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Former chancellor, Cypress Glen resident honored

The Daily Reflector

Monday, December 28, 2009

Approximately 100 Cypress Glen Retirement Community residents and their guests recently held their last ECU Club meeting for the year.

The entertainment for the evening featured the Magnolia Belles, a student-run ladies a cappella group, who were brought back to Cypress Glen to perform by special request of the residents. They sang a dozen religious and secular Christmas classics; the crowd favorite was a spirited version of “Rocking Around the Christmas Tree”.

The vocal group is one of two student organizations sponsored by the East Carolina Alumni Association. The name for the Magnolia Belles was inspired by the beautiful magnolia trees that adorn the ECU campus and also honors the memory of three sisters who came to East Carolina Teachers College from the North Carolina town of Magnolia in the 1920s.

Former East Carolina University Chancellor Richard Eakin was honored for his support during the flood following Hurricane Floyd. Eakin, ECU’s chancellor from 1987-2001, arranged for university buses to transport Cypress Glen residents to Durham, out of harm’s way. Eakin was unable to attend the presentation but, in his absence, he was honored with a plaque and key to Cypress Glen in recognition of his tremendous support during the flood. This is the first time the retirement community has ever honored an individual with a key to Cypress Glen.

Betty Speir, who was chairwoman of the ECU Board of Trustees at the time of the flood, was presented with a bouquet of roses in recognition for her significant role in facilitating moving the residents to safety. She is a 1963 ECU graduate and served on the Board of Trustees from 1995 to 2003.

The Cypress Glen ECU Club is sponsored by the East Carolina Alumni Association and is open to all residents and their guests who have an interest in East Carolina University. Many Cypress Glen residents have close ties to the university, i.e., ECU graduates, family members of graduates, and former employees of the university.

The next ECU Club meeting is scheduled for March 17.

Cypress Glen, 100 Hickory St., is the region’s only continuing care retirement community. It’s managed by the United Methodist Retirement Homes, Inc., with support by Life Care Services.
Ethnic, rural health disparities the focus of online program

Monday, December 28, 2009

East Carolina University is offering a new online program focusing on ethnic and rural health disparities.

ERHD is a non-credit certificate program designed for health care professionals and others interested in broadening their understanding of health issues and improving their skills in working with ethnic health disparities. The program is composed of 16 modules that may be taken individually or as a full series.

Modules include: Ethnic Health and Health Disparities (modules 1-4); Global Public Health (modules 5-8); African American Health (modules 9-12); and Medical Anthropology (modules 13-16).

A certificate of completion and continuing education units may be awarded to those who meet requirements.

For information about the instructor and overview of the program, visit online at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9kS1ny99BQ.

To register, visit http://cpeprograms.ecu.edu/ShowSchedule.awp?~GROUP=HEALTH~Health,+Wellness,+and+Healthcare or contact the Division of Continuing Studies at cpe@ecu.edu or 328-9198.

The Division of Continuing Studies is offering the program in partnership with the Department of Public Health at the Brody School of Medicine and the Department of Anthropology at the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences.

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Longtime ECU faculty member selected dean

ECU News Services

Saturday, December 26, 2009

David White, a longtime faculty member and administrator at East Carolina University, has been named dean of the College of Technology and Computer Science.

White, who has served as interim dean of the college since last year, is a former chair of the Department of Health Education and Promotion and former interim dean of the School of Health and Human Performance. He joined the ECU faculty in 1981.

Provost Marilyn Sheerer, announcing White’s appointment at the college’s recognition ceremony on Saturday, said, “David White has a distinguished record at ECU, and he has displayed exemplary leadership while serving as interim dean of the college. He is an accomplished and respected faculty member and administrator, and I am delighted that he has accepted this position.” She also noted that White is applauded for his collegial approach and collaborative leadership style.

White said, “This is a tremendous honor and I am very excited to have the opportunity to serve as dean of the College of Technology and Computer Science. I have been very impressed with the quality of the students, faculty, and faculty in the college, and our programs in engineering, construction, technology systems and computer science are important to the region and the state. Chancellor Steve Ballard and Provost Sheerer are visionary leaders and I look forward to working them to realize the bright future ahead for the college.”

White holds a bachelor’s degree from Concord College in West Virginia, a master’s from Radford College in Virginia and a doctorate from the University of Tennessee. Before coming to ECU, he taught at the University of Tennessee and in high schools.
Holtz not worried about break

By Nathan Summers
The Daily Reflector

Sunday, December 27, 2009

If there is a science to bowl game preparation, Skip Holtz is getting it down pat.

Heading into his school-record fourth consecutive bowl as the head football coach at East Carolina, Holtz knows there are many reasons a postseason game differs from a regular season game, namely the fact that there is generally a month's layoff in between one and the other.

The 9-4 Pirates are headed to Memphis to play in their second straight Liberty Bowl on Jan. 2, this time against 7-5 Arkansas, and this year the Pirates were riding a memorable four-game winning streak when the season ended.

While a month away from true game action is not always a good thing, Holtz said he is confident the extended break will carry with it more positives than negatives for the Pirates, who last season let their bowl game slip into the hands of Kentucky in the second half.

"I don't think it can hurt you," Holtz said of ECU's December break, which as always became mostly a mini-camp for the team's younger players. "You've got some guys who are playing with a lot of confidence right now. You look at the way (senior linebackers) Chris Mattocks and Jeremy Chambliss played in the (Conference USA championship win) against Houston. They were all over the field, and that only helps their confidence and gives them kind of that chip on their shoulder, that swagger.

"If you go into the end of the season going the other way, where you lose a couple games, it might create a little doubt."

With his 28-man senior class in tow for what could become the first 10-win season of the Holtz coaching era, the coach has a high level of trust that his players will embrace one final challenge this season.

The team left for Memphis a day earlier this year than last in hopes of doing more on-site preparation for the game, but Holtz said he's long since made the point that too much preparation can be detrimental in the one-game approach.

"I told the staff to get ready for a one-game season," Holtz said. "Take as much offense as we need to win one game. We've got to have enough of what we do offensively, defensively and on special teams to play one game."

That means devising a plan that's simple, straightforward and without too many tricks.

Holtz and defensive coordinator Greg Hudson have stressed simplicity since they arrived five seasons ago, and the head coach said there is no way his team will deviate from that plan now, despite facing a Southeastern Conference team to finish out the season again this year.

"We are full-time coaches but we are coaching part-time players," Holtz said. "We have our players 20 hours a week. I think the people that are successful are those that do what their players can execute. It's making sure your players know what they're supposed to do."

Contact Nathan Summers at nsummers@reflector.com or (252)329-9595.

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Incoming Florida State head football coach Jimbo Fisher has not been able to officially announce he's hired East Carolina defensive coordinator Greg Hudson, but it seems he would like to.

Fisher, who will replace longtime Seminoles head coach Bobby Bowden after FSU's appearance in Friday's Gator Bowl, hopes he can add the five-year ECU coordinator to his staff, potentially as linebackers coach, but maybe as the Noles' defensive coordinator down the road.

Fisher told the Orlando Sentinel on Saturday he thought Hudson would fit in with the staff he hoped to piece together. Although Fisher has already hired Mark Stoops to be his defensive coordinator, he said Hudson would be a potential replacement if Stoops took another job in the future.

Hudson told The Reflector on Friday night he had met with FSU officials, but said he planned no further announcement on his future until after the Pirates' Liberty Bowl clash with Arkansas Saturday.

Hudson's defenses were critical parts of each of the Pirates' Conference USA championship victories the last two seasons.

Fisher previously worked with Hudson at the University of Cincinnati.
Pirates' Hartman knows how to win

Ben Hartman makes it sound so easy.

He has made it look that way, too.

The East Carolina kicker has made six winning field goals - three on the final play of the game - during his college football career with the Pirates.

That career will end Saturday when Hartman has a chance to add to his school-record career total of 56 field goals when the Pirates (9-4) meet Arkansas (7-5) at 5:30 p.m. in the Liberty Bowl in Memphis, Tenn.

He has thrived at a pressure-packed position by staying relaxed and thinking positive. While other players use high-energy music to get amped up before games, Hartman listens to the 1980s pop of Phil Collins to stay loose.

If he's nervous before kicks, it doesn't show.

"It's not a big deal," Hartman said. "My job is to kick the ball through the uprights. I try not to see it as a pressure moment. It's more like a shining moment to help my team win the game."

That cheerful attitude and energy was what got Terry Craft's attention as he signed up his 4-year-old son Robbie for youth soccer years ago. Craft saw little Ben Hartman skipping in with his mother to register.

Hartman wound up on Craft's team and became best friends with Robbie. For more than 10 years, Craft coached the boys in soccer, baseball and basketball.

Nicknamed "Bigfoot Ben" by his soccer teammates, Hartman was a sweeper who excelled at scoring off free kicks. Hartman credits Craft - who never coached him in football - for teaching him the positive attitude that's helped him succeed as a kicker.

"Ben's naturally got a good attitude, too," Craft said. "He finds positive ways to think about things. The position he's in, kicking for the Pirates, I think I might be a nervous wreck, but he's kicked a lot of big kicks."

As a sophomore, Hartman booted a 39-yard field goal that sent Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium into a delirious celebration with a 34-31 defeat of North Carolina. He also kicked a 34-yard field goal to beat Boise State in the Hawaii Bowl that same year. He then clinched the 2008 Conference USA title game as a junior for the Pirates with a 36-yard field goal against Tulsa.

But his unflappable attitude was stretched to its limit in August, when it appeared that he might miss his senior season. He suffered a hip injury during spring practice that took two months to heal.

His problems continued into the preseason as he hunted for a precise diagnosis.
"I was heartbroken," Hartman said. "I was devastated. They had just reported back to camp, and it was the first camp I wasn't down [in Greenville] for. I was back home and seeing specialists."

Ultimately, he was told that it would take exploratory surgery to identify the problem. That would have kept him out for the season.

He decided to do physical therapy instead in hopes of managing the pain enough to get through the season. That plan succeeded, and he has kicked 19 field goals in 25 attempts this season.

Hartman said he's been told that once he stops kicking, the hip probably will heal on its own with proper rest. It appears that's going to be possible, because he's not hoping to kick in the NFL.

He has decided that now is the time for him to pursue his dream of becoming a law enforcement officer. Since he was a small child, he has been a fan of movies and television shows featuring police officers.

The show "Cops" is a longtime favorite, and he will watch reruns of "DEA" on the Spike channel for hours. He earned a criminal justice degree at East Carolina and did an internship in the police department in Greenville.

There he learned forensics and fingerprinting and made connections that he hopes will find him a job. Hartman wants to work for a federal agency such as the U.S. Marshals or the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

"When I was doing my internship, I never once felt, 'God, I have to be up at 5:30 in the morning to go and ride the morning shift at patrol,' " he said. "I woke up, and you pretty much had to drag me out of the station [at the end of his shift]."

That career plan means the Liberty Bowl will be Hartman's last chance to play football. As his career winds down, he has been made aware of statistics which indicate he has been one of the most successful kickers in the history of his home state.

Among Football Bowl Subdivision programs in North Carolina, only Wake Forest's Sam Swank, with 71, has kicked more field goals in his career than Hartman. Predictably, Hartman said he is ending his career with good memories of all the winning kicks and of being part of a senior class that helped turn East Carolina's program around.

"Whenever I chose to come here, they had won two games the previous year," Hartman said. "And Coach [Skip] Holtz was hired. I made a lot of good friendships with the guys that are here that I will remember forever."

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'Banchetto Musicale' gala on schedule

The Daily Reflector Contributed photo

Monday, December 28, 2009

The Friends of the East Carolina University School of Music will present its annual scholarship gala, "Banchetto Musicale: A Renaissance Celebration," Jan. 30 at the Rock Springs Center, N.C. 43.

Cash bar opens at 6 p.m., followed by dinner and a concert featuring several East Carolina University ensembles. Dress is black-tie optional. Admission is $100 per person.

Chris Buddo is director of the ECU School of Music. Melanie Frost Moll is president of the Friends of ECU School of Music board.

The dinner will feature apple pear salad with lemon poppyseed dressing; filet mignon and chicken marsala; stuffed red bliss potatoes; green beans almandine; and Portuguese rolls.

The Renaissance-inspired concert will include the Wind Ensemble, under the direction of Scott Carter, performing La Mourisque and Pavane Battaille for Brass and Percussion from Dansereye by Flemish Composer Theilman Susato and Volte from Terpsichore by Michael Praetorius. The Chamber Singers, directed by Dan Bara, will perform the Kyrie from the Pope Marcellus Mass of Palestrina, and other selections by Morley, Josquin des Prez, and Viadana. Jazz Ensemble A, directed by Carroll Dashiel, will pay homage to the Harlem Renaissance. The orchestra, under the baton of Jorge Richter, will perform Ottorino Respighi's Ancient Airs and Dances. Opera Theater, directed by John Kramar, will present the Act 1 Deut from Donizetti's Lucrezia Borgia. There will be additional interludes by the ECU guitar duo, and songs for Renaissance Guitar and Voice performed by Jocelyn Nelson and Shelly Maddox.

Invitations to the event have been sent out to patrons. In keeping with the Renaissance theme, the invitations were printed on a reproduction of a letterpress, a Vandercook SP-15, that belongs to Craig Malmrose, professor of Graphic Design in he School of Art and Design. Although the press was manufactured in 1961, it uses the same technology available to Renaissance printers. The text of the invitation, designed by Malmrose, uses a font designed in 1495. The invitation's ornament was hand carved after a Renaissance woodcut by Lisa Beth Robinson, who is also with the School of Art and Design. Malmrose and Robinson printed the invitations on the letterpress.

If you'd like to attend the gala, call Melanie Moll at (252) 341-0320 or Chris Buddo's office at 328-4270.

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS SPOTLIGHT

Infectious disease specialist Sheran Mahatme joins Brody School of Medicine, ECU Physicians

Dr. Sheran Mahatme, an infectious disease specialist, has joined the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and its group practice, ECU Physicians.

Mahatme joined the Department of Internal Medicine's division of infectious diseases as an assistant professor. She completed a fellowship in infectious diseases at the University of Pittsburgh, residency training at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit and an internship in internal medicine at Genesys Regional Medical Center in Grand Blanc, Mich.

Mahatme has a medical degree from Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine in Missouri and a master's of public health degree and a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Pittsburgh.

Mahatme is certified in infectious diseases and internal medicine by the American Board of Internal Medicine. She is a member of the Infectious Diseases Society of America, the HIV Medical Association, the American Society of Microbiology, the American College of Physicians, the American Medical Association and the American Osteopathic Association.

Her clinical and research interests are HIV drug resistance, HIV salvage therapies and Kaposi's Sarcoma.

Mahatme sees patients at Doctors Park 6A. Call 744-4500 for appointments.
Officials say health care bill is a start

By Ginger Livingston
The Daily Reflector

Tuesday, December 22, 2009

More residencies for doctors in training and assistance for rural hospitals are two ways eastern North Carolina could benefit from the health care reform legislation nearing a final vote in the U.S. Senate, local experts said Monday.

Officials at East Carolina University's Brody School of Medicine and University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina, along with academics studying the nation's health care system, agree the pending legislation falls short in finding solutions for all health care woes but is a needed start.

"This is not perfect; there is no perfection here," said Dr. Paul R.G. Cunningham, dean of the Brody School of Medicine and ECU's senior associate vice chancellor for medical affairs.

"What's left for us who are physicians and who are providing care is to take the law once it's done and create the best opportunity for our patients to benefit from the resources and strategies that have been created for our patients," he said.

The Senate is expected to vote on the final bill later this week. If approved, a conference of Senate and House members will hammer out a proposal reconciling the differences between the language passed by both bodies. That should begin in the new year.

The conference negotiations will be tricky and lengthy, said Donald Taylor, assistant professor of Health Policy at Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy. The House leadership will be angry because the public option for insurance was dropped and because the Senate took so long to reach a vote. The Senate, wanting to hold its coalition together, won't be willing to make many changes to its legislation, Taylor said.

"Our approach is to be prepared no matter what happens," said Dave McRae, chief executive officer of University Health Systems, which owns Pitt County Memorial Hospital and owns or manages seven other hospitals in the east.

The changes being proposed in both bills are designed to be phased in, McRae said, and it's too early to tell how it will affect the hospital.

Cunningham said there are multiple parts of the legislation that should benefit the east. He is particularly interested in a proposal that would increase federal funding for residency positions at hospitals like Pitt. The medical school has one of the nation's best records for placing residents in permanent positions in the east, Cunningham said. If more residency positions can be secured, he believes that will translate into more practicing doctors for the region.

The legislation also directs the Department of Health and Human Services to determine what models are available for improving the quality of health care delivery. Cunningham said the medical school's track record for providing quality care makes it a contender for serving as a model.

Cunningham said this part of the state also should benefit from a commitment to create incentives for reducing health care disparities among minority groups. The university and other regional institutions have been proactive in overcoming language and cultural barriers and physical obstacles that kept medical care from reaching certain populations.
McRae echoed Cunningham's comments. The hospital has encouraged the development of outpatient treatment services, wellness programs and educated people about avoiding emergency departments for routine medical procedures.

There are parts of the legislation that will have negative effects, he said. Special payments made to hospitals with large numbers of Medicaid patients will be cut, Cunningham said.

Also tort reform was barely addressed, he said. States can qualify for grants to develop an alternative method to the current tort litigation system, but there is no comprehensive plan for addressing medical malpractice lawsuits.

Contact Ginger Livingston at glivingston@reflector.com or at (252) 329-9570.

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Should alcohol be sold in Kenan Stadium?

Open the tap for regular fans, too

BY MATTEW EISLEY STAFF WRITER

To athletic director Dick Baddour and others who want UNC-Chapel Hill to start serving alcoholic drinks at Kenan Stadium, I say go for it - but don't limit it to the luxury suites.

Let us fans of more modest means partake as well of the fruits of the vine and the field. Carolina is, remember, a public university. Call me crazy, but I think it should serve, you know, the public.

As with any other responsible provider of alcohol, the university would have to take care not to help people get drunk, especially drivers.

But it shouldn't give in to the tsk-tskers who oppose all booze at university sporting events.

This might shock some of you, but fans already drink at football games. They just do it with hidden liquor or at tailgate parties.

Allowing open service of beer and wine would present several advantages:

For the wealthy boosters in the luxury boxes, a citrusy sauvignon blanc or a toasty pinot noir is sure to lubricate the back-slapping, deal-making and padded armchair coaching.

For university fundraisers, passing the bubbly first should make it easier to pass the plate, gathering gifts from cheerful contributors.

For us rank-and-file fans, the chance to sip some suds while watching Carolina beat teams it shouldn't and lose to teams it shouldn't - Moo U. comes to mind - will improve celebrations and consolations alike.

Just don't foolishly foment class warfare by limiting the booze supply to the fat cats.

The most difficult decision, of course, will be what kind of cheese to serve with the wine.

We're talking about Carolina, after all.

*Matthew Eisley is editor of The N&O's North Raleigh News and Midtown Raleigh News.*

Booze in Kenan is a bad idea

BY CAROLE TANZER MILLER STAFF WRITER

I adopted the Tar Heels as soon as I moved to the Triangle in 2000. The campus, the teams, the football Saturday scene were so steeped in tradition - and so classy.
That classy game-day vibe was a far cry from my alma mater, the University of Oregon, which may be best known as the campus where "National Lampoon's Animal House" was filmed.

There's a reason some say Autzen Stadium is not only among the nation's loudest, but also the rudest.

A fixture of Oregon's football complex is "The Mo," which is, for lack of a better term, a school-run, indoor biergarten where the beer and wine start flowing hours before kickoff. With fans allowed to leave the game, slake their thirst and return, things can get pretty rowdy. And there's no such thing as ducking out between downs for a quick potty break. The queues can be horrendous - especially for the men's room! - and people don't always wait their turn, if you get my drift. Spirited, yes. But classy, it ain't.

My husband and son are Carolina graduates. We are season ticket holders and Rams Club members. We rarely miss a game.

Sure, we've seen those airplane bottles of booze that get smuggled into Kenan Stadium. We've also seen a few inebriated fans get carried away. But nothing compared to what you'd see, Matthew, if Kenan turned open bar.

There's a gentler - and more genteel - feeling at Carolina that we enjoy. We don't need a drink to savor the experience, even when the Heels choke. And I sure don't need the fan next to me tossing his cookies into my lap. Besides, what will come next? Casino ads like those at Oregon? Thanks, but no thanks.

Carole Tanzer Miller is an assistant metro editor.
The family failure

"All happy families resemble each other; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way" begins Tolstoy's classic "Anna Karenina." In other words, Eden is boring, but we all identify with the pain of exile.

Lauren Grodstein's powerful second novel begins with first-person narrator Dr. Peter "Pete" Dizinoff, a skilled internist who is trying to deal with guilt and understand what exiled him from the kingdom of family and friends to a cell-like room above his garage, divorce pending, his lucrative practice gone.

The plot is simple but progress is tantalizingly interrupted, perhaps too often, by flashbacks as the narrator replays 30 years of history in order to fathom his failure. The novel presents complex portraits of the Dizinovfs, the Sterns, and their intimate friendship. Pete Dizinoff and Joe Stern, both doctors, have been friends since med school. Pete first dated Iris, who became Joe's wife. Joe has four children, Pete only one because his wife, Elaine, could have no more. Iris has done well on Wall Street and the Sterns are wealthier than the Dizinovfs. A competitive basketball player at the Jewish Community Center, Pete might resent the achievement gap, envy but one factor motivating his misguided actions.

Before the novel's first flashback we see a crazed teen threaten Dizinoff, then throw an unopened can of beer, drawing blood. Shortly thereafter we learn the teen's family has a pending malpractice suit against the doctor.

More central to the story, however, is Laura, Stern's attractive daughter. Fifteen years ago, teenage Laura secretly carried, then delivered a baby in the town library restroom, crushed its skull and tossed it in the trash. Prosecuted for murder, she got off with three years in a psychiatric facility, then lived and worked far away from home. Suddenly she returns at age 31, takes an interest in the Dizinovfs' only son Alec, a 20-year-old who has left college, has been busted for drugs, has pierced his ears and eyebrows, and has - from his father's point of view - a fragile grasp on the future.

Pete has inherited a firm sense of how things should be. His Jewish immigrant father "took the jigsaw puzzle of the world and made it into a simple picture: work hard, stay safe, do better than your own dad." He and Elaine argue often about Alec, especially with regard to Laura who, among other things, infuriates Pete by fouling the air of their nonsmoking home with cigarettes.

More understanding of Laura, Elaine tells him: "You live in black and white. Gray is beyond you." So is forgiveness, and in a final blistering scene, before Pete does something that will require the forgiveness of others, Laura stings him: "You just want Alec to have the future you've already chosen for him!"

The novel questions the relationship between wealth and happiness, between the rights of one generation's imperatives for the next. The Dizinovfs and Sterns would like their children to chase the American Dream of affluence. Mocking his bourgeois father, Alec has his own dreams but without the promise of big bucks.

Roseanne Craig, whose family is suing Dizinoff, finds herself unhappily selling cars at her father's
franchise because he wants her to, never mind that she has a degree from Berkeley and has dreamed of opening a bookstore. Laura, though, is a special case. If not exactly evil, she is a terminal narcissist, manipulative and scary, her unhappiness self-imposed. No character approaches goodness and peace except, perhaps, Elaine Dizinoff, who survives breast cancer and teaches English at a university Pete would never allow his son to attend because it lacks a prestigious name.

Lauren Grodstein, her father a doctor and an acknowledged resource, handles the medical scenes convincingly. She also has a splendid ear for dialogue. Wonderfully individualized characters come into focus largely by what they say, often a birdlike style of conversation that pecks away at a subject.

Full of fine insights and observations, her flexible prose pinches a reader's attention. Alec, for example, "looked as happy as a fist full of balloons." A flair for comedy often comes to the fore, as in this scene at the Museum of Modern Art, a building "designed to make the average shlub from New Jersey feel like the average shlub from New Jersey . . . Some kind of oil painting turned out to be only partly an oil painting, and partly an octopus shape made out of . . . elephant dung."

Grodstein herself is quite mindful of design and knows how to keep us reading.

Peter Makuck, founder and editor of Tar River Poetry from 1978 to 2006, is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at East Carolina University.
It's no wonder when greatness is recognized

By Della Batts  
The Daily Herald Staff Writer

ROANOKE RAPIDS — The first thing you notice when you walk into the band room at Roanoke Rapids High School is all the trophies piled on a table to the left.

Granted there are trophies everywhere. The school's been around for many years and so has the band, but the trophies and awards for 2009-2010 seem to stand out as they number over 40 already.

Laura Avery, director of bands, steps from out of her office. She's focused on selling fruit to raise money for the band, and their next performance.

She's not the kind of person that likes attention for herself. She'd rather spotlight the children. She's part of the team. Proficient and professional in every way.

She leads, and when she leads, she takes her followers straight to the top.

Leading by example, holding high expectation, she knows if she can attain it, so can they.

It's no wonder she was inducted into East Carolina University's Educator's Hall of Fame this year. She was born and raised in Roanoke Rapids, the daughter of Jack and Susan Avery. She attended Roanoke Rapids City Schools, then went off to Greenville attending ECU. After graduation and a degree in music education, she moved to Michigan, earned her masters in performance from the University of Michigan, and worked as a teacher. She played clarinet full time with an orchestra and was a choir director.

Hearing her speak of it, she never differentiated the significance of being an orchestra member or a choir director. They were both jobs. They were both about making music. They were both about being part of something greater than one's self.

It's no wonder she served as Teacher Ambassador for the Roanoke Rapids School District.

Seeing it was time to make a change, Avery moved back to Roanoke Rapids to be close to her parents. She became band director for Chaloner Middle School. She established the Jingle Bell Jackets and the Jacket Racket.

Recently, she moved into the High School as band director. She said it was a good move. The trophies on the table are a positive indication of that.

She served as Teacher Ambassador, then the school district nominated her for the Educator's Hall of Fame. That program was inaugurated in fall 1999.

Currently there are 300 honorees. Only professors, teachers, counselors, community members or others whose service to the education profession decisively impacted the lives of others are considered for this honor.

This permanent recognition is displayed prominently in the Speight Building on the ECU campus.
“Serving as Teacher Ambassador and the Hall of Fame give you a sense of accomplishment,” said Avery. Her eyes hardened, her fist clenched slightly and she took a more serious tone. “But I have a passion for music and if I can give an ounce of that to a student, that’s my reward.”

It’s no wonder her students win so many awards.