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Flu already at peak levels

A third H1N1 wave is foreseen

BY SARAH AVERY, Staff Writer

Pandemic flu infections throughout North Carolina are so widespread that doctors and hospitals are dealing with an outbreak more typical of January or February, when seasonal flu spikes.

And it's only September.

"Right now we're in the midst of a second wave," said Dr. Jeffrey Engel, state health director. He said this wave -- the first hit in May when the novel H1N1 erupted before tailing off in the summer -- is likely to remain at a peak for a while.

For the first week of September, the state reported 1,125 cases of flu-like illness through its network of doctors' offices, clinics and hospitals that participate in a surveillance system. Most of those illnesses are attributed to the H1N1 virus.

At its worst last winter, seasonal flu hit 719 people in North Carolina during one week in February.

Engel said he expects there will be a third wave of the pandemic flu, and it's likely to strike at the same time that seasonal flu begins circulating this winter.

As a result, he said, people should take advantage of vaccination programs, both for seasonal flu and the H1N1 strain. Engel said the state has received $23 million in federal funds to help counties conduct flu vaccine clinics for the pandemic strain, because the shots will have to be delivered separately from seasonal inoculations.

Engel said he expects the H1N1 vaccine to be available in early October, although it will initially be given to people who are at highest risk of developing complications.

Among those most vulnerable to serious complications are pregnant women, people with chronic diseases such as asthma and diabetes, and children.

Dr. Megan Davies, state epidemiologist, said pregnant women are an especially critical population, and public health teams are working to get obstetricians to encourage vaccination.

According to recent analyses, 6 percent of patients who died from H1N1 infections in the early outbreak were pregnant women.

Clinical trials on the vaccine are under way. At Duke University Medical Center, doctors begin a trial today, hoping to enroll about 20 pregnant women to help test dosage levels.

"It's really very similar to standard seasonal flu vaccine," said Dr. Geeta Swamy, who is helping lead the trial. "It's just a strain change."
By the numbers

1,125: Number of flu-like infections reported the week of Sept. 5
5.9: Percentage of doctor visits that were due to flu that week
217: Number of hospitalizations since May
11: Death toll since May

SOURCE: N.C. Division of Public Health

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ECU commemorating Floyd with symposium

The Daily Reflector

Wednesday, September 16, 2009

East Carolina University will commemorate the 10-year anniversary of Hurricane Floyd during the next two days with a symposium focusing on the storm's history and the future of hurricane hazard response and research.

The event, organized by ECU's Center for Natural Hazards Research, will be held at the City Hotel and Bistro.

Speakers scheduled for the event include ECU researchers and scientists from around the country along with former Gov. Jim Hunt and former Secretary of the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety Richard Moore.

Hurricane Floyd was one of the deadliest and most costly storms to make landfall in the United States. In North Carolina alone, the storm and its subsequent flooding caused nearly $8 billion in damage.

Today's schedule begins with a free public forum from 12:30-5 p.m. Panelists will discuss emergency preparedness for disadvantaged communities, ways to use technology to reduce risk and long-term disaster recovery planning among other topics.

Hunt is scheduled to speak at 3:15 today. Moore will speak during a 6 p.m. dinner that required pre-registration.

"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 in a release.

The second day of the event will include discussions between researchers from various fields about issues related to hurricane research including forecasting, flood characteristics, economic effects, emergency communication and evacuation.

The keynote speaker for Friday will be Laura Furgione, an assistant administrator with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. She was the local warning meteorologist during Floyd.

Friday's presentations will begin at 8:30 a.m. and continue until 5:20 p.m. The cost is $40 for the general public and $20 for students.
ECU sells out two more games

The Daily Reflector

Wednesday, September 16, 2009

General public tickets for East Carolina's home football games with UCF and Virginia Tech have sold out, school officials announced Wednesday.

A limited number of student tickets for the Sept. 26 UCF game will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis to full-time fee-paying ECU students starting at 10 a.m. on Sept. 22. ECU students can view the student distribution schedule at www.ecu.edu/athletictickets for all remaining home games.

Less than 700 tickets remain for the Rice game Oct. 17, the Pirates' Homecoming game.

Tickets, which are priced at $40 for adults and $25 for youth 12-and-under, are still available for UAB (Military Appreciation Day) and Southern Miss (Senior Day), scheduled for Nov. 21 and Nov. 28, respectively.

All Conference USA away game tickets are available for the general public to purchase at this time. Individual ticket prices for league road battles include $32 for Marshall, $24 for SMU, $30 for Memphis and $35 for Tulsa, which features a Sunday night rematch of last year's C-USA Championship game. All away game seat assignments are based on the Pirate Club Priority Point System.

— ECU Media Relations

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Bar owners oppose new ordinances

By Kathryn Kennedy
The Daily Reflector

Wednesday, September 16, 2009

Greenville bar owners expressed their anger Wednesday afternoon with a number of restrictive draft ordinances requested by the Greenville City Council following an Aug. 24 public hearing on crime.

A meeting was held Wednesday at City Hall to allow owners and managers of public and private clubs to weigh in on ordinances that would require off-duty law enforcement or security personnel inside the bars, prohibit hiring bouncers with criminal backgrounds and set a mandatory space requirement of 500 feet between clubs citywide. Also up for discussion was a potential mutual aid agreement between the Greenville Police Department and Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) officers.

Club 519 owner Rob Waldron said he has no issue with the separation requirement because it gives their businesses a monopoly on the area.

But most of the discussion at the meeting revolved around the hiring of off-duty law enforcement at bar owners’ expense, and Waldron spoke at length about the effect such an order would have on his business and others in the downtown area. He figured the cost of two off-duty officers at $33 per hour several nights a week would run him $43,000 annually.

“This is going to put out of business some of the smaller bars,” he said. “If you want to put us out of business, pass that one.”

Still Life owner Sharif Hatoum agreed.

“I’ve got a family,” he said. “I’ve got bills to pay … just like everybody else. It will ruin my family at the end of the day.”

Attorney Mark Owens III, who said he represents several bar owners, was additionally concerned that the law makes outside law enforcement mandatory but if something happens and the officer is at fault, the bar remains liable. He suggested that eight officers traveling between downtown clubs with property owners sharing the costs may be enough.

That idea also would suit 4th Street Tavern manager J.J. McLamb, who was concerned by the idea that requiring officers inside the club may mean taking those on duty off the street. He also asked Greenville Police Chief William Anderson for a listing of calls for service to downtown, which the chief agreed to provide.

Several attendees, including Councilman Bryant Kittrell, thought some type of training for bouncers through the police department may be a viable option.

Mayor Pat Dunn and Councilman Max Joyner Jr. — who voted against pursuing each of the ordinances Aug. 24 — were also at the meeting. Dunn emphasized that this is all part of the process of “fleshing out potential actions” and nothing is set in stone yet.

In the end, bar owners remain confused and frustrated about why their section of town is being targeted.

“Someone was shot inside B-Dubs (Buffalo Wild Wings), outside Wal-Mart,” Hatoum said. “I don’t understand why, all of a sudden, there’s such an emphasis on downtown Greenville.”
Catch-22 owner Kevin Howard said he walks downtown all hours of the day and night, unarmed, and never feels unsafe. He also noted that spreading the bars out through the separation ordinance would be a mistake.

“If we’re not there you’ll be all over town chasing drunk drivers and keg parties,” he said. “Talk about spreading law enforcement too thin.”

Waldron said he paid $84,000 to the state in taxes last year, though he is aware not all of that money comes back to Greenville. He said the bars downtown provide a service to students, who give millions in sales tax and other expenditures to the area.

"Two people got shot and there was a knee-jerk reaction," he said, also expressing frustration that bar owners weren’t asked for input before the ordinances were drafted. “We are not detrimental to this society. We are an asset.”

City Attorney Dave Holec will present a report on Oct. 5, including remarks from Wednesday’s meeting, to the city council for further consideration.

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

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Bill could revamp student loans

Legislation would stop government subsidies to banks and private lenders

BY BARBARA BARRETT, Washington correspondent

WASHINGTON - As more college students seek financial aid in the troubled economy, the U.S. House of Representatives today is set to overhaul the nation's student loan system.

For students, little in the application process would change beyond a shorter and more simplified form. But more money could be coming their way, and Congress would rework the bureaucracy to potentially save $87 billion in the next decade.

"Overall, it saves a lot of money and allows more money to go into college loans over 10 years," said U.S. Rep. Bob Etheridge, a Lillington Democrat. "It really gets the money into the schools rather than the financial institutions."

The bill would cut out banks and other private lenders who now are subsidized by federal taxpayers. Instead, all lending would be done through the federal government -- a switch that has some critics calling the proposal yet another government takeover.

The money saved by the switch would pay for education programs, including increases in Pell Grants for low-income students. The federal government would plow billions of dollars into programs to increase graduation rates, boost historically black colleges, and expand access to two-year community colleges.

"We have to educate our way to a better economy," Education Secretary Arne Duncan said to reporters this week. "This represents a better investment and commitment to our nation's young people."

But those opposed to the bill say it kills the free market.

"This legislation bears many of the hallmarks of a big government takeover," said U.S. Rep. Virginia Foxx, a Banner Elk Republican and former community college president, in a prepared statement.

"Not only will the government now completely dominate the student loan industry, but thousands of jobs will be destroyed and students will be rewarded with fewer choices," she said.

Democrats say the bill as it stands would save money and allow the government to pay down the deficit. But the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found last week that economic changes could boost spending overall by $10.5 billion.

The legislation comes as colleges are swamped with needy students.

UNC-Chapel Hill financial aid director Shirley Ort said 17 percent more students are applying for
financial aid this year, and 23 percent more qualify for need-based assistance.

"We've never seen anything like that before," Ort said.

In North Carolina, student aid requests for the UNC system and private colleges have jumped 10 percent in the past year, according to Steve Brooks, executive director of the N.C. State Education Assistance Authority. For community colleges, the increase is 30 percent.

Both Brooks and Ort said that though they appreciate the increased financial aid, they're troubled by some of the legislation's provisions. Most significant, the bill would cut out the state education authority's work issuing federal loans in favor of direct government loans.

Ort said many in the state's financial aid community want to see private loans issued as they are now, with the assistance authority often as the preferred lender.

"We realize that may not happen," Ort said. "We think for years they've given us what one writer called 'dirt-cheap loans,' and they've helped generations of our students here."

A provision sponsored by Etheridge and Rep. David Price of Chapel Hill, both Democrats, tries to make up for some of the potential loss. The provision would allow nonprofit agencies to contract with the Department of Education for other loan-related work such as financial counseling.

The legislation is expected to pass today in the House.

It then goes to the Senate, where the education committee is scheduled to vote this month. North Carolina's senators, Democrat Kay Hagan and Republican Richard Burr, sit on the committee.

Hagan has said she wants to support community colleges and historically black universities. Burr, meanwhile, said he strongly opposes the plan to end federally subsidized private loans because it would create a government monopoly and reduce customer service.

McClatchy correspondent David Lightman contributed to this report.

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Perdue shifts focus to college preparedness

Gov. Beverly Perdue and education leaders met Wednesday to talk about making students better prepared for college and careers.

With a high school dropout rate hovering around 30 percent and about 60 percent of entering community college students who are not up to speed, Perdue is looking to her Education Cabinet to have all layers of the state education system work together on remedies.

"If you make headway on this, you will be a great governor," UNC system President Erskine Bowles told Perdue.

The universities have a role in public schools because they educate most of the state's teachers, he said. He suggested education leaders get a list of four or five things each had to do to realize the goal of creating a unified education system.

The state Department of Public Instruction is revamping its curriculum and coming up with new ways to measure student progress.

The Cabinet members, representing public schools, community colleges, and public and private higher education, talked about electronic connections between schools that would enable easier communication and transfer of student data. But full execution of those plans depends on winning federal grants.

The Education Cabinet is operating with staff donated by DPI. Bowles said he could not promise his staff because he was preparing to announce 900 position cuts today.

But Perdue said money was not a barrier to achieving what she called a seamless education system.

"It's not all about money," she said. "There are hundreds of millions of dollars in this system. We can all do more with less."

By staff writers Lynn Bonner, Rob Christensen and Benjamin Niolet

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New species of salamander named after WCU professor

Thursday, 17 September 2006

CULLOWHEE—A newly discovered salamander has been named in honor of Richard Bruce, professor emeritus of biology at Western Carolina University.

"It is indeed an honor to have the new species of salamander, Unaspisaspis brucei, named for me," said Bruce, who came to WCU in 1963 and continues to research and promote preservation of Appalachian amphibians.

A group of researchers began documenting Unaspisaspis brucei, a patch-nosed salamander native to Appalachia that can grow to 2 inches in length, in 2007 near Toccoa, Ga. Their findings, which were published recently in the Journal of Zoology, represent the first new genus of four-footed creatures discovered in the United States in 50 years.

The creature is named for Bruce to honor his foundational work on stream salamander ecology in the region and on the evolution of miniaturization in salamanders, said John McNeill, assistant wildlife professor at the University of Georgia and part of the research team. McNeill worked with Carlos Camp, professor at Piedmont College; Joe Mitrovich, a University of Georgia graduate student; Bill Peterman, a University of Missouri graduate student; Trip Lamb, professor at East Carolina University; and David Wake, professor at the University of California Berkeley.

Jim Costa, WCU professor of biology, said Bruce's research and dedication "helped put Cullowhee on the scientific map." Around the WCU area, he became known as the "Salamander King" because of his in-depth study of Appalachian's diverse salamander populations, said Costa.

In 1995 while conducting research with the U.S. Forest Service, Bruce said that Appalachia was "one of the most biologically diverse regions in the temperate zone," and that "only in the tropics can a greater variety of plants and animals be found."

He previously has served as executive director of Highlands Biological Station, a year-round research center dedicated to the study of regional plant and animal life, and was honored in 2000 with the H.F. and Katherine P Robinson Professorship.

After he retired in 2002, he continued to conduct research on the life histories and ecology of amphibians and explore tropical biology. An article by Bruce about miniaturization in salamanders will be published in an upcoming issue of the journal Copeia. He also is preparing articles for publication about growth in salamanders and predation by caimans on electric eels in Venezuela.

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Need for energy often points to bigger issue

Shannon Simmons

Question: I have gotten in the habit of drinking two energy drinks a day. I don't drink coffee or soda, so are these OK to drink on a regular basis?

Answer: Energy drinks are growing in popularity. In 2006, 500 new energy drinks were introduced to the market, and energy-drink sales were more than $3.2 billion. The greatest trouble is the increasing percentage of young people who are consuming energy drinks on a regular basis. Thirty-one percent of 12 to 17 year olds, compared to 22 percent of 25 to 34 year olds are consumers of energy drinks.

A study at East Carolina University discovered common reasons for reaching for the energy drink. Reasons given were to counter insufficient sleep (67 percent), to increase energy (65 percent) and to drink with alcohol to prevent the likelihood of crashing (54 percent). Twenty-nine percent of users reported that they crashed after a sense of a high after consumption, and 19 percent reported heart palpitations.

Most people reach for energy drinks if they are low on energy from lack of sleep and/or not enough calories. The common ingredients in energy drinks include caffeine, taurine, guarana, B vitamins, ginseng, gingko biloba, L-carnitine, antioxidants and sugar. Some new drinks are sugar free, which enhances their marketability. The average energy drink contains anywhere between 70 and 200 mg of caffeine. In comparison, an 8-ounce cup of coffee contains 60 mg of caffeine if prepared at home. For example, a can of Rockstar contains 200 mg of caffeine. Besides heart palpitations, many people experience increased ventilation and blood pressure when they consume this much caffeine at one time.

So what do the other ingredients offer? Taurine is a body-producing amino acid. It helps regulate heart rate, muscle contractions and energy levels. Some research shows that the combination of caffeine and taurine can increase the stimulant effects of caffeine. Guarana comes from a plant in South America and has been used as a stimulant more powerful than caffeine. B vitamins help convert food to energy, and the jury still is out on if supplementation of these vitamins actually increases energy metabolism. Ginseng is an herb some say can stimulate the hypothalamus and pituitary glands to secrete adrenal corticotropic hormone to stimulate energy and fight fatigue. Gingko biloba comes from a rare plant said to act as an anti-depressant. If you are taking anti-depressants, you should not take gingko biloba, as side effects such as headaches, vomiting, dizziness and heart palpitations have been reported. L-carnitine is an amino acid created by your liver and kidneys to maintain metabolism. Again, the research is inconclusive regarding the effects of supplementation on weight loss. Antioxidants are seen in many places as decreasing aging and free radical damage. And we all know what sugar is. Sugar is often found in energy drinks, and sugar can increase the absorption of stimulants into the muscle cells. More sugar causes the body to secrete insulin, which increases the permeability of the ingredients to be drawn into the cells for increased effectiveness.

Is the combination of these ingredients harmful to your health? Many would argue yes. While increased caffeine consumption of any kind could be bad, the concern with energy drinks is the popularity in high consumption. Caffeine in moderate doses can be safe and even healthy. Energy drinks and all caffeine-containing drinks should never be a substitute for a good night's sleep and a healthy nutritional intake.
If you need energy, you probably need more sleep or more food. Reach for a banana or other carbohydrate that will provide energy, and try to go to bed earlier or catch a quick nap. Consistent high consumption of energy drinks can lead to an addiction that can cause severe withdraw symptoms when you try to get off the habit. So get some sleep and eat an adequate diet to fuel your life.

Shannon Simmons has a Master of Science degree in exercise science and health promotion. She is a certified personal trainer and ACSM clinical exercise specialist. Shannon is a professor at Corban College. Contact her at Shannon.simmons@yahoo.com
Lab Technician Arrested in Death of Yale Student

By JAMES BARRON and SERGE F. KOVALESKI

A lab technician was arrested early on Thursday and charged in the murder of Annie M. Le, a Yale graduate student whose body was hidden in the wall of a university building after she was strangled, the police in New Haven said.

The technician, Raymond Clark III, 24, was taken into custody at a Super 8 motel in Cromwell, Conn., after DNA evidence linked him to Ms. Le’s killing, the police said. He did not resist. Bail was set at $3 million, said Chief James Lewis of the New Haven police.

Chief Lewis would not provide a motive, beyond saying it was “an issue of workplace violence.”

Mr. Clark had been described as a “person of interest” in the case earlier in the week, and had been taken briefly into custody, at which point DNA and hair samples were taken from him under court order. He was then released, but the police said they remained aware of his whereabouts at all times.

A law enforcement official said on Wednesday that Mr. Clark had scratch marks on his chest and on parts of his arms, where there were also bruises. This raised the suspicions of investigators, said the official, who declined to be identified because the case was still open.

Mr. Clark and Ms. Le worked in the same building, but little beyond that was known about whether there was any connection or relationship between them. Ms. Le’s body was found in a wall in the basement of the building on Sunday, the day she was to be married. She had been missing since the previous Tuesday.

The arrest capped 24 hours of fast-moving developments in the case.

On Thursday, the police had said that Mr. Clark was not the only person they were looking at in connection with Ms. Le’s her disappearance and death. But he was the only one from whom they had taken DNA samples, and the only one whose car — a red Ford Mustang — they had hauled away to search.

Chief Lewis said that investigators had taken more than 200 items from the crime scene with potential DNA evidence that could be compared with the samples from Mr. Clark. Earlier in the week, Chief Lewis said the police had interviewed 150 people and watched 700 hours of surveillance video from cameras in and around the building where Ms. Le’s body was found — and where Mr. Clark worked.

The police said they did not question Mr. Clark on Tuesday night. They had questioned him earlier, Chief Lewis said, but he had invoked his right to a lawyer. He was represented by David H. Dworski of Fairfield, Conn., and the New Haven Public Defender’s Office was also providing counsel.
The public defender’s office declined to comment. Mr. Dworski said in a statement, “We are committed to proceeding appropriately with authorities with whom we are in regular communication.”

By Wednesday afternoon, about 12 hours after Mr. Clark had been released, Connecticut’s chief medical examiner released the cause of Ms. Le’s death, a finding he had withheld earlier in the week at the request of the state’s attorney in New Haven. A spokeswoman for the medical examiner, H. Wayne Carver II, said Ms. Le had been strangled — she died from “traumatic asphyxia” caused by “neck compression.”

Chief Lewis would not say whether she had been sexually assaulted.

It remained unclear whether there was any connection between Ms. Le and Mr. Clark beyond the fact that they spent time in the same building, Mr. Clark working as a technician, Ms. Le watching experiments with mice. A spokesman for the New Haven police, Officer Joe Avery, said there was no indication that she had complained of being stalked or harassed by Mr. Clark or anyone else in recent weeks.

Mr. Clark, who lives in Middletown with his girlfriend, also an animal research technician at Yale, had been a focus of the police for several days. On Wednesday afternoon, after removing boxes of items from Mr. Clark’s apartment, investigators were knocking on his neighbors’ doors seeking information about him.

Chief Lewis refused to discuss a police report from 2003, when Mr. Clark was a senior at Branford High School and the police were called about a dispute with his girlfriend at the time. According to the police document, reported Wednesday in The New Haven Independent, a news Web site, she wanted to break up but he did not, and tried to confront her. She complained to school authorities, who called the police, but did not press charges, according to the Web site.

Mr. Clark grew up in a rented gray house in a working-class neighborhood of aspirations when a nearby factory was humming. Jim Garrett, 65, who lives two doors down, said the house the Clarks lived in deteriorated as the years went by and the factory closed, and eventually Mr. Clark’s parents moved out. They went to a condominium in Cromwell, Conn., north of Middletown, where Mr. Clark’s mother works in the Wal-Mart across the street.

In high school, he joined the Asian Awareness Club, which made spring rolls for a faculty lunch and organized a trip to Chinatown for the Chinese New Year. He also joined the Interact Club, which focused on community problems like homelessness. And he played football and baseball, throwing long bombs as a quarterback and knuckleballs as a pitcher.

At Yale, Mr. Clark’s work habits were described by one researcher as “very officious and very demanding.” But Mr. Garrett remembered Mr. Clark as “industrious and busy.” More than once, Mr. Clark rang the doorbell with Mr. Garrett’s runaway beagle at his heels. “Your dog was loose,” Mr. Clark would tell him.

Mr. Clark was pictured several times in the Branford High School yearbook in 2004, his senior year. The first photograph was with the Asian Awareness Club; the second was with the Interact Club. He was also shown with the Cheers for Charity Club, which gave baby showers for two pregnant women. It also raised money for lymphoma and leukemia research, the yearbook said.

The last picture of Mr. Clark in the yearbook is with the baseball team. In contrast to the photographs on the club pages, where he is grinning, in the baseball picture, he looks stoic.
Teammates remembered Mr. Clark as a talented, versatile and competitive athlete. “He played sports hard,” said Michael Tamsin, 23, who was on the baseball and football teams at Branford High School. “On the field, he went about his business and he got the job done.”

Conor Reardon, 23, who was on the team with Mr. Clark, said that he and other teammates got Mr. Clark to succumb to a baseball rite of passage, chewing tobacco.

“But the next day, he came to school late because it had made him so sick that when he got out of his car that night he could barely stand up,” Mr. Reardon said, adding that Mr. Clark “ended up falling asleep in the bath tub in his baseball uniform after taking a shower fully clothed.”
Four can again visit UNC-CH

Dismissed charges nullify ban

BY JESSE JAMES DECONTO, Staff Writer

CHAPEL HILL - UNC-Chapel Hill officials say four non-student protesters may return to the campus after a judge cleared them of disorderly conduct charges this week.

District Court Judge Joe Buckner found Jack Wilson Groves, 19, not guilty Monday after Groves said that his disruption of former U.S. Rep. Virgil Goode's speech in April lasted only a minute. Groves held up a banner denouncing racism and yelled, "I'm a Southern working man," interrupting Goode's speech against illegal immigration.

"The behavior I engaged in is without a doubt rude," Groves said. "It was really a brief interruption, and I left when I was told to."

Three other protesters who also had charges dismissed -- Donald George Yeo, Sarah Monica Johnson and Rachel Love Harris -- are now allowed back on campus. Haley Koch, a UNC student who was never banned, also had charges dismissed.

Buckner dismissed the charges on the same grounds that the defendants' individual actions were minor and that they obeyed police orders to leave.

UNC Police Chief Jeff McCracken said he will meet with the district attorney's office to develop a protocol for handling protests, taking Buckner's decision into account. Ensuring the campus speakers' safety was the priority, he said.

"That is our responsibility, and that's what we'll continue to address," McCracken said.

A student group, the UNC Protesters' Defense Committee, had been calling for the university to drop charges against the activists. But Michael Bandes, 25, and Meredith Dickey, 19, remain banned from campus as part of a deal they made with the prosecutor before Buckner cleared their co-defendants. The university has lifted trespass orders against those Buckner cleared Monday.

Asked whether Nieman should drop the charges against Bandes and Dickey, McCracken said, "That's the DA's decision, and we'll support whatever he decides is appropriate."

Bandes and Groves face additional trespassing charges for visiting campus Aug. 25 in violation of trespass orders issued at the time of their April arrests. Both are due in court Monday.

Assistant District Attorney Jeff Nieman said he would decide what to do about those charges that day.

McCracken said Nieman "would want to take into consideration" the judge's rulings on the other cases.
UNC-CH Chancellor Holden Thorp said he was happy that the legal system resolved the disorderly conduct cases.

"I'm not a judge or a district attorney or a police officer," Thorp said. "I don't tell history professors how to do their jobs."

Nieman said he thought the prosecution's effort was worthwhile but he spent little time preparing his case.

"It's almost impossible for us to know how a judge sitting as a jury is going to decide based on a given set of facts," he said. "Even though I can say now after the fact the judge's decision is reasonable ... we thought we had a reasonable case."

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