Students gear up for class

New, returning students welcomed

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector

Sunday, August 23, 2009

What's more important to East Carolina University's approximately 4,000 freshmen than their football team playing Appalachian State University on Sept. 5? Not much, if you heard the crowd gathered at Wright Auditorium on Sunday afternoon.

Hundreds of new co-eds shouted cheers and learned the school's fight song during freshmen convocation. Most wore purple shirts proudly proclaiming they are now part of the "Pirate Nation."

The official welcome was one of several events going on this weekend to usher in the academic year, which begins Tuesday. A total of nearly 5,000 students moved into residence halls between Thursday and Sunday.

Freshmen were greeted Sunday by a who's-who of ECU personalities, including Chancellor Steve Ballard, ECU Head Coach Skip Holtz, student body Chief of Staff Josh Martinkovic and, of course, PeeDee the Pirate. Each promised exciting and educational opportunities will be at their feet for the next four years.

"Our number one goal at East Carolina is your success," Ballard said. "You need to find what you want to do. And we will do everything we can to make you successful."

Holtz shared the advice his mother imparted when he left for a university 12 hours away from his parents' home: Make good choices, live through your experiences, learn from them.

"These are the best days of your life," he said, and thanked them in advance for the support the student body gives football players from the stands each season.

Expectations of the Pirate Class of 2013 also were aired.

"I see a lot of potential in this class," said Martinkovic, a junior who also worked during orientation. "A lot of people who can do big things in this university."

Ballard said he expects every freshman to become a leader. Service projects, a timely graduation and opening minds to unfamiliar people and cultures also were mentioned by various speakers.

But all of the brief addresses were tempered by good humor and excitement. Provost Marilyn Sheerer, who spoke about the importance of engaging in academics, closed convocation by quoting legendary actress Katharine Hepburn.

"If you obey all the rules," she said, "You miss all the fun."

Contact Kathryn Kennedy at k kennedy@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9566.

Copyright 2009 The Daily Reflector All rights reserved.
ECU Notes: N.C. Literary Review focuses on state's drama traditions

ECU News Services

Sunday, August 23, 2009

The 18th issue of the North Carolina Literary Review focusing on the state's vibrant play writing and production traditions is now available.

Produced by East Carolina University and the North Carolina Literary and Historical Association, the 2009 NCLR received additional funding for this edition from the Paul Green Foundation. This issue of the award-winning journal includes a special section focusing on North Carolina's play traditions along with an original drama and a range of essays about this dynamic body of literature.

As the cradle of outdoor theater, the Old North State has been a national leader in connecting people with their pasts through the medium of drama, according to NCLR Editor Margaret D. Bauer. Beyond outdoor drama, the state's dramatic arts scene is flourishing, as evidenced by this issue's special feature section, which opens with a recently discovered 1960 interview with Paul Green and closes with Bland Simpson talking about Musician's Theater, another subgenre of drama that originated in North Carolina.

In between are original plays by Paul Green, June Gurainick, Richard Krawiec, Kat Meads, and Sam Post; an interview with Jim Grimsley and an article on his dramatic work; and literary criticism on the Asheville-set play of Tennessee Williams and on a play by Elizabeth Spencer performed in Chapel Hill in 1989.

Interspersed throughout the drama section are short news articles on other dramatic activities in the state — productions, awards, and tributes to various theater personalities — and photographs from productions of North Carolina plays across the state and beyond, as they have been performed from New York to California.

The 2009 issue also introduces a new North Carolina Miscellany section, which includes original poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction by North Carolina writers; author interviews; literary criticism; and information about literary awards and activities during the past year.

Bauer writes in the introduction to this section, "It is a particular pleasure to introduce within NCLR's pages writers from our state whom readers might not yet know about, like Kat Meads and William Conescu [who are] interviewed in this section of the issue.

After reading Meads's novel 'The Invented Life of Kitty Duncan,' I have been on a crusade to introduce her 1950s-era Scarlett O'Hara to other readers, and after reading Louisa Dang's interview with Conescu, I put his novel 'Being Written' on my own 'must read' list."

The Miscellany section also includes an extensive interview with and poems by Betty Adcock, as well as the first- and second-place stories of the 2008 Doris Betts Fiction Prize competition sponsored by the North Carolina Writers Network.

The Flashbacks section, in which NCLR publishes content that hearkens back to past issues' special feature topics, includes an essay by 96-year-old M. Luther Stirewalt, Jr. on the not yet mined literary inspiration writers might find in the various archives of the state's German heritage.

The North Carolina Literary Review is available in bookstores across the state or may be ordered directly from
NCLR. For information about subscriptions or single-issue purchases, visit www.ncr.edu.

**Symposium will mark Floyd’s 10th anniversary**

The 10th anniversary of Hurricane Floyd will be commemorated with an ECU symposium discussing the response to, recovery from and ongoing research related to the devastating storm.

The two-day Hurricane Floyd Symposium is organized by ECU’s Center for Natural Hazards Research. It will be held Sept. 17-18 at the City Hotel and Bistro in Greenville.

Speakers include ECU researchers and scientists from around the country. Former Governor Jim Hunt, who was in office when the hurricane struck eastern North Carolina, and the Honorable Richard Moore, who, as then-Secretary of the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, led the state’s emergency response to Floyd, are among the keynote speakers.

The event will focus on the history of Floyd, as well as the future of hurricane hazard response and research.

“We will be looking back at Floyd and seeing what we have learned in the 10 years since to better protect ourselves from hurricane events in the future,” Scott Curtis, an ECU geographer and one of the event’s organizers, said.

The first day of the symposium will be a free public forum. Beginning at 12:30 p.m. and continuing through 5 p.m., panelists will discuss, among other topics, emergency preparedness for disadvantaged communities, ways to use technology to reduce risk and long-term disaster recovery planning.

Participants can register to attend a 6 p.m. dinner featuring keynote speaker Moore. Cost is $20 ($10 for students) if registered before Aug. 28; $30 ($15 for students) if later.

**Chinese scholars join construction department**

A pair of visiting scholars from China joined ECU’s Department of Construction Management this month.

Dr. Xinhua He is currently a professor in the Department of Management Science and Engineering at Shanghai Maritime University, which financed her yearlong visit to the United States. She has a background in construction engineering and management, as well as management science and engineering.

The professor will jointly conduct research projects, deliver lectures and presentations and develop a quality management system where statistics tools will be integrated to improve construction and management.

Minzhi Liu is currently a senior researcher in the Policy Research Center of the Ministry of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of China, which is funding her visit to ECU for the next six months. She is also an adjunct professor at the Chinese Academy of Social Science with research specialties in construction law, building construction standards and construction safety.

During her time at ECU, Liu will promote an understanding of international construction practices and foster future collaborative research in this area. She will be studying U.S. construction laws, standards and common practices in the construction industry.

“These two distinguished international scholars deliver shared research interests and experience which will allow this endeavor to be beneficial for East Carolina University and our construction management faculty and students,” Dr. David Watkins, interim chair for the department, said.

“In addition, this can further strengthen our international research, lecture and curriculum exchange while at the same time developing international partnerships.”

The ECU Department of Construction Management has developed a growing relationship with universities and industry in China over the last 18 months. In May 2008, a group of faculty members and students spent three weeks studying in China on a summer study abroad trip, which included stops at major construction universities as well as the Caterpillar plant in China.

Two ECU graduates who attended the summer study abroad, Ray Harrell and Mike Grinshpon, have been accepted by Tsinghua University in Beijing, China to do graduate work in the sustainable building technology
laboratory.

Both were offered full Tsinghua scholarships and Chinese Government High Education Commission Scholarships.

**Upcoming ECU events:**

Aug. 27 — Cell Phone Drive, sponsored by ECU's Student Legal Services, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Wright Plaza. Donated used cell phones will benefit the Family Violence Center of Pitt County. Donations also accepted at 1704B Arlington Blvd through the semester. Call 737-1067 for more information.

See www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/calendar.cfm for times, places and more information on other ECU upcoming activities.

Copyright 2009 The Daily Reflector All rights reserved. --
ECU hopes efforts keep students safe

By Ginger Livingston
The Daily Reflector

Sunday, August 23, 2009

The law says the 18-year-olds who arrived at East Carolina University this weekend are adults, but their parents will tell you these young men and women are still their babies, and they want to know they'll be safe.

Yes, parents want their children protected from violent crime, said Bill Koch, ECU associate vice chancellor of environmental health and campus safety. But the group he met with Friday morning at Belk Residence Hall was equally concerned about the university’s programs for protecting students when hurricanes or tornadoes approach the region or how the school will respond if there is an outbreak of H1N1 flu virus on campus.

Koch talked about the university’s plans for dealing with the known — a flu outbreak — and the unknown — a tornado warning or a dangerous person on campus.

“I think the whole concept of risk is extremely important for our students and their parents to understand,” Koch said. “We provide the tools to help students stay safe, but we can't make them safe.”

People face risks everyday. But educating young adults about safe behaviors and using technology to alert them to immediate dangers should help them live without fear.

“The last thing I say to (parents) is don’t worry, we will take care of them,” Koch said.

The university spent the weekend testing the latest addition to its safety arsenal, an outdoor public address system that broadcasts emergency alerts when tornado or severe thunderstorm warnings are issued and other possible outdoor dangers, such as a chemical leak or a shooter on campus.

“The outdoor speakers are the last significant piece of the overall (emergency notification) network,” Koch said.

The university has spent several years implementing systems to alert students, faculty and staff to potential dangers on campus. It began 10 years ago with ECU Alert, a system that combines e-mail, a Web alert page and a pop-up alert that appears in Web browsers to lets students know when there is trouble, Tom Pohiman, ECU environmental manager, said.

That system was followed by a text messaging service that would send information to the mobile telephones of students, their parents, faculty and staff that signed up for the service.

While still in use, the text messaging option has several flaws, Pohiman said. People have to sign up to receive the messages, and it’s been difficult to get them to do so.

There’s also been problems with cell phone providers not delivering the messages until hours after they were first sent, Pohiman said.

Following the April 2007 shooting deaths of 32 people at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va., university officials realized both delivery systems have another flaw: They are dependant on people being online or near a cell phone.

People in a classroom or walking from Mendenhall Student Center to a College Hill residence hall would have no idea a warning had been issued about trouble at a central campus building.
Officials learned existing alert software could be used to broadcast a warning over a public address system, Pohlman said. ECU secured $100,000 from the University of North Carolina general administration to set up eight locations with four speakers each on the main campus.

Speakers also have been installed at the health sciences campus and the North Recreational Complex.

Statistics show ECU is a safe campus, Koch said. There have been very few violent crimes on campus. The biggest crime problem, larceny, often is a result of items not being properly secured, he said. When students are injured, it's more likely to occur off campus and while they are driving, Koch said.

That's when education becomes important. Safety materials are sent out in enrollment packages, and programming is provided during orientation to teach students how to keep themselves from harm and their property from being stolen.

The university also provides services such as SAFE RIDE which operates at night and ferries students and faculty to locations on and off campus. The university police department makes escorts available to walk with people who are uncomfortable walking alone at night.

There also are more than 100 emergency blue-light phones all over campus that students can activate if they find themselves in danger or witness a crime occurring.

"The other message we want to get out to students is let's watch out for one another," Koch said. "Let's not let someone walk home alone; let's not let someone who is drunk drive."

Contact Ginger Livingston at glivingstosn@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9570.

Student Safety

East Carolina University offers a number of programs to increase student safety.

ECU Alert: The ECU alert system is used to warn of tornadoes, chemical spills, fires, dangerous intruders and other campus emergencies. Students and their parents can sign up to receive alert e-mails and pop-up messages, regular updates to the Alert web site, text messaging to personal cell phones and phone hotline recordings. Visit www.ecu.edu/alert to sign up to receive messages and to download the pop-up software.

Safety Escorts: Uniformed, radio-equipped and trained student employees of the university police department will provide safety escorts during evening hours. Call 328-6787 15 minutes before leaving to request a safety escort and provide the following information: Name, location, call-back phone number and destination.

Emergency Blue-Light Phones: About 100 Blue-Light Phones are placed throughout the main and medical campuses to alert university police to emergency situations. To activate the phones, push the red emergency button, which will ring ECU police dispatch. An officer will be summoned to the phone's location. The phones' usage should be limited to emergency situations, reporting crimes or suspicious activities in progress.

Safe Ride: It is available to students, faculty and staff both on and off campus. There is no charge, but riders must have an ECU 1 Card. Hours of operation are: 7 p.m. to midnight, Sunday-Wednesday; 7 p.m. to 3 a.m. Thursday-Saturday. For more information, call 328-7433.

Source: East Carolina University
Letter: Health care is a fundamental right

Sunday, August 23, 2009

In recent weeks, The Daily Reflector has performed an important public service by publishing many letters from area residents expressing their views on health-care reform.

Some letters have been useful and have contributed to a rational consideration of this critical issue. Many, however, have been highly emotional, have contained egregious misinformation and reflect a fundamental fear of any change in the current health-care arrangements in the United States.

American history provides important examples of unwise government actions. Yet the opposite is also true; our government has to its credit some admirable achievements, such as the resolution of the Great Depression and (perhaps) of the current recession. To be concerned and skeptical of government actions is one thing; to engage in disinformation, hysteria and fear-mongering is something else altogether.

The founding fathers established a country in which the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness were deemed inalienable. Illness is an implacable enemy of these rights. It terminates life, it restricts or eliminates liberty and it vitiates happiness. Effective health care is the necessary response to illness. Yet in our affluent country at least 47 million citizens have minimal or no access to effective health care.

The current situation in health care is therefore intolerable, and is a violation of our fundamental beliefs. Change is required. The public program and the other proposed elements of health-care reform do not constitute a government takeover. Rather, they are prudent modifications of the existing system that will assure all citizens of access to effective health care. If we are to be true to our founding principles, we can do no less.

FREDERICK B. GLASER,
MD, FRCP(C)
Professor Emeritus
Brody School of Medicine
East Carolina University

Copyright 2009 The Daily Reflector All rights reserved. ---
Students should keep eyes open, parents say

By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector

Sunday, August 23, 2009

Many East Carolina University students moving into dormitories over the weekend were beginning their first exploration of life away from the relative safety of home.

Their safety has been the focus of intense scrutiny since a shooting rampage in April 2007 at Virginia Tech and subsequent incidents. Concerns rose again over the summer after reported on-campus assaults and a drive-by shooting that killed an ECU student and another many near campus in downtown Greenville.

Parents interviewed during move-in on Saturday said they were not afraid that crime would touch their child's life while at school, but thought their children should be aware and informed that it is there and real.

Debbie Curlings brought her daughter, Ali, from Selma after planning for the big day all summer, she said.

"We're doing what all the parents are doing today, making sure Ali is comfortable and has everything she needs," Curlings said. "We want to be sure she knows her way around campus."

Ali read the brochures and manuals about safety provided by the university, she said. As mother and daughter walked the campus, they noted all the emergency towers Ali could access if she encountered trouble or danger at night, Curlings said.

"She's very informed," she said of her daughter.

Marty and Jackie Nusbaum brought their son, Matt, to Fletcher Hall from their home in Cary.

"This is a nice transition time for Matt, a time to adjust to being out on his own," Marty said.

"I think the university did a really good job of explaining safety issues during the orientation process."

The Nusbaums said they shared their own safety instructions with Matt at home, including walking in groups, staying together while off campus and relying on campus transportation services instead of his car whenever possible.

"We also talked to him about alcohol, and he participated in the required campus alcohol awareness program that the school does online," his mother said.

The subject of off-campus crime in the downtown area was also part of the Nusbaums' conversation on safety, they said.

"He has to be aware of many things when he comes to school, not just the books," Jackie said.

Joseph Fazi brought his daughter, Kaitlin Smith, from Miami, Fla., to settle into Greene Hall for her freshman experience.

"We talked about texting, boys, motivation and being on her own for the first time," Fazi said.

Topics including the buddy system of travel, places to avoid and how to travel safely on campus and around town
were high priorities, both said.

"Let's face it, there are a lot of situations where drinking and driving become a problem in a college town," Fazi said. "I feel a lot better knowing that ECU provides an option with their transportation system that will keep Kaitlin safe."

Crime in the downtown area was not a secret to Fazi, but being raised in Miami has made his daughter grow up with more of an awareness of crime and made her more responsible in her behaviors, he said.

"I think she's ready for this experience," Fazi said.

"I'm ready," Kaitlin agreed with a smile and a roll of her eyes.

Contact Michael Abramowitz at mabramowitz@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9571.

Copyright 2009 The Daily Reflector All rights reserved. - -
Graveyard of the Pasquotank: Divers search for shipwrecks

By JENNIFER PREYSS
The Daily Advance

Saturday, August 22, 2009

ELIZABETH CITY — Four East Carolina University graduate students got an up-close look at Elizabeth City's maritime past Thursday by diving into the Pasquotank River.

The students, who are studying shipwrecks, are studying more than 60 in the Pasquotank.

Lindsay Smith, a third-year graduate student at ECU, has been collecting details and sonar images of the shipwrecks since January.

Smith calls the Pasquotank a virtual graveyard of early 20th century vessels, and said she hopes her research will shed some light on one or more pivotal economic and population trends in the city's history.

"Hopefully this research will tell me something about the economy and population growth of Elizabeth City (from) the 1900s to 1940s," Smith said.

"Maybe there was one big event that caused these boats to be abandoned; maybe it was a series of things. That's something I'd like to find out."

Joined by three other graduate students in ECU's maritime studies program, Smith set out Thursday to explore the shipwrecks first hand.

Wearing a wet suit and fins, Smith grabbed one end of an oversized canoe — her partner picked up the other end — gently placed the boat in the water, and paddled out to the first excavation site, a barge submerged win water along the 300 block of the Camden Causeway.

Another canoe followed closely behind.

"The canoes are very helpful because we can get right up close to the vessels," Smith said after diving into the water to get a closer look at the barge.

For the next several days, Smith hopes to record the height and width of each barge and schooner submerged in the river, as well as its global positioning system location and vessel identification number.

Smith has promised to share her data with North Carolina archaeologist Richard Lawrence for file refreshing purposes.

One might not even notice the shipwreck Smith was so intent on reaching Thursday.

Only small pieces of the 100-foot-long skeleton of the steel-and-wood vessel were visible from shore.

That's because when the ship went down sometime in the early part of last century, scavengers likely took any scrap metal or machinery that was visible above the waterline, Smith said.

Each shipwreck site is different. Some vessels are visible from the surface of the river, others are not. For ships
located in deeper waters, Smith plans to lead her team on a diving mission.

One site Smith is researching is a heap of four wooden barges tied together to form a small island.

"The barges are about 200 feet long and 30-40 feet wide, and trees are growing up out of them," Smith said.

"Some of the boats we're looking at were known as 'dumb vessels' because they had to be towed and had no self-propulsion. They were the work horses."

Much of Smith's research is funded through the North Carolina Sea Grant.

Smith hopes her research unlocks the mystery of the river's ship graveyard and offers usable information about the city's maritime past for locals to enjoy for generations to come.

"There's a lot of people's heritage out here," Smith said.

Contact Jennifer Preyss at jpreyss@coxnc.com.

Copyright 2009 The Daily Reflector All rights reserved. - -
City welcomes ECU international students

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector The Associated Press

Friday, August 21, 2009

As students travel in from across the state and nation before classes begin at East Carolina University next week, nearly 100 made the trek by plane, crossing oceans and borders.

ECU will host between 80 and 90 international students this semester, according to James Gehihar, associate vice chancellor for International Affairs. Some are here on exchange, others to study in either undergraduate or post-graduate programs.

Greenville Mayor Pat Dunn conducted a welcoming ceremony for about 50 of those international students Friday afternoon at City Hall. They represented more than 20 nations ranging from Wales to Russia, Zimbabwe to Saudi Arabia.

"In my travels I've found that people are nice all over the world," Dunn said. "We have a lot in common and want a lot of the same things."

The mayor recently returned from a July mission trip to Ecuador. She said making the students feel welcome is part of building both an inclusive community and international relations.

Greenville City Council members Rose Glover and Calvin Mercer and ECU Chancellor Steve Ballard also welcomed the group before mingling with students over refreshments.

Turkish native Ipek Ozmen, 19, was drawn to ECU particularly because of her studies in interior architecture.

"I want to see a wide range of arts," she explained in perfect English. "I'm trying to experience other instructors, other information. In Turkey, I'm always hearing the same thing because we're the same culture."

Ozmen said she'd also be learning to live on her own, without family members to rely on.

Cass Cheeseman, 22, and Jazz Creece, 20, both attend Australian universities but were already in ECU T-shirts by Friday afternoon. They said they were surprised by the number of differences between their homeland and the United States — particularly understanding the Southern accent.

Creece said she flew into New York City and stayed three days before arriving here. She was harried by the fast pace and anonymity of the big city.

"I thought it would all be like that," she said. "But I got a warm welcome here. We're nurtured here."

In Australia, Cheeseman noted, culture doesn't vary much from region to region.

Gehihar said the experiences of these students and others will prepare them to live in a global world and work well with others as their lives and careers progress.

Contact Kathryn Kennedy at kkennedy@coxnc.com or (252) 329-9566.