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In North Carolina, a fight over sea levels and science

After a state report predicts higher ocean levels, based in part on global-warming data, new legislation seeks to all but outlaw such projections. The bill has drawn ridicule, as well as scrutiny of the state's new political climate.

By David Zucchino, Los Angeles Times
June 24, 2012, 5:00 a.m.

RALEIGH, N.C. — When scientists at a state commission predicted that North Carolina's sea levels could rise 39 inches by 2100, coastal business and development leaders weren't alarmed at the prospect of flooding. They were outraged by the report itself.

They complained to state legislators, saying the projection could trigger regulations costing coastal businesses and homeowners millions of dollars.

The result is House Bill 819, a measure that would require sea level forecasts to be based on past patterns and would all but outlaw projections based on climate change data.

The bill, now under discussion by a legislative conference committee, has been ridiculed nationwide. It was mocked by comedian Stephen Colbert and savaged in a Scientific American blog post titled "N.C. Considers Making Sea Rise Illegal."

It has also focused attention on the political shift in North Carolina, where Republicans in 2010 won control of the state Legislature for the first time in
a century.

The legislation would outlaw "scenarios of accelerated rates of sea level rise unless such rates are from statistically significant, peer-reviewed data and are consistent with historic trends."

Scientists and environmentalists say the bill would legislate science and inhibit research. Orrin H. Pilkey, a geology professor emeritus at Duke University, said making projections based only on past sea level changes is like limiting hurricane warnings to the precise spots where hurricanes have struck.

Stanley R. Riggs, an East Carolina University geologist and one of 19 scientists who made the 39-inch projection, said the bill represents "a criminally serious disregard for science."

The Science Panel on Coastal Hazards of the state Coastal Resources Commission consists of marine scientists, geologists and engineers who relied on tide gauges, satellite altimetry, storm records and geologic data. They cautioned that predicting long-term sea level change is "an inexact exact science," saying the report reflects "the likely range" of sea level rise due to global warming and the melting of ice shelves.

Because sea levels and scientific knowledge are advancing rapidly, Riggs said in an interview, the panel recommended recalculating sea level projections every five years.

The bill's backers issued their own projections, using data from tide gauges and carbon dioxide levels, and citing studies that project no or minimal sea level rise. They predict a rise of, at the most, 8 inches — and contend that sea levels are actually receding in some coastal areas. They say the 39-inch projection would restrict economic development, send insurance rates skyrocketing and decrease coastal property values.

"It's a death sentence for coastal North Carolina," said Tom Thompson, who leads the coastal business group, known as NC-20 for its representation of 20 coastal counties. "It could quite frankly kill development on the coast."

Thompson, director of the Beaufort County Economic Development Commission, called the 39-inch prediction "dishonest statistically" and no
better than a coin flip. In an interview, he dismissed climate change as "a phobia" pushed by environmentalists.

John Droz Jr., NC-20's science advisor, said commission scientists were "bent on promoting their personal political agenda." NC-20's projections "are entirely about the science" and have nothing to do with developers, or economics, Droz wrote in a letter to the News & Observer newspaper.

Republican state Sen. David Rouzer, a sponsor of the bill, did not respond to requests for comment. After the measure was endorsed by a state Senate committee June 7, Rouzer told reporters:

"If you're going to use science when you really can't validate it … you're going to be implementing policy and rules and regulations that can have a very, very negative impact on the coastal economy of this state."

A spokeswoman for Gov. Bev Perdue, a Democrat, said the governor would not announce her position on the bill unless it was passed by the Legislature.

Biology professor Robert B. Jackson, who directs Duke University's Center on Global Change, warned a Senate committee earlier this month that denying rising sea levels puts coastal residents and property at risk of serious flooding.

"There are many things we can do something about if we use this data," Jackson said. "I don't see why taking into account the range of possible futures costs us money, compared to naively assuming the best-case scenario."

Riggs, the geologist, said the panel had preferred to report a range of projected sea level rises — from 15 to 18 inches to 55 inches, based on each member's projections. But because the commission demanded an absolute number, the panel took the mean of the range, or 39 inches.

Comedian Colbert brought the debate to a national audience, wisecracking in a segment titled "Sea, No Evil" on the June 4 "Colbert Report": "If your science gives you a result you don't like, pass a law saying the result is illegal. Problem solved."

The bill has triggered lively debate on social media, websites and the letters
page of the News & Observer. The paper's editorial board called the bill "a burst of legislative folly."

One letter, titled "Sea-Level Fiction," said the bill "reveals just how far the climate change-deniers and their anti-environmental, science-hating minions have penetrated" state government. Another, from an environmental technology professor at North Carolina State University, said: "We are the laughingstock of the nation."

In a recent full-page newspaper ad titled "The N.C. General Assembly wants to ignore science," the Southern Environmental Law Center said the sea level bill would "set a dangerous precedent of politicians telling scientists what data they may and may not use."

david.zucchino@latimes.com
Clinic provides free advice
By Kim Grizzard
Saturday, June 23, 2012

Dr. Jim Byrd went on a medical mission Friday, but he did not need a passport, and he got to go home afterward and sleep in his own bed.

Byrd, a clinical professor of internal medicine at East Carolina University’s Brody School of Medicine and a physician at the Veterans Affairs Clinic in Greenville, was among doctors, nurses and other health care professionals staffing the Greenville Medical Mission. The mission, which continues today at Building Hope Community Life Center, provides free medical advice to patients. For providers, it’s a chance to practice their faith.

“Not everybody can go to Haiti or something like that,” said Mike Williams, pastor of Greenville Christian Fellowship, which organized the medical mission with Covenant United Methodist Church. “But some people can use their gifts and talents here locally in our city.”

At the mission, physicians, nurses, social workers and pharmacists are providing free cholesterol, glucose and pregnancy tests, along with blood
pressure checks and nutrition information. Volunteers also are available to pray with patients.

The mission, which began with the idea of offering medical resources to families of children in Building Hope’s after-school program, quickly attracted more than a dozen health care professionals who wanted to give their time. When the mission opened its doors on Friday afternoon, the number of volunteers far exceeded the number of patients.

“I feel like people are looking for something that is tangible and significant to feel like, ‘Hey, I can really help somebody,’” Williams said. “People are looking for a hands-on way to express a commitment to Christ or serve or be a blessing.”

Dr. David Michael found that two years ago on a medical mission trip to Belize. Michael, a primary care physician, traveled with a team of doctors and nurses from Oakmont Baptist Church to the Central American country to provide medical care to villages where people lived in poverty.

“You see the lack of health care, and you start to realize that same type of stuff occurs right around your hometown,” Michael said. “You want to figure out how you can take what you learn down there and bring it back. Everybody that was on the mission trip with us said the same thing, ‘Gosh, we should be doing this a lot closer to home.’”

Within a year, some of them were doing just that. The Oakmont Medical Clinic was launched in April 2011.

Registered nurse Sylvia Fuller recalls sitting at a table of health care professionals during a church planning meeting and dreaming of providing a free medical clinic for people in need. Initially, the clinic was designed as an outreach to Oakmont Square Apartments, a complex beside the church that Oakmont owns.

“We realized here were people right here in our town, in fact, there were people right next door to our church, who needed what we could provide,” Fuller said. “A great number of those people are working, but after rent, utilities, food, gas, they simply don’t have enough money for things (that are) medical.”

The first clinic drew 10 patients, four of them residents of the apartments. But the clinics quickly grew in both size and scope. Church members gave money for prescriptions, and a pharmacist in the congregation agreed to provide medications at a discount.
Volunteers began scheduling clinics once a month, providing examinations and prayers for anyone who came in the door. The largest clinic drew 63 patients, but, on average, 10 to 20 will come. As more people are finding out about the clinic, volunteers are considering whether or not they will need to offer clinics more than once a month.

Fuller, who plans to volunteer at today’s medical mission, is glad to see other Christian nurses and physicians responding to the needs around them.

“I would like to think that maybe more churches are having the same idea we are, however they phrase it, of wanting to be more missional, of wanting to be more hands-on, of wanting to be more available,” Fuller said. “We have a mission as believers.”

Byrd would someday love to go with members of Covenant United Methodist Church on a medical mission trip to the Dominican Republic. But he knows there also is a mission here.

“There’s a tremendous number of people who are underserved, don’t have any medical care,” he said. “It’s just amazing that within probably a mile and a half of a tertiary care medical center are people who are not able to access the care that they need, so we’ve got to figure out a way to do better.”

The Greenville Medical Mission will be held from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. today at Building Hope Community Life Center, 309 W. Ninth St. Call 752-2100.

The Oakmont Medical Clinic will be held from 1-4 p.m. Sunday at Oakmont Baptist Church, 1100 Red Banks Road. Call 756-1245.
The East Carolina Heart Institute at Vidant Medical Center has received full accreditation with percuteous coronary intervention (PCI) from the Society of Chest Pain Centers (SCPC).

More than five million Americans visit hospitals each year with chest pain. The SCPC’s goal is to significantly reduce the mortality rate of these patients by teaching the public to recognize and react to the early symptoms of a possible heart attack, reduce the time that it takes to receive treatment, and increase the accuracy and effectiveness of treatment.

The Accredited Chest Pain Center’s protocol-driven and systematic approach to patient management allows physicians to reduce time to treatment during the critical early stages of a heart attack and to better monitor patients when it is not clear whether or not they are having a coronary event.

With the increase in chest pain centers came the need to establish standards designed to improve the consistency and quality of care provided to patients. The SCPC’s accreditation process ensures that centers meet or exceed quality-of-care measures in acute cardiac medicine.

“The CPCA is a reflection of Vidant Medical Center’s continued commitment to eastern North Carolina by developing programs for rapid identification, diagnosis and treat of cardiovascular disease,” Dr. Brian Cabarrus, chest pain center director, said.

The Accredited Chest Pain Center at the Heart Institute has demonstrated its expertise and commitment to patient care by meeting or exceeding a set of stringent criteria and undergoing an onsite review by a team of SPCP’s accreditation review specialists. Key areas in which an accredited chest pain center must demonstrate expertise include:

- Integrating the emergency department with the local emergency medical system;
- Assessing, diagnosing and treating patients quickly;
- Effectively treating patients with low risk for acute coronary syndrome and no assignable cause for their symptoms;
• Continually seeking to improve processes and procedures;
• Ensuring the competence and training of accredited chest pain center personnel;
• Maintaining organizational structure and commitment;
• Having a functional design that promotes optimal patient care;
• Supporting community outreach programs that educate the public to promptly seek medical care if they display symptoms of a possible heart attack.

“Vidant Medical Center’s distinction as an accredited chest pain center is a result of incredible multi-disciplinary collaborations to continuously advance the processes by which we care for heart disease, from first contact by emergency medical services personnel to care in the emergency department to cardiac care in the hospital, in order to achieve the best possible outcomes for our patients,” Dr. Theodore Delbridge, chief of emergency services at Vidant Medical Center said.

The Society of Chest Pain Centers (SCPC) is an international not-for-profit organization that focuses on transforming cardiovascular care by assisting facilities in their effort to create communities of excellence that bring together quality, cost and patient satisfaction. As the only cross-specialty organization, SCPC provides the support needed for individual hospitals and hospital systems to effectively bridge existing gaps in treatment by providing the tools, education and support necessary to successfully navigate the changing face of healthcare. For more information on SCPC, accreditation and certification opportunities, visit www.scpcp.org, or call toll free 1-877-271-4176.
ECU student crowned Miss North Carolina
Sunday, June 24, 2012

East Carolina University student Arlie Honeycutt has been crowned Miss North Carolina 2012.

Jessie Christine Smith of Greenville was named second runner-up.

Honeycutt, Miss Kinston-Lenoir, became the 75th Miss North Carolina at the annual pageant, held Saturday in Raleigh’s Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts. Seventy-one young women competed for the titles of Miss North Carolina 2012 and Miss North Carolina’s Outstanding Teen.

Honeycutt, a Garner native, has made her public service platform “The Domino Effect – Inspiring Volunteerism One Person at a Time.”

She won a preliminary competition in talent last week with her vocal performance of “Someone Like You” from the Broadway musical “Jekyll and Hyde.”

Honeycutt is a graduate of Raleigh’s William G. Enloe High School, is a rising junior at ECU. She is scheduled to star in an ECU Opera Theatre production of “Lizzie Borden: A Family Portrait in Three Acts” in November.

Smith, 21, a student at Pitt Community College, has made her platform “C.A.P.E.S. – Creating Alternative Pathways to Education.”
Smith won two preliminary competitions last week, one in swimsuit and another in talent with her ballet en pointe “Swan Lake Opus 20.” She won those same two preliminary categories at last year’s Miss North Carolina Pageant, where she competed as Miss Kinston-Lenoir County.

Smith was Winterville’s Watermelon Queen in 2008 and in 2009 was Teen Miss Princess of Pitt County and Teen Miss Princess of North Carolina. She studied dance at the North Carolina Academy of Dance Arts in Greenville.

Smith, daughter of Enid Smith of Greenville and Neil Smith of Winterville, plans to attend East Carolina University in the fall.
ECU Notes: Alum's cabinet in museum
Sunday, June 24, 2012

A trip to the doctor could include a history lesson at East Carolina University’s Family Medicine Center.

Laupus Library commissioned Stuart Kent, an ECU alumnus and Greenville furniture maker and designer, to craft a 14-foot black cherry wood and glass display cabinet for the second floor of the family medicine center to highlight exhibits from the Country Doctor Museum.

The Bailey museum is operated by ECU’s health sciences library.

The first rotating exhibit, “Compounding Remedies: Tools of the Trade from Early Pharmacies,” will feature artifacts used by country doctors and pharmacists including a turn-of-the-century show globe. Show globes were vases filled with colored liquid used by apothecaries, pharmacies and drug stores to let customers know they could compound medicine. Other artifacts will give insight on how remedies were measured, mixed and dispensed.

Kent (’05,’08) built tables and chairs for the history collections reading room on the fourth floor of Laupus Library following graduate school and an apprenticeship with Paul Gianino of Greenville, who created bookcases to house the library’s rare and historic collections.

Kent recently received a Fulbright Award, and the display case will be one of several jobs he finishes before leaving for Costa Rica later this year. There, he will teach woodworking and environmentally sensitive harvesting techniques and research sustainable tropical hardwoods.

The display cabinet is the largest freestanding piece of furniture Kent has made, although he has completed much larger sculpture exhibitions. He is
known for his tall clocks, furniture and 6-8-foot sculpted wooden vessels on exhibit in the United States and abroad. He often incorporates cast bronze or iron as elements of his wooden pieces.

Working in his 1,000-square-foot studio on East Third Street in Greenville, he likes to repurpose wood from existing pieces.

“I feel sculpture has a lifespan,” he said. “I like to make new things with it.”

The Family Medicine Center display case, weighing an estimated 1,500 pounds, will feature low-energy LEED track lighting in keeping with Kent’s dedication to the environment and sustainability.

“All the wood is from North Carolina,” he said. “I try to keep everything as American as I can.”

The cabinet, with five-inch crown molding, seven-inch base molding and massive quarter-inch glass doors, ends and shelves, is scheduled to be moved in three pieces and assembled on site this month depending on the weather.

“All the finishes are hand-rubbed, shellacked finishes which reacts with humidity,” he said. “Wood is an organic material. It’s always going to expand and contract.”

Kent’s first woodworking job was in Bailey, the site of the Country Doctor Museum, where his family moved from New Mexico when he was in high school. He worked with Glenn Perry, owner of Woodworking Unlimited, who introduced him to the business.

“I like working with wood because I like the way it feels, I like the way it smells, I like the way it cuts,” he said. “I like it because it’s a natural thing. It’s very rewarding.”

Kent received bachelor’s degrees in sculpture and wood design in 2005, and a master’s of fine arts in sculpture in 2008. His wife, Susan, also an ECU alumnus, received a bachelor’s in biology in 2004 and is a researcher in the Brody School of Medicine’s physiology department.

**Students share research**

Three ECU graduate students displayed their research at the North Carolina Capitol Building in Raleigh May 23 as part of North Carolina’s Graduate Education Week, May 20-26.

Mahealani Kaneshiro-Pineiro, Bradley Eidschun and Daniel Zapf from ECU joined students from Duke, Wake Forest and other UNC system universities
at the event, which was designed to recognize the contributions that graduate education makes to the scientific, cultural and economic needs of the state and global communities.


A native of Oahu, Hawaii, Kaneshiro-Pineiro is a doctoral candidate in coastal resources management. She has a master’s degree in zoology and a bachelor’s in marine science from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and Hilo, respectively. She has conducted research throughout the Pacific, including Midway Atoll and Okinawa, Japan.

Kaneshiro-Pineiro’s research interests include jellyfish ecology and jellyfish-human interactions. Kaneshiro-Pineiro presented research on the biology and tourism effects of sea nettle jellyfish. Her faculty mentor is David Kimmel, assistant professor of biology in the Harriot College of Arts and Sciences and the Institute for Coastal Science and Policy.

Arizona native Eidschun has just completed a master’s degree in mathematics at ECU and holds a bachelor’s in mathematics and computer science from UNC-Pembroke. His research examined a method for modeling tsunami and rogue waves, as well as the impact these waves could have on the North Carolina coast. ECU mathematics professors David Pravica and Mike Spurr served as Eidschun’s mentors.

Master’s degree student Zapf, of Rochester, N.Y., has a bachelor’s degree in environmental biology from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Zapf’s research examined critical river herring nursery habitats in the Albemarle Sound using otolith microchemistry. His faculty mentor is Roger Rulifson, professor of biology in the Harriot College of Arts and Sciences and the Institute for Coastal Science and Policy.

Accompanying the students were their faculty mentors, ECU Graduate School Dean Paul Gemperline and Graduate School Associate Deans Thomas J. McConnell and Belinda Patterson. Gemperline is the president of the N.C. Conference of Graduate Schools for 2011-12.
Ex-Pirate recruit stars for Angels
By Nathan Summers
Sunday, June 24, 2012

The constant lure of a pro baseball contract forces college coaches to stress out every year on draft day, and the potential losses come from both ends of the team.

Because players can be drafted multiple times without negotiating a contract, skippers like East Carolina veteran Billy Godwin can lose juniors — like John Wooten this year — or high school commitments who have never played a collegiate game to the professional ranks.

For Godwin, watching the fast rise of Los Angeles Angels outfielder and former ECU commit Mike Trout sums up that sentiment perfectly. Trout committed to the Pirates but never played a game in Greenville before being a first-round draft pick.

“I never coached him, but honestly it makes me feel really good because they made a significant investment in him, and sometimes it goes the other way and it doesn’t work out,” Godwin said of Trout, who entered Saturday’s interleague game between the Angels and the L.A. Dodgers second in the American League with a .338 batting average. “He’s been worth every penny of it up to this point.”

Godwin said there is simply no way to draw the line when recruiting high-caliber players that might never play in college.
Instead, he goes and sees as many players as humanly possible during the summer.

“We just try to go attract the best talent we can get at East Carolina,” said Godwin, speaking from a high school baseball diamond in Conway, S.C., while on a scouting trip. “One of the things we’re doing is recruiting for 2013, 2014, kids that are rising juniors and seniors. But you’re also getting a chance to see your commitments, guys that have already committed to you, and you’re evaluating them. The evaluation doesn’t stop.”

Godwin said it’s often the level of commitment a coach or a staff has shown a player that will determine which school ultimately gets his commitment.

But it’s a tougher recruiting road for coaches than in other college sports.

“You’ve got to constantly evaluate where they’re at, because the majority of the kids we’re signing are getting professional interest,” Godwin said. “Of the 13 kids that we just signed, eight of them had moderate to significant interest from professional clubs. That tells you you’re on the right guys.”

While he too hasn’t played for the Pirates yet, middle infielder and former Louisburg College standout and Washington Nationals draftee Zach Houchins looks like he will play for ECU.

Now playing with the Wilson Tobs in the Coastal Plain League, it appears Houchins will leave a controversial couple of years in the past and start fresh with ECU.

Houchins found himself in the national sports media for the wrong reasons when his Twitter account was found to contain racial slurs shortly after being selected by the Nats.

“I’m excited that he’s going to be coming to school,” said Godwin, adding that he gets on his computer at least once a day and relies on text messaging to track his current players as they compete in wood bat leagues across the country. “He’s a great player.”

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or 252-329-9595.
Bianca Gentile Shoneman, a Greenville native, has been hired as the first full-time director of Uptown Greenville, a private, nonprofit organization chartered with revitalizing the city’s center.

“She’s got a great background and has experience in just about everything we were looking for in terms of organizational growth,” said Todd Hickey, the group’s chairman and a senior vice president at Vidant Medical Center.

Shoneman is a graduate of East Carolina University. After working in international development in Central America, she returned to ECU to complete a graduate degree in the Department of Geography focused on rural development.

“I have a lot of history in Greenville and throughout the region,” Shoneman said. “This makes my transition to Uptown Greenville feel seamless.”

Shoneman’s professional portfolio includes work in the public sector as a senior community development planner with the N.C. Department of Commerce, authoring investment and development strategies for communities throughout the eastern region. She has written municipal- and county-level comprehensive growth plans and has scripted zoning
ordinances, historic district guidelines and strategic plans for a variety of organizations, including Tryon Palace Historic Sites and Gardens and the Beaufort County Chamber of Commerce.

Before her tenure with Department of Commerce, she served as the local director of a bi-state initiative designed to create assets for low- to moderate-income families. At the time of the initiatives’ inception, Program for the Rural Carolinas was the largest private philanthropic investment in the history of North Carolina and South Carolina.

“I feel fortunate to have worked on many interesting projects throughout the community development spectrum,” Shoneman said.

Most recently, Shoneman was the special projects/community development planner for the City of Washington, working with the City Council and downtown development engine, Washington Harbor District Alliance, to leverage funding and link private investors to community building initiatives. Her efforts resulted in multiple public-private investments that created jobs and expanded the tax base.

Uptown Greenville’s primary funding comes from events such as Freeboot Friday, Piratefest and the Umbrella Market. Endorsements from key stakeholder institutions and residents also support the organization’s mission.

“My predecessor (Denise Walsh) did a phenomenal job seeding these events into Greenville’s unique community culture. Uptown Greenville will continue to host its flagship events in addition to expanding their efforts to support and attract businesses, capital improvements and quality of life projects to the Uptown district,” Shoneman said.
Arlie Honeycutt, right, reacts after winning the Miss North Carolina Scholarship Pageant for 2012 Saturday night, June 23, 2012, at the Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts. Runner-up Bindhu Pamarthi, Miss Johnston County, is in front left. Honeycutt will compete in the Miss America pageant in January.

**Garner's Arlie Honeycutt wins Miss North Carolina crown**
By J.N. Miller
June 25, 2012

RALEIGH -- Like mother, like daughter.

Thirty years after competing in the Miss North Carolina Scholarship Pageant, Beth Honeycutt experienced the thrill of watching her daughter, Arlie Honeycutt, be crowned Miss North Carolina 2012 Saturday night at the Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts.

“I knew we were in for a whirlwind, and I knew this was going to be an amazing year,” Beth Honeycutt said.

Arlie Honeycutt, 19, entered the pageant after winning Miss Kinston-Lenoir. Although she is from Garner, she attends East Carolina University, which allowed her to compete in Kinston.

Honeycutt gets a $15,000 scholarship and will now get ready for the Miss America pageant next January in Las Vegas.

She said she first was bitten by the pageant bug around 14 years old and was involved in the Outstanding Teen program in Garner. Honeycutt said she was shocked when she heard her name called as the winner.
“At one point, I looked down at my hands and I thought ‘OK, when am I going to wake up?’ This is a dream come true,” she said Sunday.

Honeycutt’s win capped off a busy week for the contestants filled with interviews, rehearsals and even a meeting with Jennifer Berry, Miss America 2006.

Honeycutt was followed by pageant runner-up Bindhu Pamarthi, Miss Johnston County; second runner-up, Jessie Smith, Miss Tarheel; third runner-up, Brooklyne Williamson, Miss Central Carolina; and fourth runner-up, Mya Kayler, Miss Queen City.

During her yearlong reign as Miss North Carolina, Honeycutt plans to promote volunteerism. Her platform is: “The Domino Effect – Inspiring Volunteerism One Person at a Time.”

She hopes to continue a program where she would speak to children about volunteering and create cards for the Children’s Miracle Network.

“I’m looking forward to getting out in our state talking about service, getting people engaged in service and really giving back to our state,” she said.

The pageant is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. Honeycutt said it’s an honor to win and mark the historic occasion.

Honeycutt understands that some people have a negative view of pageant winners, and she plans to work hard to change peoples’ perceptions. She said contestants are focused on giving back to the community.

“I think it’s really exciting as a titleholder to go out there and change that perception of the beauty queen ideal,” she said.

In 1962, Maria Fletcher from Asheville won the Miss America pageant after winning Miss North Carolina the year before. Honeycutt said if she won Miss America, it would be an incredible feeling, but she is happy just for the opportunity to participate.

“It would be absolutely incredible, but I’m so excited to represent North Carolina this year that win or lose, I’m just ecstatic,” she said.

Miller: 829-4520
Water is on our minds
By Peter A. Coclanis

With all the other problems the world is facing, it might seem strange to some that UNC-Chapel Hill recently selected water for its first pan-university research and teaching theme. For the next two years students, faculty and staff from all over campus will be exploring various and sundry issues relating to H2O here, there, and everywhere whether in the present, future or past.

Why water? Why now? Heck, North Carolina’s economy has been in the doldrums for almost five years now, and we’re not even in a drought.


Despite its relatively low-profile image and under-the-radar status as a capital-letter Problem, many experts agree that issues relating to water will be among the most prominent we will face in coming decades, with many viewing water as the new oil.

For starters, there are basic issues relating to demand and supply. While the world as a whole will not be running dry any time soon, many discrete locales are already facing shortages of fresh water. With world population likely to reach 9 or 9.5 billion by mid-century, with urbanization continuing to increase and with average income rising worldwide, demand for water, already intense, will rise rapidly, putting increasing pressure on limited supplies.

As a result, tradeoffs between water for human consumption and other uses will grow increasingly intense. Since roughly 75 percent of the world’s fresh water is currently used for agriculture, clearly, something’s gotta give. At a minimum, we’re going to have to learn to use less water more smartly and efficiently at relatively higher prices. This will entail a great deal of new thinking such as is being done in Singapore, where an ever increasing portion of the drinking supply is comprised of so-called NEWater, which is water recycled from toilets after intense purification. NEWater indeed!
There’s more to deal with: Oceanic pollution, diminished aquifers and water tables, political fights over water rights and the building of dams, overfished lakes and streams, etc. And we haven’t even mentioned the severe problems relating to so-called WaSH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) issues, which are perhaps the most pressing of all.

Don’t believe me? Try these stats from a 2010 U.N. Environment Programme report entitled “Sick Water? The Central Role of Wastewater Management in Sustainable Development.” According to this widely cited report, over 90 percent of the sewage and agricultural/industrial waste in developing countries is “discharged untreated directly into rivers, lakes or the oceans.” The (unsurprising) result? A child under 5 years of age dies from one or another water-related disease every 20 seconds. More than half of the world’s hospital beds are occupied by people suffering from diseases associated with water contamination or pollution. Many more people die each year from water-borne diseases than from war. Sobering to say the least.

In deliberating about a campus-wide theme at UNC-Chapel Hill, these were just some of the issues that made water rise to the top.

Water plays a prominent role in many of the great religions, and water themes have long been central in cultural expressions ranging from literature to art, and from dance to music. Over the next two years we don’t expect to solve every problem relating to water, nor to explore each and every facet of the infinitely complex relationship between water and culture, broadly construed. What we do hope to do, however, is to enrich and intensify the conversation about a priceless resource that, despite its importance, has all too often either been overlooked or employed wantonly and used cavalierly.

Peter A. Coclanis is Albert R. Newsome distinguished professor of history and director of the Global Research Institute at UNC-Chapel Hill.

Read more here: http://www.newsobserver.com/2012/06/25/2153431/water-is-on-our-minds.html#storylink=misearch#storylink=cpy
Addressing obesity epidemic requires smart policy and innovative solutions
By Christopher Gergen and Stephen Martin

Losing weight is really hard. And in North Carolina, we are struggling with a state-wide obesity epidemic. Consider this: two-thirds of North Carolinians are overweight or obese. In the last two decades, obesity rates have doubled across the state – an increase of 1.9 million adults, or the equivalent of filling the Carolina Panthers stadium 26 times.

One in three children between the ages of 10-17 in our state struggles with weight. They have a 70 percent chance of remaining overweight or obese as adults. Less than half of adults and only a quarter of high school students in North Carolina get the recommended amount of daily exercise. And it’s more likely that you will drink a sugar sweetened beverage today than consume the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables.

The impact on our lives is alarming. Lack of physical activity and poor eating habits are significant contributors to heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and certain types of cancer. All told, these behaviors are the second leading preventable cause of death in our state. Because of over-eating and lack of exercise, today’s children might be the first generation to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents’ generation.

What makes this challenge so tough is that it’s complex. Addressing it effectively requires a combination of smart policy and innovative solutions from the non-profit and private sector. And one such effort is already under way.

To catalyze community problem solving, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina has partnered up with N.C. State’s Institute of Emerging Issues and Forward Communities (that Christopher leads) to launch the Health Innovation Challenge.

Setting health goals

Aligned with Blue Cross’ interest in preventive health care solutions as well as their commitment to practical solutions for improving health in the state, the Challenge provides entrepreneurs incentives to develop, implement, and scale community-based solutions designed to promote healthy lifestyles with a specific focus on reducing obesity.
It works as a multi-round business plan competition for entrepreneurs focused on taking on obesity. The top three winners will receive up to $20,000 each to help pursue their ventures.

Launched in March, the first round attracted 64 innovative ideas from across the state. Judges selected 24 for a pitch competition at BCBS; after an intense day of presentations, 11 advanced to a 10-week accelerator run by Bull City Forward. During this time, these entrepreneurs will be matched up with office space and coaches, get feedback on their ideas, and plug into a peer leadership group of other social entrepreneurs. In mid-September, they will present their polished ideas for the final awards ceremony.

Among the top 11 ventures, innovation abounds. Waterra installs filtered water dispensers in schools that chill municipal water, mix it with low calorie vitamins, and allow students to use their own bottles (reducing land fill). Operating in 20 schools across the state so far, Waterra is now looking to extend its reach.

Ongoing guidance

Meanwhile, The Walking Classroom is an educational fitness program that allows fifth- graders to listen to standards-based curriculum podcasts while taking a brisk 20-minute walk. And MATCH is a multi-disciplinary program for eighth- graders emerging out of Greenville, N.C. that helps students set personal health goals, learn nutritional decision-making, and track their progress through an awards-based challenge.

Speaking of challenges, ChallengeWave helps communities and companies host healthy weight challenges – pitting city against city or company against company in friendly weight-loss competitions. And Closed Loop Health is using social media to provide overweight people a peer support group, ongoing guidance, and personal accountability.

Also in the tech space, INRFOOD is a smart-phone app that allows you to scan your food to determine its health attributes (it’s also great for folks with allergies or who are pregnant and need to avoid certain foods). And Sqord is an incentive-based game sparking kids’ exercise using accelerometers that measure a child’s daily exercise.

Commitment is key

LoMo Market brings the farmer’s market to your neighborhood through its sleek mobile grocery store. LoMo’s currently in the Triangle with ambitions to scale across the state. And Healthy Black Hair has developed a
proprietary head wrap designed to keep African-American women’s head cool and their hair sweat-free as they work out.

Finally, Cook for Good teaches people how to cook organically for less than $5 a day. And the Nash County Health Department is finding innovative ways to get healthy foods into under-served communities – a model it hopes to share statewide.

Will these promising ideas make a difference? We hope so. Still, smart innovation can only take us so far. It needs to be matched by a personal commitment to eating well, exercising right, and helping our communities get and stay healthy.

Christopher Gergen is founder of Bull City Forward & Queen City Forward, a fellow with Fuqua’s Center for the Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship at Duke University, and the author of "Life Entrepreneurs." Stephen Martin, a director at the nonprofit Center for Creative Leadership, is author of the forthcoming book "The Messy Quest for Meaning" and blogs at www.messyquest.com. They can be reached at authors@bullcityforward.org and followed on Twitter through @cgergen.
First in drones? NC hopes remote-aircraft industry takes flight
By Martha Quillin

North Carolina hopes to launch one of its next big industries out of a tiny airport in Hyde County.

The Division of Aviation, part of the state transportation department, is drafting plans for a test range where private companies and academic researchers could try out unmanned aircraft and the cameras and other devices they might carry.

If they’re successful at getting an FAA permit for the range, officials will then ask the Federal Aviation Administration to make it one of six sites nationwide the agency will use to help determine how unmanned craft can be incorporated into U.S. airspace.

Having a test range in the state could spur research and development worth billions of dollars, said Kyle Snyder, director of the NextGen Air Transportation Center at N.C. State University, which is working with the state, other universities and private industry to find uses for unmanned aircraft.

In North Carolina, Snyder said, “We could do the building, the testing, the final production, the training and the maintenance on these aircraft. We could do the full life-cycle.”

Unmanned aircraft — also called remotely piloted aircraft — have been in use for years, most notably by the U.S. and Israeli military. Large U.S. military drones have carried out attacks during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Within the United States, the FAA strictly regulates the use of unmanned aircraft. About five dozen universities and law enforcement agencies across the country are certified to operate them.

In North Carolina, they’re used by the Army and the Marines within the confines of Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune.

The test field proposed for the Engelhard Airport would be geared toward much smaller craft than those used to carry out military air strikes; those flown in Hyde County would weigh 50 pounds or less and have wing spans of up to about 10 feet. Depending on their size, they could be launched by hand or with a catapult.
Possible uses of remote planes and helicopters, which can cost from $20,000 into the millions of dollars each, are still being imagined.

“I can hardly think of a single industry where there wouldn’t be a use for these aircraft,” Snyder said. “If you’re an accountant, I probably can’t help you with a little helicopter. But anybody else, I look forward to talking to you about a business application.”

The technology of the aircraft is generally considered well established, though improvements continue to be made in battery life and capacity so that unmanned planes can stay in the air longer and carry heavier or more sophisticated payloads. Current research is focused on the systems the aircraft take up with them, such as digital and infrared cameras.

Civilian uses of the craft could include search-and-rescue over water, in wildernesses or in collapsed buildings; land surveying; post-disaster damage assessment; crop evaluation; forest fire spotting; livestock observation; and power-line trouble detection.

The proposed site

Richard Walls, aviation director at N.C. DOT, said the range is essentially “a box in the sky” where the planes could maneuver. This one, still being drawn, might be a rectangle as large as 5 miles by 2 miles, encompassing the Engelhard Airport. Remote aircraft generally fly below 1,000 feet, and when the range is in use, spotters would be on the ground to make sure the craft stay in view at all times. Companies or others renting the range would work with the airport to prevent conflicts with general aviation planes.

Proponents of the test range say it would allow the industry to grow within the state and could draw companies from outside that don’t have another place to test their gear. It could also benefit students in aeronautics, engineering and aviation at N.C. State, Elizabeth City State University and other schools.

“The potential is just unlimited,” said Mazie Swindell-Smith, manager of Hyde County, whose commissioners have endorsed the idea.

Along the Pamlico Sound in the northeastern part of the state, Hyde is one of North Carolina’s least populated and poorer counties. It has just 5,800 residents, most of them supported by commercial fishing, farming or timber production. Its county-owned airport is the least traveled in the state, though traffic picks up a bit as sportsmen come in when the fish are biting and ducks are on the wing.
Those who use the Engelhard Airport are accustomed to air-space restrictions. The airport, off U.S. 264, has three national wildlife refuges as neighbors, including 52,000-acre Lake Mattamuskeet, along with a Navy bombing range.

The buzz in Hyde County

There has been no opposition to the plan locally, Swindell-Smith said. Elsewhere, the American Civil Liberties Union and others have expressed privacy concerns about aircraft equipped with such sophisticated cameras cruising above their heads.

The FAA’s primary concern is safety, making sure the introduction of a new class of aircraft into the skies doesn’t create problems.

The state plans to apply to the FAA by September to create the test range. Under pressure from Congress to create a set of rules for unmanned aircraft to enter the open skies, the FAA has said it will designate its six test sites by the end of the year. Snyder said industry observers expect it will be at least two years after that before the rules are completed.

Whatever economic opportunity it presents, Swindell-Smith hopes for another windfall from the emerging remote-piloted aircraft industry. It has to do with a persistent problem in her watery home county besides poverty.

“I’d love to see somebody develop a better application for spraying mosquitoes.”

Quillin: 919-829-8989
There are more than 25 known Bartonella strains, and roughly nine have been linked to disease development in humans. The difficult-to-detect pathogen is transmitted by blood-sucking insects. Individuals with frequent animal exposure, especially to cats, can be at high risk.

N.C. State researchers develop a better test for cat scratch fever
By Whitney L.J. Howell

“Cat Scratch Fever” might be best known as a catchy song, but the infection of the same name, scientifically known as Bartonella – is an easy-to-catch infection caused by a common, hard-to-detect microbe. But a test developed by N.C. State researchers could make it simpler to pinpoint the pathogen and treat the resulting symptoms.

Using a patented insect medium and a sensitive, sophisticated DNA analysis tool, N.C. State investigators have developed a Bartonella diagnostic test for humans. The goal is to identify Bartonella infections faster and more accurately, and a partnership with Research Triangle Park-based company Galaxy Diagnostics, Inc. could make the test widely available.

“This microbe is one of a handful that physicians who specialize in chronic disease look at now, but a lot of doctors don’t test for it because of the high false-negative rates. If you don’t know exactly what to look for or if you don’t have the tools, why look for it?” said Amanda Elam, Galaxy Diagnostics president. “We think we’ve found a way to identify the bacteria, and we’re helping to find it in patients with this test.”

Currently, there are more than 25 known Bartonella strains, and roughly nine have been linked to disease development in humans.
However, diagnosis is challenging because it only takes a few Bartonella particles to prompt an infection. Small amounts mean even highly sensitive tests, such as DNA analysis with the help of polymerase chain reactions (PCR), often yield false negatives.

“Locating Bartonella is like finding a needle in a haystack with the infection being the needle and the haystack being the patient,” said Ed Breitschwerdt, internal medicine professor at N.C. State’s College of Veterinary Medicine. “If the haystack is too big and there are only a few needles, PCR will miss the infection more often than not.”

How the test works

Getting a Bartonella diagnosis faster means relying on the bugs that carry it, said Breitschwerdt, who led the test’s development team.

“During our 15 years of research, it became obvious many different insects – sand flies, lice, fleas, biting flies on cattle, and ticks – were confirmed Bartonella carriers,” Breitschwerdt said. What made his research different was finding the way to grow Bartonella more quickly in a Petrie dish.

“We asked whether Bartonella would be happier in an insect-growth medium compared to mammal-growth. It’s not too sophisticated a question, but it proved important because the answer was yes.”

To identify an infection, scientists kick-start Bartonella growth by putting a small (4 milliliter) blood sample into an insect growth medium called Bartonella alpha Proteobacteria Growth Medium that stimulates bacteria production. Within 10 days, there are enough bacteria present in the blood for a PCR test to yield an accurate diagnosis. Through a series of up to 40 temperature changes, PCR produces multiple copies of any bacteria DNA present, allowing scientists to definitively determine whether Bartonella is present.

The entire process – from petrie dish to verified results – takes between two to three weeks, said Galaxy’s Elam. Scientists can also run the test using non-blood bodily fluids or tissue samples.

Testing teams at Galaxy Diagnostics run PCR analyses on patient samples before inserting it into the insect growth medium in order to accurately gauge the bacteria’s growth. They also determine which Bartonella strain is present by running DNA sequence verification.

According to company data, the enhanced PCR analysis is four to five times more sensitive than the traditional PCR technique used to pinpoint the
bacteria in the bloodstream, Elam said. With this extra sensitivity, Breitschwerdt estimated the tests will accurately diagnose between 80 percent to 90 percent of tested individuals who have Bartonella infections.

But identifying the pathogen is only part of the battle, he said. “Our major contribution is that we’ve gone from thinking this bacterium only occurs in immuno-compromised patients or people with cat scratch disease to knowing there are quite a few people out there in specific populations who have this bacterium in their blood,” he said. “Now, we need research to find out what it means for patients to have this bacterium in their bloodstream.”

Proceeding with caution

Terry Yamauchi, M.D., an Arkansas Children’s Hospital pediatrician with infectious disease expertise, agreed with Breitschwerdt. While the insect growth medium-enhanced PCR is a valid method of identifying Bartonella, the analysis should not be a stand-alone clinical tool.

“The test itself seems to be scientifically very sound – growing more of the organism you’re searching for to improve test sensitivity will be helpful,” he said. “However, I worry about putting all our treatment-plan bets on this test because there’s little hard-core evidence indicating Bartonella is responsible for the chronic effects attributed to these infections.”

Until additional investigations into Bartonella yield a more definitive link between the bacteria and long-term symptoms, he said, physicians should opt to pair the test with traditional clinical observation and assessment.

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Confederate blockade runner Advance in an 1899 drawing by R.G. Skerrett.

Historians seek answers from a different sort of buried treasure
By Jay Price
Posted: Saturday, Jun. 23, 2012

KURE BEACH The surf line along the coast here is littered with the wrecks of a rakish, speed-at-all-costs breed of ship that briefly made Wilmington the most important city in the South.

Dozens and dozens went aground or were sunk while trying to slip past the Union blockade, creating the largest concentration of Civil War-era shipwrecks anywhere in the world.

Hundreds of times, though, these blockade runners got through. They’d tie up on the docks and their often-rowdy, daredevil crews would hit the streets, bars and hotels of the city, throwing around their hefty pay.

Meanwhile, their fabulously valuable cargos would be offloaded, and the arms and other military supplies shipped off to keep the Confederate Army fighting.

Now, 150 years later, archaeologists and historians are taking a closer look at this central but nearly forgotten chapter of U.S. and North Carolina history, a time when Gen. Robert E. Lee called the port city his lifeline.

“For me, its role made Wilmington the single most important place in the Confederacy,” said Stephen Wise, a historian, director of the Parris Island
Museum and author of “Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running During the Civil War.”

Researchers have applied for a federal grant to locate more of the wrecks and better document the sites. The clock is ticking because this was the dawn of metal shipbuilding and the wrecks that are made of iron are vanishing rapidly.

A historical group is also raising money for both a film about one of the most important wrecks – that of the Modern Greece – and for conserving the vast horde of artifacts brought ashore from it.

Wise is among the presenters at a symposium this week. He’ll talk about blockade running, and other speakers will focus on how the blockade worked from a Union perspective, the fortifications protecting the two entrances that the runners used to reach the port, and details about the Modern Greece.

Having two ways into the port to pick from gave Wilmington a big advantage for blockade running, Wise said.

And given that Union forces effectively blocked shipments into Charleston and took New Orleans early in the war, Wilmington was the only thing that allowed the South to keep fighting.

“If it also had been taken early in the war, the Confederacy couldn’t have survived past 1863,” Wise said.

A rough party

Not that the people of the city were thrilled with their role. Many of the sailors partied with abandon, and their money and lifestyle attracted prostitutes, con men and other criminals. The murder rate jumped, and one ship was even blamed for unleashing a yellow fever epidemic that killed hundreds in the fall of 1862.

The pay that allowed all that high living sounds like modern drug-running. Midway through the war, a captain could make the equivalent of $100,000 today for a single voyage, Wise said. A first officer might make the modern equivalent of $20,000 to $25,000 and a simple crewman $5,000. A handful of crews were Confederate military and paid much less. A Confederate Army private was making the equivalent of about $254 a month.

The sky-high war prices on the goods brought in, and the valuable commodities such as cotton that were shipped out, made for huge profits when a voyage succeeded. Cotton bought here for pennies a pound could be
sold in Britain for as much as a dollar. The companies that owned the ships, many of them British ventures, could reap as much as a 100 percent return on the investment with a single run.

Some never completed a single voyage, but others got through a 20 times or more.

Many Wilmington residents would have looked upon the sailors and the problems they created as a necessary evil, said Chris Fonvielle, an assistant professor in history at UNC-W and author of two books on the Civil War in southeastern part of the state.

“They understood that this really was the only way the Confederacy was going to be able to fight, by continuing to get these vital supplies from Europe and in particular great Britain,” Fonvielle said.

About 60 percent of Confederate small arms came in via blockade runners, Wise said, along with about 30 percent of the lead they used for bullets, and at least three-quarters of the saltpeter that was a key ingredient in gunpowder.

Also coming on the ships was most medicine needed for the troops, most of the cloth used in their uniforms and leather for boots and other uses. Late in the war, there were shipments of canned meat for Lee’s army, some of it produced in places such as Chicago and Cleveland and routed surreptitiously to neutral ports, then onto blockade runners.

Built for speed

Offshore, the Union blockaders suffered through month after month of some of the most tedious duty of the war, sailing back and forth, scanning the horizons day and night as best they could.

Still, the duty was considered desirable because it was much safer than fighting ashore. The blockade runners generally weren’t armed and, so that they could preserve non-combatant status, didn’t fight back. Many crew members were foreign, and if captured by the Union navy, Wise said, could only be held briefly.

Also, blockading could pay well, particularly if your ship caught a valuable runner, as the crew got to divvy up “prize” money that could be the equivalent of years of normal pay.

Aboard the prey that they were hunting, life was much more tense. The chance of getting through on any given run was about 75 percent, Wise said.
The ships came from neutral and relatively close ports, typically Bermuda but sometimes Nassau, he said.

Larger ships brought the goods to those places, and they were then loaded into blockade runners. They would then depart, timing their approach to land so that it came just after dark.

The ships that kept the Confederacy alive were the very fastest that could be built, stuffed with giant engines. But their final approaches to land were made softly.

They would try to cut across the warm, blue waters of the Gulf Stream in late afternoon, just before the light started to fail, looking all the while for the tall masts of the first of three picket lines of ships that were hunting them, said Kevin Foster, the recently retired head of the National Park Service’s Maritime Heritage Program. Foster is writing a book on the blockade running ships.

Skippers would shoot for landfall well north or south of Cape Fear, then run along the coast, just outside the breakers. With luck, Confederate artillery might be able to keep any Union chasers at bay until they could get into either New Inlet to the north, or the mouth of the Cape Fear to the south.

The stealth required meant that tiny details counted. Lights were all snuffed and crew members weren’t allowed to smoke. Aloft, there might be just one lookout, dressed in the loosest, most shapeless clothes he could find so as not to present even the sharp line of a starched sleeve that would stand out in the evening haze.

Every man on deck would be in light clothing, which blended better than dark with the nighttime haze.

Softly, softly, the ship pushed on, slowed just enough that the paddle wheels and stern wave didn’t trigger much natural luminescence on the sea surface, and fire from the coal didn’t flare from the top of the smokestacks. But enough steam was up that the ship could rapidly accelerate if the time came.

The toughest test, Foster said, could be the inner of the three lines of blockaders, which sometimes included captured blockade runners that were as fast as the ones they pursued.

“And speed was the main requisite for these ships,” Foster said.

And, oh, the names …

In fact, the Darwinian nature of the trade pushed developments in ship design to new heights.
At the beginning of the war, ships such as Modern Greece – a bulky ship designed for the timber trade – could achieve perhaps 10 knots (11 miles per hour). By the end, some of the long, slender, engine-stuffed and purpose-designed blockade runners, such as the Presto or its sister ship the Dare could make more than twice that speed.

“They’d put the cargo in the space they had left over after they had crammed in these giant engines,” Foster said.

The runners also were the first to make serious use of camouflage colors to blend in better with the sea and sky.

The names are fun to contemplate. Some were named for fast, wily or simply elusive animals: Bat, Lynx, Stag, Deer, Fox, Night Hawk, Condor. Others were named for goddesses with attributes perceived to be tied with Southern values of hearth, home or growing things: Flora, Hebe, Ceres.

A favorite of Foster’s: “Let ’er Rip.”

“That seems particularly Southern to me,” he said. “I mean, you can see that painted on the side of a moonshiner’s car just as well as you can a blockade runner.”

Some were so lightly built that they would be badly damaged in groundings, or simply by heavy seas. At least six disappeared without a trace while being delivered from their shipyards in Britain to transshipment ports for their first run, he said.

The ships were glamorous and some of the characters that emerged from the tales about them equally so. There was the famous spy and prominent society figure Rose O’Neal Greenhow, who drowned in the surf when fleeing a grounded runner via rowboat because she was weighed down by $2,000 in gold hidden under her dress, according to legend.

Then there was the true story of another female Confederate spy – a legendarily promiscuous one at that – named Belle Boyd, who was among a crew captured by Union sailors. She talked one Yankee crewman into letting her captain escape to Canada and then later married the crewman accused of helping her.

There were captains celebrated for making more than 20 successful runs. Another was known for a prodigious capacity for rum punch, hardly a stretch, given that many modern yachtsmen are known for the same.

Price: (919) 829-4526