THE DAILY CLIPS

November 12, 2007

News, commentary, and opinion
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

The Greenville Daily Reflector
The Raleigh News & Observer
    The New York Times
    The Wall Street Journal
    USA Today
    The Charlotte Observer
    The Fayetteville Observer
The Greensboro News & Record
    Newsweek
    U.S. News & World Report
    Business Week
    Time

East Carolina University News Bureau
E-mail to durhamj@ecu.edu  Web site at http://www.news.ecu.edu
252-328-6481 FAX: 252-328-6300
Broadway actress will perform one-woman show

The Daily Reflector

A Broadway and television actress is presenting a one-woman show on how HIV/AIDS affects women later this month in Wright Auditorium.

Sheryl Lee Ralph will present "Sometimes I Cry: The lives, loves and losses of women infected and affected by HIV/AIDS" Nov. 29 at 7 p.m. Ralph, an original cast member of the Broadway production of "Dreamgirls" also starred in the television series "Moeshia."

"Sometimes I Cry", written by Ralph, examines how women cope with HIV and AIDS.

The show is sponsored by East Carolina University Office of Institutional Diversity, Student Health Services and the Pitt County Health Department.

Tickets, $15 for the general public and $12 for ECU staff/faculty, are on sale at the Central Ticket Office, Mendenhall Student Center. The first 250 students are free, other student tickets are $5.

A portion of the proceeds from the production will be donated to the Pitt County AIDS Service Organization, also called Picaso.

For more information on tickets, call 328-4788, 1-800-ECU-ARTS.

Event to feature tennis champion

Nationally and internationally accomplished wheelchair tennis player Harriet Enzor will speak at Saturday's 11th Annual Adapted Sports Day.

The event, being held from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the Student Recreation Center, introduces individuals with and without disabilities to a variety of adapted sports.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. A $5 registration fee covers breakfast, lunch, presentation, all instructional sessions, entry into facilities and parking.

All ages and ability levels, students, spectators and family members can attend.

Enzor has won the U.S. Open International Tennis Tournament for wheelchair athletes and has been ranked as No. 1 nationally in singles and doubles and No. 12 internationally.

She was the 1997 North Carolina Wheelchair Athlete of the Year and chairperson for the Wheelchair Tennis Committee for the North Carolina Tennis Association.

Adapted Sports Day is sponsored by the Department of Campus Recreation & Wellness Adapted Recreation program, The L.T. Walker International Human Performance Center's Adapted Sports program, Pitt County Community Schools & Recreation and the local community's Support Team for Active Recreation, also called STAR.

For more information, contact David Gaskins at 328-6887 or David Loy at 328-2718.

Professor earns ethics award

A medical school professor was given a medical ethics See NOTES, B3
State, UNC rivalry on tap for new twist

RALEIGH—The rivalry between the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and North Carolina State University isn't confined to the field or the court.

Their latest competition involves conserving water.

The schools are trying to find out which of them can best fight the local drought. With drought and game in mind, N.C. State issued its challenge. Their effort began with Saturday's football game. It lasts until February, when the two schools meet on the basketball court.
Scientists study brains of musical conductors

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP) — When 18 musical conductors gather in a magnetic resonance imaging machine, it's not to lead an orchestra in a symphony. In this case, it was to collect data about how the brain responds to our senses.

Researchers at Wake Forest University and UNC-Greensboro's Music Research Institute were gauging how the brains of musical conductors, and people who aren't musically trained, respond to being asked to listen to something difficult to hear.

One thing they hoped to find was evidence that multitasking might be harder than once thought. The findings shed light on how interdependent two different sections of the brain can be.
Kopelman receives Bartholome Award in Ethics Excellence

Dr. Loretta Kopelman, a professor of medical humanities at East Carolina University, has received the 2007 William G. Bartholome Award in Ethics Excellence from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The award recognizes an individual or group for significantly affecting public discussion of ethical issues in pediatric medicine. Kopelman received the award at the national meeting of the AAP in San Francisco.

Kopelman founded the Department of Medical Humanities at the Brody School of Medicine at ECU and served as its chairwoman until 2005. The founding president of the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities and a member of the Institute of Medicine’s committee on research with children, Kopelman is a leading figure in bioethics and has written more than 140 articles and edited numerous books on the topic.
Princeton Review rankings list ECU College of Business

The Princeton Review — known for its college rankings based on how students rate their schools — has ranked the College of Business at East Carolina University among the nation’s top 290 business schools.

The Princeton Review, a New York City-based education services company, recently released the 2008 editions of its annual law and business school guidebooks. As part of its rating in the new guide, the ECU College of Business is featured in a two-page profile outlining academics, career and placement, student life, and admissions information.

The profile includes comments from business students who applaud “the helpfulness of the instructors” and describe the College of Business faculty as “demanding and, at the same time, willing to do anything.”

“We are very pleased to be nationally recognized as a top 290 business school,” Rick Niswander, dean of the College of Business, said in a news release. “Our long-standing AACSB accreditation, high-quality faculty, high-touch instruction, exceptional value and flexibility are a winning combination at ECU.”

The Princeton Review, which is not affiliated with Princeton University, compiled its rankings based on surveys of 18,000 students attending the 170 law schools and 19,000 students attending the 290 business schools in the books and on school-reported data. The ranking lists are available online at www.PrincetonReview.com.

There are approximately 2,500 business schools in the United States.

The College of Business at ECU was founded in 1936 and has been accredited by the AACSB since 1987. The college has more than 2500 undergraduate students, 710 graduate students and 110 faculty members, as well as 30 degrees, majors and concentrations.
Six Greenville professionals recently spent two days with Pitt County Medical Society physicians participating in the mini-internship.

The mini-internship — held each spring and fall — offers community professionals an opportunity to experience the medical world by shadowing physicians. Fall participants were Ron Elks, Greenville Utilities Commission; Stacy Gaskins, Greenville-Pitt Chamber of Commerce; Gordon Jethro, First Citizens Bank; James Earl Jones, Southern Bank & Trust Co.; Barbara Owens, Pitt County Board of Education; and Mary Parsons, Parsons & Robinson Insurance.

Participating private practice physicians were Dr. Brian Brodish, Eastern Carolina Ear, Nose & Throat; Dr. Ira Hardy II, Center for Scoliosis & Spinal Surgery; Dr. F. Doug Jones, Eastern Neurosurgical & Spine Associates; and Dr. Eric Lindbeck, Eastern Carolina Ear, Nose & Throat.

Participating physicians from the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University were Dr. Ron Allison, Department of Radiation Oncology; Dr. William Bogey Jr., Department of Surgery/Vascular; Dr. William Chapman, Department of Surgery/General; and Dr. Hiram Gay, Department of Radiation Oncology.

For information about the internship, call 758-8833 or e-mail kbeanp@earthlink.net.
Darts & Laurels

Fighting staph

Laurels — To Pitt County Memorial Hospital, which has started universal testing for staph infection in response to an aggressive new strain and has seen promising results. The more concerning variation of the infection is resistant to antibiotics and claimed several lives, prompting the hospital to adopt a more active defense against staph last winter. The new system has seen positive results, and staph infections are declining at PCMH.
Stadium goes low-flow for game
Carter-Finley to tame crowd’s flushes with less pressure

BY ANNE BLYTHE
STAFF WRITER
RALEIGH — A football stadium full of imbibing fans poses a conundrum for a drought-stricken region trying to conserve water.

Managers at Carter-Finley Stadium preparing for 60,000 spectators at this afternoon’s battle between the Wolfpack and the Tar Heels know that lots of drinking invariably leads to lots of toilets flushing.

Their strategy for limiting how much goes down the drain: Lower the water pressure to the stadium’s 700 toilets.

“We’re monitoring the flow at every bathroom,” said Ray Brincefield, assistant athletics director for outdoor facilities at N.C. State University. “That’s the way we’ve been doing it since September.”

In Georgia, where Mother Nature has been just as stingy with the rain, stadium managers have resorted to more heavy-handed solutions.

Fans answering nature’s call at the University of Georgia’s Sanford Stadium in Athens last week were greeted by signs telling them not to flush. The handle-pulling would be left to designated flushers.

Arthur Johnson, the associate athletic director for internal operations at UGA, said it was too early to know how many gallons of water were conserved.

“We feel like we should have realized some savings by not having to flush every time,” Johnson said.

At the RBC Center in Raleigh, the Smith Center in Chapel Hill and other Triangle arenas that draw huge crowds, the prospect of thousands of flushes prompted managers to consider conservation measures well before this year’s protracted drought.

Many have changed flush valves to decrease the amount of water used.

Water monitors at Carter-Finley Stadium say they can’t come

SEE FLUSH, PAGE 12A

FLUSH
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

If each of the 19,000 people at a sold-out Hurricanes game flushed once the old-fashioned way — at 5 gallons a flush — that’s 95,000 gallons.

The new commodes would use 28,500 gallons — a savings of 66,500 gallons.

And that’s a lot of drops in the bucket.

anne.blythe@newsobserver.com
or (919) 932-8741
Donor had voice in law school hire

BY TONY BARBOZA, HENRY WEINSTEIN AND GARRETT THEROLF
LOS ANGELES TIMES

IRVINE, Calif. – The University of California at Irvine gave billionaire developer Donald Bren the right to consult in the selection of a dean for its new law school in return for his $20 million donation, according to documents released to the Los Angeles Times on Thursday.

The disclosure shows that the university granted Bren much more of a voice in the hiring of the dean than officials had disclosed.

The eight-page gift agreement also requires that signs on law school buildings read “Donald Bren School of Law,” that they be at least twice the size of the building name and that it be the largest and most prominently displayed name.

Chancellor Michael Drake in September abruptly fired Erwin Chemerinsky as founding dean — even before he announced his selection publicly — only to offer him the job five days later after a national outcry ensued.

Despite the agreement, Bren’s foundation insisted Thursday that it had nothing to do with the Chemerinsky matter.

The June agreement required the university chancellor and the leader of the law school dean search committee to “periodically and confidentially consult” with the Donald Bren Foundation in choosing a dean and for any future dean searches, including information on leading candidates.

Drake said in September that he had no conversations with Bren or his advisers about Chemerinsky, a constitutional law scholar at Duke University.

A spokesman for Bren said at the time that the Irvine Co. chairman had nothing to do with the ouster. In a statement issued Thursday, the Bren Foundation said that “neither the Foundation nor Mr. Bren was consulted prior to the hiring, and as we’ve stated before, Mr. Bren didn’t know enough about Dr. Chemerinsky to offer an opinion, and has not offered an opinion on Dr. Chemerinsky in the past or up to this moment.”

Asked whether the university broke the agreement by not consulting with Bren, foundation spokesman John Christensen said, “It was a courtesy, it didn’t happen, and we’re looking forward to a world-class law school.”

Drake did not respond to calls seeking comment.

The Chemerinsky affair became news in September when the nationally known legal scholar said that Drake had withdrawn the job offer because of pressure over his liberal views and that there would be a “bloody fight” within the University of California Regents.

Drake has denied Chemerinsky’s account and has insisted that Chemerinsky didn’t lose the dean’s position because of his politics but because he expressed himself in a polarizing way.

Change of mind

Five days later, Drake flew to Chemerinsky’s home in North Carolina and reached an agreement to rehire him.

But Drake has offered little detail about whom he communicated with before he made the initial decision to pull the offer.

Jeffrey S. Brand, dean of the University of San Francisco Law School, said he never would enter into a confidentiality clause like the one between UCI and Bren.

He said the language in the agreement was “dangerous and could be viewed as a subterfuge permitting undue influence.”

Stephen Gillers, a legal ethics specialist and former vice dean at New York University Law School, said the agreement did not trouble him. “It implies no control... I think it is fair to assume that nothing more than an expression of views is contemplated or will be tolerated.”
By Jane Stancill
Staff Writer

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is granting $2.5 million to develop four North Carolina high schools into models of student achievement.

UNC system President Erskine Bowles announced the initiative Friday. It will be a joint program of UNC and the Gates-funded New Schools Project, with $1.7 million going to UNC.

The New Schools Project has worked with local school systems, the UNC system and community colleges to create 86 innovative high schools across North Carolina that are rethinking instruction and student support.

Four of the schools will be selected as Learning Lab sites for the new program. Two will be traditional high schools, and two will be Learn and Earn early college high schools. The Learn and Earn schools are housed at community colleges or universities and allow students to graduate with as much as two years of college credit.

Each of the four Learning Lab schools will be paired with a UNC campus and its education programs, which will help develop the schools.

The goal is to create four highly effective, high-profile schools that will push other schools to become more innovative.

UNC campuses also will gain insight into how best to train future teachers and school leaders. Within two years, the four Learning Lab schools will be prepared to host visiting teachers and principals for residencies in which they will observe and explore the schools' instructional practices.

"I think this is exciting," Bowles said. "I'm a great believer in pilot projects. And if this works, we can really change the public schools in North Carolina."

Former N.C. Supreme Court Justice Burley Mitchell, chairman of the N.C. New Schools Project, said the schools already are achieving successes, including lower dropout rates.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for us to get all of North Carolina focused on our schools, which we know is needed," he said.
Doctors' offices try to ward off medical identity theft

BY VICKI LEE PARKER
STAFF WRITER

The next time you visit your family doctor, you should be ready to smile and say "cheese."

Some local practices are putting their cameras to work as insurance companies push doctors to find ways to prevent medical identity theft.

About six months ago, Family Medical Associates of Raleigh started taking photos of its patients to add to its permanent electronic file. That way, when someone comes in for an appointment, the administrator can quickly pull up the medical records and confirm that the person seeking treatment is indeed the correct patient, said Janet Spangler, administrator for the practice.

Gynecology & Laparoscopic Surgeons in Raleigh downloads patients' driver's license photos for its permanent medical files. Kimberly Melton, the practice manager, said the office started downloading the photos after receiving calls from insurance companies to verify the identity of patients suspected of fraud.

"We found that a lot of surgery insurance

fraud was going on," Melton said.

Medical identity theft occurs when someone uses another person's personal information to get medical services or prescriptions or collect money from medical claims.

Lou Patalano, director of the special investigations unit at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, said such fraud is not a major problem, but it's growing.

Blue Cross is urging its members to ask for patients' insurance cards and driver's licenses each time they come into the office, not just on the first visit, he said.

This year, Blue Cross has investigated several cases across the state.

In one instance, a woman noticed payments for a treatment she had never received on her explanation of benefits statements, Patalano said. It turned out her husband had taken his girlfriend to the doctor and used his wife's insurance card.

Still, some question how prevalent medical ID fraud is.

"It's certainly true that it can happen and it probably does happen," said Jim Harper,

SEE IDENTITY, PAGE 3D
IDENTITY
CONTINUED FROM PAGE ID

author of "Identity Crisis: How Identification is Overused and Misunderstood."

"But is it a problem that is sweeping the nation? I have my doubts."

The World Privacy Forum, a nonprofit research and consumer education organization, estimates that 250,000 to 500,000 consumers have been victims of medical identity theft.

Pam Dixon, the forum's executive director, said its 2006 study estimated that health-care fraud has cost the industry $400 billion to $700 billion. How much of that could be attributed to medical ID theft is unclear, she said.

"If it is even 1 percent of that, you are looking at a lot of money," Dixon said.

The forum's study, which incorporated interviews with victims, medical professionals and law enforcement officials, found that stolen insurance cards are just a small part of the problem.

Schemes to bilk insurers

Dixon said there is a black market for medical records, with the police reporting that a person's medical records can sell for about $50 on the street, compared with a dollar or two for Social Security numbers.

The records are used by fake clinics to file fraudulent claims so that they can bilk insurance companies out of millions of dollars.

Kenneth Faustine, director of special investigations at Cigna, said he is seeing more of these types of schemes. Criminals typically buy 1,000 medical records and set up a post office box to collect checks, he said.

SAFEGUARDING HEALTH INFO

Jim Harper, who lives in Washington, is the author of "Identity Crisis: How Identification is Overused and Misunderstood."

Harper suggested following these steps to avoid being a victim of medical identity theft:

- Review all your medical statements.
- Ask your doctor questions about your care.
- If you notice unfamiliar payments or treatments in your records, contact your insurance provider.

"They hit quick, and by the time anyone realizes it, they [have] shut down," he said.

Faustine said Cigna developed a computerized system that helps detect such fraud. For example, if a certain doctor typically sends in 100 claims a month, the system will prompt an investigation if that doctor suddenly submits 500 claims.

Not all schemes are so elaborate; some data is simply sold to individuals who don't have insurance. About 47 million people were uninsured in 2006, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Such thefts are costly to insurance companies and the scammed consumers, and they can be just as big a headache as any other identity theft.

It's difficult to remove erroneous information from medical records, Dixon said, because some health-care providers are reluctant to change records out of fear of violating federal health and privacy laws.

But erroneous information can compromise a patient's medical history and lead to a wrong diagnosis or treatment, Dixon said. "It has the potential to pose significant harm," she said.

vicki.parker@newsobserver or (919) 829-4898
Advances in DNA study raise fears of racism

By Amy Harmon
The New York Times

New York – When scientists first decoded the human genome in 2000, they were quick to portray it as proof of humankind’s remarkable similarity. The DNA of any two people, they emphasized, is at least 99 percent identical.

But new research is exploring the remaining fraction to explain differences between people of different continental origins.

Scientists have recently identified small changes in DNA that account for the pale skin of Europeans, the tendency of Asians to sweat less and West Africans’ resistance to certain diseases.

At the same time, genetic information is slipping into everyday life, carrying with it the inescapable message that people of different races have different DNA.

Ancestry tests tell customers what percentage of their genes is from Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas. The heart-disease drug BiDil is marketed exclusively to black people, who seem genetically predisposed to respond to it. Jews are offered prenatal tests for genetic disorders rarely found in other ethnic groups.

Such developments are providing some of the first tangible benefits of the genetic revolution. Yet some social critics fear they might also be giving long-discredited racial prejudices a new potency.

See DNA, Page 1B

DNA

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

The notion that race is more than skin-deep, they fear, could undermine principles of equal treatment and opportunity that rely on the presumption that we are all fundamentally equal.

“We are living through an era of the ascendance of biology, and we have to be very careful,” said Henry Louis Gates Jr., director of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African and African American Research at Harvard University. “We will all be walking a fine line between using biology and allowing it to be abused.”

Drawing conclusions

Certain superficial traits like skin pigmentation or disease predispositions have long been presumed to be genetic. Now, the ability to pinpoint their source in DNA is prompting the question on mainstream Internet discussion sites, in college classrooms and among the growing community of ancestry test-takers of whether more profound differences may also be attributed to genetics.

Nonscientists are beginning to stitch together speculative conclusions about the historically charged subject of race and intelligence from the new biological data. Last month, a blogger in Manhattan described a recently published study that linked several snippets of DNA to high IQ.

How to respond

“There are clear differences between people of different continental ancestries,” said Marcus W. Feldman, a professor of biological sciences at Stanford University. “It’s not there yet for things like IQ, but I can see it coming. And it has the potential to spark a new era of racism if we do not start explaining it better.”

Feldman said any finding on intelligence was likely to be exceedingly hard to pin down. But given that some may emerge, he said he wanted to create “ready response teams” of geneticists to put such socially fraught discoveries in perspective.

The authority that DNA has earned through use in freeing falsely convicted inmates, preventing disease and tracing ancestry might lead people to wrongly elevate genetics over other explanations for differences.

“I’ve spent the last 10 years of my life researching how much genetic variability there is between populations,” said Dr. David Altschuler, director of the Program in Medical and Population Genetics at the Broad Institute in Cambridge, Mass. “But living in America, it is so clear that the economic and social and educational differences have so much more influence than genes.”

But on the Half Sigma blog and
An online genetic database used by medical researchers, he told readers, showed that two of the snippets were found more often in Europeans and Asians than in Africans. No matter that the link between IQ and those particular bits of DNA was unconfirmed, or that other high-IQ snippets are more common in Africans, or that hundreds or thousands of others might also affect intelligence, or that their combined influence might be dwarfed by environmental factors. Just the existence of such genetic differences between races, proclaimed the author of the Half Sigma blog, a 40-year-old software developer, means “the egalitarian theory” that all races are equal is “proven false.”

Although few of the bits of human genetic code that vary among individuals have been tied to physical or behavioral traits, scientists have found that roughly 10 percent of them are more common in certain continental groups and can be used to distinguish people of different races. They say that studying the differences is crucial to mapping the genetic basis for disease. But many geneticists, wary of fuelling discrimination and worried that speaking openly about race could endanger support for their research, are loath to discuss the social implications of their findings. Still, some acknowledge that as their data and methods are extended to nonmedical traits, the field has reached what one researcher recently called “a very delicate time and a dangerous time.”

elsewhere, the conversation is already flashing forward to what might happen if genetically encoded racial differences in socially desirable—or undesirable—traits are identified.

**Discussion heats up**

“If I were to believe the ‘facts’ in this post, what should I do?” one reader responded on Half Sigma. “Should I advocate discrimination against blacks because they are less smart? Should I not hire them to my company because odds are I could find a smarter white person? Stop trying to prove that one group of people are genetically inferior to your group. Just stop.” Renata McGriff, 52, a health care consultant who had been encouraging black clients to volunteer genetic information to scientists, said she and other black people have lately been discussing “opting out of genetic research until it’s clear we’re not going to use science to validate prejudices.”

Such discussions followed the geneticist James D. Watson’s assertion last month that Africans are innately less intelligent than other races. Watson, a Nobel Prize winner, subsequently apologized and quit his post at the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory on Long Island.

But the incident has added to uneasiness about whether society is prepared to handle the consequences of science that might eventually reveal appreciable differences among races in the genes that influence socially important traits. New genetic information, some liberal critics say, could become the latest rallying point for a conservative political camp that objects to social policies such as affirmative action. Yet even some self-described liberals argue that accepting that there might be genetic differences between races is important in preparing to address them politically.

“Let’s say the genetic data says we’ll have to spend two times as much for every black child to close the achievement gap,” said Jason Malloy, 28, an artist in Madison, Wis., who wrote a defense of Watson for the widely read science blog Gene Expression. Society, he said, would need to consider how individuals “can be given educational and occupational opportunities that work best for their unique talents and limitations.”

Others hope that the genetic data may overturn preconceived notions of racial superiority by, for example, showing that Africans are innately more intelligent than other groups. But either way, the increased outpouring of conversation on the normally taboo subject of race and genetics has prompted some to suggest that innate differences should be accepted, but, at some level, ignored.

“Regardless of any such genetic variation, it is our moral duty to treat all as equal before God and before the law,” Perry Clark, 44, wrote on a New York Times blog. It is not necessary, argued Clark, a retired neonatologist in Leawood, Kan., who is white, to maintain the pretense that inborn racial differences do not exist.

“When was the last time a non-black sprinter won the Olympic 100 meters?” he asked.

“To say that such differences aren’t real,” Clark later said in an interview, “is to stick your head in the sand and go blah blah blah until the band marches by.”

**Meaning of race**

Race, many sociologists and anthropologists have argued, is a social invention historically used to justify prejudice and persecution. But when Samuel M. Richards gave his students at Pennsylvania State University genetic ancestry tests to establish the imprecision of socially constructed racial categories, he found the exercise reinforced them instead.

One white-skinned student, told she was 9 percent West African, went to a Kwanzaa celebration, for instance, but would not dream of going to an Asian cultural event because her DNA did not match, Richards said. Preconceived notions of race seemed all the more authentic when quantified by DNA.

“Before, it was, ‘I’m white because I have white skin and grew up in white culture,’” Richards said. “Now it’s, ‘I really know I’m white, so ‘white’ is this big neon sign hanging over my head.’ It’s like, oh, no, come on. That wasn’t the point.”
Black student group marks 40 years at UNC

BY ERIC FERRERI
STAFF WRITER

CHAPEL HILL — Will Mebane remembers fearing for his life during the days when he headed UNC-Chapel Hill’s Black Student Movement in the early 1970s. A loud and visible student leader, the Durham native led campus protests, brought students to Raleigh to march at the governor’s mansion and generally pushed a civil rights agenda at a time of race riots and smoldering racial tension.

“If there was a political issue of the day, I was involved in it,” Mebane, now 55, said last week. “There were times when I was afraid my car was going to blow up.”

Mebane was the organization’s leader during the 1972-73 school year. The group was in its infancy then, formed six years earlier to give the university’s tiny black student population a political voice.

This fall, the Black Student Movement celebrates its 40th birthday. It is now 400 members strong with interests and aims far more diverse than when it began in fall 1967.

About 30 current members met Sunday afternoon for a brief reception and slide show to honor the group’s history. Events all week on campus will do so as well.

Reached at his home in Connecticut, Mebane, a recent graduate of Yale’s divinity school, said he hopes today’s students appreciate what he and his con-

SEE UNC, PAGE 6A

UNC CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

temporaries went through. The Ku Klux Klan was still active in North Carolina, and tensions boiled over in incidents like the 1971 arrest and conviction of nine black men and one white woman in Wilmington — eventually overturned on a technicality — on charges of arson and shooting at city police and firefighters during a desegregation-related riot.

Black student leaders who got involved in issues like that — even within the seemingly safe confines of a college campus — did so with some unease, Mebane recalled.

“It was not an easy time,” he said. “The benefits [black students] receive today were hard-fought.”

This year, the Black Student Movement is led by President Derek Sykes and Vice President Racine Peters, both seniors from Virginia.

Each professor at appreciation for what Mebane and others like him went through during the organization’s formative years but say the BSM has grown and expanded greatly since then. It is one of UNC’s largest student organizations, with 20 committees, a magazine and a gospel choir.

It isn’t solely a political entity anymore.

Times, Peters said, have changed.

“Back in 1967, racism was more overt,” she said. “Now, if students feel any racism at all, it’s in a more covert manner.”

History recalled

Today’s students learn the history of the movement’s formative years — informally through stories handed down through the ranks; more formally with things such as the video detailing BSM history that the organization shows members each year.

Students today might be surprised to learn that when the BSM was formed in 1967, there were only 113 black students out of a student body of 33,352, according to an exhibit displayed earlier this year at UNC’s Wilson Library.

A key early challenge came the following fall, when BSM members aligned with striking cafeteria workers frustrated by low pay and poor treatment by white supervisors. For months, BSM leaders
worked with cafeteria workers, joined in protests and even got arrested.

The issue grew turbulent enough that Gov. Robert W. Scott became involved and the National Guard was mobilized. Eventually, worker raises were approved, though dissatisfaction with job conditions eventually led to another walkout.

"The students didn't have to be involved," Archie Ervin, UNC-Chapel Hill's associate provost for diversity and multicultural affairs and a faculty advisor to the BSM, said during Sunday's reception. "It wasn't their fight. But they saw it was a wrong that had to be righted."

In subsequent years, the Black Student Movement continued to challenge the administration. In the early 1970s — while Mebane was there — a key issue was the diversification of the faculty and student body. In the 1990s, the hot issue was the creation of a free-standing black cultural center, a controversial initiative led largely by the Black Student Movement and the Campus Y, another student organization.

Some opposed to the proposal argued that the center would create an isolated fortress for black students, but the university administration eventually got behind the idea.

The center finally opened, after a long and often frustrating fundraising process, in August 2004. Though the BSM helped advocate for the building throughout the 1990s, the student group still maintains its office in the campus student union.

**A sense of place**

The BSM's other meeting place is the new Upendo Room, in a new student services building on South Campus. The room, in a fairly institutional red brick building at the corner of Manning Drive and Country Club Road, is no accident. It is on the same patch of land as the original Upendo Lounge, a largely nondescript room on the second floor of Chase Hall, which served as the South Campus cafeteria until it was torn down three years ago.

The lounge was once a truly distant outpost on the edge of campus. For black students relegated to nearby Hinton James Residence Hall, Upendo Lounge meant community, family and camaraderie. It was known less formally as the Black Student Union.

The new Upendo Room features a wall covered with enlarged copies of Daily Tar Heel articles through the years chronicling the BSM's quest for its own meeting space. The BSM christened the Upendo Lounge in 1972 but, as the articles show, had to fight to hang on to the space through the years.

Using a new meeting room with the same name at the same campus spot is, for today's batch of BSM students, one small nod to the past, organizers said.

"It very quickly became a gathering point where black students could see each other when they were just 1 or 2 percent of the population," Ervin said. "We are remembering that place and that legacy."

**eric.ferrer@newsobserver.com**
**or (919) 856-2415**
Staph causes cells to explode

Germ-fighters attacked in lab test

BY RANDOLPH E. SCHMID
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — The aggressive antibiotic-resistant staph infection responsible for thousands of recent illnesses undermines the body's defenses by causing germ-fighting cells to explode, researchers reported Sunday.

Experts hope the findings may help lead to better treatments.

An estimated 90,000 people in the United States fall ill each year from methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus, or MRSA. It is not clear how many die from the infection; one estimate put it at more than 18,000, which would be slightly higher than U.S. deaths from AIDS.

The infection long has been associated with health care facilities, where it attacks people with compromised immune systems. But many recent cases involve an aggressive strain, community-associated MRSA, or CA-MRSA. It can cause severe infections and even death in otherwise healthy people outside of health care settings.

The CA-MRSA strain secretes a kind of peptide — a compound formed by amino acids — that causes immune cells called neutrophils to burst, eliminating a main defense against infection, according to researchers.

The findings, from a team of U.S. and German researchers led by Michael Otto of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, appeared in Sunday's online edition of the journal Nature Medicine.

Though only 14 percent of serious MRSA infections are the community-associated kind, they have drawn attention in recent months with a spate of reports in schools, including the death of a 17-year-old Virginia high school student.

Both hospital-associated and community-associated MRSA contain genes for the peptides. But their production is much higher in the CA-MRSA, the researchers said.

The compounds first cause inflammation, drawing the immune cells to the site of the infection, and then destroy those cells.

The research was conducted in mice and with human blood in laboratory tests.

Within five minutes of exposure to the peptides from CA-MRSA, human neutrophils showed flattening and signs of damage to their membrane, researchers said. After 60 minutes, many cells had disintegrated completely.

New drugs a priority

"This elegant work helps reveal the complex strategy that S. aureus has developed to evade our normal immune defenses," Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, NIAID director, said in a statement.

"Understanding what makes the infections caused by these new strains so severe and developing new drugs to treat them are urgent public health priorities." The research was funded by the National Institutes of Health, the German Research Council and the German Ministry of Education and Research.

HOW TO PREVENT MRSA

- Keep your hands clean by washing thoroughly with soap and water or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered with a bandage until healed.
- Avoid contact with other people's wounds or bandages.
- Avoid sharing personal items such as towels or razors.

SOURCE: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION ONLINE
Nature Medicine:
www.nature.com/naturemedicine
‘Homeless’ college grad writes success story

He shows how poor can get ahead

By Josh Shaffer
Staff Writer

Raleigh — Adam Shepard hopped a train out of Raleigh with $25 in his pocket, carrying only a tent, a sleeping bag and a young man’s optimism.

He set out to prove that anyone willing to work hard and save money could make a happy life — the old bootstraps motto.

Just 23, Shepard set a goal: find a job in a brand-new city, get a furnished apartment, a car and $2,500 in savings within a year.

He did it in six months.

Shepard believes his experience with homelessness and low-pay labor presents a countercharge to the idea that American society stacks the deck against the poor.

He concedes that he has none of the mental illnesses or addictions that fuel homelessness. He hasn’t suffered from abuse, sickness or the hundreds of other forms that hard luck can take. He always knew that as a healthy, white, well-spoken college graduate, he enjoyed advantages that can help shed poverty.

But Shepard spent 70 days sleeping on the floor of a home-

SEE HOMELESS, PAGE 7B
HOMELESS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B

less shelter, and he estimates that 40 percent of the people sleeping alongside were mentally ill. Probably half fit the stereotype of old, bearded men with whiskey on their breath.

The other half, Shepard said, were young men like him. When he came back to Raleigh last summer, he wrote a book with them in mind.

In the book, he presents two contrasting low-wage workers he met along the way: one who saves money and survives on Rice-a-Roni dinners; and the other who squanders money on lottery tickets and beer.

"If you're making $8 an hour, you've got one of two choices," he said. "You can cry 'Life is tough,' or you can say, 'Man, in two years, I'm not going to be doing this.'"

Tall and good-looking with a mop of brown hair, Shepard studied business and Spanish at Merrimack College in Massachusetts. His experiment in poverty drew from reading "Nickle and Dimed: On Not Getting By in America," the 2001 best-seller that chronicles life on poverty-level wages.

In the book, journalist Barbara Ehrenreich takes a string of low-paying jobs: waitress, house cleaner, hotel maid, Wal-Mart clerk.

She describes working for $6 and change an hour, being forced to take personality tests to land menial jobs, and concludes that the working poor keep enduring their misery out of generosity and sacrifice.

The premise didn't ring true for Shepard. In the summer of 2008, he pulled the city of Charleston, S.C., out of a hat and headed there by train.

No simple answer

It's unwise to generalize about the poor, said Jeanne Tedrow, director of Raleigh's Passage Home, which finds mentors and housing for low-income families.

Poverty springs from many sources, and people land on the streets for dozens of reasons — something as quick and unforeseen as a layoff, or as permanent as a prison record or mental sickness.

"Every person has his own story," Tedrow said. "There are good people who are poor, and there are mean people who are poor."

The National Coalition for the Homeless in Washington, D.C., released a fact sheet last summer that breaks down common traits.

Their studies showed 22 percent of homeless mothers had taken to the streets to avoid domestic abuse; 16 percent of single adults suffered from severe mental illness; those addicted to drugs and alcohol ranged between a third and two-thirds.

As many as one-quarter were homeless despite having jobs, the study said.

Shepard's youth and good health are important factors, Tedrow said, making it easier to be a go-getter.

"In the general population," she said, "whether you're affluent or not, there's always going to be people who are more ambitious, more able."

Shepard took his first job as a day laborer, picking up garbage, working on construction sites, and hanging baby clothes in a new store.

He made about $6 an hour, but once taxes were subtracted — plus a $2.50 transportation fee, plus a $1 check fee — his hourly pay came closer to $4.

Job advice

After a few weeks, he started filling out job applications using the shelter as his permanent address. Shepard left out his college education and contacts, and got no bites from employers.

It wasn't until he took the advice of a veteran homeless man and started asking for jobs in person that Shepard found work.

At a moving company, he offered to work for free — a strategy that got him hired on the spot, pay included.

He bought a battered truck for $1,000 and moved into a duplex with a fellow mover.

That roommate became Shepard's bad example. He ate fast food, played the lottery incessantly and borrowed Shepard's truck for hours at a time. They had a fistfight over his borrowing habits, and Shepard lost badly.

In contrast, the roommate's cousin lived next door and also worked for the moving company. He and Shepard cooked meals at home, packages of chicken and boxes of Rice-a-Roni.

All three of them were roughly the same age. They played cards and watched television at night, though Shepard spent at least 30 minutes a day writing in his journal.

Shepard broke a toe on the job and developed an ulcer while in Charleston, but he kept himself motivated.

"Some people wake up and say 'Life sucks,'" he said. "I woke up and said in a year, two years, three years, I'm not going to be doing this."

By January, he had met his goal, but Shepard stayed in Charleston until May of this year. Back in Raleigh, he took a job as a skydive for Southwest Airlines, writing his book on the side.

Shepard doesn't want to glorify his own success. After a year, his mover friend bought a house with his savings, cherishing it even more because it came from paltry wages.

Having started with $25, Shepard knows the feeling.

Josh.shaffer@newsobserver.com or (919) 829-4818

Adam Shepard of Raleigh has written a book detailing how he rose from homelessness to success in six months.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ADAM SHEPARD

TO LEARN MORE

Information on Shepard's book can be found at: www.scratchbegginings.com.