

# The Banner

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## Accident hospitalizes student

By Shaun Cashman  
Staff Writer

Sunday at approximately 6:40 p.m., Roberto Mera, a sophomore atmospheric science major, was taken to Memorial Mission Hospital after falling off the back of a moving truck and hitting his head. Mera spent Sunday night in the neuro-trauma intensive-care unit (ICU). He has gone through several surgeries to reduce the pressure in his head. As of Wednesday, a spokesperson for Mission-St. Joseph's Health System said Mera was still in critical condition.

Mera and his roommate, Colin McCandless, an undeclared sophomore, caught a ride on the back of a 1992 Toyota truck up the South Ridge Residence Hall service entrance. Midway up the hill, while standing on the bumper and holding onto the roof of the truck camper, Mera lost his grip and fell to the ground.

Although the truck was reportedly only going about five miles per hour, the driver, fellow student Mark Ebert, an undeclared sophomore, has been issued a citation for reckless driving, according to the incident report obtained from UNCA public safety.

Ebert was unavailable for comment.

On Sunday night, McCandless parked his car in

the South Ridge parking lot, and then he and Mera began to walk back up to South Ridge, where they live. While walking up the back entrance, Ebert drove up beside the two students and offered them a ride.

A bicycle and a small mattress were taking up most of the truck bed's interior, and since it was such a short distance up the hill, McCandless and Mera decided to ride on the rear bumper.

According to the incident report, Ebert said he did not know either of the boys, and the trip up the hill was calm and slow until he heard McCandless yelling for him to stop.

In the report, McCandless said that Ebert was playing around and weaving the car back and forth and revving the engine.

However, McCandless said that Mera did not fall because of Ebert's driving, but because they had nothing to hold on to on the back of the camper.

Mera fell 28 inches from the bumper to the ground and struck his head. He was bleeding from the head, ears, and mouth.

Ebert drove the rest of the way up the hill and called 911. He and McCandless followed the ambulance to the hospital.

*Cards and balloons can be sent to Mera and his family at Memorial Mission Hospital. No flowers, please.*

## Thieves ignore bike locks

### Bike theft increases despite use of locks

By Shaun Cashman  
Staff Writer

Four bicycles and one bike tire have been stolen from the UNCA campus since August, mostly from around the Highsmith University Center and Founders Hall areas. "We have not had much of a problem with it until this semester," said Jerry Adams, investigator and shift supervisor for UNCA public safety.

"People are probably taking them to sell and make money," he said.

No suspects have been apprehended in any of the thefts so far.

"We're doing the best we can with increasing patrols in these areas," said Adams. "It's possible that some students are doing it, but right now, we don't have any evidence to that effect."

All of the bicycles stolen were chained and locked to bike racks, but a pair of bolt cutters were used to cut through the chains.

"There's not much defense when somebody cuts the chain with bolt cutters," said Adams.

When a bike is locked to the bike rack, the best way to keep thieves away is to run the chain through the frame as well as through the front tire, and that way certain

parts of the bike can't be stolen, he said.

In a theft last month, a bicycle was secured to the bike rack outside Highsmith, with the chain running through the frame.

The owner found that during the night, someone had tried to break the lock to steal the bicycle, and being unsuccessful, the thief then removed and stole the front tire instead, according to an incident report obtained from public safety.

In another theft at the end of August, a bicycle was locked by the front tire to the bike rack outside Aycock Hall in Governors Village.

The owner later returned to find only the front tire locked to the rack, and the rest of the bike had been stolen, said an incident report.

The bicycle was later found and returned to the owner.

"The best way to really help us do what we need to do in case your bike gets stolen is to record the name, the model, the size, the color, just a general description of it, and also record the serial number," said Adams. "That would increase your chances of us finding it and getting it back."

"Have that information saved somewhere, so that you can get to it in case your bike is stolen," said Adams.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY TRAVIS BARKER/ MODEL JOHNNY ZIEM

Students use chains and locks to secure their bikes to the bike racks. In the recent string of bike thefts, the locked chains have not stopped thieves.

## Justice Center receives \$500,000 for renovations

By Mat Peery  
Staff Writer

UNCA received \$500,000 from the state this week for renovations to the 30-year old Justice Center as part of the North Carolina state budget.

The General Assembly passed the state's 1998-2000 budget on Monday, and the bill was signed by Governor Jim Hunt Wednesday.

The \$500,000 for renovations to

the Justice Center was included in the \$12 billion budget as part of capital expenditures for the UNC system.

"To make a long story short, the university got its regular funding, and, in addition, this money was appropriated," said Tom Hunnicutt, director of athletics.

Chancellor Patsy Reed said the money for the Justice Center was "outside of our priorities. It wasn't something that we asked for officially."

"It was something that was seen as

a need and was provided to us," Reed said. "We are happy to have it."

According to Representative Wilma Sherrill, who sponsored the appropriations bill for the money, the state legislature has the power to obtain funding for "anything it wants to."

Sherrill said she had a conversation with Hunnicutt and Eddie Biedenbach, men's basketball head coach, about things that "were needed at UNC-Asheville."

Sherrill said she had the support

of Governor Hunt to acquire funds for Justice Center.

Biedenbach said that Governor Hunt had toured the facility while on campus for a meeting last year.

"He and I looked around the facility here for a little bit, and he realized that there were some needs, that we were quite behind the other schools in the university system in our facilities," said Biedenbach.

Sherrill also said that she introduced a bill in the House of Representatives for the \$12 million for renovating and expanding the

Highsmith University Center.

"We definitely have \$1 million for Highsmith, but I think that is going to grow to \$3.5 million," Sherrill said.

Sherrill said that the additional money for Highsmith might be diverted from funding for the Blue Ridge Destination Center, an economic development project for the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Sherrill said she put a provision in the bill funding the destination center that said if the matching "federal funds did not materialize, then

that \$2.5 million would be diverted to UNCA's Highsmith Center."

"The federal funds did not come through, but that would be after Dec. 31," she said.

Although the budget only allocated \$1 million for the renovations, Reed said she hoped that the rest of the funding for the student center would be approved at some time.

Planned improvements to the Jus-

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## Collision on Division?



PHOTO BY TRAVIS BARKER

Drivers often cross into the lane of oncoming traffic while trying to navigate the curve on the new Division Street.

## Consultant reviews facilities

By Samantha Hartmann  
Staff Writer

A Virginia-based higher education consultant, Eva Klein, visited UNCA in September to generate discussion on UNCA's facility needs.

The UNC Board of Governors hired the consultant to do a comprehensive study of facilities on all 16 UNC campuses.

"The General Assembly has asked the universities to undertake a study of their total physical facility needs," said Tom Byers, special assistant to the chancellor. "The Board

of Governors made a decision to carry out that mandate by engaging a consultant."

"The purpose of (Klein's) initial visit was to listen and hear our thoughts," said Byers. "What we found was she had some very definite concepts about the future. She also had a good grasp on what our particular facility requirements might be for carrying out a good liberal arts program."

According to Tom Cochran, assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs, funding is often based on the size of the university.

"They are doing what I call a 'comprehensive facilities study,'" said Cochran. "Tra-

ditionally, in the state funding model, funding is driven by how much you will continue to grow."

"A liberal arts college needs to be small in order to have the personal contact we've been trying to build for the last 25-30 years," he said. "It has been difficult to get special funding for that."

In discussions with Klein, Byers said UNCA officials stressed the importance of maintaining smaller classroom settings.

"One of the distinctive things about UNCA is the faculty and student interaction that takes place in relatively small groups," said Byers. "As a lib-

eral arts institution, we have a need for smaller spaces."

In an article published in *The News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.) on Sept. 20, Klein said she believed that many classrooms across the system are under-utilized because of poor scheduling.

"Faculty want to teach from 9 to 1, and I say, 'too bad,'" said Klein in the article. "Students don't want to go to school in the afternoon, they want to play pool. I say, 'too bad.'"

Neno Bojic, a senior management major, does not see

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