THE DAILY CLIPS

June 5, 2007

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
   The New York Times
   The Wall Street Journal
   USA Today
   The Charlotte Observer
   The Fayetteville Observer
The Greensboro News & Record
   Newsweek
   U.S. News & World Report
   Business Week
   Time

East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu  Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252-328-6300
FUN FOR A CAUSE

Event's success helps a special group

By Jamie Williams
The Daily Reflector

Having your own golf tournament can make for a tiring day.

Drew Steele spent most of his Monday afternoon smiling as he romped around Ironwood Golf and Country Club, receiving pats on the back from golfers on hand for the Drew Steele-Skip Holtz Golf Classic.

The golfers had come to play and also raise money for special needs children of Pitt County and the Drew Steele Endowment. Drew, who is 22, has Down Syndrome.

After countless high-fives, Drew later settled in to survey the action on the course from the comfort of his golf cart.

The tournament's other headliner, East Carolina head football coach Skip Holtz, said he achieved his goal for the day during his morning round at Greenville Country Club.

"I just had a great time, that's all you could ask," he said. "We want everyone to come out and enjoy themselves today."

Holtz's foursome was one of about 85 teams playing in the tournament, which was divided into morning and afternoon sessions at Ironwood and Greenville Country clubs. Sixty teams participated in last year's inaugural event.

The golf was the culmination of a weekend that featured a dinner and auction Sunday to raise money for the foundation bearing Steele's name and the renovations planned for Greenville's Elm Street Gym.

When completed, that facility will be named in Steele's honor. The Drew Steele Center will offer recreational opportunities for the county's special needs population.

Mike Steele, Drew's father and former ECU basketball coach, said as the scope of the event has expanded, he is continually impressed by the community's response.

"The support has been amazing," he said. "This has gone from just a fund raiser and turned into a much bigger event."

Steele was quick to praise Holtz for his support of the cause, crediting him with much of the event's success.

"Coach and Drew have such a neat bond," he said. "I see Drew every day, so I can sometimes forget the effect that he has on people, but it took someone like Coach Holtz who came into town and saw so much in Drew to make something like this happen."

Holtz said his bond with Drew has made it easy to promote the event which raised more than $200,000 last year and is approaching that number again this year as final donations continue to be counted.

"Drew Steele has touched my heart in such a positive way," Holtz said. "He has every reason to be negative and yet he isn't, you always find him smiling."

Drew received a special presentation during the afternoon session when three young girls handed him more than $100 they made selling lemonade and cookies from a stand they set up beside Ironwood's ninth fairway.

"Those girls were great," Mike Steele said. "That sort of typifies the type of support we've gotten from the community."

The Greenville business community has shown its support for the event, putting aside business competition to offer sponsorships and assistance.

"We have people out here from all types of business," Steele said. "Everyone forgets about competition and does this for the good of the community."

Although Drew Steele made it to the course a few hours after the start of the action Monday, he quickly made his presence felt upon arrival, spreading those now familiar smiles.

He also inspired a few laughs while snapping golf clubs to take a few hacks.

"He finished up late last night at the banquet and he was back on the course this morning," Mike Steele said. "He's rocking out there, just like always."
Two golf courses needed to house participants for the second annual Drew Steele-Skip Holtz Classic

By Tony Castleberry
The Daily Reflector

If the Drew Steele-Skip Holtz Golf Classic continues to grow, it might take three Pitt County courses to accommodate all the teams that want to participate.

The second Classic was held Monday at Ironwood and Greenville Country Clubs and more than 80 threesomes and foursomes played in either morning or afternoon flights. While Ironwood is the official home of the event and hosted the first Classic last year, so many teams signed up this year that one course would not hold all the golfers.

"With (East Carolina football coach) Skip (Holtz) and Mike (Steele, Drew's father) being members here, that was an obvious fit," GCC head professional Brady Pin- ner said of his facility being a co-host with Ironwood. "Our course is always in excellent shape and people enjoy playing it, so I think from those two standpoints, it was a home run."

Proceeds from the Classic go to the Drew Steele Endowment Fund, named after the Greenville youngster with Down syndrome who struck up a friendship with Holtz after Holtz took the reigns of ECU's football program in 2005. Steele's fund will help pay for renovations at Elm Street Gym, which will be renamed the Drew Steele Center and will offer recreational opportunities for Pitt's special needs population.

Last year's tournament raised more than $200,000 and it's likely to equal or surpass that number this time around. Mike Steele, former East Carolina basketball coach and Drew's father, credited Holtz with helping make the Classic as popular, and beneficial, as it is.

"Coach had that vision, but none of us had a clue that it could get to be this big, this quick," Steele said.

While the tournament, which uses a captain's choice format, is a charity event and everyone seemed to be focused on having a good time, there was some pretty good golf played as well.

The team of Bennett Dunn, Stephen Pugh, Jason Jones and Jordan Craft posted the low net score in the morning flight at Ironwood while Elliot Greer, Jay Conway, Shane Robinson and Tim Aube were first at GCC.

Ben Dixon, Stephen West, Mac Prichard and Eddie Gun- ton posted the best gross score in the morning group at Greenville while Andy Harris, Mike Harris, Eddie Tyndall and Danny Bebb took first in the early gross competition at Ironwood.

Holtz's group, which included Dusty Fields, Joe Kucharski and D.A. Fitzgerald, finished with a 62 gross and 60 net, but like many others the coach emphasized his main priority was to enjoy the day and the event. That doesn't mean his competitive spirit didn't surface though.

"We want everybody to have a good time," said Holtz, who drove a fancy golf cart he received as a gift from his father, Lou. "We want to try to raise some money. But if you're going to come out here, if you're going to play, go ahead and play to win."

In the afternoon flight at GCC, Russell Eaves, Lee Ball, Kathy Bussell and Don Bussell took first place while Jimmy Neuhoff, Daniel Griffis, Jamie Dudley and John Tipton won the gross competition. Afternoon scores from Ironwood were not made available.
ECU football opener on ESPN2

GREENVILLE – The kickoff time for East Carolina University football's season-opening non-conference contest against Virginia Tech, scheduled for Sept. 1 at Lane Stadium in Blacksburg, has been set for noon to accommodate a live ESPN2 national television broadcast.

The Pirates will open Skip Holtz' third season at the helm of the East Carolina program by renewing a 12-game series with the Hokies that began in 1956. The meeting against Virginia Tech, which wrapped up the 2006 season with a No. 18 national rank and an appearance in the Chick-fil-A Bowl, will be the first since a 45-28 win by the Hokies at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium on Sept. 7, 2000.

In all, ECU won four of the first seven matchups before Virginia Tech rolled off five straight. East Carolina posted a 7-6 overall record last year, which marked the Pirates' highest win total since an 8-4 ledger in 2000. In addition, ECU made its first bowl appearance since 2001 when it accepted an invite to the PapaJohns.com Bowl in Birmingham, Ala.

The ESPN2 telecast will be the third for East Carolina in its last 11 games, dating back to No. 4 West Virginia’s visit to Greenville on Sept. 23 and the Pirates’ bowl clash against USF last December.
Experts fear major hurricane could wipeout N.C.'s Outer Banks

BY MIKE BAKER, Associated Press Writer

BUXTON, N.C. - For more than 200 years, the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse has guided sailors through the "graveyard of the Atlantic" - the shallow shores of North Carolina's Outer Banks. But not even the nation's tallest lighthouse is safe from the merciless grind of the ocean's waves.

The towering lighthouse has been relocated twice since it first arose in 1803, and will have to be moved again as the sands that make up the 130-mile string of barrier islands - which reach out into the ocean like few others in the world - slowly shift in the surf. It might take 100 years, but scientists say it's a geologic inevitability.

And one they fear a direct strike from a major hurricane could duplicate overnight.

"If we had a Katrina-sized storm, 75 percent of these islands could be gone," said Stan Riggs, a geologist at East Carolina University who has studied the Outer Banks for four decades. "You can count on it cleaning the clock."

Dozens of hurricanes have hit the Outer Banks since the English landed on Roanoke Island in 1585. Today, though only about 35,000 people live here permanently, each year some 5 million visit the islands that jut out into the Gulf Stream as if they were inviting Atlantic hurricanes to strike.

In the place where the Wright brothers first took to skies, they spend the summer in vacation and rental homes - some with a dozen bedrooms, private pools and elevators - that have a tax-assessed value of about $27 billion.

But Riggs and other scientists fear the right hurricane - an especially powerful storm packing a deep surge - could drown the islands with sea water, smash buildings with 25-foot waves and force map makers to redraw the state's signature coastline.

Riggs said such a storm would break the chain of long, narrow islands into a perforated series of many smaller spots of sand. Instead of Pamlico Sound to the west, sailors would find Pamlico Bay. Where Alligator River now cuts into the mainland, the ocean will take over to create Alligator Sound.

Yet North Carolina's Division of Emergency Management estimates that, even if a Category 5 hurricane turns toward the Outer Banks, several hundred defiant homeowners will try to ride the storm. Many will die as the violent weather destroys structures across the islands and carves several new inlets where land now stands up from the sea, said Orrin Pilkey, a professor emeritus of geology at Duke University.

And the islands won't simply disappear. While much of the Outer Banks are untouched by man, protected as part of two national seashores and a national wildlife refuge, there is rampant development elsewhere. A storm that wipes out the islands could dump an untold amount of gas, chemicals and remnants of destroyed homes and buildings into the ocean.

"The environment is the sort of the unnoticed victim that barrier islands face in hurricanes," Pilkey said.

The Outer Banks are as much a part of North Carolina's identity as the Blue Ridge Mountains that rise along the state's western edge. The islands are home to particularly unique ecology that features maritime forests, one of the world's largest estuary systems and wild horses believed to be descended from the Spanish mounts that arrived with early European explorers.

Above sea level, the islands are essentially large sandbars that have migrated slowly to the west over large wetlands that include deposits of mud and peat. There are no solid coral reefs or large patches of rock to slow the islands' changing landscape. Almost every nor'easter blows piles of sand and overwash onto properties and roadways, and Riggs estimates that some 1,250 acres of shoreline and wetlands erodes into the ocean each year.
Officials have spent millions trying to salvage homes with stilts and sandbags, and even by moving sand on their own. The costs can be staggering: a 50-year beach nourishment project to protect just 14 miles of beach in Nags Head and Kitty Hawk would cost $1.6 billion, according to an U.S. Army Corps of Engineers estimate.

"These are just stopgap attempts," said Jan Deblie, the Cape Hatteras Coastkeeper for the North Carolina Coastal Federation, a conservation group. "We won't ever get the equation exactly right."

Riggs has pulled thousands of cores from the islands and found that more than half are only about 500 years old, having formed not long before Virginia Dare became the first English child born in the Americas.

Some stretches are even younger - and manmade. When Hurricane Isabel rolled through the Outer Banks in 2003, the Category 2 hurricane's 8-foot storm surge and violent waves washed out a stretch of Hatteras Island a third of a mile wide. Two months later, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dumped enough sand into the newly formed inlet to rebuild that section of the island.

Even a minor hurricane would be devastating to some parts of the Outer Banks. In Nags Head, for example, the homes that once sat comfortably on the beach now sit in the foaming seas several times each year.

Neil Carignan, an independent contractor, said a Thanksgiving nor’easter destroyed the septic drain field, water line, electricity and driveway of a client whose property is now condemned. Though the home has sandbags piled underneath its stilts, Carnigan pointed 100 feet behind the home to a plowed mound of sand.

"The waves were coming all the way up here across the street," Carnigan said. "The people across the street are about to have beachfront property because this home will probably fall in the ocean in the next Category 3 hurricane."

In Rodanthe, a major weak point where scientists expect a storm would form a new inlet, Janet Bigney points out into Pamlico Sound - on the west side of the island - where an old well sits a couple hundred feet off shore.

"That's an area where a house may have been," said Bigney, who owns a campground there with her husband.

"We built our house strong, but once the water touches the sand and saturates it, it's like quicksand - things start sinking and moving around," Bigney said. "Whenever we find out there's going to be a hurricane, we're out of here."
Columbia Will Pay $1.1 Million to State Fund in Student Lending Scandal

By KAREN W. ARENSON

Columbia University will pay $1.1 million to a fund to educate students about loans and has agreed to have its financial aid office monitored by state officials for five years, under a settlement that New York State Attorney General Andrew M. Cuomo announced yesterday.

The settlement, the most stringent Mr. Cuomo has reached with any university so far in his investigation of the $65 billion student loan industry, grew out of his finding that David Charlow, the financial aid director for Columbia’s undergraduate college and its engineering school, was promoting a lending company in which he had a financial stake.

Columbia put Mr. Charlow on paid leave in April, when it disclosed that he held 100,000 or more in shares of Education Lending Group, the parent company of Student Loan Xpress, and it dismissed him last week.

The settlement came on a day of developments in the student loan scandal. The Federal Trade Commission said in a letter to Congress that it was “actively assessing whether lenders are making deceptive claims” in marketing student loans. Mr. Cuomo also announced that the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, a trade group of college financial aid officials, had agreed to monitoring by its office.

And the University of Southern California said that its financial aid director, Catherine A. Thomas, who also owned shares in Education Lending Group, would retire effective today. The university said in a statement that Ms. Thomas’s actions were “inconsistent with USC’s conflict of interest policy” and that it was continuing to investigate.

Michael W. Fitzgerald, a lawyer representing Ms. Thomas, confirmed her retirement and would not comment further.

Columbia is the only university so far that has agreed to make annual reports on its financial aid office to Mr. Cuomo, and it is also the only one to make a substantial payment to the education fund he set up.

Mr. Cuomo said at a news conference yesterday that while he had reached settlements with about 25 colleges, Columbia was different because it “was not properly policing its employee” and he thought the agreement could serve as a benchmark for more to come.

He added that he believed that Mr. Charlow had been “acting illegally” in his efforts to promote Student Loan Xpress and that a criminal prosecution was possible. He declined to comment further, saying the investigation was continuing.

Asked about the possibility of criminal charges, Harvey Kurzweil, a lawyer for Mr. Charlow, said, “I don’t believe there is a basis for that.”

Columbia said in a statement that a “longtime, well-regarded employee failed to uphold the trust that had been placed in him by the University” and that it was making changes “to make this kind of conduct a thing of the past.”

The university added that its agreement with the attorney general “specifically states that Columbia University does not admit, and expressly denies, that it has violated any law in connection with its student loan practices.”

Mr. Cuomo’s office found that Mr. Charlow had put Student Loan Xpress on Columbia’s list of preferred lenders after acquiring the stock. He also advised the company on marketing strategy, pushed its loans and helped draft talking points for its sales force.

Mr. Cuomo said Columbia had agreed to centralize the oversight of all of its financial aid operations at its various schools and to provide reports on the operations to the attorney general for five years.

While Columbia is the only university so far that is being put under such scrutiny, Mr. Cuomo said that there were “other schools in similar situations,” and that he was beginning to negotiate with them.

In addition to Mr. Charlow and Ms. Thomas, Lawrence W. Burt, the financial aid director at the University of Texas at Austin, also held stock in Education Lending Group. At Johns Hopkins University, the financial aid director, Ellen Frishberg, received about $65,000 in consulting fees and tuition payments from Student Loan Xpress and more from other companies. All four university officials have left or been dismissed.

The attorney general’s office has reached agreements in which more than a dozen other colleges and universities have agreed to pay back students the amounts the colleges had received from lenders in return for generating loan volume among students. The University of Pennsylvania, for example, will be returning $1.6 million, and New York University will be paying out $1.4 million. Columbia did not have such a revenue-sharing arrangement.

Mr. Cuomo said the agreement to have Columbia contribute more than $1 million anyway — to a fund run by his office to educate students and parents about financial aid — was an effort to estimate a sum “commensurate with their relative liability.”

Mr. Cuomo also had a public reconciliation with the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.

When Mr. Cuomo first started investigating student lending problems, Dallas Martin, the group’s president, accused him of “character assassination.”

But yesterday, Mr. Martin said that he had been wrong, and that his association had expanded its own code of ethics. “I want to apologize,” he said. “We did not have all the facts. We do not condone individuals taking kickbacks.”

Appearing next to Mr. Cuomo, Mr. Martin said the association would stop relying on lenders to sponsor its conferences and allowing them to use the meetings to court its members. For five years, the attorney general’s office will have representatives at the conferences to ensure compliance.
Earn 4-year degree at CCC

School partners up with ECU and N.C. State

By Matt Tessnear
Sun Journal Staff

HAVELOCK—Starting this fall, students can get a degree from East Carolina or N.C. State without leaving Craven County, thanks to a new partnership announced Thursday at Craven Community College’s Havelock campus.

University Connections, a partnership between CCC and the universities, will allow students to complete the requirements for a bachelor’s or associate’s degree at CCC.

Seventeen degree programs — including business, communications, health information, industrial technology, education and nursing — will be available through University Connections.

“It means more people with skills to make us a more competitive community and region,” said Scott Ralls, president of CCC. “Most of the reasons why students can’t complete degrees are financial. This provides opportunities for students to do it without financial problems.”

Tuition rates and fees are lower at the community college than on university campuses, Ralls said. The cost per credit hour on a university campus is about $140, while a community college is about $40, said Bill Fortney the eastern regional director for distance engineering programs at N.C. State.

Additionally, Ralls said that University Connections is an attractive option for anyone stationed at Cherry Point.

An associate’s degree can be completed on site or on the Internet. The last two years of a bachelor’s degree must be completed on a CCC campus.

Resources for the program are taken care of by the schools, which doesn’t put a strain on any member of the partnership, said Ralls.

“The staffing is provided by the universities,” he said. “Craven provides the facilities.”

Officials from ECU and N.C. State say the program will benefit everyone involved.

“What we’re doing here is capping the work of what Craven Community College is doing, not replacing it,” said Clayton Ses-soms, director of the division of continuing studies at ECU. “It’s a bargain. It’s a good model, and the North Carolina system has done a good job with this.”

Fortney said the program also helps N.C. State reach its goals.

“One of our missions is outreach and making that education opportunity available to everyone,” said Fortney. “It makes it available in a format palatable for their lifestyle.”

This is not CCC’s first partnership with either university. CCC’s college transfer efforts began with a collaborative teacher-preparation program with ECU and a 2+2 engineering collaboration with N.C. State.

For more information about CCC’s University Connections initiative, contact Suzanne Kaylor, college advising center coordinator, at 638-7329 or kaylor@cravenccc.edu.