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Students dig into Bath’s history

By KEVIN SCOTT CUTLER
Lifestyles & Features Editor
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BATH — A group of high school students are winding up a summer history project this week in North Carolina’s oldest town.

The 15 students are part of a Summer Ventures program under the direction of Charles R. Ewen, professor in the Department of Anthropology at East Carolina University.

Ewen likened the four-week program to Governor’s School.

“Every campus has its own Summer Ventures program,” he said. “It’s state funded so these groups don’t pay for anything. It’s a really good experience. They get to do things that they haven’t done in high school.”

The program is open to students from across the state, with one catch — a student cannot attend the Summer Ventures program at the campus closest to his or her home. As a result, Ewen’s students hail from such widespread places as Camden, Lincolnton, Walnut Cove, Raleigh, Wilmington and Greensboro.

The group has excavated a site in the back yard of Bath’s historic Bonner House, unearthing such finds as pieces of ceramics and pottery, pipe stems, an iron knife handle, wine bottle glass and a fragment of a locally-made red clay tobacco pipe.

“We’re finding a lot of 18th century debris,” said Lauren McMillan, an ECU graduate assistant working under Ewen. “We thought there might be a brick foundation here, but it turns out there isn’t. But we are finding a lot of good artifacts from the Colonial period and the Bonner period. And we have a piece of what is possibly historic Indian pottery.”

The findings reflect that not only was Bath a port, bringing in goods from England, there was also a thriving community of people who made many of the things they used on a daily basis, according to McMillan.

The group has also worked on two vacant lots along Bath’s Main Street in hopes of learning more about how the properties were used generations ago.
"We're using ground penetrating radar and the students are dropping flags when they see something interesting," Ewen said. "Despite this heat and humidity, they've been in good spirits and asking good questions. I'm impressed."

Stuart Rhea, a 15-year-old student from Lincolnton, is in the enviable position of being the only male in the group.

"You just kind of get relied on to carry the heavy stuff, and you get to dig a lot if you're the only guy," Rhea said with a laugh.

"He's lying," chimed in Rene Kronlage, 16, of Camden. "But he does dig good holes."

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Larry Seigler named 10th recipient of Jay Robinson Leadership Award

Lawrence L. “Larry” Seigler, a retired executive with DSM Pharmaceuticals Inc. in Greenville, was named the 10th recipient of the Jay Robinson Leadership Award given by the Public School Forum of North Carolina.

The award honors the extraordinary leadership and service of Jay Robinson, former school superintendent, vice president of the university system, chairman of the State Board of Education and first president of the Public School Forum.

Seigler’s career has spanned 40 years of which 24 years were at Burroughs Wellcome. He received his undergraduate degree at the University of North Carolina in pharmacy, and later at the same university completed the Executive Program. He has been honored with many awards in Pitt County including Volunteer of the Year and Outstanding Citizen of the Year. He also helped create the Pitt County Educational Foundation and initiated the Pitt County School Entrepreneurial Awards Program.

Seigler has served State Board of Education initiatives as co-chairman of the E-Learning Commission, a member of the Compliance Commission and the ABCs advisory committee. His community involvement ranges from serving on and leading a number of boards including the Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce. His positions include Pitt County Memorial Hospital trustee, Pitt County Education Foundation board director, Greenville Learning Center board director, and member of the ECU College of Education Advancement Council.

"With large measures of dedication, leadership and courage, Larry was led to help create the Pitt County Education Foundation in the 1980s," Mike Priddy, former Pitt County Schools superintendent and chairman of the N.C. Teaching Fellows Commission, said. "Over 400 teachers in the system have benefited from the Teacher Executive Institute, as they learned firsthand about the workforce needs of local industries.

"Larry has a long history of promoting public education through the business community," Priddy said. "Larry was an early leader for the creation of the Greenville-Pitt County Chamber of Commerce’s Partners in Education Program. Jay Robinson would be proud to have him recognized."

Greenville attorney Jim Hopf said, "His willingness to take the lead and to personally get involved, roll up his sleeves, contribute without hesitation and do all he can to make a difference in our public schools has been second to none. He sets the example, leads the way by doing, and tirelessly raises the bar for the common good that is public education."

In addition to Seigler, other finalists for this year’s award were Speaker of the House of Representatives Joe Hackney of Chapel Hill and former Senator Howard Lee, also of Chapel Hill.

The award was created to honor Jay Robinson, a distinguished educator, superintendent of Charlotte/McKeeleburg Schools, UNC vice president, and former chairman of the State Board of Education. He is best remembered as the architect of the state’s ABCs accountability plan.

Award winners include:
- Laura Bilbro-Berry, 2000 N.C. Teacher of the Year, an N.C. Teaching Fellow and lead coordinator of Wachovia Partnership East and ECU College of Education;
- Dr. Tom McNeel, former superintendent of Caldwell County Schools, now retired;
- Dr. Jim Causby, former superintendent of Johnston County Schools, executive director of the NCASA and executive director of the N.C. School Superintendents’ Association;
- Dr. Bob Bridges, former superintendent of Wake County Schools and former chairman of the Closing the Achievement Gap Commission, now retired;
- Judge Howard E. Manning Jr., Wake County Superior Court Judge presiding over the Leandro case;
- Dr. Ann Denlinger, former superintendent of Durham Public Schools, now president of the Wake Education Partnership;
- Philip J. Kirk Jr., former vice president of External Relations, Catawba College, former chairman of the State Board of Education, now director of Brady Energy Services;
- Dr. Bill Harrison, former superintendent of Cumberland County Schools and now chairman of the State Board of Education;
- Dr. Dudley Flood, education consultant.
East Carolina Heart Institute, PCMH earns Beacon Award for critical care

The Cardiac Intensive Care Unit (CICU) at the East Carolina Heart Institute at Pitt County Memorial Hospital has received the Beacon Award for Critical Care Excellence, an award given by the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN).

The award specifically recognizes the nation's top pediatric, progressive and adult critical care units across a multitude of hospitals. The recognition itself represents extraordinary commitment to high-quality critical care standards, and dedication to the exceptional care of patients and their families.

Brian Floyd, vice president and executive director of cardiovascular and emergency services at the East Carolina Heart Institute at PCMH, said the Beacon Award is a highly competitive national recognition of excellence in nursing units.

"With more than 6,000 hospital units eligible for the award, the Beacon award highlights what is best about our hospital: the incredible people who work together to deliver incredible care every day," Floyd said. "While we are proud of the services and technology of the East Carolina Heart Institute at Pitt County Memorial Hospital, our best achievement is building teams of caregivers like those in the CICU."

As a Beacon Award recipient, the CICU succeeded in the following areas, as measured against evidence-based national criteria:

- Recruitment and retention;
- Education, training and mentoring;
- Research and evidence-based practice;
- Patient outcomes;
- Leadership and organization ethics;
- Healing environment.

Beacon Award units realize many benefits of having met rigid criteria for excellence, high-quality standards and exceptional care of patients and patients' families:

- Influence and Recognition: Units that participate in the Beacon Award process help set the standards for what constitutes an excellent acute or critical care environment through the collection of evidence-based information. Patient safety and quality programs, such as the Leapfrog Group Hospital Quality and Safety Survey, consider Beacon achievement in their evaluation process.

- Credibility: Consumers, who are paying much closer attention today to quality-of-care factors with regard to their own health care, will take this level of recognition into consideration when choosing a hospital for care or treatment.

- Recruitment and Retention: Prospective employees will recognize a Beacon Award unit as a healthy work environment, a place where quality of care is tied directly to quality of staff. Nurses who work in these units will recognize that their skills and expertise are appreciated and valued, boosting employee morale.

The East Carolina Heart Institute is a partnership that includes University Health Systems' Pitt County Memorial Hospital and East Carolina University, along with cardiovascular experts in private practice, academic medicine and research. The East Carolina Heart Institute is the first in North Carolina devoted exclusively to education, research, treatment and prevention of cardiovascular diseases.

The American Association of Critical-Care Nurses is the largest specialty nursing organization in the world, representing the interests of more than 500,000 acute and critical care nurses. Its international headquarters are in Aliso Viejo, Calif.
Board appointment

Robert J. Greczyn Jr. has been named to the board of directors of TrustAtlantic Financial Corp. and to the board of its wholly owned subsidiary, TrustAtlantic Bank.

Greczyn recently retired as chief executive officer of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina. He joins nine other business leaders on the boards that direct the affairs of the TrustAtlantic Financial and the bank.

"This is a really good opportunity for me on several levels," Greczyn said. "Since my retirement, I have been researching roles where I might continue my professional development and utilize the business experience I've gained. I see this position with the TrustAtlantic board as an excellent use of my time and look forward to playing an active role in this young, dynamic company."

Greczyn spent 30 years in the health care industry and the last 12 as an executive, president and CEO with BCBSNC. Prior to those roles he was president and CEO of CIGNA HealthCare Inc., as well as Healthsource Health Plans Inc. He holds a master's degree in health administration from the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and a bachelor of arts degree in psychology from East Carolina University.

Greczyn is on the Board of Trustees and immediate past chairman at ECU.

Headquartered in Raleigh, TrustAtlantic Financial Corp. is the parent company of TrustAtlantic Bank. The bank operates one banking office in Greenville, two in Raleigh and one in Cary.
Habitat receives SEANC donation

MEMBERS OF District 65 of the State Employees Association of North Carolina (SEANC) donated $1,000 to Habitat for Humanity during its annual meeting on June 15. The district represents members from East Carolina University. Shown are Andy Brown with Habitat and Lynn Tuthill, the district’s volunteer action chairman.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Decision-making needn’t suffer with age, NCSU study finds

By Ilana Yurkiewicz
Staff Writer

When it comes to decision-making among seniors, this may be the best advice: keep it simple.

Older people make better decisions using their intuition — their “gut” reactions — than using analysis, particularly when forced to plow through an array of information where the right choice isn’t obvious, N.C. State researchers report.

Yet even when analyzing, simply being old does not doom you to weak performance. In fact, seniors with high education levels reason through decisions almost as well as those less than half their age.

The findings were drawn from a study published last month in Psychology and Aging, an American Psychological Association journal that publishes original articles on adult development and aging.

"None of this means that old people are bad at making decisions," said Tara Queen, a psychology Ph.D. student and lead author of the study. "We just need to be more sensitive about how to present information to optimize decision making.”

When faced with a choice, people reach into their mental toolboxes for two instruments of decision-making: intuition and analysis, also known as deliberation. An intuitive decision involves scanning the big picture and then going with your instinct. A deliberative one, in contrast, requires filtering relevant from irrelevant information and then calling upon logic to make your pick.

Queen and senior author Dr. Thomas Hess, professor of psychology, simulated the decision-making processes through two fictional sce-

arios: choosing an apartment and a bank.

Study participants were given background information such as “you and your spouse are physically active,” and “prefer to have plenty of storage space” and then asked to make a decision from four answer choices.

To mimic a deliberative task, the researchers cluttered the answer choices with useful but extraneous information. The intuitive option was set up so that the best choice stood out in a quick once-over of the information as a whole.

Younger participants were between the ages of 17 and 28, while the older ones ranged from 60 to 86. When the results were tallied, researchers noticed an overall trend of young folks outperforming their older peers in both types of tasks.

However, this difference became much smaller when the researchers looked at other factors.

Seniors did much better when using their intuition than when relying on deliberation. They also did better if they had higher education levels — and this applied to both deliberative and intuitive thinking tasks.

The bottom line, the authors say, is that getting older doesn’t necessarily mean getting worse at decision-making.

"Age is not the only factor at play," agreed Dr. Daniel Kaufer, a neurology professor at UNC Chapel Hill who was not involved in the study. "Educational level, individual personality differences, and the complexity of the decision all may influence the ultimate choice.”

The findings suggest that society should rethink how it pitches decisions to its older residents.

Queen points to the array of choices thrust upon seniors in recent Medicare plans as a perfect example of overwhelming their deliberative ability.

"The government presented people with some 50-plus plans, with a lot of detail,” she said. "It was information overload.”

Dr. Scott Huettel, a psychology professor at Duke, agreed.

"It’s now a challenge for policy makers, scientists and others to try to identify what ways to present information,” he said.

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To Stop Cheats, Colleges Learn Their Trickery

By TRIP GABRIEL

ORLANDO, Fla. — The frontier in the battle to defeat student cheating may be here at the testing center of the University of Central Florida.

No gum is allowed during an exam: chewing could disguise a student’s speaking into a hands-free cellphone to an accomplice outside.

The 228 computers that students use are recessed into desk tops so that anyone trying to photograph the screen — using, say, a pen with a hidden camera, in order to help a friend who will take the test later — is easy to spot.

Scratch paper is allowed — but it is stamped with the date and must be turned in later.

When a proctor sees something suspicious, he records the student’s real-time work at the computer and directs an overhead camera to zoom in, and both sets of images are burned onto a CD for evidence.

Taylor Ellis, the associate dean who runs the testing center within the business school at Central Florida, the nation’s third-largest campus by enrollment, said that cheating had dropped significantly, to 14 suspected incidents out of 64,000 exams administered during the spring semester.

“I will never stop it completely, but I’ll find out about it,” Mr. Ellis said.

As the eternal temptation of students to cheat has gone high-tech — not just on exams, but also by cutting and pasting from the Internet and sharing of homework online like music files — educators have responded with their own efforts to crack down.

This summer, as incoming freshmen fill out forms to select roommates and courses, some colleges — Duke and Bowdoin among them — are also requiring them to complete online tutorials about plagiarism before they can enroll.
Anti-plagiarism services requiring students to submit papers to be vetted for copying is a booming business. Fifty-five percent of colleges and universities now use such a service, according to the Campus Computing Survey.

The best-known service, Turnitin.com, is engaged in an endless cat-and-mouse game with technologically savvy students who try to outsmart it. "The Turnitin algorithms are updated on an on-going basis," the company warned last month in a blog post titled "Can Students 'Trick' Turnitin?"

The extent of student cheating, difficult to measure precisely, appears widespread at colleges. In surveys of 14,000 undergraduates over the last four years, an average of 61 percent admitted to cheating on assignments and exams.

The figure declined somewhat from 65 percent earlier in the decade, but the researcher who conducted the surveys, Donald L. McCabe, a business professor at Rutgers, doubts there is less of it. Instead, he suspects students no longer regard certain acts as cheating at all, for instance, cutting and pasting a few sentences at a time from the Internet.

Andrew Daines, who graduated in May from Cornell, where he served on a board in the College of Arts and Sciences that hears cheating cases, said Internet plagiarism was so common that professors told him they had replaced written assignments with tests and in-class writing.

Mr. Daines, a philosophy major, contributed to pages that Cornell added last month to its student Web site to bring attention to academic integrity. They include a link to a voluntary tutorial on avoiding plagiarism and a strongly worded admonition that "other generations may not have had as many temptations to cheat or plagiarize as yours," and urging students to view this as a character test.

Mr. Daines said he was especially disturbed by an epidemic of students' copying homework. "The term 'collaborative work' has been taken to this unbelievable extreme where it means, because of the ease of e-mailing, one person looking at someone else who's done the assignment," he said.

At M.I.T., David E. Pritchard, a physics professor, was able to accurately measure homework copying with software he had developed for another purpose — to allow students to complete sets of physics problems online. Some answered the questions so fast, "at first I thought we had some geniuses here at M.I.T.," Dr. Pritchard said. Then he realized they were completing problems in less time than it took to read them and were copying the answers — mostly, it turned out, from e-mail from friends who had already done the assignment.
About 20 percent copied one-third or more of their homework, according to a study Dr. Pritchard and colleagues published this year. Students who copy homework find answers at sites like Course Hero, which is a kind of Napster of homework sharing, where students from more than 3,500 institutions upload papers, class notes and past exams.

Another site, Cramster, specializes in solutions to textbook questions in science and engineering. It boasts answers from 77 physics textbooks — but not Dr. Pritchard's popular "Mastering Physics," an online tutorial, because his publisher, Pearson, searches the Web for solutions and requests they be taken down to protect its copyright.

"You can use technology as well for detecting as for committing" cheating, Dr. Pritchard said.

The most popular anti-cheating technology, Turnitin.com, says it is now used by 9,500 high schools and colleges. Students submit written assignments to be compared with billions of archived Web pages and millions of other student papers, before they are sent to instructors. The company says that schools using the service for several years experience a decline in plagiarism.

Cheaters trying to outfox Turnitin have tried many tricks, some described in blogs and videos. One is to replace every “e” in plagiarized text with a foreign letter that looks like it, such as a Cyrillic “е,” meant to fool Turnitin’s scanners. Another is to use the Macros tool in Microsoft Word to hide copied text. Turnitin says neither scheme works.

Some educators have rejected the service and other anti-cheating technologies on the grounds that they presume students are guilty, undermining the trust that instructors seek with students.

Washington & Lee University, for example, concluded several years ago that Turnitin was inconsistent with the school’s honor code, “which starts from a basis of trusting our students,” said Dawn Watkins, vice president for student affairs. “Services like Turnitin.com give the implication that we are anticipating our students will cheat.”

For the similar reasons, some students at the University of Central Florida objected to the business school’s testing center with its eye-in-the-sky video in its early days, Dr. Ellis said.

But last week during final exams after a summer semester, almost no students voiced such concerns. Rose Calixte, a senior, was told during an exam to turn her cap backward, a rule meant to prevent students from writing notes under the brim. Ms. Calixte disapproved of the fashion statement but didn’t knock the reason: "This is college. There is the possibility for people to cheat."
A first-year M.B.A. student, Ashley Haumann, said that when she was an undergraduate at the University of Florida, “everyone cheated” in her accounting class of 300 by comparing answers during quizzes. She preferred the highly monitored testing center because it “encourages you to be ready for the test because you can’t turn and ask, ‘What’d you get?’ ”

For educators uncomfortable in the role of anti-cheating enforcer, an online tutorial in plagiarism may prove an elegantly simple technological fix.

That was the finding of a study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research in January. Students at an unnamed selective college who completed a Web tutorial were shown to plagiarize two-thirds less than students who did not. (The study also found that plagiarism was concentrated among students with lower SAT scores.)

The tutorial “had an outsize impact,” said Thomas S. Dee, a co-author, who is now an economist at the University of Virginia.

“Many instructors don’t want to create this kind of adversarial environment with their students where there is a presumption of guilt,” Mr. Dee said. “Our results suggest a tutorial worked by educating students rather than by frightening them.”

Only a handful of colleges currently require students to complete such a tutorial, which typically illustrates how to cite a source or even someone else’s ideas, followed by a quiz.

The tutorial that Bowdoin uses was developed with its neighbor colleges Bates and Colby several years ago. Part of the reason it is required for enrollment, said Suzanne B. Lovett, a Bowdoin psychology professor whose specialty is cognitive development, is that Internet-age students see so many examples of text, music and images copied online without credit that they may not fully understand the idea of plagiarism.

As for Central Florida’s testing center, one of its most recent cheating cases had nothing to do with the Internet, cellphones or anything tech. A heavily tattooed student was found with notes written on his arm. He had blended them into his body art.
Letter: New attractions a welcome boost
Tuesday, July 6, 2010

The Greenville City Council and the Pitt County Board of Commissioners are to be commended in supporting efforts in bringing attractions to our area which are educational and entertaining. The recent announcement about the Science Museum on Dickinson Avenue with the city purchasing the building, which will allow a non-profit group to develop the project, was welcomed by everyone who wants to see downtown improved. This project will bring many school students to our city and will provide ECU students an opportunity for various internships. This will truly be an asset to our community.
Likewise, the county providing the land for the new home of the Village of Yesteryear was a giant step forward in preserving our history and providing an attraction which will bring many here. For those who have an agricultural heritage, it will give an opportunity to relive the “good old days.” For those who have a city background, these folks will have a greater appreciation for the old vocation — tilling the earth. The village board has a number of plans for future programs and affiliations with other attractions in Pitt County.
The Red Banks Primitive Baptist Church, the May Museum of Farmville, the Depot in Grifton and the Ange House in Winterville all have a special place in the history and development of Greenville and Pitt County.
Along with the Eppes Museum, the Greenville Museum of Art and, hopefully, a future museum for the city of Greenville as well as the ones mentioned above, we will become a destination stop for visitors to the area. We should continue to encourage our government leaders to support endeavors to preserve history, to promote education and to promote tourist attractions which will bring commerce and revenue to our business community.
Again, our thanks to the council and commissioners for their support.
GREENVILLE BANKS JR.
Greenville