

INSIDE:

SPORTS: Men's basketball team defeats Winthrop p. 5

OPINION: University needs snow policy p. 2

FEATURES: Hypnotist performs in the new dining hall p. 4

COMICS: New feature: Soaps summary p. 6

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The Blue

BANNER

"Human diversity makes tolerance more than a virtue, it makes it a requirement for survival—Rene Dubos

WEATHER: Increasing cloudiness this weekend with a chance of freezing rain or snow.

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OFFICIALS SAY PARKING IS NO LONGER AN ISSUE; LAZINESS IS THE PROBLEM

Christin Hall
Staff Writer

With the opening of a new parking garage on campus this semester, students say that finding a parking space is generally less of a problem. The parking deck is located under the new dining hall which opened this semester. The new facility cost approximately \$4.8 million.

The new parking deck and the gravel lot behind it contribute about 138 new parking spaces for students. With the loss of the 108-space lot behind Justice Gym, however, students have gained fewer than 30 new spaces overall.

"I would say it's a little easier this semester than it was last semester," said Amy Graham, a commuter student. "I haven't had any trouble finding a space."

Although opinions differ among students, the

general consensus echoes Graham's viewpoint. Most commuter students agree, however, that arriving on campus early is the key to finding a parking space easily.

"When you have an 8:00 o'clock class it's easier to find a space," said Judy Gentry, who also commutes. "If you come in for a later class you cannot find parking anywhere, except on the big parking lot way, way down below Owen."

Jeffrey Van Slyke, director of public safety on campus, said there is ample parking for students. He said the problem is "laziness." Everyone wants a convenient space, and nobody wants to have to walk, he said.

This semester there are approximately 861 parking spaces designated for students, according to a parking survey conducted by Van Slyke. The new parking garage added about 98 spaces, and the gravel lot behind the new dining hall added 40 more.

This 138-space gain is considerably lessened by the loss of the Justice Gym lot, which contained 108 parking spaces, most of which were student spaces, according to Van Slyke.

Faculty and staff also lost some spaces with the demolition of that lot, but they have gained 30 spaces to counter the loss, said Van Slyke. There are now an estimated 462 parking spaces on campus designated for faculty and staff, according to the parking survey.

Van Slyke said that when people look at the numbers of student-designated spaces and faculty/staff-designated spaces, they often overlook the fact that there are about 560 "open" parking spaces that anyone can use. With these 560 spaces, the total number of parking spaces on campus, including handicapped and service spaces, is estimated at 1883.

Ronald D. Reagan, director of facilities planning and construction on campus, agrees with Van Slyke that the real problem is that everyone wants

a convenient place to park.

"If you want to find a space outside your dorm or classroom, yeah, there's a problem," said Reagan. "You're looking for the location, not the empty space. There's always available spaces on campus. The problem is people want a [close] space."

For the most part, though, parking has not been a problem so far this semester, Van Slyke said.

"There's usually a crunch at the beginning of the semester. We just haven't had it [this semester]," said Van Slyke.

He said that, unlike past semesters, when cars could be seen lined up on the grass along University Heights, this semester has seen very little of the "overflow-onto-the-grass situation."

Campus police have already begun issuing tickets for parking violations, but this semester they've

Please see "Parking," page 8

Students Are Pleased With The New \$4.8 Million Dining Facility

Andrea Lawson
Staff Writer

Even though lines have stretched out of the building, students say they are pleased with the food and atmosphere in UNCA's new 490-seat dining hall which opened at the beginning of this semester.

"I think that they need to make the lines more structured so that they don't back up as much," said Tim Martin, junior. "It's more accommodating [and] more attractive, not a standard lunch-room."

"It's more like a restaurant now," said Sophomore Jesse Richards. "It's definitely more hospitable."

The project to build a new dining hall/parking deck was started about five years ago, according to Ken Barefoot, director of University Dining Services.

"I think right now we've got one of the best facilities of anybody [in this area]," said Barefoot. "Everything is really geared to the student. When we started working on this project, we found out what the students wanted. Luckily, it hasn't changed since we started."

Barefoot said that the old dining hall was built to service a smaller resident

population. The new facility has double the amount of square feet, an increase from 10,000 to 21,000 square feet, and will accommodate the growing number of on-campus students.

"The [old] space was designed when the school only had 300 students who lived on campus," said Barefoot.

The larger space will help improve the quality of food served, according to Barefoot. In the old building, cooks were forced to cook large quantities of food ahead of time, since the kitchen could only cook for about 250 people at once. Barefoot said that the new kitchen is larger, enabling the cooks to spread out, cook more food at one time, and keep less pre-prepared food warming.

Several residents have said that they are pleased with the new dining atmosphere, especially the new seats and larger dining area, but confused by the new structure of the lines.

"They need better signs so you don't wander all over the place," said Doug Flaherty, freshman. "The seats are great, there's a good selection of food, and there's always something to choose from."

"I think that the seats are much more comfortable, and the food is better," said David Underhill, senior. "It's prettier, and it has much more room."

Barefoot said that the cafeteria's multi-line system, while not lessening the amount of time spent in the cafeteria, will offer students a better variety of foods such as sub sandwiches, hamburgers, and Pizza Inn pizza.

"We're the only school that I know of that has a national brand in their boarding cafeteria," said Barefoot.

"I like the wide variety of foods offered," said Jennifer Loftin, freshman.

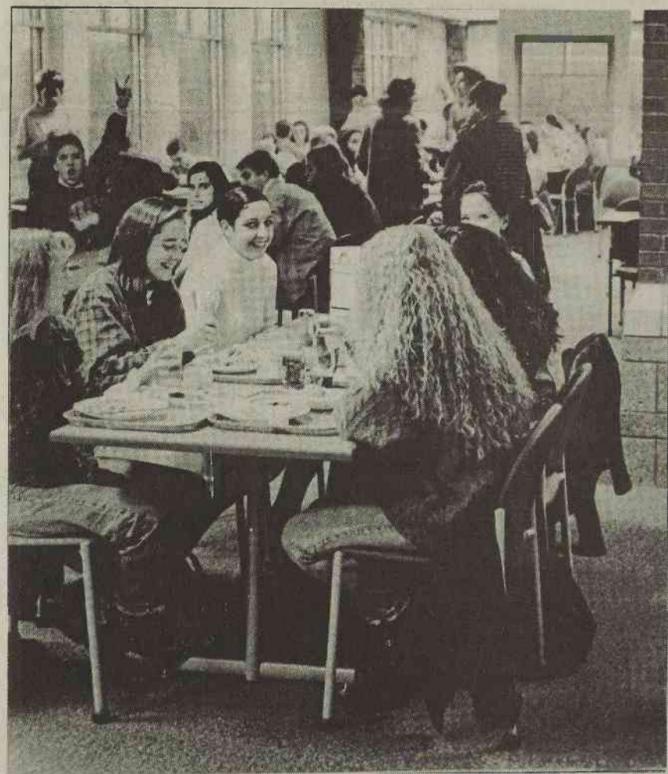
"It's a little confusing to figure out where to go to get your food," said Skip Petro, freshman. "You don't quite know which line to get in. Other than that, the place is beautiful."

Many students said that they liked the new grill and pizza lines, but were confused by the fact that they are not open for lunch and dinner. Barefoot said that for now, the grill will stay open only for lunch, and the pizza line will be open for dinner. However, the possibility of having all of the lines open for lunch and dinner has not been ruled out for the future.

"It would be a real zoo in there if we got all of the lines open at the same time right now," said Barefoot.

Another concern of students is the fact

Please see "Dining," page 8



The new dining hall facility opened at the beginning of this semester.

Photo by Lat Roy

Fire In South Ridge Residence Hall Leaves Students Out In The Cold

Todd Hagans
Staff Writer

An electrical fire in an air handler unit last Thursday evening caused an evacuation of UNCA's South Ridge Residence Hall.

According to Pete Williams, UNCA's Director of Housing, the motor in an air handler unit overheated, burned up, and filled a room on the third floor with smoke around 6:30 p.m. The air handler is a mechanism that filters the heat and air conditioning into each room.

"From what I understand, what actually happened was the motor in the heater burned out, and was just smoking," said Natalie Reid, a South Ridge Hall resident assistant.

Kim Walker, a South Ridge Hall resident, said that she was in the shower when the fire alarm went off. "All I wanted was a warm shower, but instead, I was stuck in the freezing rain," said Walker.

South Ridge Hall's Head Resident Assistant Jesse

Kenyon said that he was entering the building when the alarm went off. "I went up to room 307, and I could see a lot of smoke," said Kenyon.

Kenyon said that he searched the room to find the cause of the smoke, and that it smelled like something electrical was burning.

According to Kenyon, the resident assistants should check the fire board when there is a fire alarm to see which smoke detector set the alarm off. Kenyon also said that the fire alarm sounds for a long period of time so people will remain outside of the building.

Kenyon said that campus security was called after the fire was found, and that campus security called the Asheville Fire Department.

According to Reid, the residents of room 307 were able to stay in their room overnight. Reid said that all South Ridge residents evacuated the building, and that there were no injuries.

"I was very proud of everybody for evacuating the building," said Reid. "Every time the fire alarm goes off, you need to evacuate the building because

we aren't going to know until after the building is evacuated how dangerous it might be."

According to Angelique Roberts, of 307 South Ridge Hall, no one was in the room when the fire occurred. Roberts said that her roommate told her that she could not enter the building because there was a problem in room 307.

Roberts said that the air handler unit was not working earlier Thursday, and that maintenance came to fix the problem.

Roberts said that she was surprised that there was not any smoke damage, and that she and her roommate were able to stay in the room overnight. Roberts also said that a space heater was provided to her and her roommate while the air handler unit was being repaired.

"We were planning on going to spend the night in another friend's room because everyone was so worried about us staying in here, but we decided to stay here," said Roberts.

Kenyon said that members of the Asheville Fire Department inspected the room, and said that

residents were allowed to return to the building after the inspection by the fire department. Kenyon also said that several people from the physical plant were called to the scene Thursday night to fix the problem.

According to Kenyon, there were three fire alarms in South Ridge last week. The first alarm occurred Monday night when a resident sprayed disinfectant and insect spray in their room which caused the alarm to go off.

Kenyon said that the second fire alarm on Wednesday morning was due to an electrical problem in the air handler unit, and that maintenance fixed the unit Wednesday.

Walker said that because of the numerous fire alarms, she does not know if the fire alarms are real or false.

Reid said that the fire last Thursday evening was a small incident, and that UNCA is lucky that the incident was not any larger.