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Greenville city leaders on Thursday appeared en masse to support the police department as it wages its summertime war on gang violence.

Appearing at a weekly police news briefing with four of six City Council members, Mayor Pat Dunn issued a statement acknowledging a crime spike since June 18 that includes nine shootings and several robberies tied to gang activity.

“The City Council recognizes that citizens are concerned,” Dunn said. “As elected representatives, so are we.”

Police have been aggressive, Dunn said. Long-term strategies to step up pressure in hot spots, as well as community outreach and youth programs, have been effective, she said. “The City Council and I support these strategies,” Dunn said. “The City Council has made public safety its No. 1 priority.”

Dunn urged citizens to “stand up” and help police and community efforts. “Help our police department to keep us safe,” she said. “We cannot do it alone.” Council members Marion Blackburn, Max Joyner, Bryant Kittrell and Kandie Smith attended the briefing; Rose Glover and Calvin Mercer were out of town.

Dawn Tevepaugh, East Carolina University assistant police chief, and Bill Koch, associate vice chancellor of environmental health and safety, said they continue to work with police to combat crime on and off campus.
Violence in the city slowed until last weekend, when several shootings and robberies were reported.

 Shootings during a private party at Fusion Skate Park that spilled over to the Sheetz at 10th Street and Charles Boulevard, injuring four, are not gang-related, Greenville Police Chief William Anderson said Thursday.

 However, shots fired at one Kangaroo gas station and a robbery at another the same night are gang related, Anderson said. The suspects in the robbery incident were arrested. No new arrests have been made, although persons of interest have been identified, he said.

 “I think they are getting close,” he said of investigators.
 A gang suppression plan is working, Anderson said. Several confirmed gang members in the city have been in touch with police since their names and photos were released, he said.

 “We've gotten feedback from some of the individuals involved, some of the individuals we have listed, that are concerned about the increased activity and the pressure that's being put on them,” he said.

 “As long as we continue that level of pressure and they aren't committing crimes, that's our ultimate goal.”

 Contact Jennifer Swartz at jswartz@reflector.com or 252-329-9565.
This week the city fathers of Aberdeen, Washington, decided it might not be wise to name a bridge after Kurt Cobain. So what are the perils and pitfalls of renaming things after famous people?

There are some very famous places named after famous people. A famous renaming can quickly erase what went before.

How many foreigners flying into New York's JFK airport remember it used to be Idlewild airport?

We name places after people to recognise their achievements. Alexander the Great liked to found cities and name them after himself, in honour of his own achievements. But mostly it's done by other people.

Every act of naming is pregnant with meaning. In the 1980s, the UK had a wave of renaming places after Nelson Mandela. With then-Prime Minister Margaret
Thatcher reportedly regarding Mandela as a terrorist, such namings were often by more left-wing councils and groups. The trend was immortalised in the sitcom Only Fools and Horses for the block of flats the Trotters lived in.

Today, of course, Mandela is an uncontroversial figure, hailed from all parts of the political spectrum.

A similar flurry of renaming streets after Martin Luther King has happened in the US.

But many figures are inherently more controversial.

It's easy to see why Aberdeen decided to hold off on honouring Kurt Cobain. A great musician to some may be seen by others as a drug user who falls short of role model status. Instead the bridge will now stay as Young Street Bridge. But it's still named after a person - Alexander Young who built the first saw mill.

Attitudes to people can change over time. It used to be common to name streets after notables of the British Empire. In 2002, efforts were made to change the name of a street housing a large Sikh temple in Southall, west London. Havelock Road was named after Sir Henry Havelock, who was prominent during the Indian Mutiny of 1857.

Some have even suggested that Liverpool's Penny Lane, made famous by the Beatles, is insensitive. It commemorates James Penny, an 18th Century slave trader.

Kurt Cobain is a controversial figure to some

The point is that attitudes change over time, says Derek Alderman, professor of geography at East Carolina University. He has been tracking the US streets named after Martin Luther King. So far he's counted over 900.
For Alderman, addresses are an everyday reminder of people's history in a way a museum can't be. "Think about all the times you use a street name in a day from catching a cab to putting it in your GPS."

In this way it can do much more than a monument and, he suggests, it is a cheaper option.

And older names are useful because they "force people to talk about their history".

People's reputations are constantly being reassessed, adds Alderman. He notes George Washington, once celebrated as presiding over the creation of the US constitution, is now also criticised by some for his association with slaves. He observes a trend in avoiding naming schools in the US after people in order to stay away from controversy.

But the debate, for Alderman, gives an opportunity to work out what the popular view of a person is. "If a city decides they are going to name a park after [Kurt] Cobain they will talk about why that person is important. In doing so they are going to talk about that person's legacy and so they have to come to a consensus about the meaning of that person."

Martin Luther King, on the other hand, has his own national holiday

Location names for Alderman can have political motivations. "Renaming a street is about claiming a certain voice, and a certain power over how your city looks. It is about remembering the specific person but it is also about making sure there is a greater democracy in how cities look."

Liam Scott-Smith at think tank New Local Government Network goes one step further. He thinks naming a place after someone can "reward good behaviour". This recognition, he thinks, could create a virtuous circle where people aim to get this kind of recognition.

Scott-Smith's think tank started a campaign in 2008 for more British roads to be renamed after modern people. Their report at the time claimed Britain is far behind
America and France in doing this. But he says it should be encouraged for local celebrities to be named as "you have a strong affinity with someone in the area and that builds civic pride".

He does warn against fads, though, confessing that at the time the report was launched they suggested naming roads after David Beckham.

**Remember Downing?**

Figures can rise and fall in the public consciousness. Leeds University's student union once had a section called the Harvey Milk Bar, but many of the 18-year-olds arriving there for the first time would have been unaware of the life of the assassinated, gay 1970s San Francisco politician. After Sean Penn's recent high-profile movie, knowledge of Milk's life will have again spread.

Others maintain a steady level of fame. The officials who named streets in Italy, the Netherlands and Spain after George Orwell seem on safe ground.

Others can disappear into obscurity. How many people stopped in London's Whitehall, would be able to tell you much about the life of George Downing, after whom Downing Street is named?

Etymologist Tania Styles says that the people cities, towns and villages are named after have been forgotten over time without much consequence. That's because, she says, place names become a labelling function and the name "may as well be arbitrary".

Historians have struggled to find the Padda after whom Paddington is named, or indeed the Bucca who gave us Buckingham.

But she warns that nowadays the associations of the names will persist much longer. "In this day and age I can't imagine that kind of information will be forgotten."
Thomas Allen Bennett Sr.

NAPLES, Fla. - Mr. Thomas Allen Bennett Sr., 74, of Naples, Fla. and Greenville/Pine Knoll Shores, N.C., died Tuesday, July 19, 2011 after a courageous battle with lung cancer.

A memorial service will be conducted Tuesday, August 2 at 11 a.m. in the Wilkerson Funeral Chapel.

Born in Beaufort County on March 23, 1937 to Hyacinth W. and the Rev. Wilbur I. Bennett Sr., he grew up in Farmville and Washington, N.C., graduating from Washington High School in 1955. Tom earned a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from East Carolina College in 1959, and was also a graduate of the Executive Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Upon graduation from East Carolina, Tom was a teacher and assistant football coach at Havelock High School from 1959 to 1962. Tom left teaching to join Wachovia Bank where over the next 30 years he would start as a field representative and rise to Vice Chairman and Chief Operating Officer. His career with the bank included service as City Executive (Morehead City), Regional Executive (Greenville and Raleigh), Executive Vice President in charge of North Carolina banking, and Vice Chairman and Chief Operating Officer (Winston-Salem). He served as president of the North Carolina Banker's Association in 1991, and he retired from banking in 1992. Tom was respected by both peers and competitors in the banking industry, and one always knew where he stood on any issue.

Throughout Tom's career and into retirement, he served his communities and his alma mater by volunteering in numerous organizations. Included were the Carteret County Chamber of Commerce (three terms as president); Neuse Development Association; Morehead City Rotary; Morehead City Jaycees (winner of the Distinguished Service Award in 1968); and Carteret Economic Development Council (founding president). He served on the advisory boards of the Sea Level Hospital and the Maritime Museum of Beaufort, as well as on the boards of the following: Taylor Foundation of Norfolk, Va., Pitt County Memorial Hospital, Brenner Children's Hospital, the YMCA of Winston-Salem, Peace College, N.C. Citizens for Business and Industry, N.C. Agribusiness Council, N.C. Community Foundation, and N.C. Rural Economic Development Center.

Tom loved East Carolina University and devoted much time and resources in promoting excellence in both academic and athletic programs. He was a member of the Chancellor's Society and the Sabre Society, and served from 1981 to 1989 on the Board of Trustees, including service as Chair of the Athletics Committee and Chair of the Board. He also served on the Board of Visitors, and the boards of the ECU Foundation, Inc., the ECU Medical Foundation (chair 1997-2000), and the ECU Educational Foundation, the latter...
of which he enjoyed 15 years on the Endowment Investment Committee. Tom was an avid Pirate fan, and for many years could be heard cheering on the football and basketball teams, especially, and his presence in the stands will be sorely missed.

Tom was the recipient of numerous awards, including the Order of the Long Leaf Pine from the state of North Carolina and the 1998 Distinguished Service Award from the ECU Alumni Association.

He enjoyed a dual membership in the First Baptist Church of Naples and the Bogue Banks Baptist Church in Atlantic Beach. At Bogue Banks he was on the finance and personnel committees, and was an enthusiastic team player at Vacation Bible School.

Tom's great passions were his love for the Lord Jesus Christ, his family, his profession, his beloved East Carolina University and his love for all people. A respected banker, devoted husband, father and grandfather, he was also a loyal friend and mentor to so many and was loved by all who had the privilege to know him.

He was preceded in death by his parents; a sister, Clara Bennett; and brothers, James I. Bennett and Wilbur I. Bennett.

He is survived by his devoted wife of over 49 years, Carolyn Williams Bennett; a son, Thomas Allen Bennett Jr. and wife Meg, of Concord, N.C.; a daughter, Carolyn Anne Bennett Durham and husband Bryan, of Wilmington, N.C.; four grandchildren, Thomas and Martha Bennett, and Noah and Lane Durham; sisters-in-law Loretta Handley of Tamarac, Fla. and Jane Bennett of Greenville; and several nieces and nephews.

The family will receive friends Monday, August 1 from 6-8 p.m. at Wilkerson Funeral Home.

The family wishes to thank Dr. Robert Dietrich, Dr. Thomas Lee and staff of Physicians East for their exceptional care and compassion, as well as his caregiver, Chris English. Memorial contributions may be made to the East Carolina University Medical Foundation, 525 Moye Blvd., Greenville, NC 27858 or to the East Carolina University Educational Foundation, 901 East 5th Street, Greenville, NC 27858.


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Pitt plane crash kills pilot

By Jennifer Swartz
The Daily Reflector
Friday, July 29, 2011

A small plane crashed at a residential landing field in southern Pitt County on Thursday, killing the pilot.

The single-engine Taylorcraft propeller plane crashed at the South Oaks Aerodrome about 3 p.m., Sheriff Neil Elks said. The pilot, a Pitt County resident, was the only occupant.

Deputies were expected to remain on the scene through this morning awaiting federal investigators.

The plane appeared to be landing, according to witnesses, and went down in a grassy landing area at the airfield, sheriff's officials said. The strip is part of the residential development. No structures were damaged. A flight plan was not known, officials said. Elks said it was possible the pilot went up for a brief pleasure ride. The crash does not appear suspicious, he said.

The site is off County Home Road, just south of Ayden Golf Club Road. Ayden fire and rescue workers responded along with the sheriff's office and the State Highway Patrol. Federal aviation officials were expected to arrive this morning from Florida. Sheriff's officials did not release the pilot's name pending the federal probe.

The plane is registered to Joshua Brehm of Corbett Street in Winterville, according to Federal Aviation Administration documents. It is a 1940 Taylorcraft BL-65, a fixed-wing airplane.

Contact Jennifer Swartz at jswartz@reflector.com or 252-329-9565.
Thorpe stands alone for now

BY DAN KANE - Staff Writer

Butch Davis is gone. Dick Baddour is retiring early. So UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor Holden Thorp stood alone in the spotlight Thursday, answering questions about the school's football scandal and damage to the university's reputation.

The news conference could well be Thorp's defining moment as chancellor. He announced Baddour's retirement and sought to explain his reasoning for firing Davis - after publicly supporting both Davis and Baddour for months.

"I made the decision in the fall that I was going to support Coach Davis and his efforts to improve the football program, but I can no longer overlook the fact that what started as a purely athletic issue has begun to chip away at this university's integrity," Thorp said. "I cannot stand for that. We can't get better without making a change."
While message boards and talk radio lit up with questions about Thorp's timing and reasoning, his work got better reviews from those familiar with university operations.

Yet there's a familiar pattern to college athletic scandals: the allegations, the denials, the investigation, the violations, the housecleaning within the athletic department, and then the departure of the chancellor.

It has happened at major colleges such as UCLA, Maryland, Kentucky, Colorado and Florida. It happened at N.C. State roughly 20 years ago.

Thorp is in his third year on the job, his first try at leading a university. He is a homegrown product, a Fayetteville native who received his bachelor's degree from UNC-CH in 1986 and returned to teach chemistry there seven years later. He was tapped to lead the university at the relatively young age of 43.

On Thursday, while Thorp took numerous questions from reporters, university officials - from the chairman of the Board of Trustees to the chair of the Faculty Council - said they are standing behind him. They said he has shown true character in the face of adversity.

"I think he held up well, and I think he has the complete support of the faculty," said Jan Boxill, who became chair of the Faculty Council this summer. "He's so open, and he's so honest. He gets it."

Wade Hargrove, who assumed the chairmanship of the university's Board of Trustees this week, praised Thorp for using great care and deliberation in making the decision to fire Davis.

"This was no easy decision for all the reasons that the chancellor expressed, but it was the right decision," said Hargrove, a Raleigh lawyer.

Art Padilla, an N.C. State management professor who wrote a book on university leadership, said athletic scandals are a dangerous trap for chancellors because they can't control much of what happens within athletic departments. Once the scandal develops, the chancellors have little time to deal with the university's core mission, so it suffers.

"I don't care what they say, it consumes them day and night," he said.

He added that he did not think Thorp had handled the situation poorly.

In explaining his decision to fire Davis, Thorp pointed out that the university has much larger challenges. It is grappling with a $100 million budget cut that may cause the university to shut down buildings along with cutting
programs. He said the changes to the athletic program's leadership should help bring the focus back to the academic challenge facing the university.

After the news conference, Thorp said he wants to step up the university's efforts in catching plagiarism. It was a heavily plagiarized paper by a former football player that created the latest controversy for the program. He and Boxill confirmed that a task force is being set up to tackle the problem.

Bill Friday, former president of the UNC system, said it's too soon to judge Thorp's performance. He said the first priority for anyone who cares about the university is identifying the people who pushed so hard to try to turn the football team into a national powerhouse.

"We've got work to do and we've got issues to resolve, but the first one has got to be ferreting out where this pressure comes from," he said. "Who is generating it? Why is it this win-at-any-cost mentality?"

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Baddour announces decision to step down as UNC-CH AD

BY KEN TYSIAC - Staff Writer

CHAPEL HILL The abrupt - and financially costly - dismissal of Tar Heels football coach Butch Davis on Wednesday leaves UNC-Chapel Hill searching for its third head coach in six years.

The university also must hire a new athletic director entrusted with finding a permanent coaching replacement for a troubled program shaken by an NCAA investigation.

UNC athletic director Dick Baddour, who has held the post for 14 years and who has worked at UNC since 1967, announced Thursday that he is retiring. He will continue as athletic director until UNC makes a new hire, then will move to another role until his contract ends.

With university chancellor Holden Thorp on hand to discuss the decision to fire Davis, Baddour told reporters that although his contract runs through June 2012, he is stepping aside. UNC officials would like Baddour's successor to be in place in time to hire a permanent replacement for Davis at the end of the 2011 football season.

"I've given my heart and soul for 45 years to the University of North Carolina," Baddour said. "... As someone who has hired coaches for the past 14 years, I know that it is even more imperative that my successor be able to name the next permanent head coach."
Thorp said UNC is prepared to pay Davis his full buyout, which is worth $2,703,500. All money will come from athletic department funds, and no state money will be involved, according to UNC officials.

Thursday evening, the university named defensive coordinator Everett Withers, who served on Davis' staff the last three seasons, the team's interim head coach.

Davis has four years remaining on a contract stating that the school would not owe him a buyout if it was determined he reasonably should have known about violations of NCAA rules within the program. Last month, the NCAA delivered a Notice of Allegations detailing nine alleged major violations involving improper benefits from agents and academic misconduct.

The NCAA has instructed university officials, including Thorp and Baddour, to attend an Oct. 28 hearing on the allegations in Indianapolis.

**Davis not aware**

Since late last fall, Thorp and other university officials have maintained that Davis did not know about the violations in the program. Thorp echoed that stance Thursday morning.

"This was a very difficult decision, compounded by cost and timing," Thorp said. "But the integrity of our football program and the reputation of this university have a value beyond any dollar figure."

Thorp explained the peculiar timing of the decision to fire Davis nine days before the scheduled start of preseason football practice. Since an NCAA investigation into impermissible benefits and academic misconduct began in June 2010, Thorp had consistently expressed support for Davis.

But over the last two months, UNC has endured several embarrassing episodes. The NCAA sent the school a letter on June 21 alleging nine major violations. Also last month, a Wake Superior Court judge ordered UNC to turn over to the media records showing that fewer than 12 football players received a total of 395 parking tickets worth $13,125 in fines over 3 1/2 years.

This month brought news that university officials had failed to detect plagiarism in a term paper turned in by former football player Michael McAdoo, an African Studies paper that had been reviewed by the school's student-run honor court.

"This was really about the cumulative effect on the university's reputation, nine NCAA allegations and persistent questions to our commitment to
"academic integrity," Thorp said. "The best way for the football program to move forward is to make a change."

**Board no factor**

Thorp said the change in the Board of Trustees roster that took place Wednesday had no impact on his decision to fire Davis. Three new trustees joined the board, and lawyer Wade H. Hargrove of Raleigh was sworn in as board chairman.

Hargrove, who replaced Bob Winston, said in a statement that the board supports Thorp.

"This was not an easy decision for the chancellor, but it was the right decision," Hargrove said. "It was reached after long and thoughtful deliberation."

Thorp said Baddour's sterling reputation with the NCAA has helped UNC cooperate throughout the 13-month investigation.

When asked how difficult it was for him to step down, Baddour held back tears and politely declined, saying he didn't have the emotional wherewithal to answer the question.

He expressed concern for the players in a tumultuous time and encouraged supporters to continue backing UNC's players and athletes.

"Our fans will rally around our student-athletes and our programs and the coaches that we have and understand that these are difficult times, and that this is when we need them the most," Baddour said. "This is when we need our Tar Heels to step up and help us."

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Tar Heel tarnish

UNCC-Chapel Hill sought football glory, and found instead the first major athletics scandal in 50 years.

The last thing, the very last thing, that ought to concern Chancellor Holden Thorp, trustees, alumni and friends of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is the winning percentage in the upcoming football season. A perspective on the relative unimportance of athletics has been painfully gained with a scandal in the football program that has brought down the coach in charge and cast reasonable skepticism and tough questions in the direction of Thorp, who dismissed Coach Butch Davis after months of stormy weather over the program.

This was big-time, all right. Awaiting possible if not likely sanctions from the NCAA, the governing body of college athletics, UNCC-CH now finds itself in the company of "football schools" such as Ohio State, which could face a hammer blow from the NCAA for rampant problems with its championship program.

Seeds of scandal

A lust to play at the Buckeye level, to compete for national titles, to go to glamorous bowl games, to bring in more and more TV revenue all are at the root of the problems in Chapel Hill. Boosters wanted a major coach, and Director of Athletics Dick Baddour (now departing early), eager to do their bidding, got one in Davis, a veteran of the professional ranks and of the University of Miami, where he was credited with cleaning up a corrupt program.

He had a multimillion-dollar contract, and boosters arranged to spend tens of millions of dollars on the football stadium, a graceful facility steeped in tradition and fond memory. Although Kenan Stadium was perhaps the most beautiful football setting in America, Davis wanted better, and boosters wanted a palace where they could dine and drink. The "renovation," or abomination depending upon one's point of view, is in progress.

That change might now be characterized as more a monument to all that went wrong.
Story snowballs

By this time the story that has enveloped the Tar Heels in recent months is known all too well: An associate head coach whom Davis had known for decades, John Blake, resigned and received a settlement after accusations that he had contact with a sports agent from whom he received money. Players were suspended for having gotten a total of over $27,000 in impermissible benefits. When records the university disgracefully tried to keep from the public were released, it turned out that players had wantonly ignored parking regulations and run up over $13,000 worth of tickets and fines, some mysteriously paid.

Then there were the 14 players who missed at least one game last season, seven of whom missed the entire season because of an NCAA investigation. Academic misconduct involving a tutor was alleged, and the tutor also had worked for Davis, helping his son.

Davis says he has done nothing wrong. But he says at the same time that he was fully responsible for the football program. As problems unfolded, Thorp in effect joined himself to Davis at the hip, repeatedly voicing his support for the coach and asserting that Davis was not going to be fired.

At a truly sad press conference yesterday, Thorp dropped another shoe regarding Davis. Thorp said the coach is not being fired for cause and thus will be bought out at a figure that could run to $2.7 million. Multiple NCAA allegations are not cause? That's curious, indeed.

Back on campus

It was hard not to notice that the Davis announcement coincided with Thorp sounding alarms about how there would have to be layoffs on his campus and that buildings might have to be closed because of state budget cuts amounting to $100 million.

Though the money for the coach is expected to come from athletics department revenues, surely Thorp can see the maddening disconnect in those two announcements.

And just what has the return been on this massive investment in athletics, other than fancy buildings and the expense of maintaining them, assistant coaches with salaries higher than senior professors and those bragging rights?

Oh, yes. There was that "return" in scandal.

Lessons learned
How hard are the lessons that have been learned here: A great university, which boasted for generations about not just the excellence of but also the sterling righteousness in its athletics program, has been embarrassed and its reputation tarnished.

There's just no point in denying it. Tens of millions of dollars have been spent and yes, wasted on facilities the university did not need, facilities that send the wrong message about priorities at this public campus.

Chancellor Thorp, an accomplished scientist and teacher, has had his own reputation shaken by this, with lingering questions about why he waited so long to take action on what seemed to be an ever-growing scandal.

After all, he backed Davis strongly even after it became clear that the problems with this football program were not going away.

Thorp says he acted after deciding the controversy was hurting the university's overall reputation. "Our academic integrity is paramount and we must work diligently to protect it," he said.

But unfortunately, it has appeared for months that he was either acquiescent to or part of a single-minded focus on big-time sports, instead of being the one who kept such things in check.

Now the mission is to chart the next steps carefully, to pull the reins on boosters, to choose a coach who understands the value of maintaining strong academic standards, to reset the priorities of the university and to never, ever allow dreams of misplaced glory to make everyone forget why this university exists.
Joe Fay, manager of the rare books department of Heritage Auction Galleries in Dallas, left, Jordan Debutts and Stefania Pandakovic of the books and manuscripts department at Christie's London, watch E. Haven Hawley as she removes a proof during a printing demo at the Rare Book School. Stephanie Gross / For The Washington Post

**U-Va. program celebrates the embattled book**

By Daniel de Vise

CHARLOTTESVILLE — Here is a book about handwriting by Palatino, a 16th-century calligrapher for whom a font is named. And here, a folio of Shakespeare’s plays that sold for one English pound in 1632. And here, an exquisitely illustrated, calfskin-bound Horace collection that bankrupted its publisher in 1733.

Welcome to Rare Book School, summer camp for bibliophiles. Tucked in the basement of the cavernous main library at the University of Virginia, the school is an annual five-week homage to the printed page. Or is it an elegy?

The modern book, a bunch of sheets bound together within a cover, has endured for two millennia, surviving the Dark Ages, radio, television and the moving picture.

But now it is threatened by an electronic version of itself. The e-book is projected to outsell the printed book by 2015, according to Publishers
Weekly magazine. Borders bookstores have begun liquidation sales. Google intends to scan all the world’s books by the end of the decade.

And now there is a new urgency at Rare Book School, arguably the preeminent center for study of the book as artifact.

Founded at Columbia University in 1983, Rare Book School relocated to Charlottesville in 1992 as a nonprofit affiliate of U-Va. and found a niche as a place for librarians and scholars to decode the story told by the book itself: the ink, the paper, the typeface, the binding, the illustrations, the subtle notations in the margins.

“You have to teach people how to read the object, not just how to read the book,” said Michael Suarez, a Jesuit priest and English literature scholar who left a post at Oxford to run the school two years ago.

Bookbinding and publishing lore once were the province of library schools. But they strayed from that mission over the decades, Suarez said, to follow the gradual migration of information from printed pages to electronic screens. Some have dropped the word “library” from their names.

Rare Book School has gone in the opposite direction, amassing a collection of 80,000 items that range from 7th-century papyrus fragments to manuscripts stored on Reagan-era floppy disks and unreadable on the modern computer.

Unlike most special collections, this one is meant to be handled. Many items are ragged specimens of rare texts — worthless to the collector but priceless to the rare-book student — or multiple copies of comparatively obscure works, enough for every student. For the sake of the books, students are forbidden to enter a classroom with food, drink or pen; notes are taken in pencil.

One bookcase is given over entirely to Harry Castlemon’s Gunboat series, popular juvenile literature from the 1860s that time has forgotten, a collection assembled to illustrate the evolution of publishing in the 19th century. Another case brims with Baedeker’s travel guides, popular with tourists of the early 1900s. And surely no library has more copies of “The Tent on the Beach,” a specimen from the later 1800s that is a minor work of Quaker poet John Greenleaf Whittier.

Every corridor on the basement campus hums with adoration of the printed book, one of the more successful contrivances of the civilized world: compact and portable, with pages perfectly suited to opposable thumbs and a spine that fits neatly between the knees.
The codex, as the form is known, emerged in the early Christian era, said Amanda Nelson, the school’s program director. “I don’t see how we’re going very far from this,” she said, holding a tome in her hands, “because this is so perfect.”

The school offers 25 weeklong courses every summer, five a week from June through July. Last week’s crop of students included a bookshop owner from Washington state, an English graduate student from New Zealand, a historian for the Mormon Church, a school librarian from Long Beach, Calif., and collegiate librarians from Oxford and Yale.

Six hours of classes each day give way to wine-and-cheese receptions or evening lectures, prompting much worshipful talk of books.

“I riffle the pages with my thumb as I’m reading, and I can’t do that on a Kindle,” Jeremy Dibbell, a young staffer at Rare Books School, said one evening while dining with other staff and faculty.

“I think about getting an iPad, but not for books,” said Michael Winship, an English professor from the University of Texas who teaches during the summer in Charlottesville. He is considered an authority on 19th-century American publishing and teaches “The American Book in the Industrial Era, 1820-1940.”

Albert Derolez, teaching “Introduction to Western Codicology,” is a Belgian scholar who excels in Gothic manuscripts.

Martin Antonetti, teaching “The Printed Book in the West to 1800,” was once librarian of the Grolier Club, the nation’s premier organization for bibliophiles.

“You know the phrase, ‘So-and-so wrote the book on X?’ ” said Elizabeth Ott, a U-Va. doctoral student who works at the school. “That’s often literally the case with Rare Book School professors.”

In class, students take turns operating wooden and iron printing presses and hanging pages to dry. Or they gather round ancient manuscripts for a closer look at this goatskin binding or that woodblock rendering.

Antonetti opens printer Johannes Pine’s 1733 edition of what is known as Pine’s Horace. With engraved copper plates, it was a luxury buy for the 18th-century European aristocrat.

“Pine engraved it and published it and went bankrupt,” Antonetti said. “He published a Pine’s Virgil to recoup his losses, but that was the final nail in his coffin.”
Terry Belanger, an English literature scholar, started Rare Book School as a laboratory on the history of books and printing within Columbia University’s School of Library Service. Over time, the school gained a reputation as a world leader in training librarians and scholars to collect, catalogue and preserve rare books.

With the future of the book itself now in question, the school’s mission seems all the more clear.

“I actually think that the digital is making us much more aware of the form of the printed book. And so I think this is a moment of rare opportunity, rather than a moment of great crisis,” said Suarez, who co-edited the million-word Oxford Companion to the Book. “This whole Gutenberg elegy, death-of-the-book thing — I’m not buying it.”

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Is Going Back to School Over 50 Worth It?
A dismal job market has sent boomers back to campus. How much can a new degree help?

By CATEY HILL
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With unemployment high and retirement savings low, hundreds of thousands of people over 50 are turning to college programs to boost their job skills. But given the rising costs of tuition, is it worth the money?

Drawn by a growing number of college programs targeted at boomers and spurred by the lousy job market, the number of students ages 50 to 64 increased 17% between fall 2007 and fall 2009, according to the latest data available from the National Center for Education Statistics. And colleges have welcomed them with programs specifically designed for older students: In 2008, the American Association of Community Colleges launched its "Plus 50 Initiative" on 15 campuses and has since expanded to 21. And individual schools, including University of California schools in Los Angeles and Riverside, have recently launched boomer-specific programs.

This growth reflects the dismal economy, and in particular, its disproportionate impact on older workers. More than half of unemployed workers ages 55 and older have been unemployed for six months or more, compared to 40% of workers under 55, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. And older workers tend to stay out of work longer: The average unemployed worker over 55 spends more than 52 weeks looking for a job, almost 50% longer than younger workers. "The job market is tough right now," says Marc Dorio, an executive coach and author of "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Career Advancement." "A lot of people want something on their resume that helps them stand out."

Even those who have a job are taking classes, a move that is part defense -- trying to keep a job they have -- and part offense -- preparing for a job they want, says Dorio. And as people plan to work longer (the percentage of workers who expect to keep working past age 65 has increased from 20% in 2001 to 36% in 2011, according to the Employee
Benefit Research Institute), according to a Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies), a significant career shift may be more sustainable, profitable or fulfilling in the long-run, says Marci Alboher, vice president of Civic Ventures, a think tank on boomers, work and social purpose.

But going back to school is an expense in itself. The average public four-year college charges about $760 per class for an in-state student; private colleges charge roughly $2,700. At these rates, an additional bachelor's degree can easily cost more than $30,000, according to data from The College Board. Even continuing education programs can be expensive: A certificate in accounting from NYU's School of Continuing and Professional Studies, for example, costs about $5,000. And the average cost of a master's degree can range from about $5,000 to more than $40,000 per year.

As a result, older learners need to do the same kinds of cost-benefit analyses that first-time freshmen do, says Mark Kantrowitz, publisher of financial aid sites Fastweb.com and FinAid.org. As a general rule, don't take on more debt that the starting salary you expect to earn as a result of this new certificate or degree, he says. Secondly, consider how long you plan to work and how quickly you can pay off any debt you might take on by heading to school. "If you're planning to work for another 10 to 15 years, it's easier to amortize the costs of education," Alboher says. "If you're looking for a very short-term career extender, it's not so easy."

That said, there are plenty of ways to save money. Seniors can often sit in on classes for free if there's space available, says Kantrowitz. It's a more common practice at community colleges; just call and ask. People who are still working can ask if their current employer offers tuition assistance, as more than half do, according to a 2010 survey by the Society of Human Resource Management (the IRS lets companies give each employee up to $5,250 per year in tax-free money for university-level courses). There are also scholarships and tax credits and deductions for tuition and related expenses. If you saved money in your child's 529 plan and didn't spend it all, you can use it for your own education, or if your state gives you a tax break, you might consider creating your own 529 plan (see SavingForCollege.com or CollegeSavings.org for more information).

**What to Take**

Hint: Not 19th century British lit. If you're looking for a better job, choose your coursework and program strategically:

- **Ask your supervisor.** To advance at your current company, make sure you're taking a class that both you and the organization see as valuable.

- **Pick the right field.** Looking to change jobs? Some of the best opportunities for older workers are in health and education, says Civic Ventures' Marci Alboher.

- **Get a certificate.** These programs tend to be cheaper, more efficient and more professionally-oriented than a traditional bachelor's or master's degree program.