THE DAILY CLIPS

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Conference uses education to help those affected by diabetes

The Daily Reflector

More than 150 people interested in positive management of diabetes attended the seventh annual “Winning With Diabetes” conference Saturday at St. James United Methodist Church.

The conference, sponsored by the Diabetes and Obesity Center at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University, was designed for people with diabetes, their families, friends and care providers. It focused on education to help diabetics more skillfully manage those things that influence the disease's impact on their health and daily lives, including nutrition, exercise and medications.

"Diabetes is the leading cause of non-traumatic amputation in the U.S., so if we manage and control it, we can hopefully change those statistics," said Mindy Saenz, a dietician and diabetes educator at Brody, and a Type-I diabetic since the age of 14.

Some other more serious problems often associated with diabetes are kidney and heart disease, high blood pressure and blindness.

Frankie Brunson, of Greenville, attended her second conference this year, after discovering she was a Type-I diabetic more than a year ago, she said.

“There’s a tremendous amount of information you need to know in order to be your own advocate. This program delivers a tremendous amount of education. I feel empowered and overwhelmed at the same time; it can be a devastating disease,” Brunson said.

“Diabetes is something we have, not who we are,” said Saenz. “It can be controlled and you can live a full, happy life.”
N.C. 'special' debt to fund schools, prisons in '09

BY GARY D. ROBERTSON
The Associated Press

RALEIGH — The General Assembly is forever in debt to a 1991 court opinion that allowed North Carolina governments to approve certain types of borrowing without voter approval.

If this year’s budget bill is signed into law by Gov. Mike Easley, opponents of that type of debt are worried North Carolina’s lawmakers may be tempted to refrain forever from traditional borrowing.

This year, the Legislature went on a borrowing spree in the budget, authorizing $857 million in debt over the next four years, the largest amount ever approved in one year without a public vote.

The “special indebtedness” will pay for prison beds, more than 15 university and state buildings, an oyster hatchery and the renovation of the polar bear exhibit at the North Carolina Zoo.

“If the Legislature can authorize a billion dollars of debt without a vote, why would they ever offer another bond issue again?” asked John Hood of the conservative John Locke Foundation and a frequent critic of non-voter approved debt.

Legislative leaders said they aren’t giving up on traditional bonds, must be approved by voters. A blue-ribbon transportation commission recommended a road-building bond this year, and lawmakers said it will be considered in 2009.

But the “special indebtedness” is a way to build essential construction projects faster than possible when public approval is required, an important option as steel and concrete prices soar. The state’s construction industry will get a shot in the arm and could generate as many as 20,000 jobs, lawmakers said.

“...and the contractors are hungry and the interest rates are low and we have a big new group of university students on the way,” said Joe Hackney, D-Orange. “Together with the stimulus effect, all that argues in favor with going ahead.”

North Carolina’s annual debt service, projected this year at $681 million before the new borrowing, has doubled as a percentage of tax revenues since 2001, according to the Legislature’s Fiscal Research Division. But the overall debt remains within guidelines set by the state treasurer to keep the state’s triple-A bond rating, which keeps interest rates low.

Republicans who voted against the budget said they were disturbed by the amount of borrowing, as well as spending cash on planning for an additional $1 billion in future projects.

“So we’re now going to add (payment) requirements over $100 million to the next three or four years,” said House Minority Whip Bill McGee, R-Forsyth. “I think problems are coming for the taxpayer.”

For now, State Treasurer Richard Moore’s office said borrowing levels remain financially sound. Moore’s annual debt affordability study advised lawmakers could borrow on average $479.7 million annually for the next five years. The borrowing in the budget is spread out over time to keep below the cap.

“Special indebtedness” was first used by local governments to purchase vehicles and other equipment on an installment plan. Interest rates on the debt are slightly higher than those for general obligation bonds.

The state Supreme Court ruled in 1991 that a referendum wasn’t necessary for this kind of borrowing because lenders couldn’t force a local government to raise taxes to pay off any unpaid debt.

That opened the door for the General Assembly to try it in 2000. Special indebtedness greatly expanded in 2004, when lawmakers agreed to borrow $468 million on projects.
Chitwood among best doctors listed by Business North Carolina

When Business North Carolina's senior editor, Edward Martin, was searching for a heart surgeon last year, he was referred to physicians at the Duke University School of Medicine in Durham and the Cleveland Clinic in Ohio.

Both, it turned out, had been trained by W. Randolph Chitwood, the cardiothoracic surgeon many believe is the best in the world.

Chitwood, vice chancellor for health services at East Carolina University's Brody School of Medicine and director of the East Carolina Heart Institute, practices in Greenville.

Martin's account of his surgery at Pitt County Memorial Hospital tells how Chitwood came to the school, which almost fell victim to politics nearly 40 years ago. It also tells how the medical school has transformed Greenville into a bustling medical mecca and how it has changed how health care is practiced in the region.

Chitwood is among the more than 1,300 doctors on the magazine's annual Best Doctor's list, compiled by Boston-based Best Doctors Inc. Doctors are asked whom they would choose if they or a member of their family needed a specialist.

The magazine publishes listings for the following specialties: addiction medicine, allergy and immunology, cardiovascular disease, colon and rectal surgery, dermatology, endocrinology and metabolism, gastroenterology, hand surgery, infectious disease, internal medicine (general), medical oncology and hematology, nephrology, neurological surgery, neurology, nuclear medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, ophthalmology, orthopedic surgery, otolaryngology, physical medicine and rehabilitation, plastic surgery, psychiatry, pulmonary and critical-care medicine, radiation oncology, rheumatology, sleep medicine, surgery, surgical oncology, thoracic surgery and urology. Other specialties are published on the Web.

Business North Carolina is a Charlotte-based monthly magazine that focuses on the people, events and trends that shape business in North Carolina. Since it began publication in 1981, it has won more than 85 national awards for its writing, reporting, and design.
ECU College of Business announces $50,000 endowment from NCSLA

East Carolina University’s College of Business has announced the creation of a $50,000 endowment from the North Carolina Surplus Lines Association (NCSLA), a support agency for licensees who underwrite unique and hard-to-place risks.

The endowment will support a new risk and insurance concentration being developed by the college’s finance department.

“NCSLA is a very strong advocate of education,” NCSLA past president Josh Chappell said in a news release. “Offering this gift to East Carolina is an outstanding opportunity for us to help the university create and strengthen its insurance program.”

Chappell said the new risk and insurance concentration will allow his organization to introduce students to the surplus lines industry, which makes up about 7 percent of the total commercial insurance marketplace in the United States.

“It is extremely important for us to attract young, talented people to the surplus lines industry — and why shouldn’t they come from our home state colleges and universities?” Chappell asked.

The fund established by the NCSLA will work in tandem with the recently announced gift from the Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina, which established a faculty chair in support of the risk and insurance concentration.

The concentration will be developed by faculty during the 2008-09 academic year.

“We are sincerely grateful to the NCSLA for its investment in our students,” Frederick Niswander, dean of the College of Business, said. “Their support will help us provide top-notch instruction in the growing field of insurance, preparing today’s students to become tomorrow’s insurance professionals.”

The North Carolina Surplus Lines Association, a regulatory support organization by statute, provides support to surplus lines licensees committed to the wholesale distribution system and the surplus lines industry.

The association provides networking, regulatory, legislative and education activities on behalf of its members.
Jill Kaplan

WINTERVILLE — Mrs. Jill Kaplan, 44, died Saturday, July 12, 2008.

The funeral service will be conducted Tuesday at 10 a.m. at Congregation Bayt Shalom by Rabbi Kirschner. A graveside service will be conducted at 2:30 p.m. at Onslow Memorial Park in Jacksonville.

Mrs. Kaplan, a native of Trenton, N.J., was a 1982 graduate of Jacksonville Senior High School. She received a BS degree in political science in 1993 and a BS degree in nursing in 1997 from East Carolina University, both degrees earning status as Magna Cum Laude.

A loving and devoted mother to her son. Admired and respected by her peers and a Nurse's Nurse to her profession.

In 2005, she was recognized as one of the Great Nurses of North Carolina. For approximately nine years she was employed as a RN with Pitt County Memorial Hospital. She was a member of Congregation Bayt Shalom.

She is preceded in death by her mother, Jean Lockamy Kaplan.

She is survived by her husband John Simko of Winterville; son, Jared Harris Kaplan of Winterville; father, Irwin H. Kaplan of Surf City; and a brother, Joel A. Kaplan of Fredericksburg, Va.

We would like to express our gratitude and special thanks to Clarence & Linda Beamon, Lorrie Cox, Barbara Riggs, Mike & Ashley Tart, Buffie Lich to name just a few and everyone who has helped us through this journey — thank you.

The family will receive friends Monday from 6-8 p.m. at Wilkerson Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Congregation Bayt Shalom, 4351 E. 10th St., Greenville, NC 27858.
How can music ease the aging process? ECU professor plans to find out

Two-year study aims to develop a music program that promotes successful aging through music instruction.

ECU NEWS BUREAU
Special to The Daily Reflector

Jennifer Bugos, assistant professor in the School of Music, has won a grant to study the role of music instruction on successful aging.

The two-year study will be funded by a $115,206 grant from the Retirement Research Foundation of Chicago, which serves the needs of seniors and works to enhance their quality of life.

The purpose of the project is to develop a model music program that promotes successful aging through enhancement of bimanual coordination, lifelong learning, individual creativity, self-efficacy and social skills.

Over a two-year period, three trial programs will be included in the project, including group 'piano' instruction, music instruction and rhythmic training.

Research will include the neurological basis for music perception and cognition with regard to human development, lifespan learning and cognitive transfer.

Her research has been featured at national and international conferences such as the National Association for Music Education, the Society for Neuroscience, the International Society for Music Education, and the International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition.

Bugos teaches undergraduate and graduate students and pursues research at the ECU School of Music.

Those interested in participating in this study can contact Bugos at 252-328-5721, or bugosj@ecu.edu.

ECU assistant professor named fellow of AAPA

Spencer H. Cole, clinical assistant professor and clinical coordinator in the Department of Physician Assistant Studies, was recently recognized as a distinguished fellow of the American Academy of Physician Assistants.

Cole has 35 years of experience in clinical practice. The distinguished fellow program recognizes members who have distinguished themselves among their colleagues and in their communities by service to the profession, commitment to advancing health care and exemplary personal and professional development.

First doctorate earned in rehabilitation studies

Susie T. Harris, of the Department of Health Services and Information Management, was the first to earn a doctoral in rehabilitation studies in the College of Allied Health Sciences.

Harris successfully defended her dissertation study “The Impact of Spirituality on Health Conditions of Persons with Diabetes in Eastern North Carolina” in June. She surveyed 2,615 people with diabetes to investigate if those who use spirituality as a coping mechanism have better health conditions. Daniel Wong, professor and director of the rehabilitation studies doctoral program, was the dissertation chair.

The program began in 2005-2006.
ECU’s Joseph slims down for bigger impact

BY A.J. CARR
STAFF WRITER

When Linval Joseph jogs onto the football field this fall, East Carolina’s fans probably won’t recognize him.

"The Incredible Bulk" last season at 373 pounds, Joseph is now an impressive 6-foot-6, 300-pound bulk.

In shedding 73 pounds since February, the rising sophomore defensive tackle says he already feels more fit than he did last season, when he made Conference USA’s all-freshman team.

As long as rehab from offseason back surgery continues to go well, the “smaller” Joseph is expected to play a bigger role on a defensive line some analysts rate as tops in the league.

His commitment is evident in the way he altered his eating habits and tackled a workout program that included three calorie-sapping, stamina-building 30-minute StairMaster sessions six days a week.

“He climbed Mount Everest,” said Rock Roggeman, Joseph’s position coach. “It takes a lot of discipline to lose five pounds, much less 70. What he’s done is fantastic.”

Joseph, who once charged a training table with the same ferocity he pursues opposing quarterbacks, says his weight loss has been all natural, devoid of any diet supplements.

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JOSEPH’S DIET

A former state weight-lifting champion and prep football standout in Alachua, Fla., Joseph didn’t consult Jenny Craig about dieting. He started drinking water instead of sodas; dining on lean meat, vegetables and fruit; and snacking on nuts instead of Snickers.

Not that it wasn’t a challenge. Candy was harder to shed than an offensive lineman’s block.

The son of a chef, Joseph, who was born in the Virgin Islands, arrived on ECU’s campus with an insatiable appetite and a penchant for “sampling” food. When spotting the all-you-can-eat Pirates training table, he said “it was like heaven to me.”

“I ate everything — bacon, eggs, sausage, hash browns, corned beef, pancakes, French toast sticks, waffles,” Joseph said, and that was just for breakfast.

He also drank about three gallons of juice per day and “two or three” double chocolate mocha drinks, and he devoured a few candy bars in addition to lunch and dinner. Sometimes, he’d wake up during the night and chew down again.

“His favorite food was ... well, almost anything. Eventually, Joseph — who started the season weighing 345 — was up to 373 and starting to get fed up, so to speak. His body was screaming at him.

"It was putting pressure on my back," he said. "It was hard to tie my shoes. It was hard to breathe. I [was] getting disgusted. I was unhealthy. I said I can’t take it any more."

So Joseph began sacrificing instead of sampling. He subbed granola bars for Snickers, yogurt and fruit for pancakes. Combining his diet with exercise, he was on the way to winning his personal battle of the bulge.

“I feel 100 percent better,” said Joseph, described as humble and unassuming by Roggeman. “I can breathe easier, tie my shoes, get in and out of a car without struggling, take off my shirt and feel comfortable about myself ... and it’s easier to get dates.”

Bring on Virginia Tech, West Virginia and Virginia.

The three Virginias are Pirates opponents, but Joseph — who harbors a “no pain, no gain” attitude — is more equipped to meet formidable foes.

As a rookie in 2007, he was plenty tough, making 40 tackles and 8.5 hits behind the line. And Phil Steele Magazine has him on the All-Conference USA preseason team.

Joseph, planning to major in construction management, believes he can build a stronger resume this year through adding endurance and quickness and by playing more snaps.

“I hope to double my stats, make more plays behind the line of scrimmage,” he said. “I feel great.”

The Pirates need that from Joseph, and a lot more from everybody else, to boost a defense that gave up 431.2 yards and 30.4 points per game last season.

“He is a heck of a player, a catalyst up front, has a great attitude,” Roggeman said. “Give me two more [like him]. He played very well as a true freshman, and [losing weight] will increase his athleticism, quickness and explosion.”

All of which can still make the 300-pounder a weighty problem for opponents.

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OUR VIEWS

Thorp's launch

Holden Thorp has begun his position as chancellor of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in promising fashion. His immediate priorities are clear — more money for research and to recruit new faculty, talking with students about the future of higher education, working with the town of Chapel Hill to bolster famed Franklin Street, which is in a bit of a slump.

The 43-year-old UNC-CH grad, former chemistry professor and department head seems to have a good grasp of what the state's oldest campus has to do to fulfill its public service mission — the big picture — but also has been in classrooms long enough to connect with students.

For their part, the students seem enthused about Chancellor Thorp. "There isn't going to be that learning curve," one said. "That's why we're so excited to have him. He just seems to fit right in here."

Challenges will come along, of course, from overseeing the athletics program to putting out the figurative little fires that erupt from time to time in any university community. But Thorp, originally from Fayetteville, has been a part of the university at all levels, from his childhood fancy for the Tar Heels to his undergraduate days to his promotion to the top job. All that is going to help him.
Relearning peace after war

ECU lab uses biofeedback to help Marines manage stress disorder

BY JAY PRICE, Staff Writer

GREENVILLE - A year and a half after he left Iraq, Sgt. Terrell McClain is still fighting the sniper who shot him in the arm and the mortar shells and rockets that rattled his brain. His weapon: biofeedback.

About once a week, McClain, 24, and a handful of other Marines travel from Camp Lejeune's Wounded Warrior Barracks to a lab at East Carolina University, where they are strapped with sensors that measure stress via perspiration, body temperature and heart and brain rhythms. They are taught methods of controlling anxiety, such as breathing techniques or thinking of pleasant topics. Computer screens let them see the effects in simple terms such as a computer-generated roller coaster that starts moving when they reduce anxiety and stops when it rises again.

The idea is to train the wounded Marines to control outbursts of anger and anxiety and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

"There's nothing abnormal about these guys," said Carmen Russoniello, director of ECU's psychophysiology and biofeedback lab. "They are having normal responses to the situations they were in, and we're just training them to have better responses."

McClain said he was skeptical when he started the program in March but is now a believer, because it has helped him control his hair-trigger temper, a typical PTSD symptom.

"I still express my emotions, but I don't act wild," he said. "It's helping a lot, and I mean a whole lot."

Biofeedback is only one part of Russoniello's program, which is designed to reduce anxiety and stress through relaxation, recreation and social interaction.

Meet the civilians

Therapists also are using activities such as kayaking, Frisbee golf and wheelchair basketball, and more traditional forms of therapy, such as group counseling. Even getting off the base and interacting with college students is part of the therapy, since many of the wounded Marines will soon be moving back into the civilian world, Russoniello said.

"We do serious training, but life isn't just serious," Russoniello said. "It's also about having fun, and it's about things like checking out who you are in relationship to others. Whatever we do, it has to make sense as far as real life."

Russoniello served with the Marines in Vietnam and said for years afterward he struggled to cope with the things he had seen and done. He wanted the nation's latest generation of combat veterans to have it better.

Many will need help: This spring, the Pentagon released data showing that more than 40,000 troops who served

in Iraq and Afghanistan had been diagnosed with PTSD, and military leaders say that more have gone undiagnosed. Thousands more have traumatic brain injuries, typically from the blast of the improvised bombs used so often by insurgents in Iraq.

Russoniello's lab is working with the Marines assigned to Camp Lejeune's Wounded Warrior Barracks while they recover. Many in the barracks have PTSD, brain injuries or both. They also often have physical problems, and the recreational therapy in the ECU program helps them improve things such as balance and coordination.

The program started in February. It's operating on a shoestring, Russoniello said, but last month it opened an office next to the barracks. That will make it easier for Marines to get therapy more than once a week.

The program is weeks from adding a new therapy even closer to the cutting edge than biofeedback: Marines will be immersed in a highly detailed "Virtual Iraq" where they will assume a digital form and encounter the very things that caused their problems -- bombs, ambushes, snipers.

The idea, which has been under limited use in several places around the country in the past couple of years, is to desensitize those who have experienced trauma and give them more control over their memories of combat. Therapists will control the number and type of "surprises," stopping the sessions periodically when the Marines' stress levels spike, to work with them on controlling their responses.

Boosting the chaos

The wounded Marines will use the techniques learned from the simpler biofeedback equipment to control their stress levels. From session to session, therapists will gradually boost the level of chaos, allowing the Marines to come to terms with tougher and tougher experiences.

The "Virtual Iraq" program is being donated by a treatment center on the West Coast that is working with Marines there. The program has been in use elsewhere for a few years.

Therapies based in virtual worlds have several advantages, Russoniello said, including the ability of Marines who deploy again or who leave the service and move to a distant state to continue working with the same therapist.

McClain, the sergeant who was shot by a sniper, said more wounded troops should try the innovative therapy and the techniques like "going to a happy place" in your mind.

"To be able to calm down, that's a big thing," he said.

Of course, those who aren't familiar with the Marine Corps' band-of-brothers camaraderie might be startled at the happy place McClain goes to in his mind: Iraq, 2006. With his Marine buddies.

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A subsidiary of The McClatchy Company
Webster Bland asked his parents to use their stimulus check to help patients

BY TOM MARINE
The Daily Reflector

As Webster Bland walked into the Children's Hospital on Friday, his parents pushed two carts loaded with toys closely behind.

Batman action figures, Barbie dolls, teddy bears and other stuffed animals, board games, LEGOs and toy cars — all gifts from an 11-year-old boy who was a patient there just one year ago.

To show their gratitude, the Bland family used their economic stimulus payment to buy toys for children treated at the hospital, their third trip bringing presents since Webster received his treatment for cancer at the Leo Jenkins Cancer Center.

Diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma last year, Webster went through four cycles of chemotherapy and 14 days of radiation.

"The nurses were really nice and made it feel like home," Webster said. "Seeing what it was like when I went through it made me think about all the other kids who are less fortunate than me."

Raleigh Bland, Webster's

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father, said even though his son may not understand the economics behind why they were getting the check, it was his decision to spend the stimulus money on the presents.

Giving to others is nothing new for this rising sixth-grader at E.B. Aycock Middle School.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation, a wish-granting organization for children, sent a letter to Webster about making one of his dreams a reality.

His wish — give it to another child who needs it more than him.

"He just gets it," said Julia Raper, administrator for the Children's Hospital. "Wow. He can see that we have needs and steps up to meet them. His parents support him with that."

Raper said the toys Webster brought will be used for children during their hospital stays, helping to distract them and bring smiles to their faces.

When asked to describe their experience, Raleigh recalled their own first night in the hospital. He said three or four children from a church group were giving away coloring books and crayons to all the patients.

"They didn't know us, but it lit his day up," he said. "It was difficult at first, but, as we got into the process, we started seeing that we were not the only ones going through this."

Raleigh said being exposed to an event like that defines who you are.

"I never heard him say, "Why me,"" said Connie Bland, Webster's mother. "It's amazing how friends, family and people you don't even know will reach out to you."

The Blands said donating these gifts is just their way of saying thank you.

"Once it touches your life," Raleigh said, "you're part of it whether you want to be or not."

Tom Marine can be contacted at tmarine@coxn.com and 329-9567.
Darts & Laurels

Laurels — To the ECU/Loessin Summer Theater, puts on remarkable productions for eastern North Carolina. This year organizers expect to stage three events at the historic Turnage Theater in Washington. Following The Boy Friend, which wrapped on July 5, the company is performing Arsenic & Old Lace through July 19. The final show, The All Night Strut!, runs July 24 — Aug. 2.

Laurels — To the 25th anniversary of the North Carolina Suzuki Institute at East Carolina’s School of Music, a program for children 3 to 18. The kids study violin, cello or viola using parental involvement, positive reinforcement and immersion in a fashion similar to language education. It’s longevity stands as a testament to its value.

Laurels — To this week’s conference on youth fitness held at East Carolina. Childhood obesity poses a dangerous threat to the health and well being of millions in this country, and developing an active lifestyle and good eating habits are essential to today’s youth. The East Carolina program gathered educators and professionals to develop new strategies for achieving that goal and helping battle those health concerns.