THE DAILY CLIPS

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Paralyzed last year, bride prepares for 'fairy tale' wedding

BY PAUL A. SPECHT - Staff Writer

KNIGHTDALE—Rachelle Friedman plans to have her nails painted, skin tanned and hair styled today. The 25-year-old won't be able to outstretch her fingers, rotate her body for tanning spray or put the finishing touches on her long blond locks. It's not exactly how she imagined preparing to tie the knot.

But she'll receive all the help she needs to make her dream of marriage become reality. Friedman will wed Chris Chapman at 11 a.m. Friday at the Fearrington House in Pittsboro, a year after a life-altering injury left her unable to walk down the aisle.

"At this point, I don't care if the whole world knows I'm getting extensions," she said. "I just can't wait for (the wedding) to finally happen."

The Knightdale couple have waited longer than most.

After growing up in the same neighborhood in Virginia Beach, they met for the first time at East Carolina University, where they fell in love. They were together almost five years before planning to marry on June 27, 2010. But their plans were derailed about a month before the scheduled ceremony.
Friedman and four friends had just returned from dance clubs to a friend's house in Virginia Beach about 1:30 a.m. on May 23, 2010. It was Friedman's bachelorette party.

"Our first thought was to go swimming," Friedman recalls. "So, I went upstairs and changed quickly."

What started as teasing turned to playful roughhousing.

And before she realized what happened, Friedman was face-up in the water after a friend's playful push landed her awkwardly in the shallow end of a pool.

"I immediately knew something was wrong," she said.

**Everything put on hold**

Chapman was camping at the Eno River State Park in Durham when his bride-to-be was rushed to a hospital. Doctors told Friedman she would be permanently paralyzed before Chapman was able to make it to her side.

Photo appointments and flower arrangements quickly took a backseat.

Friedman found herself confined to the first floor of her Knightdale home.

"I didn't know if I'd be able to ever have a wedding," she said.

Medical bills replaced RSVPs on her countertops.

The cost of treatment after the accident exceeded $300,000. She doesn't qualify for Medicaid, she says.

"I assumed I would qualify for Medicaid. I didn't make as much as a teacher makes - but I don't (qualify)," Friedman says.

**Help from strangers**

Yet, in two days, her big day will finally arrive. The couple will then travel to Las Vegas and Fiji for their honeymoon - all expenses paid.

Various media broadcast Friedman's tale in the weeks after her accident. NBC's "The Today Show" was even a sponsor for renovating the couple's Knightdale home to suit Friedman's needs. The attention prompted a call to Friedman from 1-800-Registry, an online wedding-advisory service, which offered to pay for her "dream" wedding and honeymoon. It's the first time the company has reached out in such a way. It's footing the bill for music, food, decorations, accommodations, photos, tuxes and even Friedman's original gown - which has been shortened and opened up in the back.
"It was going to be a beautiful wedding, but it wasn't spectacular," Friedman said of her original plans to wed at a waterfront venue in Virginia Beach. "This is more of a fairy tale wedding. It's going to be crazy amazing."

**Standing by her friend**

Despite many changes, the cast remains the same. Friedman's father will push her wheelchair down the aisle. Also, flanking the bride at the alter will be the bridesmaid whose push landed Friedman in the pool.

"We've gone through this together," Friedman said of her friend, whose identity she says she'll never reveal. "Just how Chris and I have proven and strengthened our love through this, (the bridesmaid) and I have done so with our friendship."

Friedman and Chapman have used her rehabilitation as a bonding experience.

"When she started rehab, she was in a power chair learning the basics of how to control it," Chapman says.

**Toward independence**

Friedman has no leg or finger functions, and she has limited ability in moving her arms.

Yet in the last year, Friedman has gone from learning how to pick up a fork to using a manual wheelchair. She has recently learned how to transfer herself from the wheelchair to her bed and couch.

"That's something she really wanted," Chapman said of Friedman's progress with the wheelchair. "Each step is another direction toward independence."

Her next goal is to drive again.

She also plays league wheelchair rugby on the Raleigh Sidewinders. Wheelchair rugby is played on a basketball court. Cones are set up as goals at each end. The two teams of four try to wheel between the cones on the other teams' end to score.

"It's a pretty physical sport," said Chapman, who's a referee.

Friedman, a former dance and aerobics instructor, and Chapman say their hopes for a physically active marriage haven't changed.

"We've always been an athletic, outdoorsy couple," Chapman said. "That won't change."
Instead of playing tennis, the couple now play wheelchair tennis. Instead of going on hiking trips, they plan to go on car-side camping trips. Their plans for children haven't changed either.

Losing the experience of motherhood was one of the first worries that crossed Friedman's mind.

"As far as we've been told, she can still have kids," Chapman said. "She'll have to have more regular checkups, and she won't be able to feel the baby kick or things like that, but we still plan on having kids - a long time from now."

**The rest of their lives**

In the meantime, the couple are focused on other goals.

When they return home from Fiji, Chapman will resume normalcy at his job as a science teacher at Southern Nash Middle School. Friedman will set her sights on southern California, where she'll travel in September for a three-week rehabilitation session.

A foundation named Walking with Anthony in Beverly Hills, Calif., has paid for the trip.

Friedman is encouraged by the support of friends and strangers. But she's keeping her expectations in check.

"People often tell me, 'If anyone's going to walk it's going to be you,' " Friedman said. "Unfortunately, it doesn't work like that. I have to be realistic."

A doctor told Friedman that she has a 5 percent chance of walking again.

"I think he was just being nice," she said. "But I'm determined to try."

The man soon to be standing at the altar with her thinks "the sky is the limit" for what his bride can accomplish.

Yet his commitment remains the same - for better or worse.

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A TALENTEd teenage swimmer has landed a prestigious scholarship to train and study in the United States.

Seventeen-year-old Daniel Woods, from Abersychan, will fly out to America in August to start a degree at Eastern Carolina University, after being awarded an academic and sports scholarship.

His five-year degree will see him improve his swimming by training six days a week, as well as studying for an engineering major.

Daniel, who has just finished his A-levels at St Albans High School in Pontypool, first started swimming when he was just four years old at Pontypool Dolphins Swimming Club.

He went on to join the Swim Wales Regional Skills squad in 2004, and has swum for the Swim Wales East regional development squad, and the Torfaen County Swimming Elite.

He qualified for the British Age Group Championships in 2007 and 2008, and has competed in the National Youth Championships, as well as representing the Welsh Schools in 2008 and 2009, and making it into the current Welsh Schools National Swimming squad.

The butterfly swimmer will begin his American studies in the autumn, where his £30,000 scholarship will cover his tuition fees, accommodation, and food.
Daniel said: “I’m very nervous, going out there on my own. But if I train well, I would like to come back and compete for Great Britain in the Olympics or Wales in the Commonwealth Games.”

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http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk
Brenda Poole, left, leads an class on extracting DNA from strawberries during a lesson on cloning at Ridgewood Elementary on Tuesday morning. (Rhett Butler/The Daily Reflector)

The science of summer

Science in the summer can be fun, especially if it's at camp.

This week an academic day camp for Academically or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) students in Pitt County is under way at Ridgewood Elementary School.

The Pitt County Schools system is partnering with East Carolina University for the seventh year in a row to hold the camp.

The camp is serving 100 Pitt County students who are identified as AIG. There are 35 middle school students and 65 elementary school students attending.

Students will split up into groups and rotate through two learning stations each day. All the learning centers are focused around this year's theme, Odyssey.

“This camp is important to have because it provides the Pitt County School AIG students with a place to come and learn during the summer,” camp director and Eastern Elementary School teacher Carmen Smith-Webb said.
“Students are provided with session topics to meet their learning interests. Our goal is that no matter which topic they choose, they all participate in small-group rigorous units that engage them using hands-on learning, guest speakers and interactive use of technology.”

Students were sent interest surveys to choose their stations before the camp. Stations include Cloning, Cloning, Cloning; Volcanic Voyage; Poseidon or Poison; Poetry a la Carte; Chip in for a Change; Jet into the Green Zone and others.

“The AIG camp faculty and staff for both Pitt County Schools and ECU want the students to make connections and deeper understandings during the week to real world topics,” Smith-Webb said. “Our goal is to provide a place where students can stretch their minds and encompass new and exciting topics.”

The camp also acts as a learning environment for ECU teachers who are pursuing their AIG licensure through ECU coursework. Parents are invited to attend an exhibition of their children's work at the end of the camp on Thursday at 4 p.m.
National budget cuts could hurt PCMH

By K.j. Williams

Raising debt ceilings and spending cuts are not just a topic for Congress this week. The Pitt County Memorial Hospital board used part of its meeting Tuesday to discuss the effects actions in Washington could have closer to home.

The PCMH board heard a report on the possible financial hits it could experience under some of the scenarios in Congress requested under a Republican bill that asks for spending cuts in exchange for its approval to raise the nation's $14.3 trillion debt limit by Aug. 3. The White House said it would veto a bill that would cause serious cuts to Medicare, Social Security and limit education funding.

Another bill proposed Tuesday by six senators would cut the deficit by nearly $4 trillion but raise taxes.

Michelle Brooks, UHS vice president, community benefit and government affairs, told the board that hospitals nationwide through the American Hospital Association already had made concessions, agreeing to a $155 billion cut in payments as part of health care reform.

What's proposed could cause a $60 million reduction in payments to PCMH alone.

“So it's pretty significant and as a system, it's considerably higher,” she said. “We're still on the chopping block.”

Those proposed cuts at PCMH could include $32 million less for medical education, $10.8 million less for Medicaid medical education, $2.5 million less from Medicaid for durable medical equipment and $8.1 million fewer to offset Medicare bad debt.

At an earlier PCMH board meeting, board President Steve Lawler said that the hospital was performing well financially.

“Through three quarters, we're having a very good year,” he said. “And we're positioning ourselves more importantly for a very strong 2012.”

The hospital has reached some of its performance initiatives. More work is needed to reach others, officials said. To lower its rate of events of harm to
patients by 50 percent and improve its care, PCMH representatives were visiting other hospitals that had reached their goals.

Fire truck donation

Greenville will receive contributions toward the cost of replacing an aerial ladder truck from the two entities with the city's tallest buildings.

Pitt County Memorial Hospital will join East Carolina University in sharing in the cost. The board of University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina agreed at its Tuesday meeting to provide $250,000, the same amount as ECU. The city will pay the remaining $500,000 to replace the aging 1996 aerial fire truck. The funding formula is the same for the entities as it was when the original truck was bought.

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Evelyn Estelle Fike Laupus

Evelyn Estelle Fike Laupus, RN, beloved wife, cherished mother and grandmother, and treasured friend, passed away peacefully at the Cypress Glen Home Retirement Community in Greenville on Friday, July 15, 2011. Mrs. Laupus was 89.

Memorial services will be held Saturday, July 23 at 2 p.m. in the Brown Chapel at Cypress Glen, followed by a reception in the Four Seasons Room at Cypress Glen from 3- 5 p.m.

Born December 23, 1921 in Spartenburg, S.C., first daughter and third child of Claudius Edwin and Rosa Fike, Mrs. Laupus was raised in eastern North Carolina, in Ahoskie, where she earned her high school diploma at 16. Mrs. Laupus next attended Woman's College in Greensboro, N.C., now UNC-G and graduated in 1941 as a Registered Nurse from the School of Nursing at the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond. She enlisted in the U.S. Army Nursing Corps with the rank of first Lieutenant and served the psychiatric needs of wounded GI's for the remainder of World War II, serving on the European front, first in England, then on a Red Cross Hospital Ship based off Southern Italy and North Africa.

After the war, Mrs. Laupus was reassigned to an Army hospital facility in Marion, Ind., where she served the remainder of her commission and met her husband-to-be, Captain William E. Laupus, M.D. Following a year-long courtship, on March 6, 1948, they married at the home of her parents in Ahoskie, N.C. and shortly thereafter, relocated to New York City, where, in 1950, daughter Patricia Ann was born. In 1953, the couple moved to the suburbs of Detroit, Mich. to establish Dr. Laupus' pediatric practice. There they added 3 more children to their family: John Richard, in 1953; Laura Ruth, 1954; and William Edward Jr. in 1957. The family relocated twice again, in 1959 to Augusta, Ga., and in 1963 to Richmond, Va., where Dr. Laupus pursued a career in academic medicine. They remained in Richmond until moving to Greenville, N.C., in 1975.

In addition to raising and graduating four children from college, Mrs. Laupus was involved in the League of Women Voters in Augusta. In Richmond, Mrs. Laupus was active in both the Richmond Symphony and Virginia Museum of the Arts, and
a member and soloist in The River Road Presbyterian Church choir. In addition, she returned to psychiatric nursing at St. Mary's Hospital there.

In 1975, Dr. Laupus accepted the position as the first dean of what was to become a four year medical school at East Carolina University in Greenville. As first lady, Mrs. Laupus worked tirelessly alongside her husband to transform the School of Medicine into the regional medical center it is today – helping to recruit nationally recognized staff, raising funds, and promoting its mission to the citizens of eastern North Carolina. She also founded the Pill Guild, an association of medical faculty wives, and participated in numerous civic and social clubs.

Mrs. Laupus was an avid bridge player and fisherwoman on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. She enjoyed reading and traveling, and in retirement visited much of the Far East, Europe, South America and the Caribbean. But she always maintained that Greenville was her first and happiest home. At the time of her passing, she had resided in Greenville for 36 years, and Cypress Glen Retirement Community since 2006, where she remained active in numerous social, bridge and book clubs.

Survivors include her loving children, Patricia Laupus O'Connell, John Richard Laupus and William Edward Laupus Jr.; and daughters-in-law, Yasmin and Jane Laupus. She is preceded in death by her husband, William Edward Laupus M.D.; daughter, Laura Ruth Laupus; and son-in-law, Sanderson Edward O'Connell. She is also survived by six grandchildren, Laura Katherine "Katie" O'Connell, and Adam Mikhail, Sarah Aliya, Seth Danial, Laura Elizabeth "L.E.", and Sophia Elaina Laupus. She was deeply loved and will be dearly missed by all.

Flowers are welcome. Those wishing to make a memorial contribution may consider a donation in the memory of Evelyn Fike Laupus to the William E. Laupus Health Sciences Library at Brody School of Medicine, Medical Foundation, East Carolina University, 600 Moye Blvd., Greenville NC 27834.

Wrongful death suit against UNCW by Peyton Strickland's family can move forward, judge rules

By Erin Zureick Dunn
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The N.C. Court of Appeals has decided that a wrongful death suit can go forward in the case of a college student shot and killed by the New Hanover County Emergency Response Team in 2006.

Peyton Strickland's family sued the University of North Carolina Wilmington and its police department in 2008, claiming that false information provided by campus police to the New Hanover County Emergency Response Team led to the unarmed teen's death.

UNCW said in a statement that it is reviewing the decision.

"The University disagrees with the court's opinion, including its interpretation of the public duty doctrine," the statement read in part. "At this time, the University intends to petition the N.C. Supreme Court for discretionary review. UNCW will continue to assert all of its defenses in this action, which the University believes are valid."
Attorneys for the family did not return a message seeking comment Tuesday.

Strickland was shot through the front door of his rental home on Long Leaf Acres Drive in December 2006 when an officer said he mistook the sound of a battering ram hitting the door for gunshots inside the home.

Authorities were serving an arrest warrant on Strickland, a Cape Fear Community College student who was accused with several others of beating a UNCW student over the head and taking two PlayStation 3 game systems.

In the lawsuit, Strickland's family said UNCW's police department gave "false, misleading and irrelevant information," to the New Hanover County Sheriff's Office, including that Strickland was known to be armed and dangerous and had been involved in gang activity.

The appeals court upheld a decision by the N.C. Industrial Commission that denied the defendants summary judgment in the case. The commission had remanded the case for a full evidentiary hearing.

Unless the state Supreme Court hears the case and decides differently, a full hearing will likely take place.

The appeals court decision released Tuesday centered on the "public duty doctrine."

That doctrine limits the liability of a government entity if an injury occurs to an individual while a public officer is upholding services owed to the general public as a whole.

"While we recognize the UNCW police department's interest in efficiently concluding investigations and in protecting officers participating in those investigations, these interests bear more on the yet-unresolved issues of the existence and breach of the duty alleged by plaintiff," the court opinion stated.

The three-judge panel was in agreement on the opinion.

New Hanover County previously agreed to a $2.45 million settlement with Strickland's family that went to start a scholarship fund at CFCC.

The N.C. Industrial Commission is a state agency that oversees the N.C. Workers' Compensation Act, as well as compensation in law enforcement cases such as Strickland's.
Walter Williams: Blame 'the devil' for cheating

Last December, I reported on Harvard University professor Stephan Thernstrom's essay “Minorities in College — Good News, But ...,” on Minding the Campus, a website sponsored by the New York-based Manhattan Institute. He was commenting on the results of the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress, saying that the scores “mean that black students aged 17 do not read with any greater facility than whites who are four years younger and still in junior high. ... Exactly the same glaring gaps appear in NAEP's tests of basic mathematics skills.” Thernstrom asked, “If we put a randomly-selected group of 100 eighth-graders and another of 100 12th-graders in a typical college, would we expect the first group to perform as well as the second?” In other words, is it reasonable to expect a college freshman of any race who has the equivalent of an eighth-grade education to compete successfully with those having a 12th-grade education?

Maybe this huge gap in black/white academic achievement was in the paternalistic minds of the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals justices who recently struck down Michigan's ban on the use of race and sex as criteria for college admissions. Given the black education disaster, racial preferences in college admissions will become a permanent feature, because given the status quo, blacks as a group will never make it into top colleges based upon academic merit.

The situation is worse than we thought. U.S. News & World Report (July 7) came out with a story titled “Educators Implicated in Atlanta Cheating Scandal,” saying that “for 10 years, hundreds of Atlanta public school teachers and principals changed answers on state tests in one of the largest cheating scandals in U.S. history, according to a scathing 413-page investigative report released Tuesday by Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal.”

A total of 178 educators, including 38 principals, many of whom are black, systematically fabricated test scores of struggling black students.

Teacher and principal exam cheating is not restricted to Atlanta; it's widespread. The Detroit Free Press and USA Today (March 8) released an investigative report that found higher-than-average erasure rates on tests taken by students at 34 schools in and around Detroit in 2008 and 2009. Overall, their report “found 304 schools where experts say the gains on standardized tests in 2009-10 are so statistically improbable, they merit further investigation. Besides Michigan, the
other states (where suspected cheating was found) were Ohio, Arizona, Colorado, Florida and California.” A Dallas Morning News investigation reported finding high rates of test erasures in Texas. Six teachers and two principals were dismissed after cheating was uncovered.

Why is there widespread cheating by America's educators? According to Diane Ravitch, who is the research professor of education at New York University, it's not teachers and principals who are to blame; it's the mandates of the No Child Left Behind law, enacted during the George W. Bush administration. In other words, the devil made them do it.

Walter E. Williams is an economics professor at George Mason University and a columnist for Creators Syndicate.