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Wake Forest and the SAT

Winston-Salem Journal

By deciding to make standardized college-admissions test scores optional, Wake Forest University has taken a bold step that should pay off in increased fairness in its undergraduate admissions process and increased diversity within its student body.

Wake Forest is not the first college to scrap the SAT and ACT as a required part of undergraduate admissions, but its announcement thrusts it into a commendable leadership role on the national scene. The movement away from emphasis on the tests has been building for years, mostly among smaller liberal-arts colleges, some of which are not as selective as Wake Forest.

Wake Forest becomes the 41st college or university to drop the test requirement since the SAT was revised to include a writing test in 2005.

Wake Forest is, however, the first university in the Southeast to make the scores optional, and the only school ranked among the nation's top 30 national universities by U.S. News and World Report to do so.

It's the right thing to do for Wake Forest, and if the move results in more colleges and universities following suit, so much the better. The SAT -- and, to a lesser degree, the ACT -- has become all too important in admissions and scholarship decisions at many colleges. By extension, it also has gained disproportionate importance in high schools, among those who set education policies, and certainly in the lives of students and their parents. North Carolina's relatively low SAT scores, for example, have long been cited as justification for decisions affecting the public schools.

SAT critics make a compelling case that students from racial minorities and disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to struggle with the SAT. Wake Forest officials said they hope that if test scores are not a deal-breaker, they can attract more applicants who have the talent, drive, character and determination to succeed even if they don't fare well on the SAT. They are hoping that a more holistic, personal
Bone loss drug helps fight breast cancer spread

By Marilyn Marchione
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — A drug to prevent bone loss during breast cancer treatment also substantially cut the risk that the cancer would return, results that left doctors excited about a possible new way to fight the disease.

It is the first large study to affirm wider anti-cancer hopes for Zometa and other bone-building drugs called bisphosphonates. Zometa is used now for cancers that have already spread to the bone.

The study involved 1,800 premenopausal women taking hormone treatments for early-stage breast cancer. Zometa cut by one-third the chances that cancer would recur — in their bones or anywhere else.

"This is an important finding. It may well change practice," said Dr. Claudine Isaacs, director of the clinical breast cancer program at Georgetown University's Lombardi Cancer Center.

About three-fourths of breast cancers occur in women after menopause. Zometa may help them, too, but it hasn't been tested yet in that age group.

The study was led by Dr. Michael Gnant of the Medical University of Vienna and reported Saturday at an American Society of Clinical Oncology conference in Chicago.

If a second, ongoing study also finds a benefit, doctors predict that Zometa will quickly be tested against other cancers that tend to spread, or metastasize, to bones, such as prostate and kidney cancer.

"Hugely important is whether this has to do with the fact that it just makes the bone hostile, somehow, to metastasis or if there is a more global anti-metastasis effect," said the oncology group's president, Dr. Nancy Davidson of Johns Hopkins University.

"Either of those would be good and would teach us a lot about what to do next.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women. About 184,450 cases and 40,930 deaths from the disease are expected in the United States this year.

Standard treatments are surgery, chemotherapy, radiation and hormone-blocking drugs if the tumors are like those in the study — helped to grow by estrogen or progesterone.

The hormone-blockers often weaken bones, so bisphosphonates like the osteoporosis pill Fosamax have become increasingly popular to treat this side effect. However, using them to treat the cancer itself is a very different approach.

Lab studies hinted it would work, and Gnant's is the first to test it in a large group of breast cancer patients.

All had surgery to remove their tumors and were taking hormone-blocking drugs — goserelin plus either tamoxifen or anastrozole — treatments that made them menopausal. Half also were given infusions of Zometa once every six months.

The women were treated for three years and studied for two more. By then, only 6 percent of those given Zometa had suffered a relapse or died, compared to 9 percent of the others. That translated to a 36 percent decline in risk.

Sixteen women given Zometa died versus 26 of the others — a difference that could have occurred by chance alone but an encouraging trend that doctors hope will mean better survival as the groups are followed for a longer time.

There were no big differences in serious side effects, though minor ones like fever and bone and joint pain were more common among women given Zometa. Two percent of all study participants developed a rapid heartbeat, but only three were hospitalized — two on Zometa and one of the others.

The study was sponsored by Zometa's maker, Swiss-based Novartis, and British-based AstraZeneca PLC, which makes Arimidex, the brand name of anastrozole. Gnnt consults for the companies and several other breast cancer drugmakers.
Man buys table he believes belonged to Wright brothers

By Catherine Kozak
The Virginian-Pilot

KILL DEVIL HILLS — Orville and Wilbur Wright were meticulous and tidy men, as evidenced by a photograph they took of their camp kitchen at the base of barren Kill Devil Hill.

Containers lined shelves in perfect rows, and every dish was neatly stacked. Pots and pans and a muffin tin hung just so on the rough-hewn walls.

In the lower right corner of the shot, about half of a wooden table is visible. It looks makeshift, but in typical Wright fashion, it is devoid of clutter.

The Virginian-Pilot of Norfolk, Va., reports that Ron Ciarmello recently bought that dining table — he hopes. If a historic analysis proves that it is indeed the same table, it will be the only known surviving piece of furniture used at the camp where the brothers lived while they tested their flying machines.

The table recently was shown to the public for the first time, at Wright Brothers National Memorial.

Ciarmello, a 32-year-old aviation enthusiast, said that he had answered an advertisement placed in March by a Currituck County resident for "a Wright brothers camp table." How could he resist?

"I bought it from a local woman who was moving," he said. "It had been in her family for about 100 years."

Covering the Sheraton-style base of the table may be two opposite sides of a shipping crate that probably held tools or other supplies, said Ciarmello, a Kill Devil Hills jeweler.

RON CIARMELLO of Kill Devil Hills stands in the Outer Banks town with a makeshift table that matches one in a 1902 photograph of the Wright Brothers' kitchen when they stayed in what is now Kill Devil Hills.

Nail holes and knots match up with those evident in the photograph, and the leading edge of the table top is made of long strips of ash — the same kind of wood used as ribs on the Wright gliders.

Most impressively, under the table, written in black, it has a name, "W. Wright," and place, "Elizabeth City."

Larry Tise, Wilbur and Orville Wright distinguished professor of history at East Carolina University, said he was skeptical when Ciarmello contacted him. He hears often from folks who believe they have some great Wright item, but rarely does it end up being legitimate. But this time, Tise said, he thinks that Ciarmello has the real McCoy.

"I believe it is the only documentable, significant piece of furniture from the original Wright brothers camp of 1902-1903," Tise said. "In terms of understanding the Wright brothers, this table is as valuable as an entry in their diary because the table itself tells a story."

"You don't have to surround the table with a story. This is a table that speaks."

He is preparing a report with documentation and schematic drawings to present to National Park Service curators who will determine its authenticity.

If it passes muster, Ciarmello wants to loan it to the Park Service to be exhibited at Wright Brothers National Memorial.

Tise said the table demonstrates the randomness of the camp compared with the precision and care with which the inventors approached the creation of their flyers. Those machines, he said, were "masterpieces of artistry and craftsmanship."

But the furniture reflected their can-do attitude in another way.

"The table is an example of

See TABLE, B3
TABLE
Continued from B1

their extremely practical nature when it comes to living," he said. "This is the surface upon which they wrote their letters and their diaries."

And that's where the brilliant brothers gathered to argue and discuss and play games as they ironed out the mysteries of flight. Unlike the tables that, say, George Washington or Thomas Jefferson used to sign historic documents, Tise said, this modest table was created by the men themselves.

"It represents entirely the nature of that spot," he said. "It was created for a very specific purpose."

It's not clear how the Currituck family — which wants to remain anonymous — acquired the table, but Tise said that family members were aware of its origins. At one point, they had offered it to the Park Service, Tise said, but it was declined.

The table's historic roots didn't stop it from being used in the past for chores like laundry — it has a bleach stain and wear marks on it, he said. It has also served as a utility table in the family's barber shop.

To the brothers' chagrin, Tise said, much of their camp items were carted off by Outer Bankers in the traditional manner of recovering things apparently left behind.

Tise said he wouldn't be surprised if there are more Wright items that have been stored in private homes for more than a century.

"Nobody is suggesting there was looting," he said. "They were salvaging."

Chris Curry/The Virginian-Pilot

**THIS TABLE'S nails and nail holes in the front match a 1902 photograph of the Wright Brothers' kitchen when they stayed in what is now Kill Devil Hills.**
Steele-Holtz banquet tonight

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector

A positive, outgoing Greenville resident born with Down syndrome and the head coach of East Carolina University football team may seem a odd pairing, but their friendship has become a force for good.

The duo met at a charity Special Olympics golf event years ago, which led to Holtz offering the young man a job keeping his Pirates organized and inspired. Together, they formed a team of their own, culminating in the 2006 Drew Steele-Skip Holtz Golf Classic — raising funds to provide opportunities for others like Drew.

Tonight’s annual dinner and auction kicks off two days of food, community camaraderie and golf.

DREW STEELE AND SKIP HOLTZ

As in years past, the organizers are optimistic.

“I had no idea the first year if we’d make any money,” said

See STEELE, B3

STEELE

Continued from B1

Mike Steele, who added that his “claim to fame” is being Drew’s dad. But they did make money.

The Drew Steele Endowment Fund — in conjunction with the Greater Greenville Foundation — has raised about $300,000 over the past two years. Attendance at the dinner doubled from the first year to the second.

“Drew has been here almost his whole life,” his father said. “People know Drew Steele. And Coach Holtz has got great charisma and a good heart.”

They’re hoping to reach their total goal of $500,000 this weekend. That amount would enable them to apply for more grants, with the hope of finding one to match their funds and reel in a cool $1 million. That money will go toward renovating what is currently called Elm Street Gym, but will become the Drew Steele Center.

The center will be available to everyone, Mike Steele said, but will be handicap accessible with increased programs for the area’s special populations.

Mike Steele noted this year a number of people and sponsors launched their own fundraising events around the dinner and golf classic. The Beef Barn, for example, held a wine and food tasting May 15.

Adding to this year’s excitement is the arrival of the legendary retired college football coach and ESPN personality Lou Holtz, Skip Holtz’s father. It’s the first year he’s been able to attend his son’s fundraiser, Mike Steele said.

He could not say, however, whether Lou Holtz will be speaking or performing any of his celebrated magic tricks for the patrons.

“People will have to just come and see,” Mike Steele said.

Kathryn Kennedy can be reached at kkennedy@coxn.c com or 329-9566.
Growing grass

Retired ECU dean has spent decades sowing bluegrass seeds in Greenville

By Mark Rutledge
The Daily Reflector

There’s a patch of grass just off Greenville Boulevard that keeps its color year-round. Buddy Zincone has been growing bluegrass in his living room for more than 40 years.

The retired dean of East Carolina University’s College of Business developed a green thumb for banjo-picking as a graduate student at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville. Since the 1960s, he has cultivated his craft with students, friends and groups such as The Tar River Boys and his current band, The Greenville Grass.

Zincone’s passion for bluegrass started from a need for family-friendly Saturday-night entertainment.

“When I was in Charlottesville, we ran up this group of folks that played music every other Saturday night,” Zincone said, sitting on his banjo on the front steps of his home at the university.

“It was one of these deals where you

See GRASS, F2

MEMBERS OF THE GREENVILLE GRASS, from left, Buddy Zincone, Willie Nelms, Tom Scott, Bill Poplin and Lane Hollis, practice in Zincone’s living room.
GRASS

Continued from F1

brought your own beverage
and a bag of potato chips or
something like that to throw
in the pot. And since, of
course, none of us could af-
ford to hire baby sitters, a lot
of kids were welcome."

From there, bluegrass
became a family tradition.
Zincone's wife, Maria, and
their daughters, Molly and Al-
ice, have performed together
over the years.

Alice Zincone currently
performs with her recording
and songwriting partner Rick
LaFleur.

Buddy Zincone was drawn
to the banjo despite the
instrument's reputation for
being the butt of bluegrass
jokes — such as, "the stage
isn't level till the banjo player
drools from both sides of his
mouth."

A Charlottesville guitar
player who decided to take up
the banjo inspired Zincone
by becoming a proficient
four-string picker within four
weeks.

"He could play a tune that
was recognizable to me," said
Zincone. "So I decided if
he could do that in a month,
that I could probably learn to
play it in a year."

During the last four de-
decades, a lot of musicians have
gained a foothold through
Zincone's living room. Among them are
recording artist and banjo picker Beverley Cotton-Dillard,
who is married to Rodney
Dillard of the legendary blue-
grass band The Dillards (aka
The Darlins as seen on "The
Andy Griffith Show").

"She was a graduate
student in math," Zincone
remembers, "and came over
to listen to us play."

Another musical visitor
was Farmville's Mike "Light-
nin" Wells, a blues musician
noted for his North Carolina
Piedmont style.

"He told me his dad brought
him up from Goldsboro when
he was about 9 or 10 years
old to listen to us play in the
living room," Zincone said.

"I don't remember Lightnin' being at the house at all. At
the time, he was just another kid that showed up one night
when we were playing."

The distinctive high-lone-
some sound invented by Bill
Monroe can be heard on the
street outside Zincone's house
on certain nights when The
Greenville Grass is practic-
ing — Zincone on banjo and
dobro, Lane Hollis on fiddle,
Willie Nelms on bass, Bill
Poplin on guitar and Tom
Scott on the mandolin.

Playing with accomplished
musicians, according to Zin-
cone, is the best way to grow
your own bluegrass ability.

"Ultimately, you've got to
get with some folks, prefer-
ablely that have been doing it
longer and can do it better
than you do," he said. "Be-
cause you can't learn timing
unless you play with other
people."

The Greenville Grass plays
local events and festivals
and performs often at R.A.
Fountain General Store in
downtown Fountain.

Contact Mark Rutledge at
329-9375 or mrutledge@coxnc.
com.
Dr. Ronald M. Perkin, professor and chairman of pediatrics, listed three areas of expansion that fit into their long-term and short-term goals. He said they will develop a hematology and oncology unit, expand the ability to take care of newborn babies, and improve outpatient services.

"We've recognized that we have a bigger and bigger role to play in the state," Perkin said. "(A new children's hospital) is the highlight of my career. This is where miracles happen."

Although this is just the first phase, Perkin said he hopes to break ground in January 2011. Barbara Batts, assistant vice president for women's and children's services at PCMH, said the main point of the first phase is to identify immediate needs. She said adding 30 new convalescent newborn beds to the 50 already being used would really help their capacity.

"It would mean the most to us, just to be able to say yes to all children and not have to worry about space," Batts said.

Lawler described the process of attaining the new facility as a "rising tide," one where the foundation has been laid over the last few years. He said PCMH will continue refining the plan and working through charities to help put a financial package together to make this work.

"Success is going to create additional success," Lawler said. "By doing this, we will be able to attract more high quality physicians."

The announcement preceded another exciting moment at the end of the 23rd annual Celebration Broadcast.

The event raised $1.41 million in donations, surpassing last year's total by more than $130,000. Every dollar donated dur-
Drew Steele-Skip Holtz dinner kicks off two days of fundraising for special populations

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector

From the signs flanking the entrance to the packed parking lot to the large fishing boat grounded outside the front door, it was clear something special was happening at the Greenville Convention Center on Sunday night.

Inside, Drew Steele was on his A-game: shaking hands, posing for pictures, a hug and a smile for everyone. It was the third annual Drew Steele-Skip Holtz fundraising dinner, benefiting the special populations of Pitt County.

The young man born with Down syndrome who has grown into a permanent role helping and supporting the East Carolina University football team was showered with gifts before donations began in earnest.

Event organizers hoped to raise $200,000 with last night’s event, bringing their three-year total to $500,000 — the amount needed to apply for grants and renovate the Drew Steele Center. The Center will encompass Elm Street Gym, which the city handed over to be made handicap accessible with increased programming for the disabled.

Holtz, ECU Football’s head coach, welcomed the crowd and through a series of photos and videos recalled how he met Steele during a Special Olympics charity golf tournament years ago, and how taken he was with Steele’s positive attitude and enthusiasm.

“Everyone knows Drew

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Steele,” Holtz said. “Such an incredible attitude, spirit and story.”

Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory put in an appearance. He gave Steele a Carolina Panthers jacket with his name on the back.

The Republican candidate for governor also donated box seats for 14 people and four parking passes to the Aug. 30 game between ECU and Virginia Tech, to be played in the Panthers stadium.

“I can’t wait for ECU to come to Charlotte and kick some Hokie...,” he said, trailing off and giving the crowd a knowing look. The package sold at auction for $7,000.

“You’re the big star that the people of Charlotte are waiting to see,” he told Steele.

Finally, Holtz’s father — football coaching legend Lou Holtz — was there to support both his son and Steele, giving the latter a No. 7 navy Notre Dame jersey.

“I’m proud of you,” he told Steele simply, after singing his former team’s praises. “God bless you.” The audience welcomed Lou Holtz, like Steele, with a standing ovation.

Perhaps the most touching gift, however, was given by Drew Steele himself to his dad, Mike Steele.

“This is for you dad,” he said, after insisting he present the framed No. 2 ECU football jersey on his own. Drew Steele has the No. 1 ECU jersey.

“I am in awe of the type of person he is, the type of father he is and they way they are together,” Skip Holtz said.

That hour of recognitions and thanks was sandwiched by a smorgasbord of Greenville cuisine and both silent and vocal auctions. The hundreds in attendance filled their plates with food provided by Christine’s, Finelli’s, the Beef Barn, Logan’s Roadhouse, and Chef’s 505.

They packed the purple and gold draped tables, each meal ticket worth $100, before contributing more money during the auction of numerous trips and vacation getaways.

The two-day event continues today with the Drew Steele-Skip Holtz Golf Classic, to be held at Ironwood and Greenville County Club golf courses.
Surprising findings in kids' cancer study

By Lindsey Tanner
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Surprising research suggests that childhood cancer is most common in the Northeast, results that even caught experts off-guard. But some specialists say it could just reflect differences in reporting.

The large government study is the first to find notable regional differences in pediatric cancer. Experts say it also provides important information to bolster smaller studies, confirming that cancer is rare in children, but also more common in older kids, especially among white boys.

The study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is based on data representing 90 percent of the U.S. population. It found that cancer affects about 166 out of every million children, a number that shows just how rare childhood cancers are.

The highest rate was in the Northeast with 179 cases per million children, while the lowest was among children in the South with 150 cases per million. Some experts suggested that could mean there is better access to care in the urban centers of the Northeast, leading to more diagnoses.

The rates for the Midwest and West were nearly identical, at 160 cases per million and 165 per million, respectively.

The cancer incidence in boys was 174 cases per million, compared with 157 cases per million in girls. In white children, the rate was 173 per million, versus 164 per million in Hispanics and 118 per million in blacks. Teenagers had higher rates than younger kids.

A total of 36,446 cases were identified in the study, which analyzed 2001-03 data from state and federal registries. The research appears in the June edition of Pediatrics.

"It's very powerful that this study includes so much of the U.S. population so it gives us a good picture of where we are with the incidence of these childhood cancers," said Elizabeth Ward, the American Cancer Society's surveillance director.

Experts said the regional differences, though small, are intriguing, but that reasons for them are uncertain.

Dr. Rafael Ducos, a children's cancer physician at Ochsner Medical Center in New Orleans, said the South's low rates were perplexing and might simply reflect under-reporting there and over-reporting in other regions.

Environmental factors might play a role, including exposure to radiation, said lead author Dr. Jun Li of the CDC. Radiation has been linked with the most common types of childhood cancer — leukemia, lymphoma and brain cancers.

Radiation sources include X-rays, nuclear plant emissions and natural sources. But Li said research is needed to determine if these sources vary enough by region to affect childhood cancer rates.

Dr. Lindsay Frazier, a cancer specialist at Children's Hospital Boston and Dana Farber Cancer Institute, said pollution and housing stock that's older than anywhere else in the nation might help explain the Northeast's higher rates.
Campus technology wins national honor

By ECU News Bureau
Special to The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University's technology team will receive top honors today from The Computerworld Honors Program, the foundation of a leading technology publication.

ECU's data storage team, housed in the Information Technology and Computing Services department, was named Laureate by the Computerworld Honors Program. ECU will receive its honor during a gala in Washington, D.C., along with other organizations that have used information technology to benefit society, said Ron Milton, who chairs the awards board and is executive vice president of Computerworld.

Joe Norris, ECU's chief technology officer, said he was proud to accept the award on behalf of the university's hardworking and dedicated staff, and was pleased that ECU was being recognized on a national level.

"This award is the culmination of more than three years of a focused effort to bring the latest in advanced technology services to the university and supports the longstanding mission of ECU to serve the residents of North Carolina," he said.

ECU is being recognized for its recent data storage and server consolidation. By using the latest in virtualization technologies, ECU was able to avoid the construction of a new data center, which saved the university millions of dollars.

Generate Alpha," explores how past performance can predict future performance when looking at certain groups of stocks.

The Charles H. Dow Award is named for the journalist who created the Dow Jones Industrial Average, the second oldest continuing U.S. market index. Dow also established The Wall Street Journal and co-founded Dow Jones & Company.

Program makes efficient homes

ECU's heating efficiency program assisted 122 homebuyers in eastern North Carolina last year conserve energy and save nearly $80,000 in fuel costs.

The "Upgrade & Save" program, administered by Leslie Pagliari, a professor in the College of Technology and Computer Science, works with buyers of new homes in 17 counties to exchange their standard electric furnaces and air-conditioning units for energy-efficient heat pumps.

"Most manufactured homes currently come factory-equipped with a heating system known as electric resistance heat," Pagliari said. "Although it's the least expensive system to install, it is by far the most expensive heating system to operate."

Two professors have work cited

Two finance professors recently received top honors for their paper exploring trends in the stock market.

College of Business Associate Dean Stanley Eakins and Professor Samuel Tibbs won the 2008 Charles H. Dow Award from the Market Technicians Association, honoring their excellence and creativity in technical analysis.

Eakins and Tibbs, along with co-author William DeShurko, were honored with plaques and $2,000 May 16 in New York City.

The paper, titled "Using Style Index Momentum to See ECU, B3"
ECU
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mended settings.

Owners of existing homes built in 2001 or later can be reimbursed up to $1,500 to upgrade their electric furnaces to energy efficient heat pumps. A $500 rebate is also available to home retailers who sell ENERGY STAR rated homes. For more information about these programs, contact: Susan Heath at 902-6919 or email upgrade@ecu.edu.

First clinical lab scholarship given

Amber Smith of Mount Airy has received the first W. James and Susan T. Smith Student Scholarship in the Department of Clinical Laboratory Science in the College of Allied Health Sciences.

One scholarship is awarded to a rising senior in the clinical laboratory science department for the senior academic year beginning in summer.

The scholarship recognizes more than 30 years of academic contribution to ECU by Susan T. Smith, professor emerita and former chairwoman of clinical laboratory science, and her late husband, W. James Smith, who taught cell biology and biochemistry in the Department of Biology from 1966 until 1999.

"I decided to establish this scholarship not only to support this program which is so dear to my heart but also to recognize my husband who taught all of those biochemical pathways to many clinical lab science students," said Susan Smith. "Without his love and support, I could never have worked as hard as I did to establish and develop this program."

HumorFest receives award

The ECU Humor Festival & Conference was named the 2003 Collaborative Program of the Year by the Association of College Unions International.

The award recognizes achievement of programs that bring together two or more campus entities to achieve a common goal. ECU's inaugural HumorFest, Nov. 1 through Nov. 3, featured academic papers on humor as well as comedians and humorists, a pie toss and film festival. It involved the English department and the Office of Curricular Programs and Cultural Outreach. It also was supported by the Harriet College of Arts and Sciences, the University Writing Program, Joyner Library, the Rives Chair of Southern Literature, North Carolina Literary Review, ECU's School of Theatre and Dance, Department of Biology, and WITN-TV.

Imaging center accredited

ECU's Cardiovascular Imaging Center at the Brody School of Medicine has received national accreditation from the Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation of Nuclear Medicine Laboratories.

The center provides nuclear cardiology imaging, which uses drugs with radioactive chemical tracers to produce images of the heart and blood flow. The center also provides echocardiography, which produces images of the heart and blood flow using sound waves, and cardiac stress tests. Dr. Asaad Movahed, professor of medicine and radiology, serves as the medical director of nuclear cardiology and echo at the Brody School of Medicine. Paula Barnhill is the technical director of echocardiography, and Susan Minner is the technical director of echocardiography.
ECU student team's analysis of transit system places second in annual SBTDC competition

A team of East Carolina University students, sponsored by the Eastern Regional Service Center of the N.C. Small Business and Technology Development Center, placed second in the 21st annual Graduate Business Student Competition.

College of Business MBA students Eron Earley-Thiele, Stephanie Edwards and Gregory Hodges were awarded a $2,500 prize for their project for the ECU Student Transit Authority (ECUSTA).

"This year's team consulted with the ECU Student Transit Authority in identifying critical issues and developing implementation strategies to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of ECUSTA," Carolyn Wilburn, director of the Eastern Regional Service Center of the SBTDC, said.

ECUSTA, which has the highest transit fee in the University of North Carolina system, is a nonprofit student transit organization which provides services to and from ECU's main campus for students, faculty, staff and visitors. A critical problem arose from the perception that buses were running inefficiently, partly because of ECUSTA's daily use of 60-foot articulated buses despite varying demand.

Earley-Thiele, Edwards and Hodges analyzed departmental and industry ridership data and conducted benchmark studies to compare the ECUSTA to other collegiate systems. The team then made key recommendations for improvement based on the criteria of cost, speed of implementation and value to the department. The team spent about 500 hours to complete the project.

Wilburn said the result of the team's work is a projected first-year savings of $1.5 million to the ECUSTA, which equates to $61 per student.

"An important benefit to the competition is that the students are able to transfer what they have learned in the classroom to a real-life business," Wilburn said.

College of Business MBA students have been participating in this competition since 1991 and have taken top honors in 12 of the past 17 years.

 Debbie Hathaway, a business counselor for SBTDC, served as the adviser between the client, the team and the College of Business along with faculty liaisons Len Rhodes and Dave West.

"This team was brought on for a semester-long project that culminated in their producing a lengthy written report and delivering an oral presentation to a panel of SBTDC judges," Hathaway said. "They demonstrated that they were able to work closely with a client, identify problems and solutions that have significant impact and implement many of the solutions during the project timetable."

Hathaway said the competition allows her to take a client with in-depth business counseling needs as the focus of a graduate student project. This counseling helps clients with bottom lines and often affords them the chance to work with various Office of Economic Development departments.

The ECUSTA case, the OED's Center for Survey Research designed an online survey to collect data for the team.
A testing travesty

Regarding the May 27 front-page article "Wake Forest to drop SAT," I fear that this change in Wake Forest University's admissions policy is an adjustment in priorities to favor diversity over the ability to think. Do not count on our 21st century competitors in China and India to be so foolish as to impose such a handicap upon themselves.

I wouldn't trust a lawyer or doctor who had dodged the SAT as an undergraduate, so I would hope that Wake Forest's pre-law and pre-med applicants won't lower themselves to participate in this travesty.

But the abilities measured by the SAT are important in other fields, too, even sociology. The Wake Forest sociology professor quoted in the article apparently disagrees. However, with the profound social problems prevalent in our society, it is apparent that the sociologists who have come up with ideas for social programs in the past several decades have been deficient in the ability to think critically and analytically.

We desperately need an improvement in sociologists' competence, and a positive step would be to put prospective sociology majors at the top of the list for stricter SAT standards.

John W. Simpson, Raleigh

A welcome SAT move

Regarding your May 27 article "Wake Forest to drop SAT":

As an 18-year-old who is headed to UNC-Chapel Hill, I am grateful to hear that one college, Wake Forest University, is not emphasizing SAT or ACT scores when deciding which students to admit. What an amazing concept, and yet so easy to understand for current high school and college students! I remember how daunting those tests were for me, and as a person who had over 850 volunteer hours, all A's and B's, but an SAT score of only 1250, it didn't seem quite right that schools were not accepting me simply because of a score I tried several times to improve.

But I'm not sour in the least about how my future turned out. In fact, I am very excited about my decision to go to UNC-Chapel Hill. But I'm also happy to see that one college has decided to end the ridiculous emphasis that does not define a student in the least. A score on a test should not keep a student from going to any school of his or her choice.

Way to go, Wake Forest University! Now let's hope other schools follow close behind.

Carrie Dobbins, Kinston

Dubious SAT decision

Your May 27 article "Wake Forest to drop SAT" not only chronicled a decision based on unreported concerns but included some misleading statements.

The statement was made that "Studies have shown that standardized tests tend to have built-in racial and socio-economic biases." In actuality, many studies have shown that black students tend to make poorer grades in college than white students with the same test scores, which reveals that any biases favor blacks. The historical effort to use tests as an element in admission decisions was, in fact, taken by Harvard and sister schools in an effort to put academic merit over family income and status.

A Wake Forest professor stated that the SAT has never correlated to success in college. This is contrary to literally hundreds of studies and decades of experience at leading colleges that show that, although performance in high school is the best single predictor of success in college, tests like the SAT improve that prediction — no doubt because of the considerable variance in grading systems and the use of a standard base for the test.

It is commendable that WFU is acting to improve the racial mix of its student body. But it may be doing so in a way that is tantamount to throwing the baby out with the bath water.

Junius A. Davis, Ph.D., Chapel Hill

The writer, a former graduate dean at UNC-Greensboro, is a retired senior educational scientist and head of the Center for Educational Research and Evaluation at RTI-International.
Getting it right with college admissions

BY STEVE FARMER

Chapel Hill

She was a great, good-hearted student parked on the waiting list for admission to her first-choice school. When someone called to offer her the last space in the entering class, she dropped the telephone and started to scream. Then everyone in her crowded apartment—parents, brothers and sisters, cousins twice removed—screamed with her.

I was the person who called this student, 12 years ago, almost to the day. And I'll never forget the phone call, partly because of the great joy I witnessed that afternoon, but also because of what came after.

Because four years later, this student, the last soul we admitted, was named the outstanding senior in her graduating class. In front of thousands of cheering witnesses, including many of the same people who'd screamed with her the day she'd gotten in, this last student became the first.

I think of her all the time, but especially in late spring, when we second- and third-guess the admissions decisions we've made at UNC-Chapel Hill over the course of a long year. After reading every application at least twice, and most of them three- or more times, we know we've tried our best to get things right. But we also know that it's not easy to predict what a student might do and become, how she might change and grow, over the course of the next four years. We can't help wondering whom we've missed.

When we read applications, we remember that each one represents a real student, a young person with hopes and dreams and a unique combination of strengths and weaknesses. We try to understand the ways in which each candidate will contribute to the kind of campus that will help us fulfill our mission: to serve the people of North Carolina, and indeed the nation, as a community committed to scholarship, intellectual freedom, personal integrity and justice, and enlightened leadership.

This week I've been asked repeatedly about Wake Forest University's decision to make the SAT optional for its applicants. The dean of admissions there is a friend and colleague, and I wish her and Wake Forest well in making and managing this change.

Still, I'd argue that we need more tools, not fewer, as we try to plumb the mystery of talent and potential. Standardized testing gives us one sounding, however limited and imperfect, about how students will probably perform in our classrooms. It's not the only instrument, or even the most important one, that we should use. But it can help us see a little more clearly, and we need all the help we can get.

Last fall, researchers at the University of California at Berkeley published a study of how well various credentials predicted the academic performance of 60,000 students enrolled in the University of California system. They found that high school grade-point average (GPA) was the best single predictor, accounting for 20 percent of the total variance, or difference, in the GPAs earned by students in the study. In comparison, SAT reasoning scores, when used alone, accounted for 13 percent of the variance.

I'm not sure that this was news, since earlier studies had found that grades were a better predictor of college performance than standardized testing. But the researchers didn't stop with GPA and SAT. In their most complicated analysis, they measured the extent to which a variety of factors—not only GPA and SAT reasoning, but also three SAT subject tests, parental education, family income and strength of high school—accounted for the variance in college performance. Their answer: a total of 27 percent.

The true work of college admissions, I think, is to hunt for clues about the remaining 73 percent. If this search is messy and maddening, it is also human and humane. And it is the least we can do for our applicants, who honor us by applying for admission, and whose futures are far brighter than any of us can know.

Steve Farmer is assistant provost and director of admissions of UNC-Chapel Hill.
Dismiss lacrosse suit, Duke asks

BY ANNE BLYTHE
STAFF WRITER

Duke University wants a federal judge to dismiss the lawsuit filed by 36 members of the 2006 lacrosse team, saying the players have failed to show the fraud, negligence and injury they allege in the case.

Mark Gottlieb and Benjamin Himan, the lead investigators in the Duke lacrosse case, and Durham police officers and city administrators accused of inflicting emotional stress and other injuries to the 2006 team members also asked for the case to be tossed out of court.

The requests for dismissal came Friday more than three months after the players and some of their family members accused Duke, President Richard Brodhead, more than a dozen university officials, the city of Durham, the city manager and various police officers of damaging their reputations after an escort service dancer lodged phony gang-rape allegations against three players at a 2006 team party.

No player listed in the suit was charged in the case, but the players’ attorney, Chuck Cooper, said earlier this year that they nonetheless had been through “a horrifying personal nightmare.”

The players contend they were harmed in 2006 when Duke administrators remained silent about evidence that soon contradicted the allegations of Crystal Gail Mangum, the escort service dancer hired to perform at the team’s now-infamous party.

In the motion for dismissal, Duke points the finger at Mike Nifong, the former Durham district attorney who was stripped of his law license and ousted from office for his misconduct in the criminal case against Dave Evans, Collin Finnerty and Reade Seligmann.

The three battled the phony gang-rape allegations for 13 months before the state attorney general declared them innocent.

Investigators Gottlieb and Himan claim they were conducting a criminal investigation into rape allegations when they collected DNA samples from all but one member of the 2006 lacrosse team and asked a judge to order them to sit for photos.

Evans, Finnerty and Seligmann have filed suit against Nifong, the city and others for conspiring against them in a malicious prosecution that caused them personal injury.

The group of 36 players did not list Nifong in their suit. The fallen prosecutor filed for bankruptcy protection in mid-January and because of that, any civil claims against him had to be put on hold.

This week, a federal bankruptcy judge ruled that Nifong could not hide in bankruptcy court from the malicious-prosecution claims brought by the three exonerated players.

It was unclear Friday whether the group of 36 could add Nifong to their suit.

Duke, city police officers and the former Durham investigators have asked for a hearing on their motions.

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Caesareans may snarl search for insurance

BY DENISE GRADY
THE NEW YORK TIMES

When the Golden Rule Insurance Co. rejected her application for health coverage last year, Peggy Robertson was mystified.

"It made no sense," said Robertson, 39, who lives in Centennial, Colo. "I'm in perfect health."

She was turned down because she had given birth by Caesarean section. Having the operation once increases the odds that it will be performed again, and if she became pregnant and needed another Caesarean, Golden Rule did not want to pay for it. A letter from the company explained that if she had been sterilized after the Caesarean, or if she were over 40 and had given birth two or more years before applying, she might have qualified for coverage.

Robertson had been shopping around for individual health insurance, the kind that people buy on their own. She already had insurance but was looking for a better rate. After being rejected by Golden Rule, she kept her existing coverage.

With individual insurance, unlike the group coverage usually sponsored by employers, insurance companies in many states are free to pick and choose the people and conditions they cover, and they can base the price on a person's medical history. Sometimes, a past Caesarean means higher premiums.

See INSURANCE, PAGE 7A

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INCREASES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Rise in Caesareans

Although it is not known how many women are in Robertson's situation, the number seems likely to increase, because the pool of people seeking individual health insurance, now about 18 million, has been growing steadily — and so has the Caesarean rate, which is at an all-time high of 31.1 percent. In 2006, more than 1.2 million Caesareans were performed in the United States, and researchers estimate that each year, half a million women giving birth have had previous Caesareans.

"Obstetricians are rendering large numbers of women uninsurable by overusing this surgery," said Pamela Udy, president of the International Caesarean Awareness Network, a nonprofit group whose mission is to prevent unnecessary Caesareans.

Although many women who have had a Caesarean can safely have a normal birth later, something that Udy's group advocates, in recent years many doctors and hospitals have refused to allow such births, because they carry a small risk of a potentially fatal complication, uterine rupture. Now, Udy says, insurers are adding insult to injury. Not only are women feeling pressure to have Caesareans that they do not want and may not need, but they may also be denied coverage for the surgery.

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THE NEWS & OBSERVER
SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 2008

CAESAREAN BIRTHS

Caesarean sections were performed in 31.1 percent of births in 2006, an all-time high.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Caesarean Birth Rate</th>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>2000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>35%</td>
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Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Rule, the company exempts women if they have been sterilized.

"After five years, if there is not a complication of pregnancy, another C-section, or if they get their tubes tied and are no longer in that risk situation, that rate-up goes away," said Randy M. Kammer, the vice president for regulatory affairs and public policy.

The higher rate is based on a Caesarean costing an average of $2,700 more than a vaginal birth (assuming no complications). Kammer said Blue Cross and Blue Shield could not provide a tally of how many members were paying the higher rates.

"The aggravating thing is, there are a lot of elective Caesareans, and that adds to costs," she said.

Elizabeth Bonet, who lives in Sunrise, Fla., learned about the higher rates this year when she applied to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida.

"It made me feel very helpless,"
"You have women just caught in the middle of this huge triangle of hospitals, insurance companies and doctors pointing the finger at each other," Udy said.

Insurers' rules on prior Caesareans vary by company and also by state, since the states regulate insurers, said Susan Pisano, a spokeswoman for America's Health Insurance Plans, a trade group. Some companies ignore the surgery, she said, but others treat it like a pre-existing condition.

"Sometimes the coverage will come with a rider saying that coverage for a Caesarean delivery is excluded for a period of time," Pisano said. Sometimes, she said, applicants with prior Caesareans are charged higher premiums or deductibles.

"In many respects it works a lot like other situations where someone has a condition that will foreshadow the potential for higher costs going forward," Pisano said.

Her group has reported that although most Americans with health insurance, 160 million, have group plans through employers, the number needing individual policies will probably keep rising, because more and more people are becoming self-employed or taking jobs without health benefits.

In a letter to Robertson, Golden Rule, which sells individual policies in 30 states, said it would insure a woman who had had a Caesarean only if it could exclude paying for another one for three years. But in Colorado, such exclusions are considered discriminatory and are forbidden, so Golden Rule simply rejects women who have had the surgery, unless they have been sterilized or meet the company's age requirements.

"If you don't work for someone who has insurance, and you have to get insurance on your own, this is terrifying," Robertson said.

A spokeswoman for Golden Rule declined to explain how long it had been excluding Caesareans, how it had decided to do so or how many women were affected, saying the information was proprietary. The company, based in Indianapolis, is owned by UnitedHealthcare, which collects more than $50 billion a year in premiums and has 26 million members, most with group coverage.

In Colorado, people denied individual health insurance can obtain it through a state program, Cover Colorado, which insures about 7,200 people. But the premiums are high, 140 percent of standard rates, a spokeswoman said, adding that some women had enrolled specifically because prior Caesareans had disqualified them from private insurance.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, which has about 300,000 members with individual coverage, used to exclude repeat Caesareans but recently began to cover them — for a 25 percent increase in premiums for five years. Like Golden
Triangle team racing to moon

X Prize's $30 million pot fuels private-sector effort

BY TIM SIMMONS
STAFF WRITER

In the category of audacious goals, a team of Triangle business leaders and N.C. State faculty members has entered a worldwide contest to launch the first private rocket to the moon.

Houston, you have competition.

Sponsored by Google and the X Prize Foundation of California, the contest offers $30 million in prize money to teams that can meet the following challenge:

- Land an unmanned rover on the lunar surface.
- Travel at least 500 meters.
- Transmit video back to Earth.

But ultimately, this contest is about making the moon a permanent celestial outpost.

"The space race is on again," said Dick Dell Sr., director of Raleigh-based Advanced Vehicle Research Center and a key member of the moon

SEE MOON, PAGE 6A

Dick Dell Sr., left, Andre Mazzoleni, front, and Grayson Randall lead Team Stellar.

STAFF PHOTO BY SHAWN ROCCO
launch team. “There is going to be a huge rush toward commercialization this time.”

Almost four decades after man first landed on the moon, some will no doubt question the need for such a contest.

But the rules of the game are different this time. The X Prize Foundation, which offers huge sums of money to spur innovation in a variety of fields, envisions a day when large solar panels built on the moon are used to power entire cities on Earth.

It sees the moon as an extension of our reach, a launchpad for further exploration, a place where humans keep a permanent presence.

But first, you need to get there without government help.

**Earth comes first**

Dell was involved in supporting another futuristic endeavor — building cars that compete in driverless races — when he learned of the lunar competition.

The leader of the Grand Challenge driving team, Grayson Randall of Insight Technologies in Morrisville, was interested.

So was Andre Mazzoleni, a professor at NCSU who teaches orbital mechanics and space system design. William Edmonson, who teaches electrical and computer engineering at N.C. State, also wanted in. So did others.

But by late 2007, Team Stellar filed its application to launch a rocket to the moon. Its entry was accepted May 28, making it one of 18 teams cleared to compete.

Like Team Stellar, some of the groups have universities as partners.

The group known as Astrobotics Technologies, for example, is a combined effort led by Carnegie Mellon University, The University of Arizona and Raytheon, a defense company.

But many of the teams are coali-

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**Experiments and prizes**

The idea of reaching air and space travel milestones with the lure of a prize is hardly new.

The idea was fairly common in the early 1900s, echoing a theme explored by author Jules Verne when the fictional Phileas Fogg bet he could travel around the world in 80 days.

When Charles Lindbergh flew nonstop from New York to Paris in 1927, he was spurred on by a $25,000 prize offered by French businessman Raymond Orteig.

His efforts and others caused a huge increase in air travel that is seen as the catalyst for today's airline industry.

Aviation experts aren't sure what will happen once the first private moon launch succeeds.

But they are sure it will change the calculus of space travel.

The United States and other countries plan to return to the moon, but that could be more than a decade from now.

The deadline for the private competition is 2012, those who compete will be first in line when the government needs subcontracts for its efforts.

"The only thing that has been profitable in space so far is some transportation and communications," said Bob Dickman, executive director of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics in Reston, Va.

"What this prize will do is send a message that NASA is not the only way to reach the moon,"Dickman added. "Who knows where that will lead us?"

NCSU's Mazzoleni looks backward to answer the same question.

"When European explorers set out for the Americas, did they know what they would find?" he asked. "Was it important that they try?"
Labs try to make cells die on cue

BY ROBERT S. BOYD
MCCLATCHY NEWSPAPERS

WASHINGTON — In an act of ultimate self-sacrifice, millions of human cells commit suicide every day, making your life better by their death.

Some cells kill themselves so that developing embryos don't grow webs between their fingers and toes. In teenagers, unused brain cells are pruned away. Other cells kill themselves after damage by radiation or smoking.

Now scientists are learning to control this biological demolition process and enlist it in the war on cancer. It's called programmed cell death (PCD) or, in scientific jargon, apoptosis. Mistakes during apoptosis can lead to cancer or keep anti-cancer therapy from working.

"In one-third to one-half of all cancers, a major component of the malignancy is the ability of the cancerous cell to resist apoptosis," Richard Lockshin, a biology professor at St. John's University in New York City, said in an e-mail interview.

"Their cell death is directed by a long list of cellular genes, some with morbid names such as Reaper, Grim, Bad and Scythe. These genes contain instructions to create certain proteins — strings of biological molecules — that launch cascades of chemical events ending in the annihilation of unwanted cells.

Government, academic and commercial laboratories are racing to develop drugs that control PCD genes. Several biotechnology companies are conducting preliminary human trials of such drugs for lung and colorectal cancer, among others. As yet, none has been approved for medical use.

"The first attempts to manipulate cell death directly have not proved very effective," Lockshin said. The problem is that researchers tried to use broad-based weapons — he called them "bludgeons" — that were not directed precisely at the cells that needed to be destroyed.

"There is considerable attention now to finding means of targeting these bludgeons to specific cells," Lockshin said. "In other words, bullets are very effective killers, but you have to aim them at the right targets."
Local poets reach back to their roots

North Carolina has produced many fine bards to sing of the Old North State's lush and beautiful landscapes — Robert Morgan, Fred ChapPELL, James Applewhite and Michael McPee come immediately to mind.

But the state is also lucky to have poets who reside here but write vividly about the places of their youths, places that marked them before their paths brought them here.

Betty Adcock, who is retiring from teaching at Meredith College in Raleigh this year, and John Hopenthaler, a professor at East Carolina University in Greenville, have both recently published new collections with poems that recall their roots in east Texas (Adcock) and New York (Hopenthaler).

While Adcock remembers her Texas childhood, she has now long been an honored member of the North Carolina literary community, earning the North Carolina Medal for Literature in 1996. "Slantwise," just out from Louisiana State University Press, is her sixth book, and it continues her lyrical contemplations of history, both public and personal.

She celebrates and grieves in these poems. Sometimes she does both at once, as when she imagines the woods of her home Texas county, San Augustine, on the morning of Feb. 1, 2003 — the morning the space shuttle Columbia broke up over that part of the country.

Silver the winter morning, silver
the early sun downpouring
onto columns of pine and oak,
miles of birdsong-piercing silence
silver
in the hour just before the rain;
and our shining myth oncoming.

loosening
piece meal overhead a ghastly charivari
in the high branches, mayhem
broken
from the seared-off cauld of cold space.

She literally grounds a national tragedy in the local, which is, of course, what makes the tragedy most felt.

Not all the poems in "Slantwise" take such a somber turn.

In a fine poem called "Names"

SEE POETRY, PAGE 9D

missions to Sunday Reader, contact Literary Editor Marcy Smith at 829-4765 or marcy.smith@newobserver.com.
POETRY
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8D

Adcock riffs on her first name and its unpoetic qualities:

How awful to be Betty, all aprons and frosting mix, thirties cartoons, fifties pinups ...
It's a name for a waitress, a bowler, a clerk in a store, a housewife, an apple dessert.

But then she rethinks and finds that the name does share traits with poetry:

doesn't poetry have to be every bit as tough as the woman pouring diner coffee?
as practical as the mother of several who tends bar, does laundry and cooks?

The poems of "Slantwise" are that tough and practical, and while they are about those chores, they hum, too, sometimes a hymn and sometimes a jazz tune.

John Hoppenthaler's poems often rise from the gritty urban scene of Nyack, N.Y., and environs. You can find him or his characters "Stoned in the canned jungle of steel drum tunes in the faux Tiki bar" where they nurse a drink and consider the aftermath of a relationship gone sour.

Damaged dreamboat. Damaged land.
Damaged ocean. Damaged man.
Damaged woman. Damaged pride.
Damaged angel. Damaged wing.
Damaged Jesus. Damaged everything.

There's a spooky, dark Dr. Seuss-on-cheap-whiskey quality to the internal rhymes and the beat of those lines.

Hoppenthaler's lyrics aren't afraid to follow the hopeless as in the poem "Ice Jesus," which tells of one of the most ingenuously warped suicides I've ever heard of:

he bought a trunk full of frozen blocks from the Nyack Ice Company when his parents left for three weeks in Spain, tied a rope to the back rim of his basketball hoop, placed the noose around his neck as he stood barefoot on the stack, handcuffed himself behind his back, then strangled as ice dissolved beneath his toes.

Even in the midst of such a scene, some hope can arrive, albeit in the form of an ice-sculpted savior and a drink on the house, but a sort of hope nonetheless. "Anticipate the Coming Reservoir" has its brighter moments as well. Feel the cockiness of this busker when Central Park is greening in spring.

East side girls want to be Oh Girled, Brown Eyed Girled, Beach Boyed till dawn, & summer sun bleaches my hair so blonde even the suburbs seem possible. There are girls who'll linger in Nyack, flirt through Ossining, & I can act, & I can sing.

Both Hoppenthaler and Adcock can sing and, though the voice is sometimes coming from a distance, it still sounds good down home.
Duke begins installing campus emergency siren system

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM – At Duke University, outdoor siren systems are being installed in seven spots across campus as a last-resort warning in the event of campus violence or natural disaster.

This summer, Duke joins plenty of other college campuses that, since last year's massacre at Virginia Tech, have scurried to improve their crisis-response mechanisms.

Duke bought its siren system from Federal Signal Corp., an Illinois company that also recently sold a warning system to UNC-Chapel Hill. Campuses are buying the outdoor siren systems as one component of larger security plans that include campuswide e-mail and text-messaging notifications. Campuses have been encouraging students to register their cell phone numbers to receive text-message warnings.

"This has become something of a growth industry on the heels of Virginia Tech," said Aaron Graves, Duke's associate vice chancellor for campus safety and security.

At Duke, the seven speakers spread across the far-flung campus are mounted 55 feet off the ground. They emit a variety of siren sounds that can be mixed so as not to be confused with the sound of a police or ambulance siren, Graves said. The sound, which measures about 72 decibels, can travel half a mile, Graves said.

"It's a tone that will get your attention," he said.

The speakers also serve as a public address system, so campus safety officials can speak through them.

At Duke, the system is expected to be in place and ready to test in August.

N.C. State University and UNC-CH tested their new campus siren systems in March.

The sirens are strictly a last-resort tool and can be used only for a small list of very specific reasons, said Randy Young, a spokesman for UNC-CH's public safety office. Those include an active shooter on campus, a tornado touching down on or near campus, or a large, life-threatening gas leak, explosion or fire.

"This is not a police call box," Young said. "It has to be an absolutely imminent, verifiable threat, a life-and-death emergency."

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Northeast shows nation's highest child cancer rate

BY LINDSEY TANNER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — Surprising research suggests that childhood cancer is most common in the Northeast, results that caught even experts off-guard. But some specialists say it could just reflect differences in reporting.

The large government study is the first to find notable regional differences in pediatric cancer. Experts say it also provides important information to bolster smaller studies, confirming that cancer is rare in children but also more common in older kids, especially among white boys.

The study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is based on data representing 90 percent of the U.S. population. They found that cancer affects about 166 out of every million children.

The highest rate was in the Northeast, with 179 cases per million children, while the lowest was among children in the South, with 159 cases per million. Some experts suggested that could mean there is better access to care in the urban centers of the Northeast, leading to more diagnoses.

The rates for the Midwest and West were nearly identical, at 165 cases per million and 163 per million, respectively.

The cancer incidence in boys was 174 cases per million, compared with 157 cases per million in girls. In white children, the rate was 173 per million, versus 164 per million in Hispanics and 118 per million in blacks. Teenagers had higher rates than younger kids.

Differences a mystery

A total of 36,446 cases were identified in the study, which analyzed 2001-03 data from state and federal registries. The research appears in the June edition of Pediatrics, released today.

CHILD CANCER RATES BY REGION

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Rate per million children</th>
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<tr>
<td>NORTHEAST</td>
<td>179 cases per million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH</td>
<td>159 cases per million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIDWEST</td>
<td>166 cases per million</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEST</td>
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THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"It's very powerful that this study includes so much of the U.S. population, so it gives us a good picture of where we are with the incidence of these childhood cancers," said Elizabeth Ward, the American Cancer Society's surveillance director.

Experts said the regional differences, though small, are intriguing, but that reasons for them are uncertain.

Dr. Rafael Ducoqs, a children's cancer physician at Ochsner Medical Center in New Orleans, said the South's low rates were perplexing and might simply reflect under-reporting there and over-reporting in other regions.

"I'm at a loss to explain it," he said.

Environmental factors might play a role, including exposure to radiation, said lead author Dr. Jun Li of the CDC. Radiation has been linked with the most common types of childhood cancer — leukemia, lymphoma and brain cancers.

Radiation sources include X-rays, nuclear plant emissions and natural sources such as radon gas. But Li said research is needed to determine if these sources vary enough by region to affect childhood cancer rates.

Pollution may be factor

Dr. Lindsay Frazier, a cancer specialist at Children's Hospital Boston and Dana Farber Cancer Institute, said pollution and housing stock that's older than anywhere else in the nation might help explain the Northeast's higher rates.

But also, she said, there could be better access to cancer centers in the Northeast, which would result in more diagnoses. That could explain why other research has shown that children's death rates from cancer are also lowest in the Northeast.