When world-renowned author Sir Salman Rushdie speaks at East Carolina University on Wednesday, it will be his first time here in person, but not his first time speaking to students and faculty.

The “Satanic Verses” author spoke via an online teleconference last month with an English literature class studying his fiction novels, which are based in history, religion and modern politics.

Using Skype, an internet-based video and call service, Rushdie spoke with Seodial Deena’s class on Sept. 22 from his home in New York City.

“He spoke for a solid hour and went on at great length with each student,” said ECU professor John Tucker, who has been coordinating Rushdie’s local appearances.

The class and Skype lecture are part of Rushdie’s “mini-residency” at ECU this semester, which will climax Wednesday night with Rushdie’s lecture on “Public Events, Private Lives: Literature and Politics in the Modern World.”

The lecture is part of the “Voyages of Discovery” lecture series of the Thomas Harriott College of Arts and Sciences, which Tucker directs.
“The lecture series is meant to advance the spirit of exploration in the arts and sciences that Harriot embodied,” said Tucker, referring to the college’s namesake, a 16th century scholar who served Sir Walter Raleigh.

“Given Rushdie’s standing as one of the great authors of the 20th and 21st centuries, his lecture at ECU will be an historic occasion,” Tucker said.

The class on Rushdie’s works was set up for this semester to coincide with the lecture, and another Skype teleconference is scheduled for the class in November.

Before Wednesday evening’s public lecture, Rushdie will sit down with faculty and students in the English department.

“The students will have multiple opportunities to interface with Sir Rushdie,” Tucker said.

Rushdie’s speech will bring together the worlds of literature, politics and philosophy.

He will speak about the major themes of his writing, his life and the world, including freedom of expression, religion, pop culture, current events at home and abroad, East-West relations, and the role of the artist to shape understanding of the world.

The lecture begins at 7 p.m. at Wright auditorium. Tickets for the public are $10, while ECU students and faculty who attend get one free pass each.

Copies of Rushdie’s books will be available for purchase in the lobby, with a book signing following.

Tickets are available at the ECU Central Ticket Office, 328-4788.

Contact Jackie Drake at jdrake@reflector.com or 252-329-9567.
UNC system to formally install Ross

BY JANE STANCILL - jstancill@newsobserver.com

Tom Ross has been on the job for nine months as president of the UNC system, but the formal celebration of the Ross era happens Thursday in his hometown of Greensboro.

In January, Ross took the helm of the university system at an unenviable time. Talk of budget cuts consumed the new president from the minute he was handed the keys.

By summer, a battered economy and a budget crisis led lawmakers to slash state funding by $414 million for the system's campuses, an overall reduction of 15.6 percent. The cuts varied by campus, with UNC-Chapel Hill taking the biggest hit at 17.9 percent.

A recent report detailed the impact of the reductions, from larger classes to reduced course offerings to trimmed library services. The system has let go just over 3,000 employees, mostly part-time workers. Nearly 1,500 vacant jobs also were eliminated. Last year, the total UNC workforce was 47,000.

Despite the bloodletting, Ross has repeatedly said he won't whine about the cuts. It is the university system's duty to provide quality education to the sons and daughters of North Carolina, he said, no matter the economic situation.

When he takes the oath Thursday at N.C. Agricultural and Technical State University, he will give a speech that highlights his goals for the system, which has 17 campuses and 220,000 students.
The inaugural address is likely to echo the hopes and concerns expressed in a recent discussion with reporters and editors at The News & Observer. Here are some excerpts:

**On financing higher education:** "One of the big issues, obviously, is how, as a society, we are going to continue to finance higher education. That, I think, has been bubbling up for years as people have complained about tuition going up, and yet states have tended to be moving the other direction, away from public support. ... I think we're at a point now where, if you look around the world, you're seeing other countries investing at a high level in higher education, and in the United States, we are tending to go the opposite direction. I think it's beginning to show up in sort of where we rank in terms of the percentage of our adult population that has four-year degrees. It's beginning to show up in the performance of our students on various international standardized testing. And I don't know that it bodes well for our economic future if we don't sort of rethink where are in higher education in the United States."

**On the cost of college for families:** "We have to make the case for financial aid from the state and from the federal government - that they are very important. We have 60 percent of our students now on financial aid, some sort of need-based financial aid. It's students who come from poverty, but it's also students who are middle income students who, because of the total cost of going to college nowadays, struggle to make it financially. ... (We need) to pay attention to the constitution of North Carolina and to do all we can to keep tuition low. It's a balance, because part of what tuition goes towards is building academic excellence, and so if the funds aren't going to come from the state, then your choice is either to find other revenue to support excellence or to begin to erode quality. ... I think a low tuition model with adequate financial aid is the right way to continue to have access for our people."

**On the impact of the cuts:** "We're already beginning to see, and or at least hear anecdotal stories of, students who can't get classes in the sequence they need them in order to graduate on time. If that becomes an issue, and I think it will over time on all of our campuses, that actually ends up costing the student more money. It ends up costing the campus more money. It ends up costing the state more money because it takes somebody who might have graduated in our normal 8.6 semesters and it might stretch it out to 9.6 or 10 or whatever the case might be. In addition, you have fewer classes offered, so your class size is larger."
On whether campuses should limit enrollment: "I don't see anybody saying we need fewer people educated. I think an enrollment cap is not the right direction for a state right now. If you really want to come out of the economy strong, if you really want to be focused, it's those states that invest in their future workforce that are going to be most able to attract the businesses that are going to drive the economy in the future. I hope it's not a direction we'll go. I'm not sure that it's a panacea in terms of the budget anyway."

On cooperation among UNC campuses: "Part of the key to being efficient, I think, is going to be more system cooperation, on the academic side. ... We can use technology, we can use our regional proximity to one another to continue to offer as rich an academic program to students as we do today, but to do it in a more efficient and less costly fashion. I think in the future it's actually going to be better and easier to keep us together because we're going to need each other more than we have in the past."

On the value of higher education for individuals: "The data is if you have a four-year degree in the United States and in North Carolina, your chances of being unemployed are less than 4.5 percent right now. In North Carolina, I think it's about 4.2 or 4.3 percent. If you have less than a high school degree, it's over 17 percent. With a high school degree it's still over 12 percent. So your chances of being employed in the United States are significantly better if you have a four-year degree. That's one measure. Another measure is what your earnings are going to be. Your earnings are going to be, on average, about twice as much. You're going to earn over $1 million more in your lifetime if you have a four-year degree as opposed to a high school degree. So again, is that investment worth it? Yes."

On the value of higher education for society: "If you look at most communities, most states, many, many of the leaders of those communities in those states and their institutions are people that are college-educated. Our institutions are in the business, I think, of producing leaders for our society, and we're in the business of helping people understand about a civil society, and how and why we come together in a society. We're in the business of helping people engage in their communities and be a part of their communities, whether it's through volunteer work or through public service of one kind or another. So there's a value to the common good."

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ECU coach Ruffin McNeill discusses the Pirates' upcoming game against Houston during a press conference Monday. (Rhett Butler/The Daily Reflector)

**When giving isn't good**

By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, October 4, 2011

East Carolina head coach Ruffin McNeill contended on Monday that there is only one way to fix the turnover problem that has riddled the Pirates in three of their first four games this season.

Two days removed from a disastrous start against North Carolina in which ECU committed turnovers on each of its first three drives and four total in the first half en route to a 35-20 loss to the Tar Heels, McNeill said he is certain that diligence in practice will erase his team’s nation-worst 4.3 turnovers per game.

“The guys are working on it every day and we’re going to keep working on it,” McNeill said at Monday’s weekly press conference. “We know in these last three games we’ve hurt ourselves with mistakes, and that’s no disrespect to the teams we’ve played.”

UNC, like South Carolina in the Pirates’ opening-night loss, cashed in on great field position a couple of times after ECU either put the ball on the turf or threw an interception.
The Pirates have 17 turnovers in four games, and their propensity for losing the ball clearly figured into the game-planning of the Tar Heels, evidenced by first quarter fumbles by ECU’s Danny Webster and Reggie Bullock.

“Those guys were tugging away at it, and they’re not giant guys, Danny and Reggie, and those guys were pawing at it, grabbing and tugging at it,” McNeill said of UNC going after the ball.

At 1-3, the Pirates don’t have any wiggle room, especially with a trip to play 5-0 Houston coming this weekend.

Although the Pirates got away with their school record-tying seven giveaways by still beating UAB for their lone win of the season so far, they likely won’t be so lucky again.

McNeill, who spent a decade on the coaching staff at Texas Tech, acknowledged he’s been down this road before with previous teams.

“We just kept working and emphasizing, making sure the ball doesn’t get low and making sure it stays tight,” McNeill said.

**Dixon update**

Sophomore outside linebacker Justin Dixon was scratched from the ECU lineup for the UNC clash for what McNeill announced as “corrective reasons.”

On Monday McNeill said he didn’t know if Dixon — a former UNC signee who showed great promise with the Pirates last year before sustaining a season-ending knee injury — would be back in the lineup against Houston.

“We’ll see how that develops,” McNeill said. “It’s up to me. I like Justin, but he’s got to learn to do it our way, the Pirate way. He’ll be there when I decide he’s there. He’s on my time schedule.”

**Injuries**

McNeill said wide receiver Justin Jones and inside linebacker Kyle Tudor, both sophomores who had left knee injuries, are close to being full strength again after making their returns against the Tar Heels.
Tudor made five tackles in his return and although Jones made no receptions, he pulled a regular shift with the offense.

“They were banged and sore, but excited to get those first reps,” McNeill said of the duo. “Those were Justin’s first game reps that he’s had (this year) and I know he wanted to do well. His timing may have been a little off, but that was a part of getting him back in the groove.”

Listed as questionable this week are senior CB Derek Blacknall (lower back) and OLB Maurice Falls (concussion). Still out are senior OL Doug Polochak (left knee) and junior OLB James Craig (right knee).

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or 252-329-9595.
Queen Anne’s expedition under way

JANETTE PIPPIN - DAILY NEWS STAFF

CARTERET COUNTY — A four-week fall expedition at the Queen Anne’s Revenge shipwreck site is under way, and the first look at the wreck site since Hurricane Irene brought good news.

The hurricane swept the North Carolina coast in late August without causing major disruption to the shipwreck site, said QAR Project Director Mark Wilde-Ramsing.

A sand berm placed near the site several years ago seems to be helping protect the site from storm damage, including minimizing scour, where sand is washed away and exposes artifacts.

“Last week we did a check of the site. We were very concerned after Hurricane Irene, but the site seems to have weathered the storm pretty well,” Wilde-Ramsing said. “It was not scoured out and, also, it was not completely covered up (by sand).”

After the one-day dive last week to take a preliminary look at the site and begin preparations, the QAR project team kicked off the four-week
expedition Monday and will be further assessing the site’s condition, stabilizing areas where it’s needed and continuing the excavation and recovery of artifacts.

The excavation of artifacts will focus on a previously known scour area in the area of the vessel’s foremast and galley area.

“We’re not to the bow but we’re getting up there,” Wilde-Ramsing said.

A highlight of the expedition is the planned recovery of cannon C23, one of the ship’s largest guns, at the close of the expedition. And surrounding the cannon are a kettle, wooden deadeyes, a pewter plate, cannon balls and other unidentified artifacts to be recovered.

Also during the expedition, the QAR team will continue “in situ” conservation monitoring. Aluminum rods called sacrificial anodes have been attached to all but three remaining cannons to change the electrochemical process that corrodes iron in saltwater, reducing or even reversing the amount of salts absorbed by the iron objects.

“We’re seeing really good results,” Wilde-Ramsing said.

The process will help reduce the amount of conservation time in the lab once the artifacts are raised.

The N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries’ R/V Shell Point will be used as the principle recovery vessel.

Wilde-Ramsing said that due to budget cuts the vessel will only be available for two of the four weeks, and as much excavation as possible we be done during that time.

East Carolina University will be providing volunteers and the use of its barge. NOAA’s Marine Sanctuary Program will provide the vessel for raising the cannon.

This fall’s dive expedition is made possible by a partnership of many agencies, including the NOAA’s Marine Sanctuary Program and Foundation; N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, East Carolina University, the Town of Beaufort and Friends of Queen Anne’s Revenge.

The QAR has also received ongoing support from Intersal Inc., N.C. Maritime Museum, Nautilus Productions, Coast Guard Station Fort Macon and Fort Macon State Park.

The shipwreck off the Carteret County coast, considered to be the flagship of pirate Blackbeard, was located in November 1996 by Intersal Inc, with
information provided to Operations Director Mike Daniel by company
president, the late Phil Masters.

Archaeologists with the N.C. Underwater Archaeology Branch have led
research on the wreck for the past 14 years. Artifacts that have already been
through the conservation process are displayed at the N.C. Maritime
Museum in Beaufort, which is the official repository.

For more information on the QAR project, visit the website at qaronline.org.
Updates on the fall expedition will be posted on Facebook at Blackbeard’s –
Queen Anne’s Revenge.
A video of a student orientation flash mob at Wellesley won a recent contest in Boston. It featured 120 students dancing to Katy Perry's "Firework."

College Flash Mobs Become Pep Rallies Made for YouTube

By TAMAR LEWIN

Three steps to starting college: Meet roommate. Unpack in dorm room. Then, sometime during orientation, hear music, see a student start dancing, watch as more dancers join in, and join the campus flash mob. (Or if you miss the actual event, watch it over and over on YouTube, to see how many people you recognize.)

Outbursts of seemingly impromptu dance numbers were so common at orientations this year that BostInnovation, a Web start-up chronicling Boston life, ran a contest asking readers to watch the YouTube videos and vote for the local campus — Wellesley, Merrimack or Emerson — with the best welcome. (Wellesley won.) There was even a flash mob to greet new students at a medical school, the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

The college-sponsored performances, which have grown to feature coordinated costumes and appearances by tweedy officials, sometimes suggest the dance equivalent of the school fight song, a far cry from the roots of the genre — informal gatherings hastily called via social media. Nonetheless, their popularity is growing.

“There’s definitely a cool factor to flash mobs,” said Kevin Kruger, associate executive director of Naspa, a national association of student
affairs administrators. “It’s something students will talk about, and it can help colleges brand and market themselves. It’s a way to hook students, and build community and pride in place. It gets new students superconnected, right from the start, which is one of the goals of orientation. For students, I think part of the appeal is that it goes on YouTube, and you get to watch yourself, which is a kind of self-promotion this generation likes.”

While flash mobs have been known to have a darker side — in Philadelphia, the police imposed a curfew after a violent confrontation — on campus, it is all about dancing. And not just at orientation. Last week at U.C.L.A., there was a flash mob wedding proposal, in which the whole crowd dropped to one knee.

Fraternities and sororities have sponsored them, as have residence halls. And they are becoming de rigueur for celebrating new programs, or big anniversaries: Portland State University had one last month at the opening of Electric Avenue, a street dedicated to electric vehicles, as did M.I.T.’s 150th anniversary celebration and the University of Minnesota School of Mining’s 75th anniversary.

The large official events may lack the somewhat spontaneous, almost surreptitious feel that originally characterized the genre. The Minnesota mob, for example wears gold and maroon T-shirts, and is joined by both Goldy Gopher, the school mascot, and Steven Crouch, its dean. At California State University San Marcos, orientation leaders wearing blue “I (Heart) CSUSM” T-shirts are joined by not only the mascot but a campus police officer as well.

Mascots, like the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology’s adorable little elephant, or the University of Mary Washington’s large dancing eagle, were much in evidence at orientation flash mobs.

But more modest midyear efforts, like a lunchtime dance at Bowdoin College, remain true to form.

The campus performances get enough attention that GoEnnounce.com, an online graduation-announcement business, used them as an advertising vehicle, sponsoring student-produced flash mobs where the dancers (at the University of Michigan, wearing caps and gowns) finish by holding up large cards spelling out G-O-E-N-N-O-U-N-C-E.

While college flash mobs vary enormously — students at the College of Charleston held a yoga flash mob — most start with one or two dancers, and a group of quietly bewildered onlookers, who laugh, cheer and pull out their
cellphones to record the whole thing, as more dancers arrive. The initial participants are usually good dancers, but those who join in tend to be more awkward, occasionally leaning the wrong way, or flailing their hands a bit behind the beat.

For orientation planners, it adds up to a cheap tool for boosting school spirit.

“We thought it would engage a lot of people from different parts of the college, and send a nice message about what it is to be part of the Wellesley community,” said Lori Tenser, dean of the first-year class at Wellesley. “I knew it was going to be good after a long rehearsal, when one of the students said, ‘If I were a first-year, and I saw this on my second day, I would be so happy, and feel I’d come to the right place.’”

The Wellesley group, using Katy Perry’s “Firework” — probably the flash-mob top pick this year, along with Taio Cruz’s “Dynamite” — rehearsed for six hours during the student leaders’ training week, and posted the moves on YouTube for those who needed more practice.

Buffalo State College went further, putting a short instructional video teaching the Wobble, a line dance that was a central feature of the flash mob, on its Facebook page for the 3,000 incoming students.

“We wanted to pull in as many people as possible,” said Daigi-Ann Thompson, a theater major who taught the dance on video. “The Facebook page got the freshmen all excited. All they knew was that at some point in orientation, they’d be asked to do it.”

Robert Mead-Colgrove, Buffalo State’s orientation director, said he spent less than $100 on the whole project, the only costs being sound equipment and a D.J. Ms. Thompson and others worked on the choreography all summer, and held hours of rehearsals, official and unofficial, in the days leading up to orientation, with residence advisers, orientation leaders, office assistants and administrators all trying to learn the dance.

“They rolled up their sleeves and loosened their ties, and I had the vice president of student affairs doing the Wobble right next to me,” Ms. Thompson said. “It was a big success. We’ve been asked to perform it again, at a couple other things, so we’re rounding up more students.”

But while many institutions have a college song, sung year after year, the prospect that a flash mob could become the college dance, or even a regular part of the orientation schedule, raises a metaphysical question, one that is already plaguing some orientation directors: Without the element of surprise, they wonder, would the spirit of the flash mob be destroyed?
U-Va. bans fireplaces in some historic rooms because of safety concerns
By Susan Svrluga

One of the first questions tourists usually ask when they poke their heads into one of the coveted historic rooms on the University of Virginia’s central Lawn is “Does the fireplace work?”

And then: “Are you allowed to use it?”

In the past, people often laughed when they heard “yes.”

But this year, for the first time in nearly 200 years, U-Va. officials banned fires in the fireplaces. During inspections after a roof restoration project, workers found damage to the mortar and lining of the chimneys, and officials told students in the 106 rooms with fireplaces that they would not be allowed to use them.

The rooms are connected by wooden roof and floor structures with no sprinklers, said Michael Merriam, associate director of maintenance.
“A fire in one could quickly spread to another,” Merriam said, adding that although there is a primary concern for student safety, “there’s also a very large concern that we don’t endanger an architectural treasure.”

“I was very disappointed. It was something I was really looking forward to using,” said senior Matt Cofer, who lives in one of the rooms, which often have a rocking chair and a small pile of wood by the door. One of his best memories is of hanging out in a friend’s room during a blizzard, watching the fire while snow fell.

School officials are trying to decide what to do next. It could cost $1 million to $3 million to repair the cracked chimney linings and mortar to ensure that heat from the fires doesn’t spread to the wood structure outside the chimneys, Merriam said. Adding a sprinkler system would cost significantly more.

At a recent board meeting, one board member said it was “bordering on ludicrous” to have fireplaces and asked whether they would be limiting the hours when students could duel or graze their horses on the Lawn. But others jumped in to defend the tradition.

“I think every university has something they do that makes other universities cringe that they do because of the history behind it,” said Mark Briggs, the chief risk officer for Ohio State University.

The debate matters not only to students but also to people who care about Thomas Jefferson’s legacy at the flagship public university. Jefferson, who designed the school that is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, envisioned a place where learning was not limited to the classroom, where students and faculty lived side by side, where people would gather for philosophical debates over dinner or discuss books by the fireside.

Banning fires could chip away at that, Cofer said, “turning the Lawn more into a museum or a place that doesn’t have as much meaning and connection to the past.”

* * *

Hundreds of students compete to spend their senior year in one of the 54 rooms on the Lawn, a grassy, idyllic expanse at the heart of campus lined with white columns and stately brick buildings. A committee of students chooses the winners, based on their grades, their contributions to the school, and the three essays they write in their applications, said Reedy Swanson, a senior from Knoxville who is head Lawn resident this year. It’s considered a top honor.
All this for rooms about 13-by-13-feet with no bathrooms.

But the rooms, with worn wooden plank floors, high ceilings and big windows, are evocative. They were used for wounded soldiers during the Civil War. Edgar Allan Poe lived in a room on the Range, the area just outside the Lawn that mainly houses graduate students, as did Woodrow Wilson. Each room’s closet door has a list of former residents (dating at least to 1895, the year of the university’s only major fire, when the Rotunda and many school records were destroyed.) Brass nameplates hang on the double-shutter doors, which are often thrown open to welcome visitors and for the view of the green Lawn and the Rotunda.

Lawnies, as the room occupants are known, have all kinds of traditions, intentional and accidental — such as turning spotlights on streakers racing past, chasing them in a gorilla costume, or waking up to find that tourists have come into the room to have a look. Many customs involve the fireplaces. On Halloween, children trick-or-treat at the Lawn rooms, where fires might be crackling if it’s chilly. Summer campers make s’mores with their U-Va. counselors. In December, when the Lawn displays white lights one evening and student groups sing, the doors are thrown open to show fires burning.

One room has no fireplace. It’s usually the last one picked.

The fireplaces are romantic, said Katie Couric, who has fond memories of living on the Lawn her senior year. “It’s better than a puppy in attracting members of the opposite sex!”

Alexander Gilliam, history officer at U-Va., who lived on the Lawn decades ago, said the fireplaces are “an essential part of the Lawn.” He remembers the smell of wood smoke on cold days, laughing with friends by the fire — and also, when he was trying to study while friends were drinking, seeing ice cubes clatter down his chimney, one by one.

“I know there’s a lot of tradition in this sort of thing. But a fire fatality is not a nice tradition,” said Ed Comeau, publisher of Campus Firewatch, which has tracked nearly 150 deadly accidents since a 2000 fire at Seton Hall University killed three students and injured dozens of others.

* * *

U-Va. officials, considering whether to continue the ban or repair the damaged chimneys and perhaps add a sprinkler system, asked students for their opinions.
On the West Range, where the view recently has been of orange and green plastic construction fencing, sticky new asphalt and torn-up dirt, some students weren’t all that enthusiastic about the prospect of construction that could kick them out of their rooms for a few days and mean lots of noise and dust for weeks.

But in a report to the board, Lawn and Range residents said it is of paramount importance to restore the fireplaces so that they can be used again, Swanson said.

Someone suggested at a recent board meeting that given the intensity of the loyalty of past Lawn residents — many of whom have already contacted Swanson and others — students could launch a fundraising campaign for the work.

In the meantime, Swanson has old books lined up along the cream-colored wooden mantel in his room. Quinn Weber rigged up streaming video of a yule log on a monitor over his fireplace.

And Cofer is trying to make sure no one lights a fire in his room, because it will be full of friends and fraternity brothers all year. The university told residents that the chimneys are sealed, so a fire would be considered arson.

“If someone lit a fire in here, I’d probably tackle them out of the room and throw my body on it,” Cofer said. “Expulsion from U-Va. and a felony are probably not two things I want to put on my résumé.”

Most of all, he said: “No one wants to be the one that burned down the Lawn.”

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