THE DAILY CLIPS

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N.C. State home game brings buzz

By Brock Letchworth
The Daily Reflector

It might be 10 days before the Pirates square off against the Wolfpack at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium, but hundreds of East Carolina students spent Monday night in the shadow of the goal posts.

With general admission tickets sold out, students were lined up to claim their stake among the 7,600 tickets available to them. By the end of the day Tuesday, only 500 remained.

“It's ECU football, what else can you say,” said Tara Jarvis, who got in line around 11 p.m. Monday. “You've got to be out here if you want the tickets.”

The tickets went on sale at 10 a.m. Tuesday at Mingus and the Mendenhall Student Center, said Scott Wetherby, East Carolina assistant athletic director for ticketing and marketing.

Kickoff is at 4:30 p.m. Oct. 20, but student excitement started this week.

Brian Guarino, a senior hospitality management major, brought a mattress. Junior Cameron Lewis and his friends hauled in a couch.

EAST CAROLINA head football coach Skip Holtz greets students waiting in line for ECU-N.C. State football tickets Tuesday. Holtz joked that next year he would order pizza.

Check out the photo gallery of ECU students waiting for their tickets with this story on reflector.com

“It is the N.C. State game,” Lewis said. “There is no bigger game than this. It is worth being out here all night.”

And Jarvis — who came with good intentions — found another kind of all-nighter was in store.

With plans to study for a political science exam; she brought flash cards to study while in line.

She wound up enjoying the party-like atmosphere through the night. Students played video games, danced and played other games to entertain themselves, she said.

Pirate football coach Skip Holtz and Director of Athletics Terry Holland greeted the students Tuesday morn-

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ing. Holtz and a couple of other coaches passed out doughnuts and posters and posed for pictures with students.

At its longest, the line of students stretched around Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium and ended at the scoreboard on the opposite end of the field from the ticket office, Angelo Daniels, East Carolina parking and traffic officer, said.

"Everybody has been in good spirits," Daniels said. "It's been an unbelievable turnout, but it is the State game. It will probably be the biggest game this year. I would be out here too."

Weatherby said 12,000 tickets are reserved for students each game, with 4,500 going to Student Pirate Club members. The rest are distributed based on a first-come, first-served basis, he said. Full-time students are allotted one complimentary ticket with valid identification and afforded the chance to purchase another guest ticket at regular price.

Tuesday's large turnout was not surprising considering the opponent, Weatherby said.

"N.C. State and North Carolina are always big pickups," Weatherby said. "The students always want to be there for those games."

A crowd of 50,092 at East Carolina's game against North Carolina State in 1999 remains the largest in Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium history, Tom McClellan, director of East Carolina media relations, said. Bleachers were placed behind the end zones for that game so that attendance mark is not achievable in this year's contest, McClellan said.

Brock Letchworth can be contacted at 329-9574 or bletchworth@coxnc.com.
City warning:

Three's company in houses

- A Greenville law prohibits more than three unrelated people from living in a single-family residence.

By T. Scott Batchelor
The Daily Reflector

The signs show a slumping figure, head bowed as he sits among his possessions outside a door with "Eviction!!" written on a banner stretched between door jambs.

"House hunting is hard. Being evicted is harder," the sign reads. Below that, black lettering advises of the city ordinance against more than three unrelated people sharing a dwelling.

City of Greenville and East Carolina University officials collaborated on the signs, which are being staked out in university neighborhoods, said Merrill Flood, head of the city's community development department.

"The kids don't necessarily know the rules," Flood said of ECU students. So in a continuing effort to educate them, as well as landlords, the city worked with the university's center for off-campus and community living to come up with another approach.

The city has two dozen signs made for distribution "sporadically" in the campus area where students seek rental housing.

Students typically "don't see (the rule) constantly, so it's sort of out of sight, out of mind," Flood said.

He said organizers didn't want to put up too many signs that they became unsightly, and some have been held back to replace ones that go missing because of — here he paused — "people being inquisitive."

The city's ordinance against four or more unrelated people occupying a house or apartment was adopted in the early 1980s and "is designed to keep from creating a situation that deteriorates neighborhoods," Flood said.

Michelle Lieberman, director of student safety and off-campus and community services for ECU, said the signs are part of a multipronged approach to educate students about city ordinances such as garbage rules, noise limits and parking restrictions.

The three-unrelated rule can lead to evictions, so Lieberman said her office places special focus on it. They'll plant the signs in mid-November, when students start looking for spring semester rentals.

She tells students that the city and university officials are not "out to get you," but that the ordinance is aimed at preventing excess vehicles, parking headaches and wear and tear on neighborhoods.

Signs include the number to her office so students can get advice on rental issues.

"So it's great advertising for our office as well," Lieberman said.

Flood said the city began setting out the signs in late August or early September.

Investigating occupancy cases is "a very, very active part of our enforcement program" and
SYLVIA BROWN, a Greenville code enforcement officer, places a sign on Harding Street warning of the city ordinance prohibiting more than three unrelated people living in a single-family dwelling. This conforms to the City Council's express desire to preserve existing neighborhoods and the city's quality of life, he said.

His department looked into nearly 60 cases of occupancy violations during a 12-month period ending in June. That number is running lower so far this period, and he hopes the signs are at least partially responsible for that trend.

The city in early 2007 filed lawsuits against the owners of seven rental properties as part of stepped-up enforcement of the zoning ordinance.

City Attorney Dave Holec said, to his knowledge, the suits are the first ever to be filed against landlords for having too many tenants in one rental property.

Tim Ferruzzi and his wife, Ann Nunez, are party to suits involving six of the properties, some of which are co-owned by David and Rebecca Renn. The city is involved in court-ordered mediation with those parties, Holec said.

In the seventh suit, property owner Vance Harper Jones agreed to pay a fine and to comply with the city ordinance, Holec said.

T. Scott Batchelor can be contacted at batchelor@coxnc.com and 339-9567.
Study: Migraine pill helps some alcoholics detox

By Carla K. Johnson
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — A migraine pill seems to help alcoholics taper off their drinking without detox treatment, researchers report, offering a potential option for a hard-to-treat problem.

The drug, Topamax, works in a different way than other medications already approved for alcoholism.

Experts said the drug is likely to appeal to heavy drinkers who would rather seek help from their own doctors, rather than enter a rehab clinic to dry out. The drug costs about $350 a month, plus the price of doctor’s visits.

But side effects are a problem, and it’s unclear whether the findings will make a dent in an addiction that affects millions of Americans.

Addiction specialists not involved in the study said the findings are promising, although side effects such as trouble concentrating, tingling and itching caused about one in five people to drop out of the study. Drowsiness and dizziness are also problems.

“The size of the treatment effect is larger than in most of the other medications we’ve seen,” said Dr. Mark Willenbring of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. “And all the drinking variables changed in the right direction.”

The study, published in Wednesday’s Journal of the American Medical Association, was funded by the maker of the drug, Johnson & Johnson Inc.’s Ortho-McNeil Neurologics. The researchers also reported financial ties to the company. Ortho-McNeil reviewed the manuscript, but did not change the results or interpretation, the researchers reported.

The study followed 371 heavy drinkers for 14 weeks. About half were randomly assigned to take Topamax, also called topiramate, in gradually increasing doses. The others took dummy pills.

All volunteers were encouraged — but not required — to stop drinking.

At the start of the study, they drank, on average, 11 standard drinks daily. That’s about two six-packs of beer each day, or two bottles of wine, or a pint of hard liquor.

By the end of the study, 27 of the 183 people, or 15 percent, who took Topamax had quit drinking entirely for seven weeks or more. That compared to six out of 188, or 3 percent, in the placebo group.

Others cut back. The Topamax group cut back to six drinks a day, on average, assuming everyone who dropped out of the study relapsed into heavy drinking. That compared to seven drinks a day.
for the placebo group.

"You can come in drinking a bottle of scotch a day and get treatment without detox," said Dr. Bankole Johnson of the University of Virginia, who led the study, which was conducted at 17 U.S. sites from 2004-06.

The study didn't follow the drinkers long-term, so it's unclear how many relapsed after they stopped taking the pill.

But there were lasting effects for Tom Wolfe, 44, a carpenter from Earleville, Va., who said he has been sober for two years thanks to Topamax. After years of heavy drinking, he took part in an earlier Topamax study. He felt "a little light-headed" at first until he got used to the drug. Alcohol lost its enjoyment, strengthening his resolve to quit.

"It's been a miracle to me," Wolfe said. "It got the monkey off my back."

The drug works by inhibiting dopamine, the brain's "feel-good" neurotransmitters that are involved in all addictions, said Stephen Dewey, a neuroscientist the Brookhaven National Laboratory, who was not involved in the study but does similar research.

It's a new approach, he said, that "clearly did work on a very small subset in the population."

Willenbring, who wrote an accompanying editorial, predicts that a future pill, although probably not Topamax, will do for alcohol dependence what Prozac did for depression: Remove the stigma.
Diet may reduce risk of cancer

By Lauran Neergaard
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Try fewer burgers and more veggies after menopause: Cutting dietary fat may offer a long-sought protection against deadly ovarian cancer — if you stick with the diet long enough.

Low-fat diets have long been promoted as a way to reduce the risk of different cancers, with decidedly mixed results when put to the test.

But Tuesday, researchers unveiled the first hard evidence that switching to a low-fat diet late in life can lower the odds of ovarian cancer, a malignancy with a particularly dismal survival rate.

The study tracked almost 40,000 women ages 50 to 79, some of whom were assigned to cut the total fat in their diets to 20 percent of calories — from an average of 35 percent — while others continued their usual diets.

For the first four years, the menu changes didn’t make a difference. But those who kept the fat low for eight years cut their chances of ovarian cancer by 40 percent, researchers reported in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

“This is really good news,” said Dr. Jacques Rossouw of the National Institutes of Health, which funded the work. “But you have to stick with the diet.”

Until now, the only known prescription against ovarian cancer — aside from surgically removing the ovaries — was for women of childbearing age to use birth control pills. Use for five years can lower the ovarian cancer risk by up to 60 percent, protection that lingers years after pill use ends.

The new findings offer an option for postmenopausal women to try.

It’s arguably the most promising finding of the mammoth Women’s Health Initiative dietary study, which enrolled tens of thousands of healthy women to track the effects of teaching them to cut fat and eat more fruits and vegetables.

So far, the diet has had seemingly little impact on rates of breast cancer, colorectal cancer and even, surprisingly, heart disease. There are a number of theories: Maybe the women started healthier eating too late; most were overweight, a major risk factor, and the diet wasn’t designed to shed pounds. Nor did most women actually cut enough fat.

Despite all those hurdles, a low-fat diet did appear protective against ovarian cancer — and the women who started with the worst diets and cut fat the most, got the most benefit from it.

Ovarian cancer is fairly rare, affecting one in 80 women compared with the one in nine who get breast cancer.
Public Forum

Cleanup leaves PTRF, river thankful

If you listen closely to the voice of the river following Saturday’s Big Sweep river cleanup, it is saying, “thank you, thank you and thank you!” The efforts of more than 50 volunteers made the cleanup effort a huge success.

The Pamlico-Tar River Foundation wants to express our gratitude to several key organizers and the volunteers. Special recognition is due Paula Clark, recycling coordinator for Pitt County. Clark oversaw the operation at the Town Common and Port Terminal. She is well organized and all the pieces came together well.

Matt Hargrove, an ECU student and PTRF intern, did a superlative job of recruiting and organizing students to help in the effort, and Heather Jacobs, the PTRF riverkeeper, led the effort in Beaufort County. In addition, ECU’s Department of Recreation and Wellness provided staff, kayaks, canoes and transportation.

Chris Mansfield led Boy Scouts from Troop 340 down the river. Greenville Parks and Recreation provided a boat and personnel. The Neuse River Foundation supplied kayaks. Last, but certainly not least, PTRF members and board members brought their own equipment and contributed to a successful outcome. Hundreds of pounds of trash, motors, a water heater, tires, chairs and a bottle labeled “Danger! Do not pour this down the drain!” were retrieved and disposed of properly.

There is a significant amount of monitoring, protecting and restoring required by the Pamlico-Tar River. Your willingness to support these efforts and the Pamlico-Tar River Foundation will enhance PTRF’s ability “to protect and improve the environmental quality of the Pamlico-Tar River, its estuary and watershed.”

We must monitor, protect and restore a resource that is the literal life blood of our community. Join PTRF and join with your neighbors in any future effort that improves the river.

DAVID A. EMERLING
executive director, Pamlico-Tar River Foundation
Thanks to nutritionist,

BY RACHEL CARTER
STAFF WRITER

CHAPEL HILL - Ryan Houston knew he needed to drop weight when he arrived at North Carolina.

Everything on the field was faster than in high school, and the UNC running back wanted to get smaller and faster.

Through hard work, dedication — and the help of the school's nutritionist — Houston lost 15 pounds and is down to 255.

"My nutritionist helped me out — a lot more fruit, and not eating after 8 [p.m.]." Houston said. "She said I actually needed to eat more ... I wasn't really eating all day until after practice. I'd go all day with an empty stomach, and then after practice just eat. She said that overall, that would make me gain more weight, because I was more hungry." Houston isn't unusual among UNC athletes.

Each one has access to Jen Ketterly, a registered dietician who serves as the nutritionist for more than 800 athletes.

That includes the football team.

Once Butch Davis arrived at UNC, he saw the opportunity of having a full-time nutritionist available and asked Ketterly to work more closely with the football program.

This summer, she helped redo the team's training table. Nearly every food is color-coded. A purple dot tells a football player that strawberries will help with muscle soreness and a yellow dot next conveys that chicken noodle soup can help ward off cramps.

The football team also has a color chart in the urinals so a player can see if he's hydrated.

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Part of Sports Medicine

Ketterly is in her second year of working exclusively with the athletics department—which makes her unique. Although both N.C. State and Duke have nutritionists who work with athletes, only UNC has one in its Sports Medicine department.

Dr. Tim Taft, who runs UNC Sports Medicine, said the athletics department had two nutritionists before Ketterly, who originally worked closely with the athletics department. Taft lobbied for a full-time sports nutritionist and after a reorganization two years ago, Ketterly joined Sports Medicine.

Ketterly teaches athletes how proper nutrition can increase energy and endurance.

"Nutrition is the last legal edge," Ketterly said.

When most athletes get to UNC, they don't know much about nutrition. They meet Ketterly during their physicals, and she begins their education.

"She gets our student-athletes to start thinking about their performance and their performance level, which gets all athletes' attention," UNC baseball coach Mike Fox said.

Fox’s program has worked with Ketterly the four years she’s been at UNC. She helps plan pregame and postseason meals and healthy snacks for during the games.

Each sport has different nutritional needs—there's a textbook in Ketterly’s office that details requirements in every sport—but some hints go for every athlete. For example, there is a 30-minute window after an athlete leaves the practice field or a game in which it is imperative that they get something to eat to aid their recovery for the next day.

That's why UNC football recently reorganized its weight room, adding a refrigerator with Gatorade nutritional supplement shakes so that the athletes can grab one after lifting.

A popular program

Fox said he isn't sure how much the effort to focus on nutrition helps with recruits, but he and other coaches make a point to tell them about the program.

Each sport uses Ketterly's services differently. A coach can request that Ketterly come to his or her team or a player can contact her directly.

Ketterly’s morning clinic calendar is booked up weeks in advance. Her small office holds a number of plastic food models that demonstrate what athletes should be doing to improve their performances.

One point she impresses upon athletes is the need to eat carbohydrates.

With a generation of young adults who have grown up hearing about the Atkins diet and messages that "carbs are bad," Ketterly teaches about the energy-enhancing role of carbs.

She advises athletes to fill two-thirds of their plates with carbs and the other third a lean protein.

Ketterly even will go with a player to a grocery store. She took several women's basketball players in the summer of 2006, teaching them how to read labels and what foods they should buy.
Aiding women's health

Women's basketball is one of the sports most devoted to using the nutritionist. If Ketterly wanted UNC coach Sylvia Hatchell's managers to monitor exactly how much water the players drank during practice, then they'd do it.

To Hatchell, Ketterly is another voice teaching her athletes to embrace a strong body image.

"I don't think most people realize that especially teenage girls have — sometimes it's with the image — nutrition situations," Hatchell said. "Some of them just don't eat because they're afraid they're going to gain. Being anorexic or being bulimic — I think that's out there a lot more than people want to admit that.

[With a nutritionist] kids know that 'Hey, I can be nutritionally healthy and not gain weight.'"

Ketterly watches for eating disorders and food allergies, and monitors iron levels and irregular menstrual cycles that can be signs of improper nutrition.

Her job also involves opening athletes' eyes, much as hers were opened as an elite teenage basketball player in West Virginia. At one camp, nutritional information was given out, amazing Ketterly. She soon decided to study it and picked Cornell, where she could pursue the subject as an undergraduate.

Ketterly spreads the nutritional gospel to UNC's athletes.

"Food is chemistry," Ketterly said. "For most people, food is food. It's enjoyment, it's pleasure, it's all those things, but for an elite athlete and a competitive athlete, it can also be performance-enhancing because you can manipulate it that way."

Staff writer Robbi Pickeral contributed to this story.

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Even the well-decorated beverage bar in UNC's football center has the color codes that nutritionist Jen Ketterly uses to aid the diets of the athletes.
Nelms backs plan for dorm

NCCU might take over residence hall

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

DURHAM - N.C. Central University's new leader is endorsing a plan initiated by his predecessor that would allow the university to take over a troubled, privately owned residence hall on the edge of campus.

Charlie Nelms, who took over as chancellor two months ago, says he agrees with former Chancellor James Ammons that the university should buy Eagle Landing, the 408-bed Brant Street dormitory built by the university's private real estate foundation and run by a private management firm.

State and university officials have disagreed over the building's condition, with state regulators contending in two reports over the past year that it has a slew of design and construction deficiencies. It has a valid certificate of occupancy from the city.

A 2006 report from the State Construction Office found $4.7 million in deficiencies; a second report released this spring cited some improvements but nevertheless found $9 million in needed fixes, including a $3.7 million overhaul to the three-year-old heating and air conditioning system.

But Nelms and other NCCU officials say improvements have steadily been made to the facility.

"The safety issues have been addressed," Nelms said in a recent interview.

The state must still sign off on the building's condition before the UNC system will allow NCCU to take over the debt payments on

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heating and air conditioning system, which uses only electricity, costs about 25 percent more per square foot than most models in a comparable state university dormitory.

And in an inspection note in the State Construction Office’s file on Eagle Landing, regulators reported in April that the building is deteriorating “at a faster rate” than they had determined upon inspection of the building the first time, the previous fall.

“Unless the HVAC system is completely revamped to a central, four-pipe operation with boiler and chiller, the current system will not only experience more and more physical problems, but operating costs will escalate,” the note said.

**Housing choices**

The traditional, two-to-a-room dormitories the state has for decades built for UNC system campuses are generally expensive to build but last 50 to 100 years.

In recent years, however, campuses have branched out — at the behest of students looking for a different living situation — to suite and apartment-style residences such as Eagle Landing. Those often cost less to build but have about a 30-year life span, and universities generally like to have a mix of both.

Responding to a housing crunch brought on by a surge in undergraduate enrollment, NCCU officials in 2003 circumvented the usual, red-tape-laden state construction process by forming a private foundation — a common practice among UNC system campuses — to build Eagle Landing privately.

Nelms, the new chancellor, said it makes sense for NCCU to own the building because it is essentially an on-campus facility but is not subject to full university oversight.

Further, owning Eagle Landing would give the university more power to collect housing receipts, which are needed to pay down the building’s debt, Nelms said.
Moore campaign faults
Perdue’s resume

Richard Moore is charging, in the latest skirmish in the Democratic primary for governor, that Beverly Perdue’s resumes are suspect.

In an e-mail to several reporters, the state treasurer’s campaign manager, Jay Reiff, pointed out that a 1991 resume submitted by Perdue to the N.C. Forum for Research and Economic Education was incorrect.

Under “Professional Experience,” the resume stated that Perdue was a teacher of kindergarten, ninth and 12th grades from 1978 to 1982.

In fact, Perdue taught those grades at schools in Georgia and Florida between 1970 and 1974, as cited later on the same resume.

Perdue’s campaign accused Moore of continuing “his scorched earth campaign of distortions, innuendos and personal attacks.”

Going after Hayes’ vote


The Washington-based liberal advocacy group is joining other organizations in putting ads out to target the Concord Republican for his vote against expanding the State Children’s Health Insurance Program.

The group isn’t targeting any of the other North Carolina members who voted the same way, including Democrats Mike McIntyre and Bob Etheridge.

President Bush vetoed the bill, and Democratic leaders are trying to get House members to change their vote to override the veto.

Brad Woodhouse, president of Americans United, said that he doesn’t want to waste money and that McIntyre and Etheridge appear “unmovable” on the issue. Both oppose using an increase in the tobacco tax to pay for the expansion.

Hayes’ spokeswoman said he’s unmovable too. But Woodhouse hopes otherwise, given that Hayes faces a tough re-

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Help from the fast track

A group of NASCAR notables is raising money for Perdue.

The fundraiser Thursday at Lowe’s Motor Speedway in Concord will take place shortly before the qualifying rounds for the Bank of America 500. Hosts include NASCAR President Mike Helton and Vice President Marcus Smith and retired driver Junior Johnson.

Tickets to the event range from $250 for an individual to $2,000 for a “Pole Position” and $4,000 for the “Winner’s Circle.”

The other hosts are racing promoter H.A. “Humpy” Wheeler, team owners Rick Hendrick and Felix Sabates, metals
supplier Greg Fornelli, racetrack owner Steve Earwood and Dale Earnhardt's daughter, Kelley Earnhardt-Elledge.

Sabbates, a registered Republican, is a major NASCAR political donor and GOP supporter who gave to Gov. Mike Easley in 2000 and 2004.

Powell to visit blind clinic

Colin Powell is coming to Raleigh.
The retired Army general and former secretary of state will be at the Raleigh Lions Clinic for the Blind on Thursday afternoon. The visit is closed to the public.
The clinic manufactures items for the Army, including rifle straps, duffel bags and until recently, military uniforms.
Powell will be in town for a motivational speech at the Get Motivated Seminar with Forbes CEO Steve Forbes, UNC-Chapel Hill coach Roy Williams and former Microsoft COO Rick Belluzzo.
Powell is stopping by the clinic at the request of retired Army Col. Al Lanier, a Lions Club member and vice chancellor emeritus at N.C. State.

Welcome, Dr. Smithies

When Oliver Smithies won the Nobel Prize in medicine this week, he fondly remembered another award he received in 1993, five years after he moved to this state. The scientist has a long list of honors to his name, but the North Carolina Award — the highest honor the state can bestow — was especially meaningful, Smithies told admirers at a celebration in Chapel Hill.

"It's one of my precious ones, because in a sense it was a welcome to being here in North Carolina," he said. "It makes one feel part of the community."

Then, the British-born scientist drew chuckles from the crowd when he added, "I've been part of UNC now for nearly 20 years. Hopefully, I've helped a little. I sometimes think I've been selfish because I haven't been chairman of anything."

By staff writers Ryan Teague Beckwith,
Barbara Barrett and Jane Stancill.
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NCSU’s ‘gum wall’ is a tradition that just stuck

Gum creations adorn the gum wall at NCSU.

Staff photo by Leslie Barbour

By Josh Shaffer
Staff Writer

Raleigh — Everybody knows N.C. State University’s Brickyard and Bell Tower. But for at least 20 years, the gum wall has endured as a gross-out landmark — a saliva-encrusted mix of art and litter.

Spend 30 minutes under the railroad bridge on Dan Allen Drive, and a passerby will wad up a piece of chewed gum, squish it onto the wall, then maybe garnish the wad with a cigarette butt or a dime. At least 1,000 pieces stretch across 15 feet of concrete, green and yellow splatters stretched into flowers and faces.

Someone recently spelled “I Love You, Julia” near the bottom, a feat that took 16 chewed sticks, counting the heart.

“It’s one of those traditions, like kissing the bronze mascot before the football game,” said Kevin MacNaughton, associate vice chancellor for facilities.

Art professors describe graffiti and other random installations as urban art, acts simultaneously rebellious and unifying.

Terri Orr paused at the wall on her way to work at University Dining, then pushed a wet chunk of Big Red into the gum.

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GUM
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middle.

“I think it’s ridiculous,” she said, clearly enjoying herself.

Raleigh’s wall has Kin nationwide.

In Greenville, Ohio, the entire exterior of The Maid Rite Sandwich Shop is dotted with wads, including the take-out window. Its collection brought a mention on WeirdUS.com, along with the storied Mothman statue in Point Pleasant, W.Va., celebrating a mythical half-man, half-insect.

In Seattle, the Market Theater has a box office every inch of which is gum-covered. For a time, chewers stuck coins in the middle, but theater patrons kept plucking them out and the habit died.

NCSU’s wall offers levity in the midst of study, a laugh or sneer of disgust between classes.

“I was walking towards Fox Labs when I first saw it, and I think my first impression was, ‘Whoa,’ said and student Pamela Ocampo, a New York native.

The gum wall surfaced on senior Tyler Dukes’ blog last month. Former editor of the campus newspaper, The Technician, Dukes pointed out that British chemists have developed a nonstick biodegradable gum — happy news for any cleanup crew.

Dukes also mentioned that the gum wall tends to get credit for NCSU’s ranking in the Princeton Review, which places it eighth this year on the list of schools rated “tiny, unsightly or both.”

Still, it offers some quirky charm.

“Despite the well-founded health concerns, I think the wall is kind of endearing,” Dukes said in an e-mail Tuesday. “It’s like a quintessential tribute to the randomness of college life.”

Cleanup is periodic, MacNaughton said, the most recent scrubbing about a year and a half back.

He didn’t do the actual scrubbing, so he couldn’t describe the process, but gum removal remedies are as varied as wart cures: Harden the gum with ice in a plastic bag. Then scrape it with a dull blade. Then apply turpentine, mineral spirits or the old reliable Gum-Out.

“The last time we tried cleaning,” MacNaughton said, “I think people hoped the gum would go away. Traditions don’t die easy.”

The history of the gum wall was unclear to passing students this week, many of them younger than the tradition itself.

“I’ve been here 22 years,” said Susan Grant, director of University Housing, “and it’s been here 22 years. It’s neat in some respects. It’s a community project.”

It’s enough to make you swallow your gum.

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Thank-You Note Enters College Admission Game

By KAREN W. ARENSON

Call it a testament to how carefully students court college admissions offices these days: Thank-you notes have become the new frontier.

Take the one that came with M & Ms to match Lehigh University’s school colors of brown and white, and with the applicant’s name inscribed on the candy. She thanked officials for her interview, adding, “Keep me on the tip of your tongue when reviewing applications.”

Some students buy college stationery for their notes as if to signal they already belong on campus. The flying pigs that adorned a thank-you to Guilford College in North Carolina were certainly eye-catching, as was the smiley face at the end of the note.

There are even thank-you notes that are less than thankful, like the one from a young man who announced he had visited Lehigh under parental duress and begged to be rejected. “He said, ‘My parents don’t know I’m sending this letter,’” said J. Leon Washington, the dean of admissions and financial aid.

Mr. Washington said that he was seeing more thank-you notes than ever, and that Lehigh received 50 or 60 in just one day last week. The notes are directed not just to admissions officers, but also to college tour guides and alumni who are often the ones most likely to be conducting college interviews these days.

Woody O’Cain, the admissions director at Furman University in South Carolina, said he received thousands each year.

“I laugh and tell people that’s the kind of stuff that replaces the zeros on my paycheck,” Mr. O’Cain said. “I realize a lot of them are strategic. A guidance counselor says be sure to write a thank-you note because they want it to be added to the file. But there are plenty that are very heartfelt.”

Still, Mary Fitzgerald Hull, a college adviser at a public high school in Maryland, seemed to strike a nerve among college admissions officers longing for authenticity when she asked recently for sample thank-you notes on a Web site for admissions professionals. Ms. Hull said one of her students disagreed with her mother on what was appropriate.
"Can you imagine your daughter going to her counselor and saying, ‘My mom and I can’t agree on what should go into a thank-you note?’” Dan Rosenfield, an admissions official at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, said in an interview.

"To be concerned about, ‘Am I going to say the wrong thing?’” Mr. Rosenfield continued, “Or ‘Am I going to write a thank-you note that hurts me?’ It just gets crazy.”

Miss Manners, Judith Martin, who writes a syndicated etiquette column that runs in more than 200 newspapers, says she, for one, does not think thanks are needed for a campus visit: “I would never, ever say, ‘Don’t write a thank-you note under any circumstances.’ I don’t want to discourage them. But it is not really a situation that is mandatory.”

Still, some admissions advisers leap to Ms. Hull’s defense.

“It seems like a small thing, but I tell my students that every contact with the college contributes to their perception of you,” said Patrick J. O’Connor, director of college counseling at the private Roeper School in Birmingham, Mich.

Bonnie R. Corman, an educational counselor and psychotherapist in Santa Barbara, Calif., does not put note-writing on her students’ to-do lists but advises those who want to send thanks to avoid lined paper. Still, she sternly rejected a young woman’s proposal to write on her mother’s personal stationery.

“I asked her, ‘How would I feel if I received a note with someone else’s name?’” Dr. Corman said.

Parents also get into the act, like the couple who recently thanked Mr. O’Cain of Furman for a “most positive” campus visit. Then they put in a plug for their son, saying that he had always been “a high achiever and a hard worker,” and that they knew Furman would be just the place to “help him reach his potential.”

Ms. Hull, who advises at Col. Zadok Magruder High School in Rockville, Md., said this year was the first that a student had asked her for a sample note. “In this competitive atmosphere, people are looking for anything they think will help them stand out,” she said. “I thought it was nice that she wanted to write a thank-you note.”

She added that some of her colleagues might like thanks themselves. “Last year, one teacher here said, ‘I have written all these recommendations, and not one student has thanked me.’ ”

Anna McGuire, Ms. Hull’s student, said she had been writing thank-you notes since she was young. She even recalled birthday presents’ being taken away until the notes were written.
Still, she and her mother differed over whether a note was necessary after visiting Guilford this past summer.

“I totally did not want to write one at all,” said Anna, a 16-year-old high school junior. “She insisted. And with my mother, I try to do what she says.”

Her mother, Grace, leaned toward a typed letter. Anna favored something more informal. But, she added, “I didn’t know if I should mention whether or not I intended to apply — I do — or who to mention in the note, as I met with both a tour guide and a representative from the college’s admission office.”

Even when thank-yous are received, they are not necessarily kept. Admissions officials at some colleges, like New York University, Johns Hopkins and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, say they are tossed.

Barbara F. Hall, associate provost for enrollment management at N.Y.U., said writing a note was “a very polite thing to do.” But, she added, the university does not keep the notes, because “with our reading files twice, we don’t need extraneous material, and that is extraneous.”

At other campuses, like Williams College and Princeton, the notes go into applicants’ files.

“Is it necessary to write a thank-you note?” said Janet L. Rapelye, dean of admissions at Princeton. “No. But I’m still in favor of them. Expressing gratitude is a lovely quality.”

Ms. Rapelye added, “In and of itself, it’s not going to change a decision,” and she suggested that the people who should really be thanked were the teachers and college counselors.

Sometimes they are. Carolyn Lawrence of Jamul, Calif., who advises students and their parents on college admissions, recalls a note she received from a student admitted early to her first-choice college. It came on a postcard of the Eiffel Tower. It said:

“I spent my spring break---

a) on last-minute college visits

b) in a month-long anxiety attack waiting to hear back from colleges

c) vacationing in Paris with my family, eating crepes, and being eternally grateful to Carolyn Lawrence for her help.

“The answer is C. Thank you.”