THE DAILY CLIPS

May 24, 2012

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by East Carolina University News Services:

The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
The New York Times
The Wall Street Journal
USA Today
The Charlotte Observer
The Fayetteville Observer
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Newsweek
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Time
ECU awards Malpass full academic scholarship

East Columbus High School senior Natalie Malpass, of Hallsboro, is among 20 incoming freshmen selected for the EC Scholars program at East Carolina University in the fall.

“It’s incredibly humbling to be recognized as an EC Scholar,” said the 17-year-old Malpass, the daughter of Amy and Eddie Malpass. “This is a wonderful opportunity that I don’t take for granted. Great privileges come with this scholarship, but it demands high levels of success in academics, service and leadership.”

The four-year merit scholarship recognizes outstanding academic performance, commitment to community engagement and strong leadership skills. Recipients receive a scholarship, along with a stipend for study abroad, for a total value of approximately $45,000.

EC Scholars program candidates must have an SAT score of 1,300 or higher and rank in the top 5 percent of their class. Once at ECU, Malpass must maintain a 3.5 GPA, participate in the university’s Honors College and perform 24 hours of community service each semester.

She must also complete a study abroad experience and a senior honors project.

Malpass said the program demands a high level of success in the classroom and outside as well.
“I think I’m up for it,” she said.

“I plan to major in chemistry with a concentration in pre-med,” she said, adding that her career goal is to become a cardiovascular surgeon, a goal influenced by the coronary surgeries her father underwent when she was in kindergarten.

“If it wasn’t for those doctors, I would have grown up without a daddy,” she said. “I want to repay it.”

Malpass, who has ranked first in her class since ninth grade, is president of the senior Beta Club, secretary of the National Honor Society and a member of the science and drama clubs and band.

Chosen as the homecoming queen last fall, she played tennis all four years and is a fullback on the women’s soccer team, which advanced to the state playoffs.

“My favorite class this year is chemistry,” she said. “I love learning a new concept in class and being able to see it everywhere in the world around me. I’m a geek, so this excites me.”

She is president of the Hallsboro United Methodist Church youth group.

Girl Scouting has been a major part of Malpass’ life for 13 years.

This summer, she will complete the 80 service hours needed to earn her Gold Award, the highest achievement awarded by the Girl Scouts.

Her community service project, Operation Stop Hunger Pain, requires her to fill gallon bags with non-perishable items and distribute them to elementary schools for students whose only meals come at school. She is working with three schools now, and hopes to make the project countywide and sustainable.

“This summer, I will bridge to an Adult Girl Scout,” she said.

Malpass was honored this year with the 2012 Girl Scouts-North Carolina Coastal Pines Memorial Scholarship and was chosen to represent her council as a delegate to the Girl Scouts 52nd National Council Session.

She was chief marshal for the 2011 graduation exercises and was chosen as a Whiteville Optimist Outstanding Youth for 2011-12.

“I can honestly say that I would not be where I am today without the support, guidance, and loving hugs of my mother,” she said. “She has always pushed me to do my best, and has been by my side through everything.
“East Columbus has given me confidence in myself and my abilities,” Malpass said. “I’ve taken part in just about every activity we offer, and as a result I’ve developed skills I never thought possible.

“I never expected to be able to twirl a flag, be a lead role in a play or lead meetings of student council,” she said. “I’ll always be proud to be a Gator.”
Expert: Brace for stormy season
By Michael Abramowitz
Thursday, May 24, 2012

Forewarned is forearmed when it comes to hurricane readiness, but that is only half the battle, according to the director of the National Hurricane Center.

Bill Read, the keynote speaker Tuesday at the 2012 Hurricane Workshop at East Carolina University, soon is retiring after 35 years with the National Weather Service, four as NHC director. He told scientists and colleagues at the daylong session at the Murphy Center that most people deny the threat of hurricanes and tropical storms in their area and do little to prepare for them.

“If you don’t know the type of flood plain you live or have flood insurance, or know your home’s wind speed risk, you’re taking a gamble,” Read said. “Most people really don’t know what they’re up against and have no disaster plan, and there is a good chance they won’t do the right thing.”

As the June 1 official start of the hurricane season approaches, the Hurricane Center mission continues to be saving lives and mitigating property loss. The scientists issue watches, warning forecasts and analyses of hazardous tropical weather. And they are all about doing it better every year, Read said.
The NWS is collaborating on a 10-year hurricane forecast improvement project begun in 2009 that is showing good results in some areas, but has slowed in others, Read said.

The combination of good science and lessons learned from previous hurricanes, like Irene in 2011, are how the weather service achieves improvements, Read said.

“We’ve greatly improved and narrowed the “cone of uncertainty” that shows the track of forecasted hurricanes, but the holy grail remains the ability to forecast rapid intensity changes, which we currently have no skill at,” he said.

Read showed statistics that 50 percent of the U.S. population lives within 50 miles of the coasts and industry and commerce continue to grow along the coastal areas.

“You can clamor all you want that we shouldn’t be building in the coastal areas, but short of the U.S. becoming a dictatorship, you are not going to change that dynamic,” Read said.

The U.S. suffers about $10 billion in damage from tropical weather and that number doubles every 10 years, Read said.

‘We put more crap — and more expensive crap all the time — at the coast,” he said. “We call it hurricane bait, and you can believe when the hurricane comes, there will be hell to pay.”

Human intransigence is all the more reason for the need of accurate hurricane track forecasting, the meteorologist said.

“Where and when is the key to every evacuation discussion,” Read said. “The confidence of the public discussion increases with the confidence in the forecast.”

The National Hurricane Center director beamed at his scientists’ forecasting successes on Irene.

“There were few errors, fewer than I’ve ever seen,” Read said. “But even good track forecasting has uncertainty, particularly 72 hours and more out.”

One important lesson reinforced by Irene is the power of winds between 35 mph and 60 mph.

“There’s no such thing as ‘justa,’ as in ‘It’s just a category-1 hurricane,’” Read said. “We knew Irene would cause disaster by the time it left the Bahamas.”

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MIAMI More high school students are enrolling in math and science classes and seeking online learning opportunities. Fewer want or are able to find jobs while in school.

Those are just some of the changes under way at the nation's high schools in how students are learning and what they are doing with their extra time, according to a report released Thursday by the U.S. Education Department.

The annual "Condition of Education" report said there has been a marked increase over the last two decades in the percent of high school graduates who had taken calculus, from 7 percent in 1990 to 16 percent in 2009. Overall, the percentage enrolling in math and science courses increased in all subjects except algebra I, a class many students now take in middle school.

Yet while more are enrolling, the report also states that scores have largely stagnated: Seventeen-year-old students performed neither significantly better nor worse on a national math and reading assessment than they did in the early 1970s. Results from the National Assessment of Educational Progress test in science found just 1 percent of high school seniors scored at the highest achievement level in 2009.

Three decades ago, the Department of Education released its landmark report, "A Nation at Risk," which raised concerns about academic achievement and called for students to take three years of math and science.

Nancy Songer, a professor of science education and learning technologies at the University of Michigan, said that once high school students finish their math and reading requirements, there is a noticeable drop in the number that pursue courses in those subjects as an elective.

"Even if we are seeing some bubbles of improvement in enrollment, we are still dramatically under-enrolled compared to what we will need in the future," Songer said.

In other subjects scores have also stalled: Seniors have performed only slightly better in U.S. history and slightly worse in geography on recent national assessments.
How students are receiving instruction is undergoing a significant change. Whereas 220,000 students were enrolled in distance education courses a decade ago, over 1.3 million were taking them in the 2009-10 school year. Those courses are usually online, and can be done at home or in class.

"There's really been a big shift in how these courses are delivered," Jack Buckley, commissioner for the National Center for Education Statistics, said in an interview Thursday.

Meanwhile, a substantial drop has been seen in the number of high schools students who are working. In 1990, 32 percent had a job. Two decades later, just 16 percent did.

Buckley said the decline can be attributable to a variety of factors, including the recent economic downturn, during which jobs previously occupied by high school students and other young adults were taken by adults with more experience.

The report also described a number of other changes, including: A huge expansion in public school enrollment in states like Arizona and Nevada that is expected to continue over the next decade; a decrease in the number of children receiving special education services; more teachers with college degrees, and a higher percentage of school principals who are female.
Editorial

Good prognosis

Unseemly, some called it, as two great medical institutions scrapped for months and months over doctors, turf, money and mission. Costly was another word that came into it, as WakeMed and UNC Health Care kept lobbyists and public relations people well-employed, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars making their case to legislators and the public.

But for the citizens of Wake County and North Carolina (both institutions have long reaches through the state) the entire episode, now settled by General Assembly leaders with what appears to be a suitable compromise, was unsettling. What they wanted to know, after WakeMed offered $750 million to buy UNC Health Care’s lucrative Rex Hospital complex and the battle intensified, was, “How will this affect sick people who need care, regardless of who provides it?”

Yes, that may not have been lost in the firestorm that lasted more than a year, but the confrontation certainly had the earmarks of a Wall Street-type takeover.

Basically, WakeMed’s leaders got ticked off when Rex lured a lucrative cardiology practice away from them. CEO Bill Atkinson, skilled and blunt, complained that Rex, a private nonprofit, had an unfair advantage because it was owned by UNC. Then WakeMed offered to purchase Rex.

A brokered solution

UNC’s Bill Roper clashed with Atkinson often, and took exception to the claim that UNC Health Care had some stash of public money it could use to compete against WakeMed. He said UNC had to be in the business of luring doctors, or it could not compete.

But now it’s over. State Sen. Tom Apodaca, a Hendersonville Republican, and former GOP Speaker Harold Brubaker of Asheboro were the leaders of an effort (backed by Speaker Thom Tillis and Senate leader Phil Berger) that pushed Roper and Atkinson toward compromise, which appeared to be the last destination to which either was headed. One tipping point in advancing a compromise, however, appears to have been rumbling in the Republican-led General Assembly that
something had to be done to stop the fussing. Lawmakers just wanted this issue gone. That apparently got everybody moving.

Which was a good idea. Legislators shouldn’t be running or designing health care systems.

That said, lawmakers deserve some credit. The deal appears to be an improvement and one of benefit to the public. But an unfortunate side effect is a change in governance, with the politically appointed UNC system Board of Governors given the power to appoint UNC Health Care board members. That will politicize that board, which has been appointed by the health care entity.

Other parts of the deal: UNC will spend $30 million to develop a mental health facility in Wake County and spend $10 million over five years on other mental health services. In addition, Rex Healthcare will remain a private nonprofit, and WakeMed will not try to buy it.

More disclosure

An agreement between the two institutions for WakeMed to remain a teaching site for medical students will be stronger, and UNC will support WakeMed’s application to become a member of the Council of Teaching Hospitals.

Importantly, UNC Health Care will file IRS form 990s for each of its private nonprofit institutions. This is appropriate for public disclosure of how a public institution works.

This battle was in a way a close-up look at issues in play in the debate over the future of American health care, which seems ever more dominated by concerns about money...how much it costs to maintain a system dominated by profit-making companies, from drug manufacturers to those who make sophisticated medical equipment, high insurance premiums, compensation for doctors, how competition seems to drive up, not lower, costs for patients.

(Then there are the executive compensation issues, with 25 executives in North Carolina making over $1 million, as reported in a News & Observer series demonstrating the exploding costs of health care.)

This battle, in the end, also was about a personality clash between two strong-minded individuals, Roper, a soft-spoken pediatrician with experience in top posts in the federal government, and Atkinson, a hard-nosed administrator who has done a good job running WakeMed’s expansive operation. Now they will have to work together, and both are making the right moves at this point. Priority one is demonstrating how this change will benefit the only people who should matter in this debate: patients.
Panel advises healthy men not to get test

By Lauran Neergaard
The Associated Press
Thursday, May 24, 2012

WASHINGTON — Healthy men shouldn’t get routine prostate cancer screenings, says updated advice from a government panel that found the PSA blood tests do more harm than good.

Despite strenuous protests from urologists, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force is sticking by a contentious proposal it made last fall. A final guideline published Monday says there’s little if any evidence that PSA testing saves lives — while too many men suffer impotence, incontinence, heart attacks, occasionally even death from treatment of tiny tumors that never would have killed them.

The guideline isn’t a mandate. The task force stresses that men who want a PSA test still can get one, but only after the doctor explains the uncertainties. That’s in part because the panel found PSA testing hasn’t been studied adequately in black men and those with prostate cancer in the family, who are at highest risk of the disease.

The Obama administration said Monday that Medicare will continue to pay for PSA screenings, a simple blood test. Other insurers tend to follow Medicare’s lead.
“This is important information for the public and men to have, and they should talk with their doctors about the risks and benefits of prostate cancer screening and make the decision that’s best for them,” said Mark Weber, a spokesman for the Department of Health and Human Services.

The task force advice goes a step further than major health groups including the American Cancer Society, which has long urged that men decide the issue for themselves after being told of PSA’s pros and cons. But it’s not likely to end an annual ritual for many men 50 and older. After all, the same task force has long urged men over 75 to skip PSA screening, and research suggests almost half of them still get tested.

The controversy will end only with development of better tests — to finally tell which men’s tumors really will threaten their lives, and who will die with prostate cancer rather than from it, said Dr. Virginia Moyer of the Baylor College of Medicine, who heads the task force.

“We have been told for decades to be terrified of cancer and that the only hope is early detection and treatment,” she said. The reality: “You don’t need to detect all cancers.”

“We don’t want this to be the answer,” Moyer added. “We want to screen for the ones that are going to be aggressive, manage those early — and leave everyone else alone.”

In an editorial published with the guideline in Annals of Internal Medicine, some urologists argue the panel underestimated PSA’s value and overestimated its harms.

“What PSA screening offers the men is a substantial opportunity to avoid dying a particularly unpleasant death from prostate cancer,” said editorial co-author Dr. William Catalona of Northwestern University, who pioneered the testing.

The American Urological Association advises that men be informed of the potential risks and benefits before screening.

But Dr. Otis Brawley, the American Cancer Society’s chief medical officer, welcomed the task force’s recommendation. He hoped it would help deter mass screenings, where men are given free PSAs at shopping malls and sports arenas without being told of the controversy, screenings that Brawley calls big business when health centers profit from the follow-up care.

“The question is, are we actually curing anybody who needs to be cured right now?” Brawley asked.
Too much PSA, or prostate-specific antigen, in the blood only sometimes signals prostate cancer is brewing. It also can mean a benign enlarged prostate or an infection. Only a biopsy can tell. Most men will get prostate cancer if they live long enough. Some 240,000 U.S. men a year are diagnosed with it, most with slow-growing tumors that carry a very low risk of morphing into the kind that can kill.

To evaluate whether routine screening saves lives, the task force analyzed previous research, focusing in particular on two huge studies in the U.S. and Europe. The panel’s conclusion:

- Without screening, about 5 in every 1,000 men die of prostate cancer over 10 years. The European study found PSA testing might prevent one of those deaths, while the U.S. study found no difference.
- Of every 1,000 men screened, two will have a heart attack or stroke from resulting cancer treatment, and 30 to 40 will experience treatment-caused impotence or incontinence.
- Of every 3,000 men screened, one will die from complications of surgery.

Both the U.S. and European studies have flaws, and task force critics argue over which are most believable. And while U.S. death rates from prostate cancer have dropped over 20 years, the cancer society’s Brawley says the drop began before PSA testing became widespread. Moreover, the risk of death is the same in Europe and the U.S. even though many more American men are screened, diagnosed and treated, he said.

“We need to do a better job of using PSA wisely,” said Dr. Scott Eggener, a University of Chicago prostate cancer specialist who was disappointed the task force went so far. “Most people would agree that a well-informed, young, healthy patient should have the opportunity to talk about it with their physician.”

But he’s studying a way beyond the screen-or-not controversy: Having men with small, low-risk tumors postpone treatment in favor of “active surveillance,” keeping close watch on their tumors and treating only if they grow. More than 100,000 men a year are candidates, concluded a recent meeting at the National Institutes of Health.

That approach could “maximize the benefits of screening,” Eggener said.
Confession: I don’t remember who spoke at my college graduation. I vaguely remember that it was a guy, but I can’t tell you what he said.

When I asked my Facebook friends and followers about their memories, several were able to name the speaker but few could recall the message.

Sure, there are commencement speakers who deliver truly memorable addresses that resonate with graduates. But I think we can all agree that most commencement speeches sound exactly the same.

Therefore, I have compiled a commencement speech that could be given to any Class of 2012 anywhere using cherry-picked quotes from real (and, actually, quite wonderful) speeches. I hope this fake speech inspires you to reach for the stars, hold fast to your dreams and be part of tomorrow’s generation of leaders.

I. Greet the crowd and bask in the glory of applause. (You can also lead everyone in the school’s chant, even if you just learned it. Or mention the weather.)

“Thank you for inviting me to participate in this important occasion. I'm honored and humbled to be among you today. To the graduating class of 2012, I say congratulations!”(Adam Savage) (Pause for applause) “I feel so important!”(Jane Lynch)

II. Recognize the check-writing parents, who might be the only ones listening to you right now.
Let’s take a moment to “thank those extraordinary people up in the bleachers with the cameras and the beaming smiles on their faces. Yes, I’m talking again about your families — the folks who pushed you and believed in you; the folks who always picked up the phone when you called, even when you were just calling to ask for money.”(Michelle Obama)

**III. Get the attention of the graduates by making a pop culture reference. Or talk about how you used to get wasted in college. Prove that even though you are currently dressed like Harry Potter, you were at one time cool.**

“I have such wonderful memories of my college experience. Great professors, great friends... great parties, great football games I can’t really remember thanks to a great guy I got to know named Jack Daniels.”(Katie Couric)

“I am in awe of you because you're already way ahead of me on this day in my life. You see, I actually didn't make it to my commencement day celebration. I celebrated a bit the night before and...Well, I didn't make it for most of it.”(Fareed Zakaria)

**IV. Now make fun of commencement speeches.**

“I’m still opposed on principle to the idea of any commencement speech. I believe that it is a doomed form, cloying and impossible. Commencement speakers give stock advice which is then promptly ignored.”(Ira Glass)

“The best news is I don't have a speech. I have just a few thoughts because it's hot, and you're hung over. But enough about your parents.”(Brian Williams)

**V. Tell these bright-eyed graduates they are amazing and hold all of the answers to the world’s problems.**

“Right now each one of you is sitting on the runway of life primed for takeoff. You are some of the world's most gifted, elite and driven college graduates – and you are undeniably ready to fly.”(Nipun Mehta)

**VI. Now, burst the egos of those self-centered Millennials. Seriously. They need it.**

“You're a group of incredibly well-educated dumb people. I was there. We all were there. You're barely functional. There are some screw-ups headed your way. I wish I could tell you that there was a trick to avoiding the screw-ups, but the screw-ups, they're a-coming for ya. It's a combination of life being unpredictable, and you being super dumb.”(Aaron Sorkin)
“There will be times in life when people are — how can I say this? — just not that into you.” (Couric)

**VII. Tell these graduates that the job market is horrible and the real world is scary. Just in case they don’t already know.**

“As young people, in many ways you have it even tougher than we did. This recession has been more brutal, the job losses steeper.” (President Obama)

“I know right now everybody’s asking you those same questions: ‘What are you gonna do after graduation? Do you have a job? Where will you be working? How much are they paying? Where are you going? Where will you be living? Who are you seeing?’” (Maria Shriver)

“Even though job opportunities are scarce in this economy, it is not for nothing that you have spent this time preparing.” (Mitt Romney)

**VIII. Now, give them hope. Lots of hope.**

“I’m here to tell you: no matter how scared you are, how intimidating the job market is, how worrisome the economy, how insecure you feel deep down about whether you really have what it takes — you don't have to settle.” (Savannah Guthrie)

“As an educated person, you have an opportunity to spend your life doing what you love. As you work to find your passion, you should also know that if you haven’t yet found it, it might indeed find you.” (Condoleezza Rice)

“Whatever your interest, no matter how weird or unattainable or far off it seems, it's not. It's completely possible and even likely if you just consistently work at it.” (Eugene Mirman)

**IX. Rattle off some clichés. Shout them if possible.**

“Set your sights on making an impact in the world. Change the world. Relentlessly strive for excellence, and follow your passion.” (UCSF Chancellor Susan Desmond-Hellmann)

**X. Ah, and forget what you said earlier. These kids really are the answer to all of the world’s problems.**

“Looking out on you this morning, I feel very optimistic about the future. If you hold on to your idealism, resist complacency, take chances, and engage thoughtfully with the difficult challenges of our time, you will succeed.” (Kathleen Sebelius)

“You are an important part of this solution. Because with your creativity, with your ingenuity, with your being able to portray ideas in ways that aren’t
simply facts and figures, debate points and focus group-proven arguments, you’re able to help us build bridges about what people care about, what they feel, and what they hope for.”(Earl Blumenauer)

XI. *Wrap up with another cliche or two--something that sounds like a drunken toast. Or a blessing. Or something students would post under Facebook’s “favorite quotations” option.*

“When jealous, angry or afraid, try compassion and warm-heartedness. Nourish your friends. And, finally, whatever hand you are dealt, I hope you will find the game worthwhile.”(Barbara Walters)

“So be wise, because the world needs more wisdom, and if you cannot be wise, pretend to be someone who is wise, and then just behave like they would.”(Neil Gaiman)

“There’s no stopping how far you can go. You’re more powerful right now than a locomotive. You can leap tall buildings in a single bound... You, the class of 2012, you are Superman!”(Mike Peters)

XII. *Thank the crowd. Bask in the applause. And then hurry up and sit down. Seriously. You are done.*

**SOURCING:** Yes, all of these quotes were taken out of context. That was the point. I encourage you to read all of the referenced speeches in their entirety:

I. Adam Savage at Sarah Lawrence College (text)

Jane Lynch at Smith College (text)

II. Michelle Obama at Virginia Tech (text)

III. Katie Couric at University of Virginia (text)
Fareed Zakaria at Duke University (text)

IV. Ira Glass at Goucher College (video)
Brian Williams at George Washington University (text)

V. Nipun Mehta at the University of Pennsylvania (text)

VI. Aaron Sorkin at Syracuse University (text)
Again, Katie Couric at U-Va. (text)

VII. President Obama at Barnard College (text)
Maria Shriver at University of Southern California (text)
Mitt Romney at Liberty University (text)
VIII. Savannah Guthrie at Hobart and William Smith Colleges (text)
Condoleezza Rice at Southern Methodist University (text)
Eugene Mirman at Hampshire College (video)

IX. UCSF Chancellor Susan Desmond-Hellmann at UCSF (text)

X. Kathleen Sebelius at Georgetown University (text)
Earl Blumenauer at Pacific Northwest College of Art (text)

XI. Barbara Walters at Yale (video)
Neil Gaiman at the University of the Arts (text)
Mike Peters at Washington University (text)