College officials seek drinking age debate

BY JUSTIN POPE
The Associated Press

College presidents from about 100 of the nation's best-known universities, including Duke, Dartmouth and Ohio State, are calling on lawmakers to consider lowering the drinking age from 21 to 18, saying current laws actually encourage dangerous binge drinking on campus.

The movement called the Amethyst Initiative began quietly recruiting presidents more than a year ago to provoke national debate about the drinking age.

"This is a law that is routinely evaded," said John McCordell, former president of Middlebury College in Vermont who started the organization. "It is a law that the people at whom it is directed believe is unjust and unfair and discriminatory."

Other prominent schools in the group include Syracuse, Tufts, Colgate, Kenyon and Morehouse.

But even before the presidents begin the public phase of their efforts, which may include publishing newspaper ads in the coming weeks, they are already facing sharp criticism.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving says lowering the drinking age would lead to more fatal car crashes. It accuses the presidents of misrepresenting science and looking for an easy way out of an inconvenient problem.

MADD officials are even urging parents to think carefully about the safety of colleges whose presidents have signed on.

"It's very clear the 21-year-old drinking age will not be enforced at those campuses," said Laura Dean-Mooney, national president of MADD.

Both sides agree alcohol abuse by college students is a huge problem.

Research has found more than 40 percent of college students reported at least one symptom of alcohol abuse or dependence. One study has estimated more than 500,000 full-time students at four-year colleges suffer injuries each year related in some way to drinking, and about 1,700 die in such accidents.

A recent Associated Press analysis of federal records found that 157 college-age people, 18 to 23, drank themselves to death from 1999 through 2005.

Moana Jagasia, a Duke University sophomore from Singapore, where the drinking age is lower, said reducing the age in the U.S. could be helpful.

"There isn't that much difference in maturity between 21 and 18," she said. "If the age is younger, you're getting exposed to it at a younger age, and you don't freak out when you get to campus."

The statement the presidents have signed avoids calling explicitly for a younger drinking age. Rather, it seeks "an informed and dispassionate debate" over the issue and the federal highway law that made 21 the de facto national drinking age by denying money to any state that bucks the trend.

But the statement makes clear the signers think the current law isn't working, citing a "culture of dangerous, clandestine binge-drinking," and noting that while adults under 21 can vote and enlist in the military, they "are told they are not mature enough to have a beer." Furthermore, "by choosing to use fake IDs, students make ethical compromises that erode respect for the law."

"I'm not sure where the dialogue will lead, but it's an important topic to American families and it deserves a straightforward dialogue," said William Trout, president of Rhodes College in Memphis, Tenn., who has signed the statement.

But some other college administrators sharply disagree that lowering the drinking age would help. University of Miami President Donna Shalala, who served as secretary of health and human services under President Clinton, declined to sign.

"I remember college campuses when we had 18-year-old drinking ages, and I honestly believe we've made some progress," Shalala said in a telephone interview.
Holtz-Hudson alliance grows stronger

BY NATHAN SUMMERS
The Daily Reflector

When Skip Holtz first met Greg Hudson in 1986, Holtz was one of the upperclassmen on the Notre Dame football team, a flanker. Hudson was a young linebacker and a guy that looked up to Holtz. "I was a senior and he was a freshman," Holtz recalled. "I knew him then, but being in different classes, we weren't as close as we are today."

As it happened, both men found their futures in coaching instead of playing, and the two have proven to be inseparable ever since. As Holtz enters his fourth season as East Carolina's head coach, Hudson enters his fourth season as the Pirates' defensive coordinator.

Hudson returned to the Notre Dame program in 1993 as a graduate assistant coach while Holtz was the Fighting Irish's offensive coordinator under his father, head coach Lou Holtz. A permanent bond was formed.

"That's when we really first started to get close together," Holtz said of Hudson. "I was newly married and he was newly married, our wives got along so well together, and we spent a lot of time together those couple of years."

When Holtz went to Connecticut for his first head coaching gig, he immediately hired Hudson as his offensive coordinator.

Now, the two are revisiting those Notre Dame days yet again, reunited in much bigger and different roles. But the premise that keeps reconnecting them seems to be the same.

"When I made the decision to come here, I called former coach and now athletic director Barry Alvarez at Wisconsin," said Hudson, referring to his departure from the University of Minnesota to join Holtz at ECU in 2005. "He said you've got to be around good people. No matter what you do in this profession, stay around and work with good people. If Skip Holtz has an enemy in this world, I want to meet the guy." Holtz, Hudson and the remainder of what has been a very loyal ECU staff for three seasons seems to be an embodiment of the wisdom of Alvarez.

Holtz's commitment to doing things the right way lured Hudson away from his defensive coordinator position at Minnesota and compelled him to join Holtz. Now, they're close enough for Holtz and his wife to be the godparents of Hudson's children.

"He was a teammate of mine, an older teammate," Hudson said of Holtz. "You attain a respect for people in this game, for men that are ahead of you and people you follow. It comes down to respect."

On the heels of consecutive winning seasons, both coaches have been mentioned during the offseason coaching searches of other programs.

See ECU, C3

ECU
Continued from C1

While both might be hired away at some point, neither have found reason to separate again just yet. In fact, it seems the two families grow closer all the time.

"That relationship has grown as our kids have grown up together, and been baptized together," Holtz said. "It's an intertwined family situation. My three kids, his four — it's like we both have seven. There are days when they're all at our house, and there are days when they're all at his house."

Hudson's stock has continued to rise ever since Holtz plucked him from Minnesota. Hudson also had a memorable stint in his hometown of Cincinnati, where he multi-tasked for the Bearcats from 1997 to 2000 as a tight ends/offensive line coach, running backs coach, linebackers coach and assistant head coach.

Hudson knows he wants to be a head coach before he's done, and he said that has helped strengthen their relationship with Holtz.

"You have a respect for the position he holds," Hudson said. "You admire it and you desire to be in that position one day so you respect it. That makes it easy to work together."

"We like the same things, we have the same beliefs and philosophies and standards, and we've both got great-looking wives, so it works."

Nathan Summers can be reached at nsummers@coxnc.com, or at (252) 329-9595.
Studies: Video games can aid students, surgeons

BY STEVE LEBLANC
The Associated Press

Parents, don't put away those video games just yet — today's gamer may be tomorrow's top surgeon.

Researchers who gathered in Boston for the American Psychological Association convention detailed a series of studies suggesting video games can be powerful learning tools — from increasing younger students' problem-solving potential to improving the suturing skills of laparoscopic surgeons. One study even looked at whether playing "World of Warcraft," the world's biggest multiplayer online game, can improve scientific thinking.

The conclusion? Certain types of video games can have benefits beyond the virtual thrills of blowing up demons.

In one Fordham University study, 122 students in fifth, sixth and seventh grades were asked to think out loud for 20 minutes while playing a game they had never seen before. Researchers studied the children's statements to see if playing the game improved cognitive and perceptual skills.

While older children seemed more interested in just playing the game, younger children showed more interest in setting up a series of short-term goals needed to help them learn the game.

"The younger kids are focusing more on their planning and problem solving while they are actually playing the game, while adolescents are focusing less on their planning and strategizing and more on the here and now," said Fordham psychologist Fran Blumberg, who conducted the research last year and plans to submit it for publication. "They're thinking less strategically than the younger kids."

Studies by Iowa State University psychologist Douglas Gentile and Dr. James Rosser, head of minimally invasive surgery at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, compared surgeons who play video games to those who don't.

The edge went to gamer surgeons, they found, even after taking into account differences in age, years of medical training and the number of laparoscopic surgeries performed. In laparoscopic procedures, surgeons use small incisions, thin surgical tools and video cameras to see inside the body.

One study of 33 laparoscopic surgeons found that those who played video games were 27 percent faster at advanced surgical proce-
GAMES

Continued from D1

dures and made 37 percent fewer errors than those who
didn't.

Advanced video-game skills also were a good way to
predict suturing abilities, according to their study, which
was published in the Archives of Surgery in 2007.

Research Gentile and
Rosser conducted for a sec-
ond as yet unpublished study
of 303 laparoscopic surgeons
found those who played video
games requiring spacial skills
and hand dexterity per-
formed better at those skills
when tested later compared
to surgeons who didn't play
videos, Gentile said.

"The single best predictor
of their skills is how much
they had played video games
in the past and how much
they played now. Those were
better predictors of surgical
skills than years of training
and number of surgeries per-
formed," Gentile said. "So the
first question you might ask
your surgeon is how many
of these (surgeries) have you
done and the second question
is 'Are you a gamer?'"

Some video games even
appear to sharpen scientific
thinking skills.

Researchers at the Univer-
sity of Wisconsin at Madison
looked at a random sample
of 2,000 chat-room posts
about "World of Warcraft"
to see what the players were
discussing. The game is set
in a fantasy world where players
hunt, gather and battle to
move their characters to higher
levels. Players who work
together succeed faster.

The research found the
game encouraged scientific
thinking, like using systems
and models for understand-
ing situations and using math
and testing to investigate
problems.

The vast majority of the
discussion participants, 86
percent, shared knowledge
to solve problems and more
than half, 58 percent, used
systematic and evaluative
processes, researchers found.

The forums show that
players are "creating an
environment in which
informal scientific reasoning
practices are being learned," said Sean Duncan, a doctoral
student who worked on the
"World of Warcraft" report
with lead author Constance
Steinkuehler. The paper is set
for publication in the Journal
of Science Education and
Technology.
College leaders want debate on drinking age

BY JUSTIN POPE, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

College presidents from about 100 of the nation's best-known universities, including Duke, Dartmouth and Ohio State, are calling on lawmakers to consider lowering the drinking age from 21 to 18, saying current laws encourage dangerous binge drinking.

The movement called the Amethyst Initiative began quietly recruiting presidents more than a year ago to provoke national debate about the drinking age.

"This is a law that is routinely evaded," said John McCardell, former president of Middlebury College in Vermont who started the organization. "It is a law that the people at whom it is directed believe is unjust and unfair and discriminatory."

Other prominent schools in the group include Syracuse, Tufts, Colgate, Kenyon and Morehouse.

SEE ALCOHOL, PAGE 7A

COLLEGE-AGE DRINKING DEATHS ARE UP

The number of deaths from alcohol poisoning of college-age people in 2005 was almost double what it was six years before. Most deaths occurred on weekends.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alcohol poisoning deaths, U.S.</th>
<th>College-age poisoning deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>338 327 333 383 390 382 362</td>
<td>30 23 12 15 17 18 42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1999-2005, by day of the week

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Associated Press
ALCOHOL
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

No UNC system campus has joined the initiative.

Even before the presidents begin the public phase of their efforts, which may include publishing newspaper ads in the coming weeks, they are already facing sharp criticism.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving says lowering the drinking age would lead to more fatal car crashes. It accuses the presidents of misrepresenting science and looking for an easy way out of an inconvenient problem. MADDD officials are even urging parents to think carefully about the safety of colleges whose presidents have signed on.

"It's very clear the 21-year-old drinking age will not be enforced at those campuses," said Laura Dean-Mooney, national president of MADDD.

Duke University faced accusations of ignoring the heavy drinking that formed the backdrop of 2006 rape allegations against three lacrosse players. The rape allegations proved to be false, but the alcohol-fueled party was not disputed.

Duke President Richard Brodhead declined an interview request. He wrote in a statement on the Amethyst Initiative's Web site that the 21-year-old drinking age "pushes drinking into hiding, heightening its risks." It also prevents school officials "from addressing drinking with students as an issue of responsible choice."

Both sides agree alcohol abuse by college students is a big problem.

Moana Jagasia, a Duke sophomore from Singapore, where the drinking age is lower, said reducing the age in the U.S. could be helpful.

DANGER ON CAMPUS

Research has found that more than 40 percent of college students reported at least one symptom of alcohol abuse or dependence. One study has estimated more than 500,000 full-time students at four-year colleges suffer injuries each year related in some way to drinking, and about 1,700 die in such accidents.

A recent Associated Press analysis of federal records found that 157 college-age people, 18 to 23, drank themselves to death from 1999 through 2005.

"There isn't that much difference in maturity between 21 and 18," she said. "If the age is younger, you're getting exposed to it at a younger age, and you don't freak out when you get to campus."

At UNC-Chapel Hill, a joint venture between student government and the dean of students' office is examining campus drinking.

J.J. Raynor, UNC-CH's student body president, said she believes the higher drinking age does promote binge drinking because it leads some students to engage in what is commonly referred to as "pre-gaming."

"Their goal is to get as much as them as possible before they go out, because once they're out, they can't get caught with [alcohol]," Raynor said. "We don't know how widespread it is," Raynor added.

N.C. State Chancellor James Oblinger could not be reached.

At N.C. Central University, excessive drinking is frowned upon, but some students do so anyway, student body President Kent Williams said.

He said Monday that he hadn't heard of the Amethyst Initiative but expected to speak with other student leaders about it. "It's a problem on everyone's campus," he said.

Leaders seek debate

McCordell's group takes its name from ancient Greece, where the purple gemstone amethyst was widely believed to ward off drunkenness if used in drinking vessels and jewelry. He said college students will drink no matter what, but do so more dangerously when it's illegal.

The statement the presidents have signed avoids calling explicitly for a younger drinking age. Rather, it seeks "an informed and dispassionate debate" over the issue and the federal highway law that made 21 the de facto national drinking age by denying money to any state that bucks the trend.

But the statement makes clear the signers think the current law isn't working, citing a "culture of dangerous, clandestine binge-drinking."

"I'm not sure where the dialogue will lead, but it's an important topic to American families and it deserves a straightforward dialogue," said William Trout, president of Rhodes College in Memphis, Tenn., who has signed the statement.

Other college administrators sharply disagree. University of Miami President Donna Shalala, who served as secretary of health and human services under President Clinton, declined to sign.

"I remember college campuses when we had 18-year-old drinking ages, and I honestly believe we've made some progress," Shalala said in a telephone interview. "To just shift it back down to the high schools makes no sense at all."

Staff writer Eric Ferrante contributed to this article.
NEWCOMERS, BEWARE!
THE FRESHMAN 15 LURK

Away from home on a new schedule, nutrition can get out of hand

By Zoe Elizabeth Buck
Staff Writer

Incoming college freshmen often pay a physical price for the combination of high levels of stress, free-flowing booze, unlimited carbohydrates and a sudden lack of parental control — the infamous freshman 15.

That's the storied average of extra weight new arrivals to the college scene often pack. But there's no need for parents or students to panic, says Elisabetta Politi, nutrition director at the Duke Diet and Fitness Center in Durham. It's easy to keep fit with a couple of healthy living guidelines to keep metabolism up and calorie intake consistent.

"It's really a challenging time in young students' lives because they are on their own for the first time," said Politi. "Some kids who have been sheltered, they find it difficult to just transition from having parents providing three meals a day to making their own selections."

Anna Myers, a freshman moving in to N.C. State this weekend, said she is worried about gaining weight but hopes being on the third floor of her dorm will help. She's also taking a running class.

But without the structure of high school and living at home, the most important thing for college students is to plan meals, Politi said.

"Freshmen have a schedule packed with classes that makes it difficult to eat regular meals," she said. "I encourage them to look at their class schedule and find times to eat their meals. It's not a good idea to rush to class and not eat anything until 2 p.m."

Never skip breakfast, added Politi.

"I know a lot of college students really enjoy sleeping late and then rushing to classes, but I think it's really important to take time for that meal," she said. "You boost your metabolism when you eat breakfast."

To keep metabolism running for the rest of the day, try to eat something every four to five hours.

But don't eat too often. Students often feel pressured to eat when their friends go out, especially late at night, said Courtney Rash, nutritionist coordinator at East Carolina University. "They don't want to miss the social experience, but I tell them they can enjoy their friends without eating again if they've already had dinner."

Study breaks, school-sponsored or otherwise, also offer occasions for social eating.

"During finals, we had an ice cream

See Freshmen, page 48
night and a doughnut night,” said Laura Keeley, a rising sophomore at Duke. “And you can almost always find someone who wants to order pizza.”

Keeley said she gained a few pounds freshman year, but the pressure to stay thin is strong enough to keep most weight gain at about five pounds. She said alcohol—a fact of college life despite the higher age limit for legal drinking—doesn’t help.

Politi agreed, saying that alcohol is highly caloric, with little nutritional value. Liquid calories aren’t filling, even after imbibing hundreds of calories. And with judgment impaired, students are more likely to binge on late-night pizza. Politi encourages setting limits and drinking only a few drinks at a time.

Stress can also impair decision-making when it comes to food.

“Studying is the priority for most students,” Politi said. “Eating right comes later.”

When students feel overwhelmed, Rash said, they should go to the health center for counseling instead of eating.

“Don’t turn to emotional eating.” Rash said.

Complicating the decision of what to eat is the lack of refrigeration and food preparation areas in college dorm rooms, which leads many college students to subsist on meal bars, shakes and ramen.

Dining halls often have healthy options, but with a smorgasbord of cheesy carbs laid out in front of them, who can stick to the salad bar?

“I recommend that when they go to a dining hall they first start with a salad or soup,” said Politi, “which has been shown to curb appetite, and then later eat food that is more calorically dense.”

To keep meals balanced, she added, fill one quarter of your plate with protein, one quarter with carbs, and the rest with fruits and vegetables. This takes advantage of what Politi calls the volumetric principle: It doesn’t matter how many calories you eat, what fills you up is plenty of volume. So a big salad can fill you up more than a little cookie, even though the cookie could have more calories.

If you’re worried about the freshman 15, most schools provide free nutritional counseling through the health center. East Carolina University has had the service for about two years.

“The hardest thing is to just let students know there are resources available,” said Rash, “that there is a dietitian on campus that students can see for free.”

NCSU freshman Ben Perkins, 17, from Durham, said he’d actually welcome a little extra weight.

“Especially in the arms,” he quipped.

zbuck@newsobserver.com
or (919) 829-4753
Thomas Hearn, Wake Forest president

Severed ties with Baptist convention

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WINSTON-SALEM — Thomas K. Hearn Jr., president of Wake Forest University from 1983 until 2005, died Monday, the school announced. He was 71.

Hearn, who suffered from brain cancer while serving as president in 2003, was eventually declared cancer-free. He took a leave from his position while he fought the illness.

"He served 22 years with great vision and integrity, and all who love Wake Forest are grateful for his legacy of achievement and the place the institution holds in American higher education," said Nathan Hatch, who succeeded Hearn as the school's 13th president in 2005.

Hearn's first major decision at the school was to sever ties with the Baptist State Convention, paving the way for a self-governing structure at the university.

"It was terribly difficult but necessary," Hearn said of the decision. "It was a pivotal point. It is a pivotal point, and I believe the energy, the vitality, the momentum that that decision brought to the institution is still being felt."

He hired and built

During his presidency, Wake Forest saw college applications double. He hired significantly more faculty, hosted presidential debates in 1988 and 2000, and the college launched an extensive construction and renovation initiative on campus, according to the Winston-Salem Journal.

"I've heard people say Wake Forest had a saving touch when it moved here 50 years ago," Hearn told a Journal reporter in 2006, on the 50th anniversary of the school's move to Winston-Salem, "but it really wasn't ready to undertake that role until I came here." Hearn is credited with, in particular, his help in starting Winston-Salem Business Inc. A private-business group, it was focused on recruiting jobs and companies in the wake of the Reynolds buyout and other economic changes. The group, of which he was chairman the first three years, helped lure Dell Inc. to Forsyth County.

He pledged the first money for construction of Joel Coliseum, which is home to the men's basketball team, and helped forge the partnership between Baptist Hospital and Wake Forest's medical school.

A statement from the school said a memorial service is being planned for later this week.

The Winston-Salem Journal contributed to this report.
UNC protesters guilty, but convictions vacated

BY JESSE JAMES DECONTO
STAFF WRITER

CHAPEL HILL — District Court Judge Pat Devine found five UNC-Chapel Hill students guilty of failing to disperse during a campus protest in May but then vacated their convictions so they'll have no criminal records.

Dozens of students occupied the lobby of South Building for more than two weeks in April and May to protest the university's refusal to join a program they said would improve wages and conditions for workers who make clothing with the UNC logo.

After then-Chancellor James Moeser declined to discuss the Designated Supplier program at a special meeting of the university's Labor Licensing Advisory Council on the 16th day of the sit-in, the demonstrators moved from the rotunda of South Building into Moeser's own office.

Campus police arrested then-junior Linda Gomaa, and most of the crowd left Moeser's office. Gomaa testified Monday that she had planned to leave if police asked her to. "I didn't really notice [the officer] until he was arresting me," she said.

Sarah Hirsh, Salma Mirza, Thomas Mattera and Tim Stallmann sat on Moeser's floor with their arms locked, and police arrested them one by one. All five, including Gomaa, were charged with failure to disperse, and Mirza was charged also with resisting arrest because she refused to walk to a patrol car and officers had to carry her out.

jesse.deconto@newsobserver.com
or (919) 932-8760
UNC study links spankers to abusers

BY MANDY LOCKE
STAFF WRITER
Parents tempted to treat Junior's misbehavior with a lashing from a tree switch out back or dad's leather belt are being urged to think again.

A study released today by doctors at UNC-Chapel Hill finds that parents who spank their children with an object — such as a belt, switch or paddle — are nine times more likely to abuse their child through more severe means. Also, parents are much more likely to beat, burn or shake their children if they spank frequently, according to the study, which is being published by the American Journal of Preventative Medicine.

"Parents get angry when they're spanking, and it's not working," said Adam Zolotor, lead author of the study and a pediatrician at UNC-Chapel Hill's Department of Family Health. "If a child gets spanked so often, they just don't care anymore and will misbehave anyway."

It's the latest finding in a growing body of research suggesting that parents should use their voices, not their hands or household tools, to keep children in line. This study rests on anonymous admissions of 1,435 mothers of children from North and South Carolina randomly selected.

SEE SPANKING, PAGE 4B

SPANKING
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

to share details of the discipline they and other caregivers use in the privacy of their homes.

Rates of abuse, the researchers found, are alarmingly high, even in a survey dependent on parents owning up to behavior that could cost them the right to raise their children. Twelve percent of mothers who reported spanking a child's bottom with an object also admitted engaging in behavior researchers classified as physical abuse. Also, 12 percent of those who spanked 50 or more times in the last year admitted abuse such as beating, burning, shaking or hitting the children with an object about their bodies.

Spanking has been a mainstay in American parents' discipline regimen for generations. Most national studies show that more than half of parents have spanked or slapped their children in the past year. In the UNC-Ch study, Zolotor and his colleagues found that nearly half of those parents with children ages 7 to 9 whipped their children's behinds with objects in the past year.

Broken relationships

Corporal punishment has been on the minds of North Carolinians this summer. In June, Triangle residents watched Johnston County mother Lynn Paddock admit she lashed out at her brood of adopted children with a plastic plumbing supply pipe; Paddock borrowed the parenting advice from an evangelical Christian minister who teaches parents how to rear submissive children. A Johnston County jury sent Paddock to prison for life for the suffocation death her youngest son, Sean, 4.

Over the last year, child advocates have appealed, without success, to legislators to outlaw corporal punishment in public schools. Some districts, such as Johnston County, have recently abandoned the practice.

"People want to change behavior immediately, and they think spanking is the way to go," said Tom Vitagliano, a child advocate from Raleigh-based Action for Children, which has pushed for the statewide ban on spanking in schools. "Down the line, though, these children do far worse. That relationship of trust is broken."

At least 56 school districts still allow administrators to spank or paddle children. Efforts to ban that practice entirely have met fierce opposition.

John Rustin, vice president of the Family Policy Council, a nonpartisan research group in Raleigh that focuses on family issues, opposed the ban and thinks there's still a place for spanking in North Carolina homes and schools.

"Spanking can be administered in a loving manner to help children understand what's right and wrong," Rustin said. "But it's not just something that ought to be done with little thought."

Some Christians heed the Bible's admonition that parents who spare the rod will spoil their child. Several ministers have written books or taught seminars instructing parents how to employ the rod, preaching that a parent's hand ought to be preserved for loving and nurturing, not discipline. Michael Pearl, the Tennessee pastor Paddock turned to for discipline advice, suggests in his books that parents who beat younger than 1 with "a foot-long willow branch shaved of its knots," and for older children, "plastic plumbing pipe, a 3-foot shrub cutting or a belt."

Beth Taylor, a mother of two boys, said she finally gave up on spanking years ago when her oldest son began acting worse after she turned to a belt to punish him. It was the only tactic she knew, Taylor said. Growing up, her father had whipped her and her sisters with a strap.

"It made him lash out at me," said Taylor, who lives in McDowell County in Western North Carolina. "It broke my heart. I worried about him hating me."

Frustrated, she took a parenting class to figure out what was going wrong. There, Taylor said, she learned her spanking provoked her son. Now, to get her oldest son to behave, Taylor disconnects his cell phone. For her youngest, 7, she takes away his video game machine.

"Nothing gets their attention faster," Taylor said.

mandy.locke@newsobserver.com
or (919) 829-8927
Yale Student To Bring Her Own Little House To Campus

By STEVE GRANT | Courant Staff Writer

August 12, 2008

Estimating her expenses to live for two years in New Haven while a graduate student at Yale University, Elizabeth Turnbull arrived at about $14,000, even if she shared an apartment.

"Well, if I have roughly $14,000 I am going to spend on living space anyway, is there something more creative I can do with it?" she asked.

There was. An incoming student at Yale's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, where students fret as much about their carbon footprint as they do about grades, Turnbull decided to build her own living space.

It would be tiny, transportable and ever so environmentally friendly; green as grass. She would arrive at Yale with her own house.

For months she has been building it on the grounds of the Governor's Academy in Byfield, Mass., a preparatory school she attended. She works nearby in Beverly as a sustainability coordinator with a building company.

Her new home-to-be is 8 feet by 18 feet and was built atop a flatbed trailer. It has a tiny sleeping loft, a storage loft, a study nook, a kitchen area, a living area and a bathroom. Sometime in the coming weeks, she will tow it to New Haven for the start of the academic year.

The house is so compact, she expects to light it and power her cellphone and laptop computer with the energy generated from three solar panels that total about 18 square feet of surface. That's renewable energy, totally free, off the grid.

"I am really a glutton for light. I mean, I do not want to be living in a cave," she said. "I probably could have gotten away with even a smaller solar array, but it can be kind of cloudy in New Haven sometimes, and I thought that was something that I did not want to compromise on. So it will be a very well-lit space."

She'll cook her meals and heat the Tiny House — that is what she calls it — with propane. She estimates her yearly propane cost will be $200 maximum.

The house has a recyclable aluminum roof, uses recycled sailboat sails for ceilings, features insulation made partly from a waste soy product, and environmentally friendly paints. Many of the fixtures and building materials were donated by people who had lumber or hardware left over from a household
renovation or expansion.

"The Tiny House has taken me by the hand and led me through the process of building it," she said. "You know when you are doing something and the process takes over? Your arms are moving because the project has almost gotten inside your body and told you what to do."

Assuming it meshes with local regulations, she'll have a composting toilet that recycles human waste. The bathroom — toilet and shower stall combined — measures 3 feet by 3 1/2 feet.

"Yep, it is pretty tiny," she said.

So far, she has spent about $8,000 on the house and expects it to cost about $11,000 when finished and furnished.

An inspiration for her house was the Tumbleweed Tiny House Co. in Sebastopol, Calif., which sells small, transportable homes. But they were more expensive than she could afford.

"I thought, I'm working with a building company, and I have some skills. Why not try it?" She set to work designing her space, contacting zoning officials in New Haven, talking to companies that might sponsor her project.

Her former school agreed to let her build the house on the school grounds and gave her use of tools, which was invaluable. Friends and volunteers have been helping her build the house (a friend did the wiring), kind of like an old-fashioned barn-raising. Companies donated some materials, and people chip in with their time or furnishings.

A woman in Newburyport gave her boxes of ceramic tiles — different styles, colors and sizes — that Turnbull will use for a countertop and backsplash in the area that will become her kitchen.

Turnbull, who lives in Newburyport, Mass., is originally from Charleston, W.Va. She majored in environmental policy and economics at Colby College in Maine, worked on the West Virginia staff of presidential candidate John Kerry, led bicycle trips across the U.S. and Europe, worked for a natural-resources consulting firm, then the federal Department of Energy, and most recently led trips for an adventure travel company, visiting 29 countries in 14 months.

She is 26, and her job this summer, besides building the Tiny House, is to help O'Neil Fine Builders incorporate green materials and practices into its projects.

Exactly where she will place the Tiny House in New Haven is not determined, but Turnbull is talking with the city and the university about suitable sites. Turnbull said she is optimistic she'll find a spot that is safe and convenient.

Gordon T. Geballe, associate dean for student and alumni affairs at the School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, said Turnbull's house would be a symbolic statement but also would provide useful information on sustainable living in a small space, which he expects to become more common.

"I'm not sure everyone will live in a tiny house, but a lot of people will live in a small house. So the kinds of things she will learn will be useful to engineers and architects and homeowners. There is no reason why so called second-homes on a lake can't be something more like this than a mansion."

The School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, where Turnbull will study, is itself preparing to move to a new building, a 50,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art green headquarters.

"We're ecstatic that one of our students is pushing the envelope here," Geballe said.
Meanwhile, Turnbull is putting the finishing touches on the Tiny House, deciding whether there is room for a tiny futon, and learning to build cabinets. What has surprised her as the project progressed is that the space feels larger than she expected.

"You don't need a lot to live really well," Turnbull said. "I hope."

Contact Steve Grant at sgrant@courant.com

For a video and more photos of

Elizabeth

Turnbull's tiny — yet completely green — rolling home, visit www.courant.com/tinyhouse.

Copyright © 2008, The Hartford Courant
Yale Grad Student Builds 'Tiny House'

(STEPHEN DUNN / HARTFORD COURANT / May 30, 2008)

Elizabeth Turnbull shows how narrow her "Tiny House" is by stretching her arms while leaning out of the window in what will be her study space. Turnbull is building her 8' x 10' rolling home using state-of-the-art green materials, and will power it with solar panels. Turnbull hopes to live in the home during her two years studying at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.