THE DAILY CLIPS

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"Jungle Book" fans need not look for "The Bare Necessities" at performances by East Carolina University's Storybook Theatre. The troupe's presentation of "The Jungle Book" has an emphasis on book. The play, which is not a musical, bears a much stronger resemblance to Rudyard Kipling's "The Mowgli Stories" than to the well-known Disney animated version of "The Jungle Book."

"We actually are doing the original story," said Storybook Theatre Director Patricia Clark. "A lot of people have only seen the Disney version on video. That version actually does not follow the original story; a lot is left out."

This version, with a cast of 32, includes favorite characters such as Baloo, the bear; Bagheera, the black panther; Kaa, the python; and Shere Khan, the tiger. It also features wolves, which were seldom seen in the film, along with other animals that were written out of the animated script altogether.

Shalen Ennis plays Tabaqui, a jackal not seen in the Disney version of the story.

"When I auditioned, I knew nothing about this character," said the ECU sophomore, who grew up watching Disney's "The Jungle Book" cartoon. Ennis, of Newport, also read Kipling's classic book.

"The characters are so different in the story," she said. "The story is actually a lot darker than the Disney version."

ECU junior Dorothy Austin also grew up with Disney's "The Jungle Book." The animated version does not include her stage character, Rann, the kite.

"With Baloo or characters like that, you have the challenge of kids coming in and seeing one thing and expecting them to be another," she said. "I've created a character voice all my own. That's nice to be able to have that creativity with it."

Besides a voice, Austin has created a bit of a dance for her character, thanks to some Internet research and some help from movement coach Jill Matairei Carlson.

Carlson, an assistant professor in ECU's school of theater and dance, is helping the cast portray convincing animal characters.

"When you're dealing with actors that are playing animals," Carlson said, "there's a lot of body movement that takes place."

The old-school approach to animal characterization—think preschoolers down on all fours and pretending to be a cat or dog—doesn't work well for stage.

Such a posture usually leaves an actor's head close to the floor and limits his ability to convey emotion through facial expressions.
"Since this is not the Disney version, we did not want to do anything remotely associated with that," Carlson said. "We just wanted to stay away from that."

Clark hopes the audience will appreciate Storybook Theatre's approach, which includes scenes depicting Kipling writing his famous story.

"I think by doing this particular script and this particular show, we've discovered the beauty of writers," said Clark, coordinator of ECU's theater education program. "It lets us share with the audience the beauty that this writer tried to share with the reading audience. ... We've found the real magic in the story through this script."

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Carlson helps actors transform their four-legged characters to two-legged ones without losing too many of their animal traits.

"They're starting to add some human qualities in there because these animals are going to speak lines," Carlson said. "(It's) mixing the animal with the human."

In researching their characters, student actors did everything from observing their own cats and dogs to watching videos on YouTube. But they did not watch the Disney version of "The Jungle Book."
Police seek two in Sunday armed robbery of ECU basketball player

The Daily Reflector

An East Carolina University basketball player and the recruit he was hosting were victims in an armed robbery reported Monday by the Greenville Police Department.

Officers are searching for two men in connection with the Sunday morning robbery and assault in the parking lot of Copper Beech, a new townhouse development off 10th Street east of Greenville. They have obtained warrants charging Kevin Rafael Monroe, 22, and Michael Roger Clemons, 17, with robbery with a dangerous weapon, attempted robbery with a dangerous weapon and assault inflicting serious injury, according to a news release.

The incident happened at Copper Beach Way shortly after 2 a.m. Sunday, the release stated.

Twenty-year-old Brock Young, a sophomore guard on the Pirate basketball team, and 19-year-old Ledrick Eackles, a basketball player at Hargrave Military Academy, said they were approached by two men, one carrying a shotgun, the other a handgun, in the parking lot, the release said.

The police report said the victims told officers they started running, but stopped because they thought they might be shot.

The man carrying the handgun struck Young in the head while the other took his watch, cell phone, tennis shoes and blue jeans, according to the report. Eackles was not reported to be injured.

A recruiting Web site said Eackles was scheduled to make a visit to ECU this weekend.

The two gunmen were seen leaving in a Silver Chevrolet Malibu.

University officials declined comment. “Because it is an ongoing criminal investigation, East Carolina is not in a position to comment on any part of the matter,” said Assistant Athletics Director/Media Relations Tom McClellan.

Police identified Monroe as the man who took the items and carried the shotgun.

Anyone with information about the location of Monroe and Clemons should call Pitt-Greenville CrimeStoppers at 758-7777.
College towns, too, feel the pain

BY BARBARA BARRETT
WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

Incumbent Democrat U.S. Rep. David Price is quick to acknowledge that his compact district, which includes Duke University, UNC-Chapel Hill and Research Triangle Park, hasn't seen the suffering of many other regions.

Still, he said, talk of the economy dominates the campaign trail.

"You have acute anxiety about savings accounts, investment accounts, where people have been saving for college or retirement and see that money evaporating," said Price, of Chapel Hill. "There's no question the recession has hit home here."

But what can one person do in Congress? A lot, Price insisted, if the individual has risen in leadership.

"There are things I can do on appropriations," he said. Price is a subcommittee chairman on the powerful spending committee, and he annually directs millions of dollars in earmark projects back to his district.

Price was fresh from a dedication of new, earmark-funded historic markers on Parrish Street in Durham, once known as "Black Wall Street" for its minority-owned banks. The money, Price said, will help support Durham's downtown revitalization plans.

He said other projects, such as money for a farmers market in Cary, also help the local economy. Price supports another economic stimulus package, but his opponent, Republican William "B.J." Lawson, said that is a bad idea.

"There aren't any legislative magic wands Congress can wave to fix the economy and our financial system," said Lawson, a former physician and business owner from Cary.

Lawson said he would rather empower individuals than rely on government's help. He wants to encourage people to start small business and create jobs. He would replace the federal income tax with a tax on the use of carbon fuels.

He also wants to create new, local bartering systems - including printing new currencies if necessary - to unhinge local economies from the national treasury.

"These are options that are admitttedly out of the box," Lawson said. "But they empower people who are going through economic stress."
Study says wellness programs pay off

Blue Cross: Measures reduce employers' costs

BY SUE STOCK
STAFF WRITER

North Carolina business owners might be looking for ways to trim costs, but the state's largest health insurer says wellness programs shouldn't be on the chopping block.

A study to be released today by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina showed that companies willing to make small investments in wellness initiatives such as paid time off for doctor's visits and health screenings in the workplace see long-term returns.

"The things that employees value the most aren't always the things that cost a lot of money, and in fact, it can be just the opposite," said Don Bradley, chief medical officer for Blue Cross. "You don't have to build a gym, but just give the opportunity to get outside and do some exercise."

The study showed that companies that offer comprehensive wellness programs see a 25 percent to 30 percent decrease in medical and absenteeism costs in about 3.6 years — something Bradley said will be more significant to employers as health care costs continue to rise.

"I think we are beginning to see the tide change here," he said. "There's been a lot of cost-shifting to the employees, and it's really gotten to the point of, 'How much more can you cost-shift?'"

Blue Cross research showed that 4 percent of companies still do not offer any site health promotions.

But employers will begin placing more emphasis on wellness programs as companies struggle to control health care costs, said John McDonnell, a partner in Progressive Benefit Solutions, an employee benefits consulting firm in Raleigh.

"They are beginning to see it because the costs are getting so exorbitant that they have to do it," he said. "It is a mindset change that is exploding in the marketplace right now. The economy's making it the biggest issue right now."

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KEY FINDINGS
in North Carolina, 70 percent of employers offer at least three workplace wellness programs, but 4 percent offer none.

The average return on investment for employers is $3.14 per dollar spent on employee wellness.

The four most commonly offered workplace wellness programs: smoke-free workplace, paid time off for doctor's visits or health care needs, on-site health screenings and health fairs.

The four programs with the highest participation rates: paid time off for doctor's visits or health care needs, health fairs and physical activity programs.

* Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina did a telephone survey of 500 plan members in June and July. The margin of error is +/- 4.3 percent.

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