Lab preserves Blackbeard’s treasures
By Jeannine Manning Hutson
ECU News Services
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A few hours after underwater archaeologists plucked one of four large anchors from the wreck of Blackbeard’s Queen Anne’s Revenge in the waters near Beaufort Inlet in May, a tourist looking at the encrusted artifact on a flatbed truck asked when it would be on display at a museum.

“Years” was the collective answer from QAR project team members standing nearby.

The answer would be the same for the approximately one-ton cannon raised Wednesday from the site. The cannon arrived Thursday at the QAR Conservation Lab at East Carolina University to begin the process of being saved for future generations.

Today the large anchor sits in a 6,500-gallon tank at the QAR Conservation Lab beside hundreds of other artifacts from the shipwreck site. Similar types of artifacts are submerged in tanks filled with sodium carbonate solutions, waiting to be conserved and prepared for display in the North Carolina Maritime Museum.

The Queen Anne’s Revenge, Blackbeard’s flagship, wrecked off the North Carolina coast in 1718. Initial fieldwork at the site under the direction of the
N.C. Department of Cultural Resources’ Underwater Archaeology Branch began in 1997, and it has progressed slowly and methodically.

The clock is ticking to pull artifacts from the wreckage. “We want to start bringing these pieces up off the main mound because we have a directive for three years to do full recovery as hard as we can, to get it all up. It’s about 50 percent of the site out there,” Mark Wilde-Ramsing, state underwater archaeologist, said in May as he stood by the newly hoisted anchor.

Wilde-Ramsing earned his doctorate in coastal resource management at ECU in 2009. He has directed the Queen Anne’s Revenge project since it began in 1997.

**Hands-on experience**

“This fall has allowed a large group of maritime studies students and professors to not just visit (the recovery site) but to also be part of the team,” said Sarah Watkins-Kenney, the QAR Lab Director and Underwater Archaeology Branch Chief Conservator with the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources.

“These students are getting hands-on experience,” during the retrieval of artifacts, Watkins-Kenney said.

Onboard the research vessels this week have been ECU graduate students in anthropology and maritime studies, undergraduate students, and Lynn Harris, QAR Intern and Independent Studies instructor with ECU Maritime Studies. Approximately 10 ECU student interns and independent study students have participated in this fall’s expedition to the Queen Anne’s Revenge recovery site.

“What we’ve been able to offer students out there, not just volunteering but also getting course credit, is exciting,” Watkins-Kenney said. “It’s a step forward for ECU. The students will get hands-on experience in the recovery of artifacts from the ocean. They will get to work on a real project instead of just seeing it in a textbook.”

ECU maritime studies students were part of the dive team, and Watkins-Kenney is hopeful that will continue for future recovery dives.
If the weather permits, the main dives at the Queen Anne’s Revenge will end this week and the site will be closed for the winter.

Two ECU graduate students — in anthropology and in maritime studies — are working in the QAR Conservation Lab currently, Watkins-Kenney said.

“In addition to those students, we have ongoing research projects with ECU faculty and their students,” Watkins-Kenney said. Also undergraduate classes in history, anthropology, conservation, maritime studies, and from the Honors College visit the facility.

‘A tedious process’

In the lab, located on ECU’s West Research Campus, the work is slow but rewarding, said Shanna Daniel, Queen Anne’s Revenge project conservator.

Inside, tanks hold the anchor, as well as barrel hoops, the ship’s sternpost that was brought up in 2007, and many concretions containing glass beads, ceramics, nails and other small pieces of the ship, tools and personal items of the crew.

Here, artifacts go through a 12-step conservation process that includes documenting the artifact, cleaning, desalination, consolidation, drying and final analysis. The lab is a joint venture between the university and the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources.

“For the cleaning process, we’ll mainly be using air scribes (on the anchor),” said Daniel. These are small pneumatic air scribes and are a more controlled way to take off the layers of concretion on the artifacts, such as the cannon. Concretion, the solid mass of mineral deposits, must be removed along with the soluble salts in the metal to make the object stable to be studied, handled and displayed.

The QAR archaeologists and conservators also have used on-site monitoring on a limited number of large artifacts while they are still on the seafloor of Beaufort Inlet. The process has the potential to shorten the desalination and stabilization time once the artifact is recovered and moved to the lab. Wendy Welsh, QAR Conservator and Lab Manager, leads those efforts.
“So actually this anchor began conservation before we ever got it in,” Daniel said.

“The main goal is not to hurt the surface of the artifact,” Daniel said, while they are removing the concretion.

“A cannon can take up to a year or more to clean so I would guess that the anchor will take at least that long,” she said.

After it’s cleaned, metal artifacts begin the electrolysis process to remove salts. “With a cannon, it could take two to three years,” Daniel said.

After electrolysis, more finite cleaning is performed before a controlled air drying with low humidity — 30 percent or less — so in eastern North Carolina that is usually done in the winter.

After the air drying, a coating of tannic acid is applied to prohibit further corrosion and to give the “aesthetic appeal” for the museum.

“When it comes out, it doesn’t look like it would in the museum. It still has that orange, rusty look,” Daniel said. Final photography and final measurements are completed before it goes to the museum.

**Years to go**

Chris Southerly was one of two divers in the water when the anchor and cannon came up. He and other divers used straps to secure the artifacts to lift bags that were inflated underwater to buoy them about 25 feet to the surface. Southerly, an ECU graduate, is assistant state archaeologist and one of the dive supervisors for the underwater archaeology branch.

The work in the conservation lab, Southerly said, is just as critical to preserving the archaeological treasures as the efforts underwater.

“Archaeology continues in the lab. What we take up as one object, that one object might have 50 to 100 pieces in it that have to be cleaned and stabilized,” Southerly said.

He estimated that conservation of the entire collection of QAR artifacts will take 10 to 15 years. X-rays are taken of the items once they are brought to the lab to prioritize what is conserved first, he said.
The Queen Anne’s Revenge originally was a French slave ship, La Concorde, measuring 90- to 100-feet long with three masts and a crew of 150 to 200. Blackbeard captured La Concorde in 1717 and renamed it before it ran aground in 1718 near what is today Fort Macon State Park.

Wilde-Ramsing said scientists from across the state work on the project. He singled out Cape Fear Community College and UNC-W’s research vessels and ECU’s efforts in the project. “The biggest support is from East Carolina University, which houses our conservation lab,” he said. “Nine-tenths of the work on any archaeology project is in the conservation lab.”

For more about the project, visit www.qaronline.org.

Photos by Cliff Hollis/ECU News Services
Three fronts are converging to form a perfect Pirate party storm this Halloween weekend in Greenville, while law enforcement coordinates efforts to keep events safe and secure.

The extended weekend will include an East Carolina University football game at 3:30 p.m. Saturday at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium against Tulane University.

Add to that the university’s alumni homecoming events, topped off by the traditional Halloween madness in the downtown club district through Monday, and there will be plenty to occupy several agencies.

The Greenville Police Department will spearhead enforcement efforts, relying on overtime budgets to provide officers and security personnel throughout the city through the early hours of Tuesday, agency officials said.

The focal event will be the historically hectic scene that occurs downtown on Halloween night, when thousands of costumed students pass through
barriers erected by police who search for contraband, dangerous objects and prohibited accessories that might give the appearance of a weapon.

The greatest concentration of officers will amass that night along the area’s perimeters to match the throngs that pack the bars and streets within the club district.

Mobile surveillance cameras have increased in the downtown area since last Halloween, but Deputy Chief Joe Bartlett would not specify how they will be deployed.

Department commanders have met with local business owners to coordinate and share ideas for keeping control of the flow of partiers in and out of the bars and clubs along and around the downtown area, department officials said.

“Our deputy chief and patrol captain also coordinate meetings with ECU police,” department spokesman Sgt. Carlton Williams said. “Other officers and volunteers who will deploy to assist in the area.”

During a news briefing Thursday, Bartlett directed his thoughts — and a reminder — to those planning their weekend.

“There will be a lot of folks out this weekend having a good time, which is an opportunity for other folks to be out doing some bad things,” Bartlett said. “This weekend, of all weekends, you need to take some extra care for your personal safety. It will be all hands on deck for the police department, with a lot of extra law enforcement officers out all over town. But bear in mind that in a city of more than 80,000 people (plus visitors), a hundred or two hundred officers is not a lot.”

He said that the extra officers on duty will be costly, but necessary.

“We have to pay people, and Halloween is an event that really strains our personnel resources, but it’s our responsibility to ensure public safety,” Bartlett said.

He described the department’s working relationship with the ECU Police Department as invaluable.
“Our relationship gets stronger every day, especially when we work events like this together,” Bartlett said.

Dawn Tevepaugh, ECU assistant police chief, said Thursday her department has conducted joint meetings with GPD to prepare for the weekend.

“We’re also beefing up our staff with extra officers throughout the campus for the daytime activities,” Tevepaugh said. “Some will then move down along the Reade Street corridor for the nighttime events downtown.”

There will be several extra officers patrolling the campus Sunday, and 20 officers deployed in groups of five in four sections of the campus for Monday night’s big Halloween event, Tevepaugh said.

For ECU students uninterested in the downtown mega-party and the drinking associated with it, from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. the university will host “Midnight Madness” on campus at the Mendenhall Student Center and the Student Recreation Center.

Events there will include a dance band, a costume contest, the horror film “Scream,” and a midnight breakfast. All campus events will be alcohol-free, and officers will be assigned at those locations to ensure student fun, safety and security.

“We expect a lot of people on campus for a long weekend. I encourage everyone to act responsibly, including with the use of alcohol,” Tevepaugh said. “Please have a sober driver if you take to the roads. Don’t walk alone to and from the campus and stay aware of your surroundings. Know where you are while on campus in case you need us to come and help with anything, and just call us if you need anything.”

In addition to the ECU police, six other law enforcement agencies will be contributing to the weekend security effort, including the State Highway Patrol, the Pitt County Sheriff’s Office and officers deployed from area police and sheriff agencies, Bartlett said.

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Social workers help teachers reach out

By Jackie Drake
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Social workers at East Carolina University are helping Pitt County teachers reach out to families so students can do better in school.

Faculty from the ECU School of Social Work led a family engagement training session in Winterville on Thursday for teachers who are part of a federal School Improvement Grant to improve academic achievement at Farmville Central, South Central and North Pitt high schools.

“We’re sharing tools for building relationships between schools and families, teachers and parents; we really feel like that’s the key,” Nancy Pierson, director of field education for the School of Social Work, said.

“Family support is the biggest factor of success in a child’s life,” Pierson said.

Awarded in the summer of 2010, the three-year grant gave more than $2 million to each school to increase the graduation rate by funding additional staff and programs in four areas: academics, attendance, staff development and family engagement.
“The family engagement piece ties it all together,” Pierson said. “It’s at the center of a child succeeding in school.”

Open houses, parent nights and other welcoming events have been held at each school. The grant covers transportation to those events and parent-teacher conferences. This past summer, teachers made visits to their students’ homes. While not required, teachers are encouraged to continue family visits and other means of connecting with parents, family engagement coordinator Jackie Beck said.

“The purpose of this workshop is to give you skills to help you do these home visits and work with these families,” assistant director of field education LaTonya Gaskins told teachers.

Teachers already have plenty to do, presenters said, so teaming with school social workers was emphasized.

“It’s been very informative,” South Central teacher Shanna Shoemaker said. “I’ve learned a lot of things in dealing with parents that I had not thought of before but will now.”

“When you can build that initial relationship with parents, they’re less likely to ignore phone calls home,” South Central teacher Carol Watson said.

Increasing parent support of attendance and homework contributed to graduation rate increases at all three grant high schools last year.

“Everything starts at home,” Farmville Central social worker Anita Mills said. “When you have open communication between family and school, it’s a positive catalyst for students to be successful in school.”

Last year, the grant provided one social worker who covered all three schools. Family needs were so great that this year there is a full-time grant-funded social worker at each school.

“This is a new experience for everyone, having a full-time social worker at Farmville Central,” Mills said. “We’re all learning. But it’s going well so far; we’re learning to work more closely with the teachers.”
The grant is successful so far, according to Pierson, adding that the school of social work has been involved from the beginning.

“It has an impact we’re only beginning to see,” she said.

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President Barack Obama extended a helping hand to unemployed recent college graduates this week with a new “Pay as Your Earn” plan for repaying student loan debt. Those calling for full forgiveness were making an unreasonable request, and the president charted the proper course to make certain the government and the banks receive what is owed.

While that will remedy an immediate ill affecting the financial health of millions of Americans, the system that encourages students to accept a tremendous debt for a college education remains deeply flawed. Without employment to help these young men and women repay those loans, it leaves them desperate and scared, fueling the indignation and outrage now visible on streets across the nation.

For the first time, Americans owe more in student loan debt than they do on credit cards, and that total is expected to reach $1 trillion by the end of the year. For most students, accepting financial aid is the only way to pay for college so they are all but assured of leaving school carrying a massive debt burden. While that system worked well when a college graduate was nearly certain to find gainful employment, it does not in a recession that has eliminated millions of jobs and tamped down most starting salaries.

This week, the president took a plan approved by Congress in 2010 and set to take effect in 2014 and accelerated it by two years. Students with loans will need to pay 10 percent of their incomes rather than the 15 percent expected now. Additionally, the debt will be forgiven after 20 years of payments instead of 25. Both changes will speed relief to recent graduates now struggling to find a job and repay their loans.

However, that leaves untouched a central cause of the issue: the rising price of tuition. The cost of college continues to escalate and schools ask students to pay a greater share for their education. That is true even at public institutions as many states — including North Carolina — see academia as an easy target for cuts despite the certain knowledge that investing in public universities helps create jobs and foster innovation. The average cost for a
full credit load is $8,000, though the full price of attending recently reached an average of $17,000 annually.

That may have been reasonable in an economy flush with jobs, but it is no longer tenable. With student loan relief on the way, that broken system should be the next issue for discussion.
School of Music presents two operas
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East Carolina University’s School of Music will present Samuel Barber’s “A Hand of Bridge” and Gian Carlo Menotti’s “The Medium” at 7 p.m. Thursday-Nov. 4 and 3 p.m. Nov. 6 at A.J. Fletcher Recital Hall.

“A Hand of Bridge” Opus 35 is an opera composed by Barber with libretto by Menotti. It is possibly the shortest regularly performed opera, with performances averaging about 10 minutes.

The story is about two couples playing bridge during which each character sings a short monologue. The first performance took place on June 17, 1959, at the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto.

“The Medium” is at two-act hourlong dramatic opera also by Menotti. The work was commissioned by Columbia University and first performed at the school on May 8, 1946.

The story is about Madame Flora, her daughter Monica and a mute servant by the name of Toby who cheat clients at fake seances. Madame Flora has an experience she could not explain during a seance, which drives her to insanity and murder.

Tickets are $5-$15. Visit www.ecuarts.com or call 328-4788.
SAN DIEGO — General manager Jed Hoyer and assistant Jason McLeod are leaving the San Diego Padres to accept similar positions in the Chicago Cubs’ front office.

Because Hoyer, whose mother, Annie, is a psychiatric nurse practitioner at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina, was still under contract, the Cubs have agreed to send the Padres a player to be named as compensation. Hoyer’s father, Robert, is also on the faculty at ECU and runs the Pediatric Outpatient Center.

Both teams said Wednesday that they will hold news conferences after the World Series. The Padres will announce on Monday morning that Josh Byrnes will replace Hoyer as general manager. The Cubs will introduce Hoyer as GM and McLeod as senior vice president of scouting and player development at a date to be determined.

New Cubs GM has local ties
Friday, October 28, 2011
The deals have been in the works since Theo Epstein left his job as Boston Red Sox general manager and was hired by the Cubs as president of baseball operations.

Hoyer and Byrnes both worked under Epstein with the Red Sox. Byrnes is a former GM of the Arizona Diamondbacks.

“If we bring in someone as a general manager it will be because there is someone I think is one of the best and one of the brightest in the game,” Epstein said Tuesday after he was introduced in Chicago. “Somebody who can make a real impact for the Cubs. We have a ton of work to do. It’s going to be a lot of hard work. We’re ready for it. ... I think it was important to develop a structure that allowed for the hiring of the GM, if we got the right person.”

The moves give Byrnes the chance to once again serve as GM under Jeff Moorad.

Byrnes was hired as GM of the Diamondbacks in November 2005, when Moorad was one of Arizona’s top executives. Byrnes and manager A.J. Hinch were fired by the Diamondbacks on July 1, 2010.

In March 2009, a group headed by Moorad began its purchase of the Padres on an installment plan. Moorad fired GM Kevin Towers after the 2009 season and hired Hoyer away from the Red Sox.

The Padres went 90-72 in 2010, leading the NL West for much of the season before stumbling in September and missing the playoffs. After Hoyer traded three-time All-Star slugger Adrian Gonzalez to the Red Sox for three prospects and outfielder Eric Patterson in December, the Padres struggled badly and finished last in the division at 71-91.

The Diamondbacks, who hired Towers as GM late in the 2010 season, won the division this season. Hinch was hired as the Padres’ vice president of professional scouting in September 2010. He was promoted to vice president-assistant GM last month and will replace McLeod.

Byrnes will work with a player payroll of between $53 million and $55 million — one of the smallest in the majors. It’ll be his turn to try to field a
team suited to Petco Park, a pitcher-friendly ballyard where runs are hard to come by.

Epstein, Hoyer and McLeod worked together with the Red Sox and helped build teams that won the World Series in 2004 and 2007.
Dick Baddour, the departing UNC Chapel Hill athletics director, acknowledged that he is anxious as he prepares to appear in front of the NCAA Committee on Infractions today.

The nine alleged major violations in UNC's football program identified by the NCAA enforcement staff mark the first time in 50 years that the university has been charged with a major NCAA violation, in any sport. Baddour is part of the UNC team assembled today in a conference room at the JW Marriott in Indianapolis to explain the school's position and the corrective steps it has taken.

"I think our team is terrific, and I think we're ready," Baddour said this week. "Am I nervous about it? Am I anxious about it? Absolutely ... I've never done it before, and I'm glad, and I hope I never do it again. But I suspect no matter how many times that you would face something like this that you would have a sense of anxiety about it."

UNC's charges are the result of an NCAA investigation into impermissible benefits and academic fraud that began 16 months ago. Fourteen Tar Heels football players missed at least one game last year, and seven missed the entire 2010 season as a result of the alleged violations, which include:

An assistant coach accused of steering players to an NFL agent who loaned the coach money.
Players receiving jewelry and thousands of dollars in improper gifts.

A tutor accused of providing players impermissible help for term papers.

Former head football coach Butch Davis, who was not cited personally in the NCAA report but who was fired in July, is not expected to attend the hearing. John Blake, the former associate head coach accused by the NCAA of recruiting players for the late sports agent Gary Wichard, plans to attend and defend himself.

Jennifer Wiley, the former tutor accused of providing improper academic assistance to players, will not attend the hearing.

Baddour will be one of six representatives of UNC at the hearing, where the committee members are judge and jury.

"Mostly everyone asks good, probing questions," said Michael Buckner, a lawyer who represents schools under NCAA investigation. (He is not associated with the UNC case.) "There are times in which, if they don't agree with your position, you will definitely know through their tone and through their questions."

UNC already has self-imposed penalties including two years of probation, vacating wins from the 2008 and 2009 seasons, and reducing scholarships by three in each of the next three seasons.

School officials hope to avoid additional penalties, which could include a postseason ban for the football program. They hope that avoiding the NCAA's most serious charge - lack of institutional control - will minimize penalties.

The NCAA enforcement staff instead levied a lesser charge against UNC of failing to adequately monitor its program. School officials also said they hope their efforts to cooperate with the NCAA in the investigation will be taken into account when the Committee on Infractions decides whether additional penalties should be handed out.

"We've been thorough," Baddour said. "We've been complete. We've gone where the information took us, and we've been extremely cooperative. In our
assessment ... of our self-imposed sanctions and our commitment to be better, we've been very thoughtful and deliberate."

**Tough questions**

If a mock hearing conducted by the NCAA for sports journalists in May is any indication, those facing charges will face tough questions today.

During the mock hearing, former committee chair Josephine Potuto grilled a make-believe coach who was accused of providing improper academic assistance to his players. Buckner, who has represented schools and coaches in front of the committee, said that's not unusual in real hearings.

"They're not bashful about confronting you if they believe that your strategy or your presentation is a little off the mark," Buckner said.

Like UNC, Blake goes into the hearing with a lot at stake. The NCAA can issue a "show cause order" banning him from recruiting or performing athletically related activities, which would make it difficult for him to work again at an NCAA school.

Blake resigned on Sept. 5, 2010, after evidence of his relationship with the late Wichard came to light. UNC paid him a buyout of $74,500.

The NCAA has records of payments from Wichard to Blake totaling $31,500 and a brochure listing Blake as vice president of football operations for Wichard's agency.

But Blake's lawyers, Wade Smith and William Beaver, have characterized the payments as gifts or loans where Wichard paid for Blake's son - Wichard's godson - to attend private school. Smith and Beaver have maintained since September of 2010 that Blake did not work for Wichard and that he did not steer players to Wichard.

Committee members will look at the serious charges the NCAA enforcement staff alleged against Blake, as well as his defense, and decide on his future.

Today's hearing is expected to take at least a few hours and perhaps all day.
Neither UNC nor Blake will know its/his status immediately after the hearing. Buckner said it typically takes three to four months for the Committee on Infractions to issue a decision.

By then, new UNC athletics director Bubba Cunningham, who will take over for Baddour on Nov. 14, will be in place. Baddour announced his retirement plans this summer, stepping down early to allow his successor hire a permanent football coach at the end of this season.

UNC Chancellor Holden Thorp, who also will represent the school at the hearing, has said he wants Baddour at his side because of the diligence Baddour has displayed throughout the investigation.

One of Baddour's last responsibilities in his 45-year career at UNC will be to present the school in the most favorable light possible in a place he hoped he never would have to visit.

"Since the discovery of this," Baddour said, "I feel like we have been putting our best foot forward."

Tysiac: 919-829-8942

Read more: http://www.newsobserver.com/2011/10/28/1600383/ncaa-to-hear-uncs-defense-today.html#ixzz1c5KJNqRI