THE DAILY CLIPS

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Annual journal puts focus on state's humor writers

The literary journal also includes two audio CDs.

ECU NEWS BUREAU
Special to The Daily Reflector

The 2008 North Carolina Literary Review showcases work by some of the state's best writers on the topic of humor.

It may make you laugh out loud, or tear up in that "laughed-so-hard-I-cried" kind of way.

Margaret D. Bauer, NCLR editor and Rives Chair of Southern literature at East Carolina University, admitted to having both of those reactions while she reviewed material for this year's edition.

And she hopes readers — and listeners to special, supplemental CDs — will share the experience.

"Humor is a popular topic, and we thank these literary critics and the creative writers who responded to our call for contributions, and we know you'll enjoy reading the issue's content as much as you do listening to the CDs," Bauer said.

The journal's 16th issue, titled "North Carolina Humor: The Old Mirth State," will be available in July. The publication is housed in the ECU English Department and also receives support from the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association.

The 200-page volume includes short stories, essays and poems. Readers also will find reviews of novels and poetry collections, artwork and an interview with the state's poet laureate, Kathryn Stripling Byer.

For the first time, the NCLR includes an audio element. Two CDs of "Laugh Tracks" feature authors reading from their short stories, books and essays.

Included on the CDs are Clyde Edgerton reading from his novel "Lunch at the Piccadilly," Grammy-nominated humorist David Sedaris contributing his essay, "The Ship Shape," and the regional band, Coastal Cohorts, performing their song, "Whose Idea Was This?" Jill McCorkle's short story, "Your Husband is Cheating on Us," which was recorded at ECU in November, is also on the CD.

"Thanks to the generosity of some of our funniest favorites here in North Carolina, all of these wonderful readings and more can be heard on the CDs supplementing this issue," Bauer said.

The CDs come free of charge with the print edition, which will be available.
ECU
Continued from B1

at bookstores across the state and on the ECU campus at Dowdy Student Stores later this month. The books can be purchased online at www.ecu.edu/nclr.

Sprinkler installation continues

Two more residence halls on the East Carolina University campus will soon have fire protection sprinkler systems.

Contractors will finish installations at Cotten and Fleming residence halls in the central campus this month. The project brings ECU closer to its goal of having sprinkler systems in all residential buildings by 2012.

"This is an important project for us, and we're certainly moving ahead to make sure our students are safe and that we complete this project in the most effective and efficient way possible," said Kemal Atkins, vice provost for student affairs.

Installation at Cotten and Fleming began in May after students moved out for summer break.

When students return for the fall semester, they will find sprinklers in the hallways and individual rooms of those buildings.

In addition to Cotten and Fleming, Jarvis and the College Hill Suites have sprinkler systems at this time, said Mark Kimball, assistant director, residence facilities services.

Work at Aycock and Jones residence halls — the next two buildings slated for safety improvements — will begin in May 2009.

Tyler and Scott residence halls will get sprinklers during renovations of those buildings also planned for summer 2009, Kimball said.

Sprinkler systems will be put in the remaining residence halls in subsequent summers. By 2012, all 15 residence halls on campus will have the fire protection systems, Kimball said.

Atkins said the campus-wide project has a price tag of more than $8 million. Funds for the installations come from housing fee receipts and institutional allocations for repair and renovations.

"These projects are time intensive, and they're costly, but we know we need to look out for the safety and the well-being of the students that we serve at this institution," Atkins said.

TechMath grant trains teachers, students

A $1.2 million grant from the National Science Foundation will enable ECU to continue to provide science and technology workshops July 21 through Aug. 8 for 70 high school teachers and their students from 10 counties in northeastern North Carolina.

The TechMath grant, now in its second year, draws
from "real life" business issues to encourage problem solving and critical thinking in the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Part of the aim is to help students see how educational lessons apply directly to career building and problem solving in the workplace. More than 30 local businesses are participating in this program.

The TechMath project team includes Rose Sincrope, Rhea Miles and Ron Preston of the College of Education.

**Physics e-text provided without textboos**

ECU students enrolled in key physics courses this fall won't have to pay $200 for the regularly assigned textbook.

"Physics for Science and Engineering Students," by Peter J. Nolan, will be available to students taking PHYS 2350/2360 at no cost. The text will be available via Blackboard, the university's online education delivery program.

Faculty members of the physics department voted to purchase the license for the text in response to the ECU Board of Trustees and Chancellor Steve Ballard's request to reduce student textbook costs. The electronic text will be available to enrolled students for the next six semesters. Approximately 100 students enroll in these courses each semester.

The course is a calculus-based introduction to basic principles of physics, covering topics of mechanics, thermodynamics, electricity and magnetism, optics and modern physics.

"Discussions are underway for students who would prefer a printed copy of the text."

**'Don't boss,' say former ECU leaders**

After successful careers as administrators at East Carolina University, Charles Coble and Henry Peel know a thing or two about leadership.

This summer, the colleagues, who worked together as dean and associate dean of ECU's College of Education for more than 10 years, penned a book, "Real Bosses Don't Boss," (outskirts Press, Colo.) based on their experiences.

The book lays out 12 principles for successful leaders. Ideas include engaging employees in decision-making and encouraging them to take ownership in the organization.

"What we're saying is a real boss doesn't boss from on high, doesn't really command," Coble said. "You can't get real change if you're going to command people to do things."

The book is available online from Barnes and Noble and Amazon.com.

For more information about the book and the authors, visit www.outskirtspress.com/webpage.php?isbn=9781432722814.
ECU graduate named new executive director of Council for Allied Health in North Carolina

Alisa Evans Debnam, a graduate of East Carolina University, has been named executive director of the Council for Allied Health in North Carolina (CAHNC).

Debnam began work with the CAHNC on July 1 following the retirement of the council's former executive director, Dr. David E. Yoder.

Debnam is a 1982 school and community health education graduate of ECU and earned a master's degree in health policy and administration in 1990 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

She was director of marketing for Sedman-Wade Health Services in Wade from 1983-86, director of health education for the Robeson County Health Department from 1987-88 and health education supervisor for Robeson County Public Schools from 1988-90.

Since 1990, she has been chief executive officer of Debnam Enterprises in Fayetteville.

Debnam most recently served as the dean of health programs at Fayetteville Technical Community College, where she was responsible for managing 16 programs. During her tenure at Fayetteville Tech, she worked with faculty to encourage and develop the integration of technology and distance education into the learning process. She was also responsible for the identification and utilization of grants and external funding sources for academic programs and personnel.

Debnam served as a member and president of the board of trustees of Cape Fear Valley Health Systems Inc. from 1997-2003, during which time the hospital experienced a major transition from a public hospital to a private, not-for-profit health system. She worked with the Robeson County Schools and Cumberland County Schools in the coordination and management of the comprehensive school health program and health curriculum. She has served as a health author and consultant for McMillan/McGraw-Hill Publishers, New York City, and recently completed a second health textbook project.

From 1999-2001, Debnam was a fellow in the prestigious William C. Friday Fellowship for Human Relations, Wildacres Leadership Initiative.

According to Debnam, top priorities are continuing to build stronger partnerships with health associations, institutions and agencies. She also said she will work toward securing stable financial resources to support the councils' vision, mission and goals.

The Council for Allied Health in North Carolina represents more than 20,000 allied health professionals from 29 professions. The council was established in 1991 by allied health practitioners, educators and employers who were concerned about chronic allied health workforce shortages and wanted to provide a forum as a platform for discussion and collaboration on the critical health care issues and needs.

The mission of the council is to ensure that North Carolinians have access to a well-prepared, well-distributed allied health workforce that is representative of the diversity of the state's communities.

The only council of its kind in the United States, its work is cited as a model of effective data collection, provision of accurate information on workforce supply and demand, support for allied health personnel issues, assessment of education capacity of the public and private universities and community colleges, and promotion of quality services to the citizens of North Carolina.
Get healthy

Assessment shows path to improvement

Having a resource like Pitt County Memorial Hospital in this community makes a tremendous difference in the health and wellness of area residents. The level of care provided there works to treat and prevent disease, and to disseminate important educational information to promote healthy lifestyles.

The Community Health Assessment released by the hospital this week is a key component of this effort, illuminating for health professionals the key risks and ailments affecting the population. The result should be more targeted care and programs aimed to boost the overall fitness of the community and ensure a greater quality of life.

Every four years, PCMH undertakes an qualitative and quantitative assessment of the community to determine the afflictions more problematic and pervasive here. The most recent study was conducted in 2007, and delivered to the hospital Board of Trustees this week. It establishes the priorities for care through 2011 and offers a litany of interesting results.

It comes as little surprise that this community suffers from a high incidence of heart disease and stroke, cancer, lung disease, diabetes and obesity. Lifestyle choices contribute significantly to those problems, with smoking and diet playing key roles. Too many residents engage in risky behavior that, over time, manifests itself in poor overall health.

Some of those concerns can be traced to a lack of accessible, affordable health care. The report posits that in 2006, one in five county adults age 18-64 were uninsured and that one-third of adults had gone longer than 12 months since having their teeth cleaned.

With these findings in hand, the hospital can take proactive steps to address these concerns. In some cases, progress is already under way. The East Carolina Heart Institute was founded to address the high level of heart disease and stroke, and East Carolina University's dental school intends to educate more dental professionals to improve access to care. Rates of smoking have declined lately as well.

However, there is much left to do. Residents at risk must improve their diets and embrace physical fitness to improve their overall health. Smokers should quit. And the community must take better care of their children, who continue to engage in risky behavior.

The identification of those problems should allow hospital and community leaders to take action on these and other health concerns. The full report is available on the PCMH Web site, and residents should take a moment to review it and commit to improvement.
Seniors needed for ECU music research

The East Carolina University School of Music is partnering with the Pitt County Council on Aging in seeking individuals age 60 and over for a compensated research study on music and successful aging.

The study, funded by the Retirement Research Foundation, will examine the effects of three new music programs — piano instruction, music appreciation and percussion ensemble — on successful aging in adults. These programs are open to those with no prior musical experience. There is no cost for program participation, and all program materials are provided.

Each class will meet once each week for 16 weeks.

Participants must be 60 to 80 years of age, native English speakers, and have no neurological disorders or difficulty in hand movement. Participants will complete a series of cognitive and musical tests. In addition to the free instruction, all participants who complete the research will receive a one-time stipend of $70.

The purpose of this 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.

Those interested in participating in the study may contact Dr. Jennifer Bugos, ECU School of Music, at 328-5721, or by e-mail at bugos@ecu.edu.
Small moves
Budget lacks bold strokes for future

Gov. Mike Easley signed the final budget of his tenure into law on Wednesday, affixing his signature a week after passage and without the typical fanfare. The final spending bill deviated substantially from the governor's goals in his final year, especially on education spending, fueling speculation he might veto it.

While the overall package will advance the state's goals in several areas — and certainly East Carolina University supporters have reason to cheer — it resembles most state budgets in a lack of imagination. It again avoids the difficult decisions bearing down on North Carolina that must be confronted by a new Legislature in the coming year.

The General Assembly approved a $21.4 billion revision of the two-year budget that meets many of the state's immediate challenges. It provides raises for school teachers and state employees while holding down overall spending and preparing for a growing population. It also allows $857 million in debt for capital construction projects, including millions for East Carolina.

The final version emerged following tense negotiations between the executive and legislative branches. The governor's original budget proposals would have delivered much larger raises for teachers, more funding for early childhood education and imposed taxes on cigarettes and tobacco.

The final agreement is workable, and residents should be pleased its balance does not rely on a numbers game. But there is also a sense, like every year, that the budget lacks the type of fundamental shift the state desperately needs, a change in approach that will position North Carolina for the future.

Teachers need salary increases that make North Carolina a competitive destination for educators. While the state is successful in honing talent through its university system, teacher retention would be aided by higher pay and greater incentives to teach where they are needed. The governor is correct on this point, and the state must find the funding.

Absent in this budget is the tax overhaul needed to reflect a changing state economy and ease a reliance on income and corporate taxes. While North Carolina taxes products, it does not tax services — this despite the growing service sector. Balance and fairness are needed.

A comprehensive reform of a flawed mental health system, changes in economic incentive programs and a strong investment in infrastructure improvement are all needed in North Carolina. But prodding lawmakers into action on these items has proven difficult.

One cannot reasonably expect lawmakers to tackle such obstacles in an election year with an outgoing governor. Nor is a revision of a two-year budget the place to make dramatic changes.

But the time has come for bold moves rather than small steps, and lawmakers heading to Raleigh next years should look forward to that task.
Chef's knife produces edible artistry

Chef Felix Fernandez with East Carolina University Dining Services presented a melon-carving demonstration Saturday at the Pitt County Farmers' Market. The event is the latest in a series of events officials say are bringing more people to the Pitt County Farmer's Market each week.

Donna Ware, coordinator of the market's nutrition education program, said Fernandez's melon carving is usually a big hit with those attending the market. Events like it are bringing more attention to the market resulting in a larger turnout.

"We continue to see more folks out there every Saturday," Ware said of the market.

Curtis Peterson, a market worker, said the market averages about 15 farmers daily with each selling a variety of vegetables, fruits, herbs, nuts and breads.

The Pitt County Farmers' Market, located at 4560 County Home Road, is open from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Fridays. The market opens in April and closes its doors in December.
Scientists take part in Carolina Vegetation Survey

BY MICHAEL ABRAMOWITZ
The Daily Reflector

Climate and environmental changes over time can impact the growth patterns of vegetation in Pitt County, as in all areas of the state. But if the types of vegetation and their various classifications of growth patterns are not identified in some way now, understanding those changes can become quite challenging with the passage of time.

That is just one of many potential benefits that a group of scientists and plant biologists see for the Carolina Vegetation Survey, being conducted this week at the Otter Creek Natural Area Research and Teaching Environment, located on N.C. 43 North in Falkland.

The group includes David Knowles, a biologist and instructor at East Carolina University, Tom Wentworth, professor of plant biology at North Carolina State University and one of the founding members of the survey, and several graduate and undergraduate level interns who volunteered to conduct an eight-day field survey of plants and vegetation at the reserve.

The team's goal, working with others doing the same statewide, is to install permanent plots in which a complete inventory of plant life and other natural features, including soils, can be made, Wentworth said Saturday at the site. They call the process a "pulse."

Knowles, Wentworth and the others hauled packs loaded with fiberglass tape, metal piping and other measurement instruments deep within the 70-acre reserve and established what Wentworth considered an ideal location to set up the plot.

Each plot is about 1,000 square meters, about one-fourth the size of a football field, he said.

"Once we remove all the tapes and flags, we can return to the plot in the future and See SURVEY, A7
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SURVEY

survey it again to learn what changes have happened to these natural communities over time,” Wentworth said.

The reasons for studying changes can be almost as varied as the types of vegetation themselves, because many factors affect the change of an environment, Wentworth said.

“An ECU scientist might want to return to this plot after a hurricane, for instance, to study what changes occurred after that event,” Wentworth said.

“The details of the pulse that is being conducted by this team go far beyond any that have been gathered in the region, Wentworth said.

“Five years or so from now, when we’ve done a thorough characterization of the natural communities in the region, we’ll be in an excellent position to write a book that describes them because we’ll have a consistent and thorough database of information to work with. That doesn’t exist in most regions of the state,” he said.

Perhaps more important from a practical standpoint, Wentworth said, is the record being made of dwindling natural conditions that still exist while man-made changes occur around them.

“These natural communities represent the best examples of what’s left in our landscape, so they will be targets for people who want to restore damaged or degraded natural communities in the future,” he said.

The team collaborates with the Ecosystem Enhancement Program of the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources to perform their plot surveys for that purpose.

As the wide array of natural events, such as fires and hurricanes, and man-made events such as pine harvesting and housing development occur in and around the reserve, students and scientists in the future will return and observe the changes they cause.

Team assistants Ashley Tuggle, an undergraduate from Dallas, Texas, studying at Franklin College in Switzerland and Nick Adams, a graduate student from Chapel Hill studying at UNC-Chapel Hill, began the cataloging process in one plot while J.C. Poythress, also of Chapel Hill, Wade Wall, a North Carolina State University graduate student, and Jarvis Hudson, a retired volunteer from Fayetteville, set up a second plot at another location in the reserve.

“I’m impressed by the number of species I’ve seen here already,” Tuggle said. “I’ve seen a lot of bottomland hardwood species in my work along the Roanoke River, but it’s nice to get into the uplands here and see all these species of oak. I don’t think I’ve ever seen so many varieties.”

Even a brief tour through the forest led by Knowles revealed the diverse landscape and natural features that make the reserve a scientifically valuable resource — and a simply rewarding experience for anyone with an appreciation for natural beauty.

“People think Greenville’s all flat,” he said as he walked first down, then up again, along a trail that revealed many trees that Hurricane Floyd toppled in 1999. He stopped and pointed down a steep hillside that led to a marshy bottom.

“This is a north-facing slope with a ridge line about 80 feet above sea level,” he said. “This is mountain laurel, a species found in more northern climates, but found here because of that north-facing slope.”

A walk in the opposite direction for about a half-mile led to Otter Creek, a winding blackwater stream that has its entire watershed in the sandy coastal plain, resulting in its year-round tea color, Knowles said.

“There’s a lot of different species of fish in here, and even otters,” he said.

Back at the pulse site, Adams took a break from his cataloging to talk about the challenges and rewards of his work, professionally and personally.

“We do this in the summer, so it gets hot and you work long days, but it’s fun, and you build a sense of camaraderie with your teammates,” he said.

The team will collect any unknown species of plants and send them back to their headquarters in Chapel Hill for identification, along with soil samples to be studied.

“Just entering the data into the database will be a lot of work for the people back there,” he said.

The Carolina Vegetation Survey teams strive to get as many plots established throughout the state as possible so future biologists can study them and increase the available database and learn about the many types of natural communities that exist within North Carolina’s diverse ecological boundaries.

There are now 6,000 such pulse sites established in the state, Wentworth said.

Without the kind of information gathered at sites like this one, effective decisions about how to preserve wooded and natural areas for future generations in the face of development might not be possible, Wentworth said.

“Think about how few places like this remain, between what’s been converted to agriculture, plantation forestry and developed for urban residential and commercial use. This kind of site is relatively rare in the landscape and important to preserve,” Wentworth said.

According to its Web site, The Carolina Vegetation Survey of The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program is a part of the Office of Conservation and Community Affairs within the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The program inventories, catalogues, and supports conservation of the rarest and the most outstanding elements of the natural diversity of our state. These elements of natural diversity include those plants and animals which are so rare or the natural communities so significant that they merit special consideration as land-use decisions are made.

Michael Abramowitz can be contacted at mabramowitz@coxnc.com and 339-0571
Easley trusts her work, charm to blunt criticism

BY BENJAMIN NIOLET
STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH — She's led a campaign to stop teens from drinking and worked to put North Carolina on the
arts map. She's read to schoolchildren and honored teachers. She's trained lawyers and police officers.
Mary Easley, 58, has been North Carolina's first lady for nearly eight years. For most of that time, when
she sought the spotlight, it was for causes important to her, such as underage drinking, education or the
arts. But as Gov. Mike Easley's second and final term winds down, Mary Easley has been dragged
into the public eye over first-class trips to Europe at state expense and an 88 percent pay increase for her
job at N.C. State University.

Friends and colleagues say the news stories and

criticisms paint a picture that bears little resemblance to the talented, smart and warm person they
know.

"I have never seen an aloof Mary Easley, nor have I seen, like I said, an ostentatious or false Mary Easley," said Doug
Parsons, a lawyer who has known Easley since 1972, when they were both law students at Wake
Forest University.
The travel expenses and the NCSU job have rankled many state workers, said Dana Cope, executive director of the State
Employees Association of North Carolina, which represents 55,000 employees and retirees.

"I think it's a classic case of the haves versus the have-nots," Cope said. "I think our state employees and I think regular taxpayers see it for what it is."

Riding out the storm

Easley, through a spokeswoman for the governor, declined to be inter-
viewed for this story. In an interview with WRAL television earlier this month, Easley said she has tried to ignore the negative
attention.

"You can't control people's reactions or how they're going to write a story or how they're going to present a story," she said. "You really have to concentrate on what you're trying to do that's positive."

Mary Pipines moved to North Carolina from New Jersey in the late 1960s to attend Wake For-
est University. After earning a law degree there, she was hired as

a prosecutor in Pender County. Through her work she met her future husband, who was a pros-
ecutor in a neighboring judicial district.

But Mary Pipines was attracting attention in her own right. She was probably the only female pros-
ecutor east of Raleigh.

"She was kind of an oddity around the state," said John Carriker, who was a fellow prosecutor who eventually became district at-
torney. Carriker remembers that at district attorneys conferences, other prosecutors would ask,
"How's that girl doing?"

Carriker and others said she was a good prosecutor who handled everything from traffic ticket
to murder cases, and defense lawyers and defendants learned to take her seriously.

The Easleys married in 1980. About twenty years later, Mike Easley, who had been a district
attorney and North Carolina's at-
torney general, was elected gov-
ernor. Since then, Mary Easley has done the first lady's duties —
ceremonies, occasional ribbon-cut-
tings and, rarely, public events at
the Executive Mansion — and
her naturally warm and gregarious personality has been an asset.

"When there's a ceremonial role, a first lady should do that, with good humor and enthusiasm and make that enthusiasm contagious," Mary Easley told The
Charlotte Observer in 2003. "I think it has important symbolic value. It may be the only exposure some people have to the gov-
ernor or the governor's family or someone representing the state."

But she has also continued to

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first governor's wife in state history to continue working.

At N.C. Central University, Easley taught trial practice and appellate advocacy while supervising law students who represented criminal defendants through the university's clinic. After she became the first lady, about the only thing that changed at school was the constant presence of a security guard, said Pamela Stanback Glean, director of clinical programs at NCCU's law school.

"She doesn't demand a whole lot. She never had a prima donna attitude about it," Glean said. "If you didn't see the troopers, you wouldn't know she was the governor's wife."

Glean said Easley was a "hands-on" teacher.

"Mary would go out of her way to not only explain her grading, but to help students improve," she said.

Boosting MADD, art

First ladies traditionally champion a few pet issues. Mary Easley chose underage drinking, education and the arts. Of the 260 events the governor's press office announced for Mary Easley since 2001, at least 128 focused on those issues.

"Her position helps open up doors," said Craig Lloyd, state executive director of MADD. "I can't point at a stronger partner that we've had to keep our youth safe and our roadways safe than Mrs. Easley and her husband."

From the start of her husband's first term, Easley has volunteered her time at the N.C. Museum of Art. She's worked the phones, helped with events and tours and lent her stature to efforts to recruit world-class exhibits.

"I would dare say that she's been the most important volunteer we've had in terms of taking the museum from what I think is a pretty good regional art museum to one of the best museums in the world," said Joyce Fitzpatrick, a member of the museum board of trustees.

Art and culture were the reasons behind two European trips that Mary Easley took. In 2007 she went to France as part of a cultural exchange that followed a blockbuster Monet exhibit at the museum in Raleigh.

Then in May, Easley was part of a delegation to Estonia and St. Petersburg, Russia. Travel arrangements and expenses were extravagant by the standards applied to most state employees. Nine people went on the trips, and transportation, hotels, meals and other items cost a total of $109,000. After the details became public, Mary Easley became a target of editorial writers, bloggers, radio hosts and others who questioned the value of the trip and some of the expenses, such as tickets to the ballet in Russia.

"All the focus on the cost of the trips misses the point, Gov. Easley and other state officials have said. The state saw an economic benefit of more than $20 million from the Monet exhibit and the trip to Russia could produce a similar result. Officials said having the first lady of North Carolina along for such a trip helps impress foreign arts officials."

Big raise at NCSU

The day after the news broke about her European trips, another news story revealed that Easley received a $90,300 raise at N.C. State, where she began working in 2005.

She was hired as an executive-in-residence with the rank of senior lecturer. Her job included directing a speakers program and teaching three courses a year. She was given new duties this year, including running a leadership training program for police and emergency rescue workers and coordinating law education initiatives.

University officials and Mary Easley emphasized that she had accepted a new job with more responsibilities and that her qualifications justified her new $170,000 salary. The UNC Board of Governors must still vote on the increase.

Cope, of the state employees association, said, "This was preferential treatment because she's the governor's wife."

Gov. Easley said that people were making an issue of it because she was a woman.

"I of the experience as a lawyer in private practice; as a prosecutor, as a person that has worked with and advised law enforcement ... puts me in a unique position [with] a unique skill set that not many people have.

MARY EASLEY
NORTH CAROLINA'S FIRST LADY

'I bring something unique to N.C. State. All of my experience as a lawyer in private practice, as a prosecutor, as a person that has worked with and advised law enforcement ... puts me in a unique position [with] a unique skill set that not many people have.'

DANA COPE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION OF NORTH CAROLINA

'I think it's a classic case of the haves versus the have-nots. I think our state employees and ... regular taxpayers see it for what it is.'

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New law school hires standouts
Ex-Duke scholar’s lineup wins praise

BY TONY BARBOZA
LOS ANGELES TIMES

After liberal constitutional scholar Erwin Chemerinsky was hired, fired and then rehired as dean of the fledgling University of California, Irvine, law school last year, some said the politically charged controversy meant Orange County had missed its shot at a nationally renowned law school.

At the time, university officials acknowledged that the hiring debacle, which erupted into a battle over academic freedom, could put such a blemish on the institution that it would be difficult to assemble a top-tier team of legal scholars.

But this month, Chemerinsky officially started as dean and proved many of those dire predictions wrong, announcing an 18-member "dream team" of founding faculty and administrators that observers in legal and higher education circles praised as an impressive lineup. The first class of 60 students is scheduled to start in fall 2009.

Chemerinsky, who left his post at Duke University to head the UC-Irvine law school, is considered one of the nation's foremost experts on constitutional law, though his left-leaning positions have drawn fire from conservatives.

The list of founding faculty was seen as an important milestone after UCI Chancellor Michael V. Drake's decision in September to abruptly fire Chemerinsky as founding dean, only to offer him the job again five days later after a national outcry. Chemerinsky contended that Drake bowed to pressure from conservatives and sacked him because of his outspoken liberal positions. Drake later admitted he "bungled" the appointment but denied outside influence.

'High-profile people'

The assortment of professors brought on staff has dispelled concerns that Chemerinsky's hiring fracas would undermine the school's ability to recruit top faculty and do so quickly, said Robert Pushaw, a politically conservative constitutional law professor at Pepperdine University.

"It's very difficult to persuade top law professors to leave their schools to join an upstart operation, but he's hired some very high-profile people," Pushaw said. "I'm guessing there won't be a whole lot of McCain bumper stickers in the parking lot there, but that's true of academia in general."

The incoming professors include specialists in intellectual property, labor, clinical education, civil rights and dispute resolution. Among the well-known names are civil rights and education expert Rachel Moran from University of California, Berkeley, who is the incoming president of the Association of American Law Schools; Dan Burk, a cyber law and biotechnology expert from the University of Minnesota; and Chemerinsky's wife, Catherine Fisk, a noted Duke University labor law professor.

Chemerinsky said he sought a faculty with diverse political views but, more importantly, professors who were at the top of their field.

"It's always been my goal that our law school will have no ideology. I don't want to make a liberal law school or a conservative law school," he said. "To the extent that conservatives had doubts about me, all I want is for them to give me a chance."
Engineer's small footprint leaves big mark on world

By Kristin Butler
Staff Writer

Jayant Baliga is a man of average size, but he probably has the world's smallest footprint. Carbon footprint, that is.

Baliga, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at N.C. State, is the inventor of a power-saving switch that prevents 1.4 trillion pounds of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere each year, at a cost savings of $300 billion.

And by saving 125 gigawatts of power each year, Baliga has offset the carbon footprint of 175 million people. You'd have to plant tens of millions of trees to achieve the same effect.

Now he may make big changes in the nation's electrical grid. He's a finalist for a National Science Foundation grant that would support research into how to deliver energy more efficiently.

Meanwhile, consumers already use Baliga's technology every time they turn on a television, power up a computer or switch on the air conditioning. Each year, 100,000 cardiac arrest victims are shocked back to life with his help, while, across the globe, Japanese bullet-train riders are whisked to work each morning because of his breakthrough.

Baliga, who also directs N.C. State University's Power Semiconductor Research Center, likes to joke that, "everybody uses my devices, but nobody knows it."

Baliga's chief invention, called an insulated gate bipolar transistor, or IGBT, is an improvement to the original transistors developed at Bell Laboratories in the 1940s.

As the building blocks of all modern electronics, transistors are arguably the most important invention of the 20th century. The devices amplify and switch electrical signals, and their low cost and ease of production means that millions of them can be lined up on a single chip.

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Staff Photo by Chris Seward
TAR HEEL
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gle microchip. But before Baliga they were very energy inefficient.

Baliga likens the concept to a garden hose: "If you think of a
garden hose, you have water running through the spigot and into
the hose at full speed. But if you want to control that flow, you
must use a damper somewhere inside the hose to decrease the
water coming out. A lot of energy is lost at the damper."

But if you could decrease the flow of the water at the spigot
— instead of sending it through at full speed and then choking off
the flow with the damper — you'd save a tremendous amount of
power, Baliga says. And that's precisely what the IGBT does.

Modest, yet proud

Baliga made the IGBT breakthrough while working at General
Electric. "Actually, I invented it under duress," Baliga said, since
his boss had given him an ultimatum to do something profit-
able in six months. His innovation has made him the equivalent
of a rock star in the electrical engi-
neering community.

Scientific American has named
Baliga, the author of 15 books and
more than 500 scientific arti-
cles, one of eight heroes of the
semiconductor revolution. The
University of North Carolina's
Board of Governors presented
him with the O. Max Gardner
award in 1998, which recognizes
the member of the 16-university
UNC system who has made "the
greatest contribution to the wel-
fare of the human race."

Among the few physics awards
Baliga still hasn't won is the No-el Prize. When pressed, Baliga
smiles thinly and acknowledges
that, at age 61, there's plenty of
time left for that. Three of his fel-
low seven "heroes of the semi-
conductor revolution" are Nobel
laureates.

As he discusses his many acco-
lades, Baliga comes across as nei-
ther embarrassed nor immodest.
He is visibly proud as he talks of be-
ing among the youngest men ever
elected to the Institute of Elec-
nic and Electrical Engineers and
the National Academy of En-
ngineering, and yet there is no hint of
self-congratulation in his tone.

JAYANT BALIGA

BORN: April 28, 1948 in Madras, In-
da

EDUCATION: B.Tech in electrical en-
gineering, Indian Institute of Technol-
ogy, Madras, India, 1969; M.S. in elec-
trical engineering, Rensselaer Poly-
technic Institute, 1971, Troy, N.Y.;
Ph.D. in electrical engineering, Ren-
sselaer Polytechnic Institute, 1974.

OCCUPATION: Distinguished uni-
versity professor of electrical and com-
puter engineering at N.C. State Uni-
versity; director of Power Semi-
iconductor Research Center.

FAMILY: Wife, Pratima Baliga, and
sons Avinash, 27; and Vinay, 21.

By his teens, Baliga wanted to
follow his father into engineering.
He took the entrance exam for the
Indian Institutes of Technology,
which are among the world's most select
universities. Of 200,000 teens who took
the test that year, just 2,000 were
offered places. Baliga ranked No.
47.

Leading a revolution

Baliga credits his time at the
IIT - with giving him a multidiscipli-
nary foundation that has been
essential to his professional suc-
cess. For that reason, he goes out of
his way to teach an intro-
ductory electrical engineering
class for non-majors at N.C. State
each year. "Many of them don't like
the class, but this information
is very important for them
to know," Baliga explains.

Never content with being No.
47, however, Baliga graduated
first in his class from IIT in 1968.

Today, IIT graduates are in high
demand around the world, but
back then, Baliga says he had a

difficult time finding an American
graduate school that would take
him. Finally, Rensselaer Poly-
tech Institute in Troy, N.Y.,
 agreed to take him in as a doc-
toral candidate.

There, he helped develop the
materials that spawned the mod-
ern semiconductor industry. Af-
after receiving his Ph.D. in 1974,
Baliga was hired to General Elec-
tric, where he developed the
IGBT in 1980.

Baliga joined N.C. State in
1968, saying the university was
one of just a few in the world that
had the kind of materials science
facilities he needed to do his work.

Since then, he has worked to
achieve a second-generation
breakthrough: A silicon carbide-
based semiconductor that is more
efficient than the IGBT.

Fortunately for the planet, Baliga
says retirement is not something
he's thought about yet. And his
legacy only continues to grow:
Baliga's sons have chosen to be-
come electrical engineers — the
did, however, pursue different
subspecialties, he notes with
"a grin — and the dozens of gradu-
ate students he's mentored over
the years typically graduate with
at least five job offers.

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CAN AN OLYMPIC STADIUM BE FAR BEHIND?
The 16-campus UNC system received the go-ahead for $401 million in borrowing for construction projects that will be backed by user fees, ticket sales and private donations. High on the list of projects were sports facilities — a $50 million expansion at Kenan Stadium and $9.5 million for Carmichael Auditorium at UNC-Chapel Hill; $24 million for Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium at East Carolina University and $8.3 million for Kidd Brewer Stadium at Appalachian State.
ECU linebacker's court case delayed

The Daily Reflector

Suspended East Carolina University freshman linebacker Max Joyner III had a court case continued Friday morning until early October.

Joyner faces misdemeanor charges of assaulting a sports official, stemming from an incident at Elm Street Gym Jan. 15.

Pitt County Assistant District Attorney Mark Stewart said Friday Joyner's case was continued until Oct. 10.

According to an arrest report, Joyner, 18, was arrested at the Pitt County Magistrate's Office Jan. 16 and posted a $500 unsecured bond. A warrant was issued for Joyner's arrest after David Zeher of the Greenville Recreation and Parks Department filed a complaint saying Joyner assaulted one of the organization's officials.

Joyner is due in court two more times before Oct. 10.

He is slated to appear Aug. 22 to face charges of assault inflicting serious injury. That charge stems from a July 9 fight during a house party on Stratford Road. Will Harton, 20, told police Joyner punched him several times that night after Harton attempted to break up a verbal dispute between Joyner and a girl.

Joyner is also due in court Sept. 10 when he faces two counts of assaulting a government official or employee, two counts of resisting a public officer, an intoxicated and disruptive charge and a charge of consuming alcohol under 19 years of age.

ECU head football coach Skip Holtz suspended Joyner July 10, but did not address specifics of the decision.

ECU Director of Media Relations Tom McClellan said Friday that Joyner is still suspended and that the decision will be re-evaluated at a future date. Joyner is a scholarship athlete, and the status of any player's scholarship is re-evaluated each semester, McClellan said.

Joyner, who enrolled at ECU at the start of Summer Session II on June 25, officially signed with Holtz's program last February after a successful local prep career at J.H. Rose High School. He was listed among the 105 players scheduled to report for the opening of the Pirates' preseason camp on Aug. 1 prior to the disciplinary action.
County must decide status of board seat

BY JOSH HUMPHRIES
The Daily Reflector

Pitt County Commissioners will be responsible for determining the status of Billy Ray Peaden's seat on the University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina board of directors.

Peaden, who is also a member of the Pitt County Board of Education, was arrested last week and charged with several felonies.

According to the by-laws of the UHS board, appointments and removal of appointees are left up to the entity that appointed the member, said hospital spokeswoman Barbara Dunn.

Two bodies appoint members to the hospital board, the UNC system Board of Governors and the County Commission. Peaden was appointed by the County Commissioners.

Peaden has not been convicted of a felony. He has only been charged.

Peaden, who operates convenience stores in the Greenville, Belvoir and Farmville areas, was charged July 12 with one felony count of possession of machines/devices prohibited by state law.

Nine video poker machines, illegal in the state since the General Assembly outlawed them in July 2007, were seized by authorities from four locations owned and operated by Peaden.

During the investigation, officers also seized two stolen guns at the N.C. 33 West store, as well as marijuana packaged for sale by one of Peaden's employees.

Peaden faces two felony counts of possession of a stolen firearm and one misdemeanor count of possession of pyrotechnics, because illegal fireworks were found at the store, ABC Law Enforcement Chief Calvin Craft said.

The by-laws for appointments for the County Commissioners states that "all members serve at the pleasure of the Board of County Commissioners and may be removed with or without cause upon 30 days written notice at the discretion of the Board."

To be appointed to a county board, the applicant must be registered to vote in Pitt County, according to the by-laws.

If Peaden is convicted of a felony, he will lose the right to vote here, according to N.C. law.

Peaden was appointed to the hospital board in March of 1998.

Trish Staton, clerk to the county commission board, said Peaden was nominated for the hospital board by County Commission Chairman Mark Owens Jr.

Owens is serving as Peaden's legal counsel in the case and will not comment on the case.

Peaden also would lose his seat on the school board if convicted of a felony.

The North Carolina Constitution prohibits anyone from holding an office in which they are not eligible to vote. Were Peaden to be convicted of the felony charges, he would no longer be eligible to hold the school board seat.

However, he can keep his seat until the case is settled, according to state law.

Alison Schafer, legal counsel and director of policy at the North Carolina School Board Association, said a recent change in the law would leave the enforcement of Peaden's removal, if he is convicted, to the state attorney general's office.

"If he is found guilty, then the attorney general would bring an action to declare the office vacant," Schafer said.

Peaden was elected to the school board in 2004. His term expires in 2010.

Josh Humphries can be contacted at jhumphries@coxnc.com and 329-9565.
Cheers — if you’re a mouse

UNC study ties ending moderate drinking to depression

ZOE ELIZABETH BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Go ahead and take another swig, because refraining from moderate drinking could be a downer for your mental health.

According to a new study at UNC-Chapel Hill, mice that were forced to abstain after a month of moderate drinking developed depression a few weeks into teetotalism.

The UNC-CH team gave the mice a choice of two drinking bottles: one with water and one with a 10 percent solution of ethanol. During the 28-day period, the mice went for the alcoholic beverage over the water 80 percent of the time. In mouse terms, that’s moderate drinking.

"Moderate drinking has a lot of definitions, but in this case what it meant is that the mice did not appear dependent," said Clyde Hodge, professor of psychiatry and pharmacology in the UNC School of Medicine and senior author of the study. "There were no withdrawal symptoms."

After 28 days, the researchers replaced the ethanol solution with a second bottle of regular water.

Then they tested the mice for depression using something called the Porsolt Swim Test, which has been a laboratory standard since it was introduced in the late 1970s. It gauges the will to live.

"The mice are put in a beaker full of water, and then we let them swim there for a while," Hodge said. Mice are good swimmers, so they usually swim around looking for a way out, but eventually they give up and float around, seemingly resigned to being stuck in the beaker.

The time it takes for the mice to give up is a measure of their despair, a symptom of depression.

The researchers expected to see a change in the mice's moods immediately after they took the alcohol away, but to their surprise, nothing significant happened.

But not for long.

"We began to see a trend toward depression emerging in the first few days," Hodge said, "although it wasn’t until two weeks after that we really saw it. And that’s really interesting. What that implied was that it’s not the drinking that is the cause, it’s something going on in the brain."

Sure enough, when the team looked at the mice’s brains, they found that up to 50 percent fewer brain cells were being generated in the area that controls learning, memory and mood. This made their brains less able to change and adapt.

Lee-Ann Kaskutas, a senior scientist at the Alcohol Research Group in California, is skeptical.

"Depression is not just a biological thing," she said. "There are contextual elements that make it very complex in humans. I’m just concerned about how the results translate to the human condition."

If the result does translate, however, it could have a big effect on the way doctors treat alcoholism.

"Alcoholics trying to quit report that negative mood is one of the top reasons for going back to drinking," Hodge said. Antidepressants, which encourage the growth of brain cells, could be a solution for people trying to get back on the wagon.

"It’s important that we understand that there are changes in the brain that occur after drinking," said Hodge, "and identifying those changes are critical. That's the bottom line."

The findings appear online in the journal Neuropsychopharmacology.

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