THE DAILY CLIPS

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Fire reported at ECU office building

East Carolina University employees were evacuated from a downtown office building Wednesday as crews battled a stubborn utility box fire, authorities said.

The fire in the exterior electrical box at East Third and Cotanche streets sent smoke pouring into the ECU administrative support services building, said Dawn Tevepaugh, ECU police assistant chief.

The fire was confined to the box.

It was not immediately known how many people worked in the building. All were expected to return once the smoke cleared, Tevepaugh said.

The fire was reported just after 11 a.m. An ECU police officer put out the flames with a fire extinguisher, but the box reignited, prompting officials to call Greenville Fire-Rescue.

Crews from Greenville Utilities also were summoned.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.
Bride-to-be looks beyond life-changing accident

By Phil Gast, CNN

(CNN) -- Fourteen months after she was left paralyzed by a pool mishap at her bachelorette party, Rachelle Friedman is having the wedding of her dreams Friday -- and then some.

Joining Friedman and fiance Chris Chapman will be between 100 and 120 family members and their closest friends, witnesses to the couple's can-do spirit.

"It just feels like a love story to people," said Rachelle's mother, Carol. "They are really great together."

Wednesday was a day of continued wedding preparations for Friedman, 25, of Knightdale, North Carolina, just east of Raleigh.

The quadriplegic in recent weeks has practiced for the couple's first dance, a special moment even if she will be in her wheelchair. Friedman's father, Larry, will push her down the aisle, so that she can hold a bridal bouquet as she approaches Chapman, 28.

"I can't compare our relationship to anyone else," she said. "I am super lucky to find that perfect love I wish everyone had."

For Friedman, life is about moving forward and gaining increased independence.

When asked how the accident changed her life, the bride-to-be says, "I don't really think about what would have been."

Friedman and Chapman, a middle school science teacher, were to wed June 27, 2010.
In late May, Friedman, who was a program coordinator for a senior citizens center, traveled to their hometown of Virginia Beach, Virginia, for her bachelorette party.

Bridesmaids enjoyed a cookout and a limousine ride to the entertainment strip with bridesmaids. "We had a really good time," the East Carolina University graduate said in November.

Afterward, the group went to her best friend's home, where they started playing around near the pool.

"It was just spontaneous horseplay," said Friedman, a former dance and aerobics dancer. Her best friend "pushed me, and I landed wrong."

The young woman's head struck the bottom of the pool, which had a few feet of water in it.

Friedman, who suffered a spinal cord injury and paralysis from the chest down, has remained close to the friend through the trauma each suffered.

"We're there for each other," Friedman said. "It could easily have been the other way around."

Chapman and Friedman put off the wedding during her initial rehabilitation and while they tried to figure out medical coverage. They were concerned that she may not qualify for Medicaid if she married, but they since learned she was ineligible.

A $500-a-month COBRA policy and long-term disability have helped. Individuals, businesses and foundations have provided other assistance.

After CNN wrote about the couple and HLN's Vinnie's Politan interviewed Friedman, a wedding and honeymoon planning company approached the couple.

"It blew me away, how upbeat and positive she is," said Donne Kerestic, CEO of 1-800-Registry, based in Nevada.

Working with vendors and two wedding planners, Kerestic's company is paying for Friedman's wedding and the couple's honeymoon in Fiji. 1-800-Registry is incurring between $50,000 and $60,000 in costs, Kerestic said Wednesday.

Chapman and Friedman will exchange vows at 11 a.m. Friday at Fearrington Village in Pittsboro, North Carolina.

The complex, which features an inn, restaurant and other features, has an upscale rural theme.
Friedman, who likes country music, is excited about having a band and deejay at the reception, planned at a large barn. She'll be wearing the same dress she planned to wear last summer.

"It's perfect," she said of the nuptial plans.

While she still has dreams of being able to walk one day, Friedman focuses now on increasing her strength and possibly regaining feeling in her hands. She's been working on her ability to "transfer" herself into bed or a car. She uses her thumbs to type on a keyboard.

The recreation management major plays wheelchair "quad rugby" for the Raleigh Sidewinders and has spoken at several venues, including an adaptive sports and wellness day, where people with disabilities were exposed to sports like kayaking, basketball and rugby.

Carol Friedman and Rachelle's 32-year-old brother help her during the week while Chapman is at work.

Besides paralysis, Friedman deals with nerve pain and blood pressure problems.

The past year has tested the couple's mettle.

"We're definitely built to last," Chapman said in November. "She was and is my best friend. I cannot wait to marry her."

The accident introduced them to new friends and brought their families closer together.

A page on a website called CaringBridge.org features photos of Friedman and has a guestbook full of best-wishes entries.

"You have such a wonderful outlook," one person wrote. "I have been through many trials and tribulations in my life and what you said hits the mark. ... You can make you(r) world perfect, different but perfect."

Excited about being able to lie on the beach in Fiji, Friedman also anticipates three weeks of treatment at Project Walk, a facility in Carlsbad, California, that helps people with spinal cord injuries.

The Walking With Anthony Foundation is covering the costs for Rachelle and Carol Friedman, said Gigi Betancourt, client services manager at Project Walk.

The nonprofit center's aim is helping patients improve their function below their injury level, build strength and find hope, said Eric Harness, head of research and development. Patients do exercises outside of their wheelchairs.
Friedman would eventually like to return to work, perhaps encouraging others as a speaker.

"Rachelle is a very motivated person," said Miranda Strider-Allen, program director at Resources for Seniors, where Friedman helped provide services to Wake County senior and disabled adults. "It's amazing -- her frame of mind and positive attitude."

"My hope is she finds her new niche in life," Carol Friedman said of her daughter.

"It's so awesome that they give to live as husband and wife, like everyone should, with or without a disability," Carol Friedman said. "So many people have it so much worse than we do."
Editorial: Harder Sciences

Here's a ranking that North Carolina promoters won't be touting: The state, which prides itself on high-tech employment, rates as "below average" in preparing its K-12 students for bachelor's degree programs in science, technology, engineering and math.

And, even though North Carolina scores higher than worst-in-the-nation Mississippi and "far below average" Louisiana and Alabama, we fail to distinguish ourselves even in the South, a region that fares particularly poorly in the Institute of Physics' Science and Engineering Readiness Index, from which the rankings come.

As noted recently on the opposite page by N.C. State University physics professor David Haase and co-author Paul Cottle, North Carolina actually rates about average in K-12 math education. It's in physics - the science dealing with matter, energy, motion and force - that we lag. That produces the substandard overall rating.

And when K-12 students aren't exposed to higher math and physics, they're less likely to enroll in college majors that lead to degrees in science and engineering, preparation for high-tech careers.

So, what's going on here? According the Haase and Cottle, "We believe this shortfall is due in part to policies that encourage students to avoid physics in high school." In North Carolina, students must complete only three science courses (biology, environmental science and an elective) to graduate from high school or to be admitted to a UNC-system college. That, plus an emphasis on teaching what will be tested, results in a shortage of good high school physics teachers and turns physics into "The Course to Avoid" in high school.

Are we going to do something about this, or, to paraphrase part of Newton's First Law of Motion, will a body at rest stay at rest, unless acted upon by an external force? Right now, it's fair to characterize North Carolina's approach to physics as "a body at rest." What could set it in motion is a decision by university officials to add rigor and substance to the admission requirements. That is, instead of the current trio, require biology, chemistry and physics.
March trial set in Taft killing

BY ANNE BLYTHE - staff writer

RALEIGH -- Jason K. Williford, the man accused of raping and killing state school board member Kathy Taft in March 2010, could go to trial this spring.

At a hearing Wednesday on Wake County's homicide cases awaiting court action, Judge Donald Stephens tentatively set a trial for March.

Williford faces the possibility of the death penalty on charges of murder, first-degree rape and burglary connected to the beating death of Kathy Taft, a state school board member.

Taft, 62, of Greenville, was at a friend's home in Raleigh recovering from plastic surgery when her sister found her in bed March 6, 2010, bloodied and unresponsive. Taft was being treated at WakeMed when health care workers realized she had been sexually assaulted and beaten in the head. She died March 9.

Williford, an unemployed musician who lived two-tenths of a mile from the Cartier Drive residence where Taft was staying, was arrested at a Jordan Lake campground 41 days later.

Because Ernest "Buddy" Conner, one of the defense attorneys representing Williford, has other capital cases scheduled for trial about the same time, Stephens acknowledged it might be necessary to reset the Williford trial.

Stephens also appointed a third defense attorney to help with the case.

Lawyers speculated the trial could take from a month to three months.

Police do not believe Taft knew Williford.

Conner told Stephens the defense might raise issues about Williford's mental health, but did not elaborate.

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Letters to the Editor: Two at dentistry's forefront

North Carolina dentistry recently lost two of its distinguished leaders who died within a week of each other, Dr. Robert "Jack" Shankle of Chapel Hill and Dr. James W. Bawden of Durham.

As the author of "The North Carolina Dental Society, 1856-2006," I interviewed both men, who were generous with their time and insights. Shankle was one of the first professors at the UNC Dental School and was a kind mentor to many of the state's dentists including my own, Dr. John Woodall. He helped integrate the school and encouraged women such as Dr. Betty McKaig, the society's first female president, to become dentists. Shankle was equally active in the Dental Society, serving as president in 1979-1980.

Bawden was a member of the Dental School's faculty for 39 years and served as dean of the school during its growth period between 1966-1974. He was dean when the school was named No. 1 in the country, a title that has benefited many of its graduates. These two men made history for their profession and their state.

Barlow Herget

Raleigh

*The writer is a former member of the Raleigh City Council and a former editorial writer for The N&O.*
Letters to the editor: UNC’s athletic transgressions

The fact that UNC football player Michael McAdoo's paper evidently was never checked for plagiarism by his UNC professor, the UNC honor court, the NCAA and especially the UNC athletics department makes the above parties appear incompetent, stupid or just plain lazy (news story, July 17). With free online plagiarism detection programs, it is inexcusable for the above parties to not carry out due diligence. The recent disclosure of numerous parking tickets and this paper makes the public suspicious that the UNC athletics department will make all efforts to avoid the full disclosure of the investigation of the football program.

Unfortunately, UNC has a long history of allowing academic incompetence in football and basketball, when they allowed Dean Smith to recruit for four years (1990-1994) players with the lowest GPAs and SATs (787) in the ACC and Mack Brown's academic exception records to be phased out. It will be interesting to see if the UNC alumni value academic integrity enough to make the necessary changes to the athletics department to avoid more investigations in the future.

Sears Bugg

Warrenton
There comes a time in art school, according to Eric White, a 22-year-old sculptor and East Carolina University alum, when “sleep deprivation starts to feel like an extremely potent hallucinogen.

“A person starts to have micro-sleeps,” he wrote on the Atomic Lime Project blog, “or periods where they slip in and out of consciousness for seconds at a time without realizing it, and the real world becomes entwined with the dream world.”

It was in this hallucinatory state in December of 2008 that close friend, fellow artist and ECU peer Justin Bernel, now 24, began compiling notes on how to make a living as an artist. One month later, while traveling to a Warhol exhibit in Charlotte, Bernel presented White with a binder of ideas, 100 pages titled “Justin's Plan for World Domination.”

“The idea was to form a group of local artists and incorporate the marketing and business notes from the binder, but also surround ourselves with like-minded artists that can help create the academic atmosphere we loved so much at ECU,” Bernel said.
What followed became known as the Atomic Lime Project, a collective of young North Carolina artists dedicated to supporting each other's aesthetic freedom. But while their manifesto calls for world domination – “You've got to aim high, right?” White said – they must first conquer Wilmington.

“Wilmington has ties for all of us in the group,” White said. “We felt like it was an appropriate place for us all to show collectively.”

The Project strikes Bottega Art & Wine in downtown Wilmington on Friday for its first collaborative exhibit. The opening reception begins at 6 p.m. and features art by all four artists – White, Bernel, Justin Campbell and new recruit Melina Reed – and live music by local Americana rock band Charlie the Horse. (“They can be goofy, serious, loud, soft,” Reed said. “They are extremely versatile as musicians, which is the way we are as artists. It just fits perfectly.”)

“What we value most is the organic nature of raw creation, using whatever inspiration catches us at any particular time to communicate some truth beyond ourselves through art,” said Reed, a 25-year-old metalsmith and UNCW English student.

Though Bernel and White gave Wilmington a preview of their work at the Projekte gallery last September, the majority of the Bottega exhibit, which runs through Sept. 16, is composed of new creations, many jointly crafted.

“The final layout for the Atomic Lime Project was a group of local artists that have a high level of craft as well as character,” Bernel said. “The group would show together, critique together, do charity events together, collaborate on pieces and essentially be a sort of family … in a very dysfunctional kind of way.

“Working with Melina since she joined the group has been huge, as I've created an entirely new series of work specifically to display her jewelry for this show.”

In addition to local members, some of the art features local materials. White created several new pieces from wood found in eastern and central North Carolina.

“All of us are inspired by the landscape of North Carolina in a substantial way,” Reed said. “This diversity is echoed in our pieces, sometimes subtly, sometimes blatantly. The fun part is that locals are usually able to pick up on those connections.”

While membership in the project is limited geographically only by the state line, three fourths of the group works specifically from a home studio in Jacksonville, dubbed “Suite 16.”

“We also refer to it as ‘our super secret location,’” Reed said. “That's about all the detail I can go into without disclosing trade secrets.”

Features: 343-2343
Father-son Cherryville duo look at close of a chapter of their baseball lives

Richard Walker

CHERRYVILLE – That Drew Reynolds has made baseball his life is no surprise.

Perhaps his father, Cherryville American Legion Post 100 coach Bobby Reynolds, puts it best when talking about his son:

“He’s been at baseball games since he could walk. Since he could put a glove on, he’s been out there taking infield. And he’s grown up as a batboy, then playing. So it’s in his blood and always has been.”

However, this weekend could mark the end of another chapter in the Reynolds’ baseball story in Cherryville. Drew and Bobby Reynolds and Post 100 are preparing for this weekend’s North Carolina state Legion baseball tournament in Morehead City – and two Cherryville losses would end Drew’s playing career.

“I’ve been very blessed to have the opportunity to play for my dad,” said Drew, a standout pitcher, shortstop and hitter for a Post 100 team that earlier in the week won a record 15th North Carolina Area IV championship. “Most people don’t get that chance, so it’s been very special to go out there with him and compete with him as the head coach. It’s been even better that we’ve had so much success. Hopefully, we can get it rolling in Morehead City and have another successful run.”

Drew is in his sixth season in the Post 100 Legion program, including the last four playing for his father’s team. In each of those four seasons, Cherryville has won the area title and advanced to the state tournament. Friday night, Post 100 opens its bid to win the eight-team, double-elimination tournament at 7:30 p.m. against host Morehead City.

“It can be very difficult to play for your dad, especially my dad,” said Drew, who is preparing for his sophomore year as a baseball player at East Carolina University. “He expects a lot out of his players, but he expects even more out of me. And that’s fine. I mean, we’re 100 percent about baseball. We go home and we talk about baseball. We go to the field and we talk about baseball. We have an off day and we go to another game and talk about baseball. It’s 100 percent what we’re about. So it was difficult to play for him, but it’s been a successful ride and I’ve enjoyed every minute of it.”

The ride began shortly after Drew was born in 1992. He first watched his father coach Gastonia Post 23 teams in the mid-1990s before Bobby was rehired as Cherryville head coach in 1997. That’s when Drew became somewhat of a team mascot as its batboy.
Drew was a part of Little World Series runnerup teams in 1998 and 2003, even getting to go to the 2003 tournament in Bartlesville, Okla.

But the best was yet to come.

“Obviously, the great memories as a batboy are of them winning a state championship and going to Oklahoma,” Drew said. “But I don’t think anything tops playing for him (Bobby) and going out to battle every season.”

Bobby never officially coached Drew until the 2007-08 school year. On the eve of his sophomore year – and after playing for Cherryville High’s junior varsity as a freshman – Drew chose to transfer to East Rutherford High in Forest City to play for his father’s high school baseball team.

“He decided to go to East Rutherford the night before school started,” Bobby said. “He was getting ready for bed and walked down and leaned his head around the steps leading downstairs and said, ‘I think I’m going with you tomorrow, dad.’

“I gave a little fist pump because I was glad to have the chance to coach him. But we (Bobby and his wife Susan) were going to let him make his choice.”

At East Rutherford, the Cavaliers finished as N.C. 2A runnerup in 2008 and advanced to the playoffs again in 2009 before Drew closed his career in storybook fashion in 2010. Drew took MVP honors as the Cavaliers won that year’s N.C. 2A state championship series.

Drew played well enough to earn a scholarship to East Carolina, where he was a part-time infielder and little-used pitcher for a Pirates’ team that was eliminated in the NCAA tournament by No. 1-ranked Virginia this past season.

Drew expects to get more playing time in his collegiate future and may well be in the area next summer playing for a Coastal Plain League team – nearby Gastonia and Forest City seem logical assignments for him.

For now, Drew’s goal is to close out his Post 100 career on a high note.

“It has not clicked yet,” Drew said of his Legion career coming to an end. “I’m not trying to look towards that because I’m trying to make every moment last as long as I can.”

On the mound, he’ll take Cherryville’s second-longest scoreless innings streak of 21 1-3 innings into this weekend’s state tournament in addition to having a 6-0 record and 2.01 ERA. And with a .429 batting average, Drew trails only longtime teammate Trey Drewery (.513) as Post 100’s top hitter.

Whenever his baseball career ends, Drew is emphatic about the next step.
“I want to be a coach just like my dad,” Drew said. “I’ve been a batboy. I’ve played for him. I’ve lived baseball and I’d like to be just like him. So my plan right now is to be a coach, have a good time and be half the coach he ever was.”

His father couldn’t be prouder.

“I’m sure he’d like to follow that next chapter when he’s done as far as coming back and coaching,” said Bobby, who is the winningest coach in Area IV history (608-280 record) and earlier this season became only the second 600-game coaching winner in state Legion history; Rowan County’s Joe Ferebee is first with 694 victories. “That seems to be the direction he's aiming at now.

“I guess I’ll go watch him in his next chapter.”

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