THE DAILY CLIPS

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ECU's 12th annual Guitar Festival offers public concerts

The four-day festival is sponsored by a nonprofit music foundation and brings some of the world's most respected classical guitarists to the area.

East Carolina University's School of Music will hold its 12th annual Guitar Festival Saturday through Tuesday.

Organized by ECU's director of guitar studies Elliot Frank, this year's festival is sponsored by the D'Addario Foundation for the Performing Arts, a nonprofit foundation committed to assisting the growth and appreciation of stringed, band, and orchestral music throughout the world.

Frank has performed at guitar festivals throughout the United States, including the Guitar Foundation of America, Appalachian Guitar Fest and the Columbus State Guitar Symposium.

He has been a guest soloist with the North Carolina Symphony and was awarded first prizes from International Guitar Competition in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and the Concurso Internacional "Alirio Diaz" in Venezuela.

The local guitar event brings some of the world's most respected classical guitarists to the area for public concerts each day.

This year's performers include 2007 solo guitar competition winner Austin Moorhead, Valerie Hartzell, Douglas James and workshop headliner Jason Vieaux.

An all-star spectacular featuring Andrew Zohn and the Italian guitarists SoloDuo, Matteo Mela and Lorenzo Micheli, will also be held.

Workshop director Elliot Frank will perform with Valerie Hartzell at 7:30 p.m. Saturday.

At 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, some of the finest young guitarists in the nation will compete in the finals of the ECU Solo Guitar Competition and the finals of the ECU Youth Guitar Competition.

All concerts are held in A.J. Fletcher Recital Hall.

GUITAR FESTIVAL SCHEDULE

- 4:30 p.m. Saturday: Austin Moorhead
- 7:30 p.m. Saturday: Elliot Frank and Valerie Hartzell
- 7:30 p.m. Sunday: Douglas James and Jason Vieaux
- 7:30 p.m. Monday: Solo Duo (Matteo Mela and Lorenzo Micheli) and Andrew Zohn
- 7:30 p.m. Tuesday: Solo competition finals
- Cost: $15 for adults and $10 for students per concert or a series package for $40 for adults and $20 for students.
- Call: 928-4768
'Arsenic and Old Lace' comes to Turnage Theater

BY KELLEY KIRK-SWINDELL
The Daily Reflector

“I feel like an old regular. John (Shearin) has invited me here several times. In a way, it’s like coming home,” said “Arsenic and Old Lace” director Walter Schoen.

Shearin is the artistic director of East Carolina University’s School of Theatre and Dance. He is responsible for selecting the plays, casts and directors for all the ECU theater productions.

Schoen is the chairman of Theater and Dance at the University of Richmond in Virginia, where he’s been since 1991.

ECU’s production of “Arsenic and Old Lace” runs through July 19 at the Turnage Theater in Washington, N.C. It is the second of three ECU summer theater productions.

Last year, Schoen directed the ECU summer production of “Barefoot in the Park” at McGinnis Theater. “Arsenic and Old Lace,” however, will be staged at the Turnage Theater.

McGinnis receives some much-needed repairs.

The Turnage recently reopened after sitting empty for more than three decades. A multimillion-dollar refurbishment finished last fall.

“Arsenic and Old Lace” was written by American playwright Joseph Kesselring in 1939 and is best known for its film adaptation starring Cary Grant.

The story revolves around two elderly Brooklyn sisters, Abby and Martha Brewster, who are known for their philanthropic actions within their community.

Unfortunately, their charity includes poisoning old men who come to their home looking for lodging. Assisting them, albeit unknowingly, with their crimes is their mentally challenged nephew, Teddy. His delusions make him think he’s Teddy Roosevelt and digs what he believes is the Panama Canal in the basement. The old women use the holes as graves for those they’ve poisoned with a mixture of elderberry wine laced with arsenic.

Matters in the Brewster home get complicated when a second nephew — theater critic Mortimer Brewster — discovers the murders, and finds himself in the basement.

“Arsenic and Old Lace” is a straight play, meaning that there is no singing or dancing in the production,” Schoen said.

With a cast of 14 people, it’s a pretty large production, especially for a space the size of the Turnage. “We’ll be filling that stage, definitely,” Schoen said.

Prior to visiting ECU this summer, Schoen opened a production of “The Glass Menagerie” by Tennessee Williams in Saratov, Russia.

“We started rehearsals in May and opened the show in June on the banks of the Volga River,” he said.

He also has another production, “The Sly Fox,” being performed in Russia.

Contact Kelley Kirk-Swindell at 329-9596 or kkirk-
NCSU to check pay for 800 jobs
School didn't understand policy

By Eric Ferreri, Staff Writer

N.C. State University must re-examine more than 800 employment contracts after misinterpreting a UNC system policy intended to add a layer of scrutiny to unusually large raises.

The most notable salary increase will still likely be the one given to first lady Mary Easley, whose recent 88 percent raise — to $170,000 — prompted the review. But last year, NCSU had 822 fixed-term workers on its rolls, employees ranging from top administrators to one-course lecturers to research technicians paid by federal grants.

NCSU will look at all such contracts to see if any workers received pay raises topping 15 percent and $10,000. Raises at that level must be approved by the UNC system's Board of Governors. Easley's new contract, a five-year term as an executive-in-residence,

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with duties including directing a seminar series, easily met that criteria but was never reviewed by the university system board.

"We know now that regardless of how they're appointed, the difference in salary needs to be approved," NCSU Provost Larry Nielsen said Thursday. "We will abide by that."

Nielsen said he didn't know how long it will take to review all the contracts, but he said he doesn't expect to discover a lot of pay increases above the acceptable range. The work must be concluded by September; that's when the UNC system board next meets.

The raise policy does not apply to new hires, and Nielsen reiterated Thursday his belief that Easley's raise approved by the campus earlier this year amounted to a new job, because she was first hired in 2005 for a three-year term with an $80,000 salary. Her new role, though with the same job title, has expanded duties and a new, five-year term.

Easley was a prosecutor for 10 years and in private law practice for eight. She also taught law at N.C. Central University. Since being hired at NCSU, she has taught three classes a year and directed a speaker series whose participants have included former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala and U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, a South Carolina Republican. Her new duties include teaching two classes, coordinating law education initiatives and creating a public safety leadership center.

She is the only executive-in-residence under the provost's office, so Nielsen used approved salary ranges for full, tenured professors in business law, business management and public administration as guidelines. He acknowledged that doing so wasn't a perfect comparison, because full professors have work expectations that differ from Easley's.

"It was the most comparable" range, he said.

The acceptable salary range for a full professor in business law is between $123,300 and $328,600, meaning that NCSU can hire a new business law professor at any salary within that range without getting UNC system approval.

Easley's job was Nielsen's idea, he said, and stemmed from his desire for NCSU to have a top-tier seminar series. He heard that Easley was ending her time teaching law at N.C. Central University several years ago and pitched the job to her. It was created for her and was not advertised as a job opening, a mechanism Nielsen said the university can do.

"When we see a circumstance when special needs of the institution match up with a person, we can go that route," he said.

Given that Easley's new job and salary must be approved by the UNC system board, it isn't clear whether she will be cashing an NCSU paycheck between now and the vote of the university system board in September.

"We haven't addressed it yet," Nielsen said.

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Skin cancer keeps rising in young women

BY ROB STEIN
THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON — Increasing numbers of younger women continue to be diagnosed with the most dangerous form of skin cancer even as the rate of new cases has leveled off in younger men, federal health officials reported Thursday.

An analysis of government cancer statistics from 1973 to 2004 found that the rate of new melanoma cases in younger women had jumped 50 percent since 1980 but did not increase for younger men in that period.

"It's worrying," said Mark Purdue, a research fellow at the National Cancer Institute, who led the analysis published in the Journal of Investigative Dermatology.

"What we are seeing in young adults right now could foretell a much larger number of melanoma cases in older women."

The new research did not examine the reasons for the trend.

About 62,000 melanoma cases are diagnosed each year in the U.S., and more than 8,400 people die from the disease, according to the American Cancer Society. Previous studies have shown that the rate of new diagnoses has been increasing among adults overall, but it was unclear what was happening with younger adults.

Purdue and his colleagues analyzed cancer statistics for men and women ages 15 to 39 collected through the NCI's Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results Program, a network of regional cancer registries.

For young men, the rate of new melanoma cases rose from 4.7 cases per 100,000 per year in 1973 to 7.7 cases per 100,000 per year in 1980, but it then stopped rising.

For young women, the rate went from 5.5 cases per 100,000 per year in 1973 to 9.4 in 1980, and it kept rising to 13.9 in 2004.

The increase is unlikely to be simply the result of increased awareness and diagnosis, Purdue said, because the data also suggest the cancers are being found at a later stage.
Fewer folks breathe smoke

BY MIKE STORBE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ATLANTA - Nearly half of non-smoking Americans are still breathing in cigarette fumes, but the percentage has declined dramatically since the early 1990s, according to a government study released Thursday.

A main reason for the decline in secondhand smoke is the growing number of smoking bans, said researchers with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Another factor is the drop in the number of adult smokers. It has now inched below 20 percent, according to 2007 CDC data.

The new study found that about 46 percent of nonsmokers had signs of nicotine in their blood in tests done from 1999 through 2004. That was a steep drop from 84 percent when similar tests were done in the late 1980s and early 1990s. But health officials stopped short of celebrating.

"It's still high," said Cinzia Marano, one of the study's authors. "There is no safe level." Cigarettes cause lung cancer and other deadly illnesses not only in smokers, but also in nonsmokers who breathe in smoke, studies have shown.

For nonsmoking adults, secondhand smoke increases their lung cancer risk by at least 20 percent and their heart disease risk by at least 25 percent. Children exposed to secondhand smoke are at increased risk of asthma attacks, ear problems, acute respiratory infections and sudden infant death syndrome, health officials say.

The new CDC report drew its data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, a government study that sends representatives to communities. Participants are asked about their health, and they get blood tests and physical exams.

The new report focused on data collected on about 17,000 nonsmokers in the years 1988-1994, and about the same number in surveys 1999-2004.
Online ‘open textbooks’ see college doors opening

Flexibility, low cost ‘flip’ traditional model

By Svetlana Shkolnikova
USA TODAY

Textbook prices have outpaced inflation 2-1 in the past two decades, says a 2005 report by the Government Accountability Office. They account for 26% of tuition and fees at four-year public universities and nearly three-quarters of costs at community colleges, the GAO says.

Open textbooks can change the way textbooks are used, produced and sold, says Nicole Allen, director of the Make Textbooks Affordable campaign by Student Public Interest Research Groups.

The non-profit student advocacy network has been pushing for open textbooks since 2003, hoping the format catches on so prices will decrease and bring some relief.

“The way we’re going to lower prices in the long run is by giving viable options,” Allen says. “Right now the publishers have a stronghold on the market. What we’re trying to do is expand the market and instigate a market shift.”

Allen is leading an effort to gather signatures for an Open Textbook Statement of Intent, which asks faculty to consider using open textbooks. The statement (published at www.maketextbooksaffordable.org) has more than 1,200 signatures from faculty in all 50 states in schools ranging from community colleges to four-year universities to graduate schools.

In California, the Foothill-De Anza Community College District is beginning a project that will train professors to find and use open resources. The goal is to have participants eventually produce their own open textbooks.

Some in the publishing industry have noticed the trend.

Eric Frank spent seven years working for Pearson Education, one of the nation’s leading textbook publishers, before quitting last year to pursue a new business venture. He spent three months talking to students, teachers and authors about textbooks, trying to find a solution to their complaints.

It became clear that open textbooks would provide the ideal solution, Frank says.

“If you are a textbook publisher, you are missing the boat,” he says. “The current business model fails the students, the faculties and the authors.”

“Students are used to having choices in what to buy; instead they’re getting the same thing they got 50 years ago and paying a lot for it. Instructors have different teaching styles, but a one-size-fits-all cookie-cutter book never allows them to deliver it. The authors are getting paid less and less for their book.”

“We flip the model completely.”

Frank and his business partner, Jeff Shelstad, in January plan to launch Flat World Knowledge, the first commercial open textbook publisher. It will offer free online textbooks that can be printed and bound, for about $25 for black and white and $35-$39 for full-color copies. The average price of a traditional textbook varies by subject; many new textbooks cost about $150, Allen says.

“Instructors will be able to modify the content, and authors will be compensated at least as well as the traditional model.”

Frank is recruiting authors, who will receive royalties for texts and supplementary materials such as study guides.

Several authors already have embraced the open format by writing their own textbooks and putting them online at no cost.

Rob Stewart, a professor of oceanography at Texas A&M University, refused offers to have his book Introduction to Physical Oceanography published the traditional way in favor of writing an open textbook.

Stewart’s book is “a gift to the students of the world.” It is distributed through the U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Students in China are using it to learn oceanography and English. Translations are in the works, including Italian and Portuguese editions.

Rob Bezee, a professor at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Wash., says he wrote A First Course in Linear Algebra mainly because he was frustrated with the frequent new editions publishers release every few years. He decided to write his own textbook in 2004, basing it on his lecture notes. Students can download it, print it or buy a soft-cover copy for $24.50.

Beezer earns $5 for every professionally bound copy sold and uses the money to update the book. He pays publishers who find mistakes in the book.

“This has been happening for 10 years with research articles, and I think textbook publishing is next,” he says. “Now there’s room for people like myself to put something together, and I think you’re going to see more of that.”

Allen hopes the influx in open-textbook authors and users represents a sign of things to come.

“The open textbooks that are out there serve as proof that it is possible to have a high-quality open textbook that is being used in classrooms,” she says. “They might just be the thing that will change the textbook industry for the better.”

Price debate is now one for the lawmakers

Textbook prices have been a subject of debate in this year’s reauthorization of the Higher Education Act.

The House of Representatives and the Senate passed versions of the bill this year and are now negotiating a final version.

One of the provisions would require publishers to provide professors with the price of a textbook as well as the history of revisions and the availability of alternative formats.

Similar price disclosures are the focus of several state bills. Laws in effect in Connecticut and Washington state; a law in Colorado will take effect next year.

Textbook-related laws have been proposed in 26 states this year. After last year, says the National Association of College Stores.

Other provisions in the federal law would end the sale of bundled textbooks, which package and sell textbooks and supplemental materials together for one price, and prompt universities to include textbook prices on course schedules.

By Svetlana Shkolnikova
American students go for an Olympic gold medal in learning

University programs look to Beijing for 'unique opportunity'

By Rebecca Kaplan
USA TODAY

Universities across the country have created study-abroad programs in Beijing this summer focused on learning from the Olympic Games.

Programs range from one at George Washington University that examines the business side of the Games to a large group of student reporters who will help staff the Olympic News Service.

The popularity of shorter study-abroad experiences has been increasing, says Peggy Blumenthal of the Institute of International Education, which provides and promotes such programs. More than 52% of the 132,600 U.S. students who studied abroad in 2005 did so for fewer than eight weeks, she says.

And China is a popular destination: The number of U.S. students studying there jumped from 6,389 in the 2004-2005 school year to 8,830 in 2005-2006.

Lisa Delpy Neirotti, a sports management professor at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., has been taking her students to study every Olympics since 1992. They prepare with lectures about the business side of the Games, and then meet with corporate sponsors, executives and Olympic Committee staff once they're there.

Other programs, such as the University of Pennsylvania's Penn-in-Beijing, focus on the role of the international news media and questions of intellectual property. They study with students from Beijing's Tsinghua University.

Students from Purdue, the Universities of Iowa, North Carolina and Missouri, and Ithaca and Emerson colleges are partnering with universities in Beijing to send student reporters to assist the Olympic News Service. Most will work at a specific venue to get athletes' quotes for international news media.

"This is a unique opportunity, potentially a life-changing opportunity," says Howard Sypher, head of the communications department at Purdue.

Preparation for the program wasn't easy. Most schools used interviews and essays to narrow down potential participants. Students then had to learn reporting techniques and background on the sports they would cover. Some learned basic Mandarin phrases and studied Chinese culture.

Earlier this year, representatives from the Beijing Olympic Committee traveled to the USA to administer a test that included writing down and choosing good quotes, writing recaps of sporting events and participating in a verbal debate, says Linda Moore, vice president for academic affairs at Emerson.

Students who are chosen must take weekly quizzes to stay sharp; they travel to Beijing this month to get acquainted with the facilities before they begin work, says Charlie Tuggle, a professor at the University of North Carolina.

"To know that I'm going to be a small part of it ... it's a mind-blowing experience," says Phil Wrigthouse, 21, a program participant from Purdue.