoration project included the removal of asbestos, a new porch and porch roof, new windows, new plumbing, heating and air conditioning, electrical upgrades and cosmetic improvements.

"It's been hard to sell some of our ideas of historic preservation when you basically were working in a historic building in such bad condition," Scott Power, the office's regional supervisor, said. "Now that it's restored, it's easy to say this is they proper way to do things."

Crow said people often ask if it is worth the expense of restoring a historic structure. Restoration makes sense because existing resources are used instead of destroyed or thrown away, he said. It also provides a continuation from the past and present, he said.

Power and his three-person staff are invigorated by the upgrades.

"It has that new-car smell," Power said.

Stan Little, the office's administrative assistant, showed off the hidden storage space behind the display shelves flanking the fireplace in his office — known as the Walnut Room for its rich walnut paneling.

"It's a very uplifting experience ... to come into a room like this," Little said.

The house was built in 1895 by Robert Lee Humber Sr., who made additions from 1911-15 and updated it in 1923, according to the Department of Cultural Resources.

Robert Lee Humber Jr. renovated the house in 1940 after returning from France prior to the outbreak of World War II. The house was deeded to Greenville and Pitt County by the Humber family in 1980 and donated to the state in 2003.

The General Assembly in 2004 earmarked $565,000 for repairs, and the city and county added $50,000
each.
The funds from the local governments paid for a copper roof.
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Andrea L. Harrell

Andrea L. Harrell GRIMESLAND - Mrs. Andrea L. Harrell, 59, died Thursday, April 30, 2009. There will be a celebration of her life on Sunday, May 17, 2009, from 2-4 p.m. at their house at 1413 Kelly Circle, Grimesland. Andrea was the daughter of the late Arbie and Dorothy Lumert of Zephyrhills, Fla. Andrea attended the University of Florida where she received her degree in Public Administration. Andrea moved to eastern North Carolina in 1993 where she was employed by East Carolina University. She was the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Administration at the Division of Research and Graduate Studies. Andrea enjoyed sailing and was a past officer of the Tar River Sail and Power Squadron. She enjoyed corresponding with her many friends and family, and never lost touch with anyone she knew. She was a loving wife and mother, gifted with a great sense of humor, honesty, and graciousness. She will be greatly missed by those whose lives she touched. Andrea is survived by her husband of 41 years, Dr. George Harrell; and daughter, Jennifer, of Gainesville, Fla.; and her son, Wesley and his wife Andrea, of Somerville, Mass. Online condolences at www.wilkesonfuneralhome.com.

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UNC board gets a crowd of fresh faces

The UNC system's Board of Governors has said goodbye to five members whose terms expired.

Stepping down are Ray Farris, Brad Adcock, Craig Souza, Frank Grainger and William Smith. Two other members whose terms expired, Jim Phillips and Brad Wilson, will remain on the board as emeritus members because each spent time as the board's chairman.

Farris, Adcock, Souza, Grainger, Wilson and Phillips each came aboard in 1997 and spent 12 years on the board, which makes policy for the state's 16 public universities. During that time, the UNC system grew by 56,000 students and saw a wave of campus construction after the $3.1 billion in bonds for higher education.

The seven vacated spots will be filled by some names familiar in the state's political and higher education circles. The new members, who begin July 1, are Burley Mitchell, Bill Daughtridge, Franklin McCain, John Blackburn, Walter Davenport, James Deal and Paul Fulton.

Mitchell is a former chief justice of the N.C. Supreme Court. Daughtridge is a former state legislator, and Fulton is a current trustee at UNC-Chapel Hill. McCain chairs the board of trustees at N.C. A&T State University, and Davenport leads the Elizabeth City State University board. Blackburn and Deal are trustees at Appalachian State University.

Lending bill gets through

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed the anti-predatory lending bill by U.S. Reps. Mel Watt of Charlotte and Brad Miller of Raleigh.

The bill would tighten regulations and require lenders to have proof that borrowers could repay their mortgages. The bill would also require that refinanced mortgages show an actual financial benefit to borrowers.

The vote was 300-114.

The state's Democrats were joined in "yes" votes by Republican Rep. Walter Jones. Republicans Howard Coble, Virginia Foxx, Patrick McHenry and Sue Myrick voted "no."

The bill passed the House last Congress as well but never got anywhere in the Senate. This year, it again goes to the Senate with an uncertain future.

New poll on public finance

A poll shows that nearly half of North Carolina voters support expanding public financing for Council of State races.

The survey, from the N.C. Center for Voter Education, shows 47 percent support expanding public financing and 33 percent oppose it. Nineteen percent were unsure.
Seventy percent said they would favor Council of State candidates whose campaigns are funded by taxpayers over those candidates funded by the special interests their offices oversee.

In 2008, public financing was available for three Council of State contests: auditor, commissioner of insurance and state superintendent of public instruction. Legislation under consideration would expand the program to all Council of State races except governor and lieutenant governor starting in 2012.

The poll of 653 North Carolina voters was conducted from April 28-30 by Public Policy Polling and has a margin of error of 3.8 percentage points.

Coble proud of his thrift

U.S. Rep. Howard Coble wants you to know that he didn’t spend all his money. Coble, a Greensboro Republican, spent less than he was allotted to run his office for the 24th consecutive year, according to a news release.

For 2008, the office returned $67,847, bringing the total he has returned as a congressman to $1.1 million.

The budget allocated to Coble in 2008 was $1.3 million. Coble has a full-time staff of 16, eight in Washington and eight in North Carolina.

By staff writers Eric Ferreri, Jane Stancill, Benjamin Niolet and Washington correspondent Barbara Barrett.

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When good cops go bad

By Michael Futch
Staff writer

Bad cops. Shady, law-breaking sheriffs.

Despite the tenet that law officers need to hold themselves to higher standards, corruption stands as one of the oldest problems in law enforcement.

"They are the final line, something that separates society from the bad guys. They are the protectors," said Dr. Hamid Kusha, an assistant professor in the Criminal Justice Department at East Carolina University. "The mandate of police is to serve and protect. Therefore, we look at police as good guys. We want them to have high ethical standards."

Obviously, that's not always the case. In Spring Lake, an assortment of alleged misdeeds has turned the Police Department into an ineffectual force.

Tuesday, Spring Lake Police Chief A.C. Brown resigned one day after the arrests of Sgt. Alfonzo Devone Whittington Jr. and Sgt. Darryl Eugene Coulter Sr., who were indicted last week by a special Cumberland County grand jury.

The charges against Whittington and Coulter include embezzlement by public officer, obtaining property by false pretense, breaking and entering, second-degree kidnapping and obstruction of justice.

Along with those indictments, the Police Department was stripped of its remaining police powers.

But law enforcement misconduct spreads much further than Spring Lake.

In the last three years, four sheriffs in this state have been convicted of breaking the very laws that they swore to uphold. In the past six years, five North Carolina sheriffs have faced serious charges.

"Four is too many, and one is too many. It's very regrettable," said Eddie Caldwell, executive vice president of the N.C. Sheriffs' Association.

But Caldwell questions whether more cases exist today than in the past. The immediacy of the news — with breaking stories running around the clock on television and on the Internet — produces a glut of information. Caldwell said some newspapers seem to thrive on the misdeeds of religious leaders, teachers and government officials.

"Those stories get front-page coverage," he said. "There's much more transparency. Things that happened decades ago that did not get prosecuted or reported get fully prosecuted or reported today. If a government official gets a parking ticket, that's reported. That changes public opinion."

The N.C. Attorney General's Office and the N.C. State Bureau of Investigation have investigated more than 500 public corruption cases in the past eight years, according to Noelle Talley, spokeswoman for the state Department of Justice. Those cases include investigations of law enforcement officials, such as the sheriffs of Robeson, Davidson and Brunswick.
counties, and the Greensboro Police Department.

In July 2008, Knightdale Police Chief Richard Nelson Pope stepped down after being charged with one count of assault on a female following a domestic dispute with his estranged wife.

Early this year, Warren County sheriff’s Deputy Cornelius Davis was charged with two counts of sexual battery after being accused of inappropriately touching women at two Raleigh stores.

A few days later, on Jan. 7, Wilmington police officer Wozzvely Albert Perez was charged with assault and sexual battery while on duty.

Kusha, the East Carolina University professor, has taught on police operations and the relationship between police and community since 1997. Police corruption, as he points out, is not a new issue. The problem dates back to colonial times.

“The reason why we’re seeing a lot of bad cops,” he said, “we are concentrated on this issue. Policing in the United States is very much under checks and balances. In the past eight years or decade, we’ve had congressmen and people at top positions that corrupted them. Their action is being scrutinized. Maybe nobody gives a damn about ethics and laws anymore.”

Talley, the Justice Department spokeswoman, said it would be inappropriate for her office to answer questions regarding police misconduct because the SBI continues to handle the Spring Lake investigation.

The SBI typically investigates cases involving law enforcement officers, which can range from involvement in a shooting to public corruption.

The following former sheriffs have gone from serving the public to serving time:

Former Sheriff Glenn Maynor was the highest-ranking lawmaker swept up in Operation Tamished Badge, a six-year investigation into corruption in the Robeson County Sheriff’s Office. Twenty-three people, mostly deputies, pleaded guilty to crimes that included kidnapping, money laundering, racketeering, theft of federal money and satellite piracy.

In May 2008, former Buncombe County Sheriff Bobby Medford — who had been the target of a two-year public corruption investigation — was found guilty of accepting money to protect an illegal video poker ring.

Former Brunswick County Sheriff Ronald Hewett was indicted on charges of embezzlement by a public official and obstruction of justice. In June 2008, his guilty plea to obstructing justice made him the second of the previous three Brunswick County sheriffs to trade in his badge for a felony conviction.

Former Polk County Sheriff Chris Abril, who was elected despite being charged mid-race with raping two girls more than 20 years earlier, later pleaded guilty to lesser charges. Abril avoided jail time in November 2008 after accepting a plea bargain.

Another former sheriff, Gerald Hege of Davidson County, was charged in September 2003 with 15 felonies and suspended from office. The charges included five counts of embezzlement by a public officer, five counts of obtaining property by false pretenses and two counts of obstruction of justice.

Hege accepted a plea agreement and received suspended sentences, three years of probation and three months of house arrest.

Kusha believes some police officers are just not up to the job.

“If you look at the policing profession, there’s a lot of stress. It’s a very stressful job,” he said. “Maybe the pay’s not enough. I’m putting my life on the line, and what is it I’m getting?” Maybe we’re not respecting the police as we should. It’s very difficult to pinpoint. Maybe we’re getting better at detecting police corruption.”

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