Take Off 4 Health campers, from left, Deondrea Smith, Erica Brown, Samantha O’kelley and Sheneequa Holton prepare for the ropes course.

Doug Boyd/Special to The Daily Reflector

Take Off 4 Health, a healthy lifestyle camp for overweight children and teens, is built around activities such as swimming and hiking, along with nutritional education and counseling.

Doug Boyd/Special to The Daily Reflector

Jocelyn Hunter
Camp helps kids deal with weight issues
By Kim Grizzard
The Daily Reflector
Saturday, August 14, 2010

COLUMBIA — Jocelyn Hunter is not the biggest loser. After nearly three weeks at a camp for overweight children, the 12-year-old Winterville girl managed to take off 7 pounds.

For anyone who has spent time watching weight-loss reality shows on television, a single-digit drop might seem like a terrible loss. But at Take Off 4 Health, it is seen as a tremendous gain.

The scale is not the only measure of success at the camp, now in its third year at the Eastern 4-H Center in Columbia. The camp, a partnership between East Carolina University, Pitt County Memorial Hospital, 4-H and North Carolina Cooperative Extension, is designed to launch a healthy lifestyle for overweight kids and teens.

“Weight loss is not necessarily the goal,” said camp Medical Director Dr. David Collier, an assistant professor of pediatrics at ECU’s Brody School of Medicine. “We’re not as interested in short-term weight loss as long-term lifestyle change.”

For 19 campers, that change began July 25 when they arrived at the 250-acre camp in Tyrrell County, about 90 minutes from Greenville and 45 minutes from the Outer Banks. Leaving vending machines and video games behind, they would spend the next 19 days hiking the woodlands and wetlands and boating in Bulls Bay.

For six hours or more a day, campers — including some weighing more than 350 pounds — walk, swim and play games. They do water aerobics, take nature hikes and take part in rock climbing.

“It’s so fun,” said Jessica Carr, 13, of Nashville, who said she came to camp to learn to be more active. “It’s like an activity camp; it’s not like a healthy weight camp.

“I thought it would be like, ‘Keep on working. Keep on working ... Don’t stop,’” she said. “They don’t push us and make us run.”

Still, campers are required to be physically active. There is no time for Facebook or computer games; only exercise-oriented video games such as Dance Dance Revolution and Wii Fit are allowed. Cell phones are locked away except for 30 minutes three nights a week. Campers spend evenings participating in activities like scavenger hunts and talent shows.

“Doing nothing is not an option,” Eastern 4-H Center Director Lee Scripture said. “You get them outside. They get to go canoeing, kayaking. They get to go fishing; they get to go crabbing. They get every program other 4-H kids get.”

They also get many of the same kinds of food other 4-H campers would have. While food offerings may be modified by ECU pediatric dietitians, meals are based on Eastern 4-H Center’s traditional menu, meaning campers eat burritos instead of Brussels sprouts.

The camp also forgoes strict portion control often associated with weight-loss programs. Although vending machines are disabled and food is prohibited in cabins, campers are served three meals a day and as many as two snacks. They are allowed to have second helpings of anything they choose — not just from the fruit and salad bar.

“A ‘fat camp’, if you will, has a very different philosophy,” Collier said. “It’s a very restricted environment where you’re guaranteed to have weight loss. Pretty significant weight loss can be achieved, but it’s not sustainable.

“So the kids go home, they gain it all back and more, and they have to come back next year,” Collier said. “It’s a great business model, but it’s a terrible public health model.”

Collier, director of the ECU Pediatric Healthy Weight Research and Treatment Center, wanted a different prototype for eastern North Carolina, where he says 15 percent of kids are overweight and another 30 percent are obese. He sought support from the Pitt Memorial Hospital Foundation, which had provided scholarship funds for overweight local teens to attend health camps in other areas.
Four years ago, the foundation began providing scholarship funds for a local healthy weight camp, which started as a six-week program on the campus of ECU. The following year, Collier approached the Eastern 4-H Center about a partnership. Scripture, a former teacher, wanted to make sure the camp’s focus was to be educational — not simply restrictive.

“I said, ‘I’m not interested in doing a program that’s going to starve the children,’” he recalled. “They’ve got to be able to go home and apply this. If it doesn’t have any carryover, then we’ve all just tortured kids for three weeks.”

But there were larger things to deal with than just food. Scripture had to consider whether or not the camp could accommodate participants who were obese. “Issues that many people don’t think about would be armed chairs in the dining hall,” Collier said. “A 400- to 500-pound person can’t fit.

“How do you handle bunk beds? Can a 500-pound child sleep on the top bunk?”

Eastern 4-H Center made adaptations, including buying larger life jackets for boating and safety harnesses for the ropes challenge course. Scripture makes cabin assignments before campers arrive to spare them the embarrassment of being told the top bunk will not hold them. The camp substitutes kayaks for many boating activities because canoe seats will only support about 250 pounds.

Many Take Off 4 Health participants weigh more than that. While campers must have a body mass index over the 85th percentile (defined as overweight) to be admitted, Collier said most are above the 95th percentile.

“A few of them are well beyond that and would be considered morbidly obese,” he said. “Some kids literally carry 200 pounds more than is right for their height. The vast majority carry at least 50 pounds more than they should.”

Camper Alex Draper lost 200 pounds before arriving at Take Off 4 Health from his home in Greenville, S.C. The 15-year-old still weighs more than 300 pounds.

“My mom, she’s heavy,” Draper said. “That’s probably how I got heavy.”

Licensed clinical psychologist Lesley Lutes, an assistant professor in ECU’s Department of Psychology, said parents who are overweight are two to three times more likely to have kids who are overweight. That is one reason Lutes and several doctoral students in the clinical health psychology program counsel campers and their families about what it takes to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

“One of the biggest misconceptions that people have about weight management either with children or adults is that it’s really just about willpower,” said Lutes, associate director of the ECU Pediatric Healthy Weight Research and Treatment Center. “They think you just have to have the willpower to eat less and exercise more.

“It is all about skill power,” she said. “What the camp is really focused on ... is to have them develop the skills to understand what was working against them before in their environment.”

Families learn to create a healthier environment during counseling sessions that continue for at least a year after camp is over. Campers whose families live too far away to attend such sessions receive telephone counseling designed to reinforce healthy habits.

“Ninety percent of people know you need to take less calories in and increase calories out,” Lutes said. “What we specialize in is teaching them the how to make the changes. That is the key.”

During camp, counselors meet individually and in small groups with campers to discuss not only food choices and activity levels but also to talk about other issues associated with childhood obesity, including depression, anxiety and bullying.

“Someone who’s obese, they can’t hide it,” Lutes said. “It’s an easy target.”

Joyce Hunter was concerned that her daughter, Jocelyn, was getting teased at school because of her weight. That is one reason she sent her to Take Off 4 Health.
“School kids are really mean,” Hunter said. “I didn’t want her to be picked on at school. I wanted her to have control over her weight, not have her weight have control over her.”

At camp, Jocelyn has made friends with campers from Pitt, Gaston, Beaufort, Washington, Nash and Greene counties. She considers the camp counselors her “BFFs” (best friends forever).

“They encourage you to do more stuff, plus they’ll cheer you on,” she said. “If you’re behind a little bit, they just walk beside you.”

Davonte Johnson, 14, of Greenville remembers the same kind of camaraderie when he attended Take Off 4 Health last year. He is one of four alumni invited back this summer to continue his weight loss and help motivate other campers.

“We don’t care what size, how big or tall or short you are; we just get along,” he said.

“Everybody’s the same. Everybody has problems here.”

All students attending camp this summer received scholarships to cover the $3,000 fee. In addition to the Pitt Memorial Hospital Foundation, which has provided more than $170,000 for scholarships in the last four years, the camp has received funding from Bank of America, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, the Roanoke Chowan Hospital Foundation and ECU alumnus Jerry Atkins.

“These kids need our help; they need our support,” said Kinney Hart, executive director for Pitt Memorial Hospital and University Health Systems foundations. “We’re making such a difference in the lives of so many children that otherwise would not have the opportunity.”

Collier said many of the eastern North Carolina children who need the camp the most can afford it the least. In the past, the camp has served children whose families were left homeless after Hurricane Floyd in 1999.

“There are some families (of campers) that don’t even have a refrigerator that works,” Collier said. “We’re really dealing with offering services to people in need of a lot of things. ... We have to turn a lot of people away.”

Participants must be referred by a health care professional, and families are interviewed to ensure they will work to support their child’s efforts to lose weight, rather than sabotage them.

Even before Jocelyn went to camp, Hunter and her husband, Harry, who are both overweight, began making some changes in their diets. They’ve cut back on bread and soft drinks and have tried to shy away from fast food. Joyce Hunter has lost 25 pounds in the last six months.

“The program opened my eyes,” she said. “It’s not just Jocelyn; it’s the whole family.”

On Friday, when Jocelyn came home from camp, the family celebrated with dinner at Red Lobster. Jocelyn passed up the cheese biscuits and persuaded most of her family to do the same.

On Saturday morning, Jocelyn awoke early, and she and her mother went to exercise together at a local walking trail.

Jocelyn would love to go back to Take Off 4 Health next summer, but meanwhile, she’s trying to bring her camp experience home with her.

“It’s about lifestyle,” Hunter said. “That’s what I like about the camp. The main thing was not really focused on weight loss, but real life.”

For more information about Take Off 4 Health, visit www.takeoff4health.org.
Groups tout benefits of breastfeeding

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector
Sunday, August 15, 2010

The many benefits of a mother’s milk were touted and promoted to the hundreds of mothers, fathers and family members attending the 2010 World Breastfeeding Celebration on Saturday at the Pitt County Agricultural Center.

The free event featured breastfeeding information sessions, booths set up by local health organizations, speakers on topics of interest, and a Baby Olympics competition that featured diaper changing, crawling races and other athletic feats by babies. There also was a rocking chair station for women to relax and nurse their children.

“We promote breastfeeding year-round locally, but once a year it’s celebrated globally,” said Donna Brooks, breastfeeding peer counselor for the Pitt County Health Department.

This was the sixth year of Pitt County’s participation in the celebration and event to promote and raise awareness about the benefits of breastfeeding infants for the first six months of life. It was a collaboration among the Health Department, Pitt County Memorial Hospital, the Brody School of Medicine, the La Leche League and the Breast Feeding Advisory Council.

Breast-fed babies have reduced instances of infant mortality, allergies, asthma, ear infections and childhood cancers, said Brooks and Victoria Brown, private lactation consultant and treasurer of the N.C. Breastfeeding Coalition.

Babies fed breast milk for the first six months have lower risks of juvenile onset diabetes and respiratory illness, and have healthier jaw and tooth development, Brown said.

“Breast milk is a living food with natural antibodies and white blood cells that fight infection and help develop babies’ immune systems,” Brown said. “It also changes composition as the baby ages and takes on some of the tastes and characteristics of the mother’s diet, giving the baby a gradual introduction to the tastes it will experience later.”

The list of benefits to infants from breastfeeding is a long one, but the promoters did not neglect the benefits of breastfeeding for mothers, as well.

It promotes faster weight loss after birth; lowers incidences of urinary tract infections, postpartum bleeding and anemia; and produces naturally soothing hormones that increase calmness, the health experts said. It also may lower risk of breast, ovarian and uterine cancers and osteoporosis in aging women, they said.
Dr. Ed Newton, chairman of the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department at the Brody School of Medicine, was keynote speaker at the event.

"After a nadir in breastfeeding nationally and locally in the 1970s, it increased a great deal through the mid 1980s, then dipped down to about 24 percent of the population of mothers before rising to its current level of about 76 percent of women leaving the hospital," Newton said. The big challenge that breastfeeding promoters spoke about is the need to maintain the nutrition method exclusively in babies at least through the first six months of life, Newton said. The benefits are not only to health but economic as well, he said.

"Mother’s milk supplies all the right proteins, fats and sugars and a lot of other ingredients that provide many benefits for both mothers and their babies,” Newton said. “If we got to the 2010 participation levels of 80 percent of mothers exclusively breastfeeding for at least six months to a year, as recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General, the World Health Organization and the Academy of Breastfeeding and the American College of ObGyn, we would save $10.5 billion dollars in pediatric health care costs and 714 lives each year.”

One of the primary approaches to the promotion of breastfeeding is to eliminate the obstacles to it that women face, the experts at Saturday’s celebration said.

Foremost on their list is to recognize and promote those businesses and employers that make their workplaces friendly and inviting to mothers who breastfeed, they said.

Pitt County Memorial Hospital is preparing to be the first university hospital in the state to be accredited as “baby friendly” by creating an environment that prepares, promotes and invites mothers to breastfeed their newborn infants, Newton said.

The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services has awarded PCMH, East Carolina University and the Pitt County Health Department a consortium grant to provide peer counseling services to county residents, Newton said. He will serve as the grant coordinator.

There are many mothers in eastern North Carolina currently not receiving the benefits of breastfeeding education that the consortium will strive toward, the chairman said.

"Unfortunately, eastern North Carolina and Pitt County are below the rest of the state in terms of initiation and continuation of breastfeeding,” Newton said. “The NCHHS goals are 75 percent participation in exclusive breastfeeding for four weeks and 50 percent at eight weeks, the current levels are 50 and 30 percent, respectively.”

With their work cut out for them, the professionals at the breastfeeding celebration were pleased to see the hundreds of mothers and fathers at the event, they said.

“In our sixth year of celebrating the benefits of breastfeeding in Pitt County, the number of participants has grown every year. We want the best for Pitt County mothers and babies,” Brooks said.

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@reflector.com or (252) 329-9571
DOT works on Charles near ECU

The Daily Reflector

Traffic on Charles Boulevard near the East Carolina University stadium complex has been squeezed temporarily to allow for road construction work intended to ease traffic into and out of parking areas, a N.C. Department of Transportation spokesman said Friday.

The work, which began Friday, coincides with completion of an addition to Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium, but turn lanes being built do not go directly into its parking lot, Gene Pittman, transportation technician from the Washington, N.C., DOT office, said. That office first verified the need for the turning lanes through its division of traffic services, then issued an encroachment permit for the work.

The construction required closing the center two lanes of Charles from See WORK, A7

WORK
Continued from A1

just north of Greenville Boulevard to just south of the railroad bridge as medians are reconstructed.

The turning lanes will lead into the new track and softball/baseball stadium complex, where parking spaces will be used for football events during the season.

ECU contracted with Barnhill Construction for the roadwork, he said.

“We’re making sure the work is done to DOT standards,” Pittman said.

Completion of the median construction is projected for Aug. 24, and completion of the turning lanes into the sports complex is projected for Sept. 2, Pittman said.

If the work cannot be finished in time for the Pirates’ first home football game on Sept. 5, the remaining work will be scheduled for the two-week window after their second home game, said Wes Anderson, Greenville Public Works director.

“They’ve got a crew of 20 people working just as hard as they can,” Pittman said. “We appreciate the public’s patience while we get together a better facility for East Carolina ath-letics.”

Trees and shrubs removed from the preexisting medians will be replanted at other areas of the campus, Pittman said.
First-year ECU medical student Nicole Merli practices walking on a wire Tuesday at the ECU ropes course with help from Helmae Wubneh, left, and Jonathan DeAntonio, right. The course, near ECU’s Belk Building, presents participants a variety of challenges meant to build self-confidence and teamwork skills. The ropes course was part of the Brody School of Medicine Class of 2014’s orientation week. The 39 men and 39 women in the class range in age from 20 to 36. They are all North Carolina residents and are from 32 different counties. Twelve class members are ECU alumni.

Cliff Hollis/ECU News Services
2010 Voyages Lecture Series brings experts to ECU
Saturday, August 14, 2010
ECU News Services
The upcoming season of the Voyages of Discovery Lecture Series will include topics ranging from slavery during the Ottoman Empire to the origins of the universe, and from Christianity to the lost colony of the newfound land of Virginia.
The lecture series is sponsored by the East Carolina University Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences. During this fourth year of the series, four prominent speakers will visit ECU and share their knowledge and life experiences with the campus and Greenville community.
Eve M. Troutt Powell, associate professor of history at the University of Pennsylvania, will kick off the lecture series with the Lawrence F. Brewster Lecture in History on Sept. 9, co-sponsored by the ECU Department of History. Powell will present a lecture titled “The Language of Slavery, the Diction of Freedom: Voices from the Nile Valley and Ottoman Empire.”
At the Premiere Lecture on Oct. 6, Neil deGrasse Tyson, astrophysicist and director of the Hayden Planetarium in New York City, will discuss “On the Origins of the Universe.” Tyson’s lecture is being held in honor of the late W. Keats Sparrow, dean of the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences from 1990-2005, who died in November 2009.
This year’s Jarvis Lecture on Christianity and Culture will be held Nov. 9 and is co-sponsored by the ECU Religious Studies Program and Jarvis Memorial United Methodist Church. Dr. Matthew Fox, theologian and Episcopal priest, will discuss the topic of “Reinventing Christianity.”
In the final lecture of the series, the Thomas Harriot Lecture on March 24, 2023, Elizabethan scholar and historian for the Roanoke Island Historical Association, will present “A Brief and True Report of ‘The Lost Colony’ Drama in the New Found Land of Virginia.”

“It has become the premier intellectual event for students and faculty of ECU, the citizens of eastern North Carolina, and a showcase for the quality of academic life at ECU,” Alan R. White, dean of the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, said. “The series features thought provoking and accomplished leaders from a variety of disciplines, who provide insight into important issues in today’s society and share their experiences and perspectives.”

All lectures are open to the public and will be held at 7 p.m. in Wright Auditorium. Complimentary tickets are available to ECU students, faculty and staff, and are $10 for the general public, with the exception of the Jarvis Lecture, which is free. Tickets are available through the ECU Central Ticket Office by calling 328-4788, (800) ECU-ARTS or (voice/TTY) 328-4736.

The Voyages of Discovery Lecture Series is made possible through contributions from the Dean’s Advancement Council of the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, the East Carolina Alumni Association and other supporters of the college.

For additional information, contact Dr. John Tucker, director of the lecture series, at 252-328-1028 or tuckerjo@ecu.edu, or visit the website at http://www.ecu.edu/voyages.

Symposium to honor retiring professors

On Aug. 28, the ECU Department of Biology will host a symposium in honor of two Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professors, Mark Brinson and Robert Christian, who are retiring this fall.

The free, public symposium, “Wetlands at Risk: New Scientific Insights into Critical Ecosystems,” will feature five guest lecturers from 1-4:30 p.m. in the Science and Technology Building, Room C207, and is co-sponsored by the Institute for Coastal Science and Policy.

“With their international prominence in wetlands research, these talented scientists played critical roles in establishing ECU as a leading institution for coastal research. We are delighted to have this opportunity to honor them,” biology chairperson Jeff McKinnon said. “This symposium will both highlight the important contributions of Brinson and Christian and give the general public a chance to learn about an area of great interest, with recent threats to Gulf wetlands from the BP spill and the longer-term threat of climate change.”

Brinson came to ECU in 1973 after completing his doctoral degree from the University of Florida. He has taught courses in ecology, wetland ecology and management, restoration ecology, introductory biology and environmental biology. He has directed 24 master’s theses and one doctoral dissertation.

“My 35 plus years at East Carolina University have been extraordinarily rewarding, both personally and professionally. Strong and sustained support from the university, college and biology department, and from individual faculty, students and staff are the envy of my colleagues at institutions elsewhere,” Brinson said.

Throughout his career, Brinson has authored or co-authored many publications pertaining to his research, including 49 journal publications, more than 60 reports and book chapters, as well as five book reviews. Over the past 37 years, he has received approximately 40 research grants that total more than $2 million.

“My work as an ecosystem ecologist has benefitted from the rich diversity of habitats in eastern North Carolina, and from the opportunity to study wetlands throughout the USA and abroad. I look forward to several more active years of research on the ecology and management of wetlands and of professional service on various committees and boards,” Brinson said.

Christian received his doctoral degree from the University of Georgia in 1976. He came to ECU in 1981, after serving as an assistant professor at Drexel University in Philadelphia. While at ECU, he has taught many courses, including principles of biology, principles of microbiology,
microbial ecology and marine community ecology. He has directed 17 master’s theses and two doctoral dissertations.

“The Biology Department at ECU has been my academic home for the past 29 years. It, and the university, have provided me an environment that has suited my personality and allowed me to pursue all aspects of my goals as a professor,” Christian said. “I thank all of the students, faculty, staff and administrators who have helped make it, what I hope is, a respectable career.” While teaching, Christian has conducted research in the areas of coastal ecosystems, particularly salt marshes, estuaries and coastal lagoons along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts. More recently, he has been involved in studies of headwater streams within the coastal plain. Throughout his career, he has published or co-authored more than 60 journal publications and 40 book chapters, and he has participated in more than 125 presentations in his areas of research. Brinson also has received 34 research grants that total more than $3 million.

At the symposium, McKinnon will provide introductory remarks at 1 p.m., followed by 30-minute presentations and a final question and answer session. Leading off the event, professor Pierluigi Viaroli from the University of Parma in Parma, Italy, will present “A Long Journey in Coastal Lagoons and Wetlands Along the Po River and the Adriatic Coast: From Ecology to Friendship, and Back to Ecology.” Dr. Linda K. Blum of the University of Virginia will present “Salt Marshes and Sea-Level Change: Where Millimeters Matter.” Dr. Aaron L. Mills, also from U.Va., will present “Coastal Riparian Forests and Wetlands: The Final Filter.” Ronald E. Ferrell, senior scientist at PBS&J Corp. in Raleigh, will discuss “Wetlands and the Clean Water Act: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.” Rounding off the presentations, Dr. Robert R. Twilley, professor of coastal sciences at Louisiana State University, will discuss “Oil, Hurricanes, Floods and Wetland Loss: Calibrating the Risks of the Mississippi River Delta.”

For additional information, contact McKinnon at 328-5258 or mckinnonj@ecu.edu.
White coats symbolize beginning for students
By JOSH HUMPHRIES
The Daily Reflector
Friday, August 13, 2010

The staff of the East Carolina University’s Brody School of Medicine welcomed the class of 2014 at the school’s annual white coat ceremony on Friday.
The 39 men and 39 women entering the medical school this fall each received white coats sponsored by graduates of the Brody School of Medicine.
Dr. Paul Cunningham, dean of the medical school, said wearing the white coat symbolizes many things including a psychological contract to be a good doctor.
“It is personally placed on each students’ shoulders by individuals who believe in your ability to carry on the position of doctor,” Cunningham told the students.
Dr. Keith Nelson, professor of obstetrics and gynecology, told the students that they will discover many amazing things while wearing their white coats.
Medical students wear white coats that are shorter than a doctor’s coat.
“It is a symbol that you have only begun,” Nelson said. “Like the proverbial white flag, you surrender yourself to a new system of training.”
Nelson said medical school will be a challenge that requires students to defend against their own fatigue, pride and carelessness.
“Amateurs practice until they get it right and professionals practice until they cannot get it wrong,” Nelson said. “Training in your own humanity requires that you maintain it. Take some time to be a human being and not a human doing.”
The 78 students in the class range in age from 20 to 36 and they are all North Carolina residents, with 32 counties of residence listed.
Students have undergraduate degrees from 31 different colleges and universities, with the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill having the most graduates at 20. ECU has 12 alumni in the class and North Carolina State University has 11.

Contact Josh Humphries at jhumphries@reflector.com or (252) 329-9565.
Police release 911 tapes from Falcone homicide
By Ginger Livingston
The Daily Reflector
Saturday, August 14, 2010

Greenville police have released additional details about the circumstances surrounding the Monday morning shooting death of a Copper Beech apartments resident along with 911 calls documenting the minutes leading up to the incident.
Tommy C. Falcone, 22, was discovered in the parking lot of Pirates Cove apartments, East 10th Street, with a single gunshot wound to the back shortly before 4 a.m. He was taken to the hospital for treatment but died.
Officers arrested and charged Phillip B. Lewis, 20, of Greenville with an open count of murder later that day.
Falcone and some friends were given a ride from the downtown area by Lewis and a friend who were in Lewis' Chevrolet pickup truck, according to a news release issued at 2:30 p.m. Friday.
Lewis was a passenger in his vehicle.
After dropping off Falcone and his friends at Copper Beech, the release states that an altercation started and the truck's driver's window was damaged. Investigators are not revealing the cause of the fight.
After the damage, the driver of Lewis' vehicle left the scene.
Police say the driver took the truck to Lewis' home at 501 Guilder Lane in the Bedford subdivision. The driver walked home.
Police say Lewis obtained three firearms, identified in other reports as a two rifles and a shotgun, and placed them in the truck. Police say Lewis called another friend and asked the person to drive him and another individual back to Copper Beech.
Police did not release the identity of the two other individuals or the original driver of the truck.
Police have not said if anyone else will be charged in connection with Falcone's death or in connection with the original fight.
After about 45 minutes, Lewis and his two friends returned to the Copper Beach and Pirates Cove area on East 10th Street.
It was at this time that Lewis called the Greenville Police Department to report the damage to his vehicle, the news release stated.
The first call to 911 emergency communications was received at 3:43 a.m., according to the digital recording released by police.
"I've got a guy that broke my window. They got a golf club and are trying to fight," said the caller. It is unclear if the caller was Lewis or one of his companions.
"Umm, they broke my, ... I was just being nice. I gave my cousin a ride home, I didn't know who his friends were," the caller said.
The dispatcher asked for the caller’s location and was told he was at Copper Beech.

“There’s a group of ‘em out here,” the caller said. The dispatcher asks the caller if the individual who caused the damage was near him.

“Have you got the guy, has he left?” the dispatcher asked.

“No, they are standing out here ... I’ll group ‘em up. Y’all come,” the caller said.”

“Don’t hurt him now,” the dispatcher said.

“I won’t hurt anybody,” the caller said.

After a few more comments the caller hangs up and the dispatcher answers a call from a Pirates Cove resident who reports a group of shirtless males are fighting in the parking lot of his apartment complex, located across the street from Copper Beech. One man had a stick, he said.

“It just startled me,” the Pirates Cove resident said. “I didn’t know if they were playing.”

The recording reveals the dispatcher called the individual who reported the truck damage to find out where he was. The caller said he was driving back and forth on 10th Street in front of Copper Beech.

“You need to stop somewhere and tell me where you are so the police can meet you,” the dispatcher directed. The caller tells someone, “Dude, pull in to Pirates Cove.”

The dispatcher asks the caller didn’t he originally say the incident happened at Copper Beech.

When the caller says yes, the dispatcher directs him to return to that apartment complex.

“There’s like six guys there, man,” the caller said.

“All right,” said the dispatcher. “Would you just stay stationary and when you see the police go over to them. They are going to Copper Beech.”

During the next part of the recording the dispatcher can been heard placing a telephone call and someone in the background is heard saying “Copper Beech” and then “gunshot wound.”

The next call to 911 apparently comes from a police officer.

“I need to get rescue at Pirates Cove, I have a victim with a gunshot wound,” the officer said.

Officers discovered Lewis’ pickup truck at Saint Paul Pentecostal Holiness Church, located next to Pirate’s Cove.

“While an officer was talking with two individuals who were in the truck, officers heard a gunshot,” the news release stated.

“The officer who was near the truck then observed Mr. Lewis with a semi-automatic rifle walking from the east side of the (church property),” the release stated. “Two of the firearms owned by Mr. Lewis were located in the area of Moseley Drive hours later.”

The news release did not mention that a golf club was found in the area near where the shooting took place. It also did not address statements made by Lewis’ attorney earlier in the week that while the young man was parked at the church two individuals, one carrying a golf club, approached the pickup truck.

“This is an active investigation and the Greenville Police Department will provide information only when it is determined such information will not hamper, impede or delay the investigation,” the release stated.

Contact Ginger Livingston at glivingston@reflector.com or (252) 329-9570.
PEOPLE IN THE NEWS SPOTLIGHT

Washington native Brenda Cherry retires from ECU after 25-year career

The Materials Management staff at East Carolina University honored Brenda Cherry of Washington, N.C., with a retirement reception on July 27 in celebration of her 25 years as receptionist for the department.

She retired on July 30.

More than 60 friends, family and business associates attended the reception. Cherry's co-workers presented her two gifts — a Love's Embrace necklace and an ECU blanket.

Cherry began her career in January 1985 as the department's receptionist and remained in that position for 25 years.

"I have had Brenda tell me more than once that she loved what she did and was not interested in changing positions," Nellie Taylor, director of Materials Management, said.

"Brenda was Materials Management," Taylor added. "She was the voice they heard on the phone when they called and the face they saw when they came to the office. We feel as if we are losing a member of our family, but we wish her the very best of health and happiness as she begins this new chapter in her life."

Although her job title remained the same, some of Cherry's duties changed as technology evolved.

"When I first started there all purchase orders were typed manually," she said. "The procedure changed four times over the years. Now everything is done online."

Cherry was rewarded for her dedication with two nominations for Quest for Excellence awards from ECU Business Services, in 1999 and 2004. It was noted in the nominations that Cherry rarely missed work — even for illness — citing as an example the time Cherry had carpal tunnel surgery on a Friday and still reported to work that Monday morning.
Lance Lewis prepares to catch a pass before East Carolina’s scrimmage on Saturday.
Scott Davis/The Daily Reflector

**Lewis eyes impact role**

By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector
Sunday, August 15, 2010

As if there weren’t enough Xs, Ys, Zs and Big Hs to East Carolina’s new football offense already, here comes another variable, and this one is a double L.
The incorporation of a spread offense this season means a need for wide receivers of different heights and specialties, and while first-year ECU coach Ruffin McNeill already has quite a few sets of hands, at least one newcomer wants a share of the pass game too.
It takes 12 receivers to fill out the Pirates’ two-deep depth chart at every possible position this season, and transfer Lance Lewis says he thinks he can be one of them.
The Concord native spent last season at East Mississippi Community College, and before that he played a season at California’s West Hills College alongside current Pirate running back Giavanni Ruffin.
Now that he’s back in the Carolinas, Lewis admits he’s still acclimating to the climate, but the offense he’s trying to impact is at least somewhat familiar.
“I’m a little rusty,” Lewis said. “I’ve had to play catch-up, but we’ve been doing a lot of conditioning, and that helps everybody get into a rhythm. I’m still trying to push through the heat."
The 6-foot-3, 200-pound receiver, like many on his team, is still working in a few different roles, but mostly is battling with sophomore Dayon Arrington in the X position on the outside.
“They’ve got me at the right spot I think, the X, because I’ve been playing on the outside most of my time playing football,” said Lewis, whose East Mississippi team played four- and five-wide receiver sets routinely. “But this offense they brought in gives everybody a shot to make something happen. I’m still learning some of the plays, some of the signals. If I can get it down, I should be a big part of the offense.”
If Saturday’s opening scrimmage of fall camp was any indication, Lewis is already becoming the play producer he thinks he can be. In a scrimmage that was hit-and-miss offensively, Lewis reeled in four catches, including a 19-yard touchdown reception from sophomore Brad Wornick.

**Pattern matters**

One of the biggest impacts on an inexperienced ECU defense this season could be one of its longest-standing, least-utilized players.
Injuries have largely interrupted the progress of reserve middle linebacker Melvin Patterson, but the senior still has a full season to leave a lasting impression, and this time he’s got his health. “I feel like I’ve got to play with a chip on my shoulder,” said Patterson, who suffered season-ending foot and leg injuries in 2008 and 2009, drastically limiting his role and his playing time. “I missed time from injuries, and I know that I have the athletic ability to play well at this level. I feel like my playmaking ability will develop along with my leadership as we go.”

The 6-3, 235-pound Patterson has already earned his bachelor’s degree in business and is pursuing a second degree in family community services. Now he hopes to add a big senior season to his other accomplishments at ECU, but said he’s long since learned that competing every day in camp is the only way he can make that happen. “Competition is the measure of a man, and that’s what pushes us to the limit every day,” said Patterson, who is vying for the top reserve role behind junior starter Steve Spence.

In Saturday’s scrimmage, the former safety from Alachua, Fla., was one of four Pirate defenders to wrap up six tackles, which included a sack.

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or (252)329-9595.
East Carolina’s Derek Blacknall (26) runs through a drill during practice on Friday morning.
Rhett Butler/The Daily Reflector

Opportunity knocking
By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector
Friday, August 13, 2010

It’s usually nothing more than an old motivational ploy when college football coaches say every position is up for grabs during preseason camp.
But in East Carolina’s case, that ploy doesn’t work since a majority of positions — including nine of the 11 starting slots on defense — really are wide open.
For first-year coach Ruffin McNeill, today’s initial scrimmage of August camp will be the first of a handful of vital evaluations at numerous position groups.
“We still have time, and I’m going to be very patient on that,” said McNeill, whose team will scrimmage inside freshly-renovated Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium if necessary safety precautions can be made in the new bowlled-in end zone. “I’m going to be very methodical. I like the competition, and the competition will continue as long as I’m here.”
Perhaps no positions on the team are as vulnerable heading into the Sept. 5 season opener against Tulsa as the safety spots.
Derek Blacknall’s two starts from the beginning of last season actually make him the most experienced safety the Pirates have in August camp, but the junior is trying to concentrate more on the idea of he and his teammates cashing in on their chances to play than he is the utter lack of game experience on the 2010 Pirate defense.
“We know we lost nine starters, but what we lack in experience we make up for in talent,” said Blacknall, who shifted from reserve strong safety last season to the potential 2010 starter at free safety alongside transfer Bradley Jacobs.
While both potential starters have at least some field experience from which to draw, ECU is very thin at both safety spots, especially given sophomore Jack Schultz’s announcement earlier this week that he was leaving the team and the fact senior starter Dekota Marshall remains in limbo while trying to rehabilitate a leg fracture from last season.
Sophomore Justin Venable and junior Devon Wallace are the most experienced returning reserves. Freshman defensive backs Detric Allen, Desi Brown, Lamar Ivey and Damon Magazu, along with sophomore Fraqwan Jones, have yet to be given defined roles in the secondary.
The 6-foot-1, 187-pound Venable loves the competition after seeing limited action thus far in his career, but he knows he and the rest of the safeties have to play better and more physical than ever to replace 2009 starters Van Eskridge and Levin Neal.
“I’m not the biggest safety, but I can use my speed to hit people, and I’ve got good eyes for the ball. I can run up or downhill and hit somebody,” Venable said. “We had a depth chart come out this spring, but like our coaches said, nothing is carved in stone and because of that everybody is out here giving it their all.”
Road to redemption
A pair of Pirates are on the comeback trail this August after off-the-field problems caused both to spend time away from the team.
Now that they’re back, senior running back Giavanni Ruffin and junior wide receiver Darryl Freeney have more to prove than ever before.
Ruffin was involved in an off-campus arrest last spring, while Freeney’s academic issues sidetracked his football, but both say they want to be contributors in the quest for a three-peat in Conference USA.
“It’s good to be back around the fellas, and we’re doing a good job of picking up this playbook,” said Freeney, who when available has been a sparkplug for the Pirates, making 70 catches for 1,070 yards and five touchdowns the last two seasons. “I feel I can pretty much do anything out here on the field given the right opportunities and the right mindset. I feel I can be pretty successful in this offense.”
Ruffin played in 13 games last season after completing his transfer from California’s College of the Sequoias, scoring five touchdowns on 308 yards rushing.
Getting another chance from McNeill has been a motivation, according to Ruffin, who said he spent his suspension time studying his playbook and watching the team run through pass progressions from the sideline.
“I just try to stay focused because the incident that I had, it set me back,” Ruffin said. “I made a mistake and I want to show my teammates I’m not going to make the same mistake again. I’m not going to let the school down, the fans, the administration, my team or the coaches.”
Tickets
For the third time in the last five years, East Carolina’s football season ticket sales will officially be classified as a record-breaker.
A total of 22,338 tickets had been sold as of 5 p.m. Friday, which eclipses the previous standard of 22,000 established in 2007. The ECU Athletics Department has now surpassed the 20,000 mark for the fourth consecutive year, setting the stage for possible new attendance standards at an expanded Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium this fall.
With a 7,000-seat endzone construction project that will increase the stadium’s capacity to 50,000 in time for the Sept. 5 opener against Tulsa, the Pirates will be in a position to push their turnstile count to unmatched levels under first-year head coach Ruffin McNeill.
In addition, Student Pirate Club membership has eclipsed its previous high of 7,800 with a current enrollment of 7,831. With a season ticket included as a benefit of membership, ECU’s overall number of sold seats exceeds 30,000 for the first time in program history.
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Obama lauds UNC for affordability, quality

Eric Ferreri in Campus Notes: UNC got a shout-out from President Barack Obama. In a speech about higher education at the University of Texas in Austin, Obama singled out UNC and the University of Maryland as two public universities that have managed to remain affordable while retaining quality.

As I read it, it isn't actually clear whether Obama is citing UNC-Chapel Hill or the entire University of North Carolina system. Either way, he'd be right. By most national markers, UNC-CH and the state's university system provide a lot of bang for the tuition buck.

Here's what he said, in part:

Now, part of the responsibility for controlling these costs falls on our colleges and universities. And some of them are stepping up. Public institutions like the University of Maryland and the University of North Carolina, and private institutions like Cornell are finding ways to combat rising tuition without compromising quality. But too many others aren't doing enough, and I want to challenge them to get a handle on spiraling costs.

In-state students living on campus at Maryland's College Park campus this fall will pay just more than $21,000. UNC-CH's in-state undergrads living on campus this year will pay about $19,700. Cornell, the private institution Obama cited, charges nearly $40,000 a year.
NCSU, Shaw open doors to 5,200 new students

BY JOHN MURAWSKI - STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH -- The SUVs, minivans and sedans began arriving in the morning, their windows obscured with blankets, cardboard boxes and plastic tubs. They homed in on the dormitories at N.C. State University and staked out available parking slots, occasionally double-parking to dislodge a freshman.

The overstuffed cars barely came to a stop before undergraduate volunteers swarmed around them like ants attacking fallen french fries. The red-shirted brigade emptied the cars in minutes, carting off luggage, pillows, bags of junk food, bottled water, computers, televisions, tennis rackets - the higgledy-piggledy survival kit for a freshman's first semester of college.

Thousands of incoming college students this weekend partook in this late-summer ritual that each year transforms the Triangle into a thriving hub of university campuses. On Saturday, the students streamed in at N.C. State as well as Shaw University in downtown Raleigh.

At N.C. State, new Chancellor Randy Woodson walked from dormitory to dormitory to greet students, meet parents and pitch in by carrying rucksacks from car trunk to dorm room.

"This is really some of the first impressions students and parents get of the university," Woodson said. "I recall this experience with my kids, when trash bags end up becoming the luggage."

Across town at Shaw, Jeffrey Smith, vice president of student affairs, welcomed families, directed students, answered questions while taking calls on his cell phone.

About 700 freshmen arrive each year at Shaw, while more than 4,500 freshman descend on the N.C. State campus. They come here from family farms, suburban split-levels and big-city condominiums. Some have never been away from home, while others have lived abroad and arrive speaking several languages.
The nation's ailing economy is the elephant in every dorm room, putting a greater premium on gaining marketable job skills. It's unclear what economic conditions will be like when these freshmen graduate, but they're already feeling the pressure to perform to real-world expectations.

With parents looking on, some students nervously joked about how they'll have to focus on schoolwork and not let campus distractions interfere with their prime directive: good grades and graduation.

Taking a break from uncluttering his dorm room, A.J. Hagwood, an NCSU freshman from Matthews, described his first-day emotions as a combination of excitement and anxiety. He's planning to major in accounting and has heard the coursework can be very demanding.

He's the last of four siblings to go college, and his father, Jim, imparted unsparing advice.

"He knows what he has to do - good grades, or he goes back home," Jim Hagwood said, as his son nodded in agreement. "And then it's either community college or flipping burgers."

On the women's floor above, Alyssa Williams-Sinn, a freshman from Cary, had moved in Friday and was getting acclimated. She's rooming with a high school friend, eliminating the uncertainty of getting paired with a total stranger.

She was also buoyed by parental advice, free and abundant on a day like this.

"My parents told me that if I was scared or unhappy, that it's completely normal," Williams-Sinn said. "But they said not to come home too much."

Over at Shaw, new students mingled in the courtyard as others were still arriving.

Their thoughts were much the same: roommates, classes, cafeteria food.

Zaniya Young, a freshman from Washington, N.C., who plans to major in social work, came out of the campus cafeteria accompanied by two students whom she had just met. She said she is naturally shy and wouldn't be at ease until she met her roommate.

"She might be crazy," Young joked.

Jeneva Carner, a freshman from Columbia, S.C., plays on Shaw's volleyball team. She's a speech-language pathology major and said her high school study habits got her this far but they will likely require an upgrade for the next phase of her life.

"I need to work on some stuff - procrastinating," Carner said. "I usually wait till the day before, but my stuff comes out good."

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Meredith College hopes to leave difficult year behind

RALEIGH -- As students return to Meredith College this weekend, everyone on campus is hoping the new academic year will be smoother than the last, which was among the most tumultuous in the school's 111-year history.

Like colleges and universities everywhere recently, it has wrestled with painful changes: budget cuts, layoffs, no raises, frozen retirement contributions, and departments merged and majors dropped.

But at Meredith, the largest women's college in the Southeast, there also were budget miscalculations, what some called out-of-control spending on big-ticket construction and, finally, at the end of the spring semester, a failed no-confidence vote by the faculty on Maureen Hartford, the school's president for the past 11 years.

This still won't be a typical year. Seventeen departments have been merged into 12; three majors being phased out - French, women's studies and public history - are closed to new students; 54 jobs - nearly a 10th of the college's work force a year ago - have been cut. The school also will pick a new leader to replace Hartford, who announced last winter that she would retire in June 2011.

But it should be closer to normal, said Anna Beavon Gravely, a Rocky Mount senior and president of the student government association.

"I think the tensions we saw within both the faculty and the students last year are not going to be repeated this year," Gravely said. "Last year there was a whole lot of shock that happened, but the school is moving in a great direction, and [its] focus is still on the students."

Meredith has fewer than 2,300 students. Given the close-knit nature of the school, Gravely said, it's inevitable that the students will feel changes affecting academic programs. Last year, despite the budget issues, the college shielded the students almost entirely from the effects, she said.
conditions right now," Gravely said. "They definitely want the student experience to remain untouched."

**Capital vs. operating**

The no-confidence vote on Hartford's leadership came after some on the faculty grew upset at the changes to academic life and what they saw as fiscal mismanagement and wasteful spending by the administration on ambitious projects. These include a $22 million apartment-style student housing project, a $4.3 million athletic complex with an artificial turf field, and a new Italy program headquartered in a 16th-century palazzo in a medieval walled city in Tuscany. Those three facilities all went into use last year during the plans for cuts and layoffs.

The outcome of the vote didn't surprise Tim Hendrix, chairman of the faculty council.

"There was disagreement about the way some of the decisions were made, but not unanimous disagreement," he said, adding that there also was disagreement about whether the vote was the right approach.

Hartford said it's always hard to explain the differences between capital funds for things such as buildings, and operating funds used for ongoing expenses such as salaries, but that the projects hadn't dragged on the overall budget.

The apartments have proved popular and are expected to be full this year. Hartford said they were financed with bonds, and the rent is covering the full cost.

Gravely, one of the first students to move in, said they also are keeping older students like her on campus, rather than in distant apartments, which enhances Meredith's feeling of community.

The college leased the building in Italy, Hartford said, and the fees charged to students for studying there are expected to cover Meredith's costs there, too.

Meredith has had study-abroad programs for years, and Hartford has long stressed the value of exposing students to the rest of the world. Last semester, almost 40 percent of Meredith students had studied abroad compared to 7.7 percent in 2001.

Hartford said the only project she would have probably handled differently is the athletics complex. The plan had been to pay for the complex, which includes a track, with a modest campaign for donations. Hartford said that the weak economy had made it hard to find enough donors. About a third of the money has been raised so far.

"If we had known that the market was going to do what it did, we probably would have delayed that construction until we had all of the cash in hand from gifts," Hartford said.

A $2.6 million second phase, which would include a 248-seat grandstand, restrooms, locker rooms and storage, will be delayed until nearly all the money is in hand, she said.

There wasn't room to expand the school's previous field, which didn't meet basic NCAA requirements, so Meredith couldn't host home conference games or tournaments, according to information on Meredith's website.

The largest part of Meredith's budget comes from tuition, so it's crucial the school be able to sell itself. The sports complex, Italy project and apartments can't be evaluated simply in terms of whether they directly pay their own way. Hartford and Hendrix agreed that the three projects greatly boost Meredith's allure.

**Budget reforms**

Last year, Hartford said, she decided it would be smart to hire a consultant to suggest improvements in the way the college creates its budgets. There were major problems with meeting spending estimates the year before, and with overestimating revenue last year.

The consultant recommended several changes, including better communications on budgeting up and down the chain of command, and holding those responsible for the budgeting accountable for it in their performance reviews.
"Budget managers do not consistently understand their responsibilities for managing budgets, how to read budget reports and how to use available tools and technologies" the consultant's report said.

Hartford said the college's budgeting has improved.

At no time, she said, was Meredith's future threatened. The college has a healthy reserve endowment for emergency use that it never had to tap, and the investments of the broader endowment have rebounded.

One of the attractions of Meredith is that feeling of a small, tight community. But that also means it's a place where controversy and rumors can move quickly, and Hartford eventually decided to address all the talk, true and otherwise.

The university held open meetings on the financial issues, and Hartford sent a collegewide letter.

That wasn't enough for some, though, leading to the no-confidence vote.

Hendrix said this won't be an easy year, because of the search for a new president and the changes that resulted from the hard choices and chaos last year. But morale seems to be up, he said.

"It's amazing to me how resilient faculty and staff are," he said. "Everyone I talk to is looking forward to the beginning of the school year, they're looking forward to students arriving this weekend, to starting off on a positive note."

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Back-to-college spending falters as freshmen cut back

Students plan to spend less on electronics

By Jillian Berman and Jayne O'Donnell
USA TODAY

In a dramatic shift, back-to-college spending isn't expected to rise this year because of a sharp drop in spending by freshmen and their parents.

First-year college students will spend 19% less on back-to-college shopping, according to National Retail Federation survey data. The decline is a setback for struggling retailers, who are trying to boost sales during their second-biggest season after the winter holidays.

"Freshmen have always been the cash cow for retailers when it comes to the back-to-college season," NRF spokeswoman Ellen Davis says.

The projected downturn in spending is "an eyebrow-raiser," though slight shifts in spending in other grade levels should make up for the loss.

Overall back-to-college spending should be flat, with shoppers expected to spend $616.13 on average in 2010, down from an average of $618.12 spent last year.

Back-to-college spending rose steadily from 2003 to 2007 and was on the upswing again last year after a big decline in 2008. Students and parents plan to spend $34 billion on back-to-college supplies, and $21 billion will be spent on grade-school students.

Driving the decline in freshman spending is an expected cutback in the purchase of electronics.

On average, freshmen plan to slash their spending on laptops, MP3 players and other gadgets by more than $150 this year, the NRF says.

The Consumer Electronics Association predicts electronics sales will be up 3% from 2009, far better than last year but well below 2007 and 2008.

Pam Goodfellow, senior analyst at BICresearch, which conducted the survey for the NRF, says one reason students might be holding back on laptops is because they have so many other gadgets.

"You've got a smartphone. What do you need a new laptop for?" she says.

The NPD Group's Marshal Cohen attributes the decline in electronics sales to more students living at home and enrolling in local colleges.

Sandi Longstreet says her family saved money because her soon-to-be-freshman daughter will be living at home in Howell, Mich., while she attends Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor.

Some of the ways retailers are luring freshmen and other college students into their stores:

► Target. The discounter is offering in-store, after-hours shopping events - with free bus transportation to and from the store - for incoming freshmen during the first weeks of the school year at 48 college campuses, up from 36 last year.

► Best Buy. The electronics retailer is promoting versions of Dell, Hewlett-Packard and other PCs that include student-friendly features such as a full version of Microsoft Office Home and Student, longer battery life and a lightweight design.

► J.C. Penney. The department store has an online dorm "registry" that works like a bridal registry, allowing students to tell their families and friends what they need. The chain is also targeting college students with its service that allows online orders to be sent to stores to avoid shipping costs.