THE DAILY CLIPS

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Holland gets pay increase

Board approves raise that will bump AD's salary to $356,400 per year.

The Daily Reflector

The East Carolina University Board of Trustees on Wednesday approved an amendment to Athletics Director Terry Holland's contract to increase his salary by $32,400 to $356,400 a year.

The board, citing Holland's leadership and success, made the increase retroactive to Jan. 1, 2008, but specified that he would not be eligible for another raise until 2010.

"We believe that we have strong leadership at ECU, and we want to recognize that leadership and keep the team in place," Robert V. Lucas, chair of the board's University Affairs Committee, said in a statement released by East Carolina.

Lucas noted Holland's accomplishments in such areas as increased attendance at football games and improved academic performance of student-athletes.

According to data released this week, eight ECU sports teams are graduating athletes at a higher rate than the national average. Earlier this year, Conference USA reported that of the 17 varsity sports recognized by the conference, East Carolina had the best grade-point average in four.

NOTE: Salaries for the athletics director, coaches, and other employees of the Athletics Department at East Carolina University are paid for with funds generated by the department from ticket sales, broadcast revenues, private fund-raising and other sources. State appropriations, which support the academic mission of the institution, are not used.
ECU appoints Sheerer to serve in provost, vice chancellor positions

She served as dean of the College of Education from 1998-2006.

The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University officials named Marilyn Sheerer provost and senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs Wednesday.

Chancellor Steve Ballard announced the appointment following a national search by the university.

"Marilyn Sheerer is a special person with a remarkable combination of ability, enthusiasm, experience and energy," Ballard said.

"She is an accomplished leader who is well known and respected throughout North Carolina, and she is exactly the right person to fill this critical role at the university."

Sheerer, whose appointment was approved Wednesday by the ECU Board of Trustees in a closed session meeting, was serving as the interim provost.

She joined the university in 1996 as a professor and chair of the Department of Elementary and Middle Grades Education. She served as dean of the College of Education from 1998-2006 and also has led the university's fundraising operation and the Division of Student Life.

"I am honored by the confidence that Chancellor Ballard and the university have placed in me," Sheerer said. "ECU has become my home, and I am very happy to be continuing my service here."

Sheerer holds a bachelor's degree from Bloomsburg State College in Pennsylvania, a master's from Syracuse University and a Ph.D. from Ohio University.

Before coming to ECU in 1996, she held faculty and administrative positions at Edinboro University of Pennsylvania and Northern Illinois University.
Chapel Hill Halloween may be drier

Partygoers will find it tougher to get there, first off. There will be no more shuttle buses, so single lanes of traffic on East Franklin Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard could discourage visitors, as could police roadblocks that will turn drivers away on Raleigh Road and South Columbia Street.

Those who do find a way to get to Franklin Street will have to pay a $5 cover charge to get into a bar, and establishments that sell alcohol will stop letting patrons in after 1 a.m.

Those new restrictions are the rules worked out in a compromise between town officials and local bar owners. The police department had threatened to declare a state of emergency and prohibit alcohol sales after 8 p.m. to curb the annual revelry that had grown to 80,000 people last fall.

SEE LAST YEAR’S TAPE
Watch video taken at the 2007 Halloween celebration in Chapel Hill and get a link to the town’s Web page at newsobserver.com/news.

“I think we got their attention,” said Police Chief Brian Curran, who has been working for months to figure out how to keep people away from Chapel Hill on Halloween. The town spent $220,000 managing Halloween last fall, including pay for 450 extra cops.

Curran said the cost could go up this year as he tries to enforce the new rules.

Bar owners agreed to stop selling alcohol an hour earlier than required normally under state law. They also agreed to charge a $5 cover charge unless they were holding private parties.

SEE HALLOWEEN, PAGE 6B

HALLOWEEN
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

Scott Maitland, owner of the Top of the Hill restaurant and brewery, said downtown restaurant and bar owners and employees had stood to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars in income with the prohibition, even though much of the alcohol is consumed before people ever arrive on Franklin Street.

“I think this is a really great move,” Maitland said of the compromise.

Curran said Chapel Hill’s bar capacity is no more than 6,000 people, meaning local bars account for only a small portion of the drinking going on during the masquerade party. The tighter rules on alcohol sales are only part of the town’s approach to dampening the party.

Roadblocks will also detour people away from downtown on Raleigh Road near the UNC-Chapel Hill School of Government and South Columbia Street at Manning Drive. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and East Franklin Street will also narrow to a single inbound lane at Estes Drive.

“We’re still having a party,” said Mayor Kevin Foy. “It’s not rude to say, ‘We’re sorry, but we’re full.’ “

Shuttles will no longer deliver people to Franklin Street from park-and-ride lots, and, as usual, downtown streets will be closed to parking. Curran said Chapel Hill’s streets will be in gridlock and probably will spill over into Carrboro.

“Not coming is going to be the smart thing to do this year,” said Curran.

“I would like to apologize in advance to all the people that are going to be inconvenienced that live here, ... Our advice to people is, plan to stay in that night.”

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Shift health plan custody, audit says

Report urges executive branch oversight

BY DAN KANE
STAFF WRITER

State lawmakers have done a poor job overseeing the health plan for roughly 650,000 state employees, teachers and retirees and should turn those responsibilities over to an executive branch agency, a state audit said Wednesday.

The audit found that a legislative oversight committee for the state health plan rarely met and was late to discover that the plan’s finances had taken a serious downturn. The latest projections show the plan faces a deficit of as much as $280 million for the current fiscal year ending June 30.

“There is clearly a problem when the Health Plan is running a deficit and facing tough economic times ahead,” State Auditor Les Merritt said in a statement.

Swing in projections

Senate Majority Leader Tony Rand, a Fayetteville Democrat, said the committee he co-leads has provided proper oversight and blamed the plan’s misfortunes on the former executive administrator, George Stokes. Rand and Rep. Hugh Holliman, a Lexington Democrat and the other committee co-chairman, effectively fired Stokes in July after they said were surprised to discover the plan’s financial projections had swung from a $50 million surplus to a $65 million deficit.

The audit found that 35 states operate their plans under an executive branch agency and the remaining 15 have set up boards of trustees. North Carolina and Louisiana’s plans have trustee boards, but they only serve in an advisory role.

Merritt said having lawmakers in charge could violate the state constitution’s separation of powers clause and creates the potential for conflicts of interest when vendors give campaign contributions to lawmakers on the oversight committee.

Rand, for example, has since 2004 received $6,000 from Robert Greecyn, the president and CEO of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, which processes claims for the plan. Rand said he’s not influenced by the campaign money and the work was awarded through the standard bid process.

This is not the first time a state audit has recommended turning oversight of the plan to the executive branch. A 1994 audit made the same recommendation after problems surfaced.

Dana Cope, executive director of the State Employees Association of North Carolina, said he supports the audit’s findings. He said Rand and Holliman have too much power over a plan so critical to workers and retirees.

“I think it’s absolutely important that — whoever wins the governorship — one of the first actions they should do is work to place the state health plan in the hands of the executive branch,” he said.

Stokes has disputed Rand and Holliman’s characterization of the plan’s fortunes. He supports moving oversight to the executive branch.

Merritt’s staff is working on a second audit into what caused the plan to dive into the red.

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Academics sign petition praising Ayers

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

Thousands of academics, including about a dozen from the Triangle, have signed an online petition in support of Bill Ayers, the 1960s-radical-turned-college professor whose ties to Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama were a matter of hot dispute in Wednesday night's debate.

The petition, which has circulated through university faculties across the nation, says critics of Ayers, an education professor at the University of Illinois-Chicago, are trying to "intimidate free thinking and stifle critical dialogue." More than 3,200 have signed the petition.

The petition represents a rare attempt to defend Ayers, whose name has become a political epithet. Republicans have called him a "domestic terrorist," and presidential candidate John McCain said Wednesday night that Obama's dealings with him raise questions of character. Obama, for his part, has downplayed his connections with Ayers and disavowed Ayers' violent acts. But Ayers, his supporters say, has dimensions that are being ignored amid the election-year tumult.

Ayers "built an extraordinary life," said Lawrence Grossberg, a UNCHapel Hill communications studies professor who signed the petition. "He has become one of the leading scholars in the field of education. [People are] excoriating him for things he did 40 years ago and misrepresenting what he has done since, in order to make someone else suffer. That doesn't seem very American to me."

The connections

In the late 1960s, Ayers helped form the Weather Underground, a group that launched a series of bombings targeting U.S. landmarks. Ayers was charged in 1970 with inciting to riot and conspiracy to bomb public buildings, but the charges were dropped because of prosecutorial misconduct. He has since redefined himself — in some circles — as an education scholar, the author or editor of about 15 books. He advocates for school reform and helped win nearly $50 million in grants for Chicago schools.

Ayers and Obama live near each other in Chicago and worked with a charity and foundation board together; in addition, Ayers once hosted a political meeting for Obama in the mid-1990s as Obama prepared to run for the state Senate in Illinois.

On Wednesday night, McCain said the scope of Ayers' ties to Obama have not been fully explored. "We need to know the full extent of that relationship," he said.

Obama said Wednesday night that the issue is a distraction. "Mr. Ayers has become the centerpiece of Sen. McCain's campaign," he said.

Ayers "engaged in despicable acts," Obama said. "I have roundly denounced those acts."

He said Ayers has had no involvement in his campaign and would have no role in an Obama administration.

Ayers is married to Bernadine Dohrn, also a former Weather Underground member who is now on the law school faculty in Northwestern University. His scholarship on education reform has been lauded; he advises Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley on school issues, the mayor recently told The New York Times.

Duke law professor Michael Tigar has known the couple for many years and respects their academic work. Tigar, who also signed the petition, criticized attempts to link Obama with Ayers' past indiscretions.

SEE AYERS, PAGE 10A
"I think that the McCain campaign's desperate attempt to tag Sen. Obama with Ayers' conduct, back when Sen. Obama was 8 years old, is a discreditable attempt to divert attention from the serious issues we face," Tigar wrote in an e-mail message to The News & Observer.

Petition: It's history

The petition's origin isn't clear. It is signed only "Friends and supporters of Bill Ayers," and it doesn't address the most destructive acts committed by Ayers and his group, such as bombs set off at the U.S. Capitol and the Pentagon.

It reads in part, "The current characterizations of Professor Ayers — 'unrepentant terrorist,' 'lunatic leftist' — are unrecognizable to those who know or work with him. It's true that Professor Ayers participated passionately in the civil rights and antiwar movements of the 1960s, as did hundreds of thousands of Americans. His participation in political activity 40 years ago is history; what is most relevant now is his continued engagement in progressive causes, and his exemplary contribution — including publishing 16 books — to the field of education. The current attacks appear as part of a pattern of 'exposés' and assaults designed to intimidate free thinking and stifle critical dialogue."

'Selective Indignation'

George Leef, director of research for the John William Pope Foundation for Education Policy, a conservative Raleigh think tank, said the petition's signers are conveniently ignoring key facts. Ayers was never charged with killing anyone, but people were killed by bombs linked to his organization.

A 1970 pipe bomb in San Francisco attributed to the group killed a police officer and hurt another, and an accidental 1970 explosion in a Greenwich Village basement killed three radicals. In 1981, two police officers and a security guard were killed in the robbery of an armored truck in New York that involved two Weather Underground members.

"There is a lot of selective indignation in America, and the academic world is as prone to that as anyone else," Leef said. "If Ayers at one point had expressed a favorable opinion of the Ku Klux Klan, I don't think he would have ever lived that down."

As of Wednesday afternoon, about a dozen UNC-CH professors had signed the petition, along with two from Duke, one from N.C. State and several from other universities across North Carolina.

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Obama 101: Politics on campus is suddenly boring.

By Jonathan Zimmerman

A few weeks ago, I was asked to speak about the presidential elections at a student dormitory. I said yes, of course, but only on the condition that some John McCain supporters showed up.

They didn't.

The discussion was OK, so far as it went, but it didn't go far.

Everyone expressed some degree of disdain for McCain and favor to his opponent, Barack Obama.

Yawn.

Welcome to another day of campaign 2008 on campus. Out there in the real world, I'm told, the election is hotly contested. But here at the university, it's all Barack, all the time. And that's a recipe for boredom.

It's also a formula for a lousy education. Last time I checked, universities were supposed to challenge students' biases and preconceived opinions. Based on what I've seen, however, we're falling down on the job. At least here in New York, the students are gaga for Obama, and we're not doing anything to defy them.

Part of the problem stems from professors' own political biases, of course. Don't get me wrong: We're not the crazy-eyed Marxists whom you've read about in the papers. As a recent study by sociologists Neil Gross and Solon Simmons has confirmed, American university professors are mostly moderate-to-liberal rather than radical.

It also means we tend to support Democratic office-seekers in overwhelming numbers. Even in Texas, hardly a bastion of liberal politics, the Houston Chronicle reported in May that professors contributed three times more money to Democratic presidential candidates than to Republicans. And on some campuses, the skew was much greater than that. At Rice and Texas Christian, for example, a whopping 97% of campaign contributions went to the Democrats.

That wouldn't be a bad thing, necessarily, if we could put aside our biases when we enter the classroom. But it's much easier said than done, as any honest professor will acknowledge. And that's because we have two different purposes, which often lie in tension with each other. As researchers and writers, we're supposed to establish a strong point of view. But as teachers, we're supposed to help other people develop their own.

How can you do both? There's no simple answer, of course. With the elections just a month away, however, I'd like to offer a few modest proposals for infusing our classes with the same political energy that we've witnessed outside of them:

► Sympathize: If you can't stomach McCain, teach yourself as much as you can about him. Whenever one of your students makes a pro-Obama comment, you'll be prepared to take McCain's side. Trust me, it works.

► Bring the outsiders in: Too many of us still operate like solo practitioners. If you can't argue coherently for McCain's positions, invite a speaker who will.

► Vary the menu: Ask students to write a campaign brief for the other guy. Or require them to interview someone from the opposing party. Either they'll develop new perspectives, or they'll come up with better rationales for their old ones.

► Don't campaign on campus: There's no reason to wear your opinions on your sleeve, or on your lapel. Go easy on the campaign paraphernalia, which will only make it harder for students to disagree with you.

And if you need a model for this type of instruction, look no further than the man you want in the White House. Barack Obama taught law for 12 years at the University of Chicago, where he developed a reputation for rigorous open-mindedness. He challenged everyone, especially the students who agreed with him. Too bad more of his supporters can't follow his example.

Jonathan Zimmerman teaches history and education at New York University. He is author of Innocents Abroad: American Teachers in the American Century.
Top conferences lag in graduation rates

By Steve Wieberg
USA TODAY

Western Kentucky and Davidson proved themselves on the floor seven months ago. Western playing into the NCAA basketball tournament's Sweet 16 and the Stephen Curry-led Wildcats moving a round further, into the regional finals. Days before tipping off practice for a new season came confirmation of their chops in the classroom, as well.

Both men's programs boasted 100% graduation rates in a study released Tuesday by the NCAA. They were among 27 Division I men's programs that saw every player who arrived from 1998 to 2001 earn a degree within six years. Elsewhere, however, were signs that the sport remains a problem area.

Well more than a quarter of the 300-plus Division I men's basketball programs had four-year graduation rates beneath 50%, including 2008 Final Four qualifier UCLA (46%) and regional finalists Texas (31%) and Louisville (42%). The numbers lagged in particular in the nation's top six conferences - the Atlantic Coast, Big East, Big Ten, Big 12, Pacific-10 and Southeastern - where 30 of 73 basketball programs graduated fewer than half their players.

Fourteen of them were NCAA tournament entrants in March. In football, where Oklahoma is No. 6 in the USA TODAY Coaches' Poll and No. 4 in the Associated Press news media and Harris polls, the Sooners posted a 46% four-year grad rate, fifth lowest in Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly known as Division I-A). Georgia and Georgia Tech were only slightly better at 48%.

The two sports, along with baseball, have long raised the greatest academic concerns within the NCAA, prompting the creation of special panels to draw up corrective measures. The average four-year grad rate in men's basketball was 62%; that's 16 points lower than the Division I average for all sports. Football's was 67% in the top-tier bowl subdivision, in which 119 schools compete. Baseball's was 68%.

Gerald Gurney, Oklahoma's senior associate athletics director for academics and student life, notes that the school's grad rates tend to fluctuate because of "the number of our athletes who pursue professional careers and delay their graduation." But the NCAA downplays that impact.

"It's below 50%" NCAA President Myles Brand said, "...either there was a problem, which they've corrected or are on their way to correcting, or there's a remaining problem."

More flattering:

Three Final Four qualifiers - national champion Tennessee, runner-up Stanford and Connecticut - were among 79 women's basketball programs with four-year rates of 100%.

Colgate and Alcorn State posted the highest overall rates, both 99% over the covered four-year period. Alcorn, like many historically black institutions, is strapped for resources, athletics director Darren Hamilton said. "But we have people who are committed, who work beyond their hours and don't count the cost to the institution," he said. "They really take pride in the total development of students."

Printable major college football standings can be found at collegefootball.usatoday.com

Different look

Reshuffling this week's USA TODAY Coaches' Poll in college football according to each program's graduation rate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team (rank in poll)</th>
<th>Grad. rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vanderbilt (23)</td>
<td>91%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wake Forest (19)</td>
<td>83%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Texas Tech (3)</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Penn State (3)</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Carolina (21)</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<td>Virginia Tech (18)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>South Carolina (14)</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Florida (20)</td>
<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alabama (2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boise State (16)</td>
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<td>Southern California(4)</td>
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<td>Kansas (15)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ohio State (11)</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<td>Michigan State (17)</td>
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<td>Texas (1)</td>
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<td>Georgia (9)</td>
<td>48%</td>
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<td>Oklahoma (6)</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

*Average four-year graduation rates for players entering school from 1998 to 2001.*

Schools with the highest and lowest NCAA graduation success rates, tracking scholarship athletes who arrived from high school or transferred from other colleges from 1998 to 2001:

**The good in Division I**
1. Alcorn State 99%
   Colgate 99%
   Holy Cross 98%
   Notre Dame 98%
   Navy 98%

**The rest of the best in FBS (formerly I-A)**
Duke 97%
Northwestern 97%
Boston College 96%
Stanford 95%
Vanderbilt 94%

**The bad in Division I**
1. Florida A&M 39%
   Chicago State 40%
   Jackson State 40%
   Savannah State 43%
   Southern 44%

**The worst in FBS (formerly I-A)**
San Jose State 52%
Florida International 58%
Fresno State 61%
Louisiana-Monroe 61%
Texas-El Paso 61%

Source: NCAA
ALE investigating Wake Forest teen's death


Agents with the state Division of Alcohol Law Enforcement say they are investigating where an 18-year-old got alcohol prior to the crash that killed him early Sunday morning.

Jarret O. Satchell, of Wake Forest, was driving east on Purnell Road around 12:49 a.m. Sunday when his vehicle went off the pavement near Wolverton Fields Drive.

Authorities said they are investigating a rumor that there had been a party at Satchell's house that evening but declined to comment further about the case.

ALE statistics show that agents have filed 36 aiding and abetting charges in Wake County this year for underage drinking cases.

Friends said Satchell left a gathering at his house after getting upset about a girl. It was unclear where he was headed when the wreck occurred, about a mile from his house.

State troopers said they believe Satchell was going an estimated 70 mph in a 50 mph zone when his car went off the right side of the road, he over-corrected, and the car crossed the center line. He was not wearing a seat belt and was thrown from the vehicle as it went airborne, struck a pole, hit two trees and overturned, authorities said.

Satchell was a 2008 graduate of Wake Forest-Rolesville High School, where he played soccer, and had been home for fall break from East Carolina University.

Relatives said Monday he was a considerate teen who often helped others.

"Jarret was an Eagle Scout with a 4.4 GPA," his uncle, David Hegel said. "He looked out for everyone else."

Friends mourned his death Sunday evening with a candle light vigil and have set up a fund to help his family with funeral expenses.

Donations can be made at Capital Bank, 12217 Capital Blvd., Wake Forest.

Funeral arrangements are pending.

Reporter: Kelcey Carlson
Photographer: Edward Wilson
Web Editor: Kelly Gardner

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Mount St. Joseph grad dies after falling, striking head

By Julie Scharper

October 14, 2008

Home from college on fall break, William S. "Willie" Staso had plans to visit with family and friends and attend a football game at his alma mater, Mount St. Joseph High School, during the weekend.

The 18-year-old was hanging out with friends in Crofton early Saturday morning when, according to police, he ran up to a sport utility vehicle driven by a friend from high school, jumped on the hood and fell and struck his head.

He was taken to Maryland Shock Trauma Center, where he died that afternoon, Anne Arundel County police said.

"It was one of those incredibly unnecessary tragedies," said Barry J. Fitzpatrick, the principal of Mount St. Joseph. "He was a wonderful kid. He didn't have a mean bone in his body. He was full of fun, full of mischief."

Staso, of the 8300 block of Cool Spring Court in Ellicott City, graduated from Mount St. Joseph in the spring and was a freshman at East Carolina University, Fitzpatrick said.

According to police, Staso was standing near Chapman Road and Andy Court about 12:30 a.m. when he ran up to the 2003 Chevrolet Suburban driven by Joseph Mendez, 19, of the 600 block of St. Johnsbury Road in Catonsville.

After Staso struck his head, Mendez and some passengers put him in the Suburban and started to drive him to the hospital, police said. They drove a short distance before stopping and calling for help.

Mendez, a 2007 graduate of Mount St. Joseph, and Staso were close friends, Fitzpatrick said.

Staso's parents declined to comment, and calls to Mendez's home were not returned.

Counselors and chaplains will be available for students at the high school this week, Fitzpatrick said.

A football game that many alumni attended Saturday was subdued, he said. Staso "would have probably been there on Saturday, God bless him, if he had lived," Fitzpatrick said.

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