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Volume 31 Issue 5

March 2, 2000

Students go on civil rights trip

By Susan McCord
Staff Writer

The 11 UNCA students and 15 Asheville High students who traveled to Birmingham, Ala., and Atlanta, Ga., last weekend got a chance to educate themselves about the history of the civil rights struggle, according to Bill Spellman, professor of history.

The students took a guided walk through Birmingham streets that, in 1963, were the site of major civil rights events.

"The commissioner of public safety called in the police dogs and hoses. Children and teenagers were hosed down the street, dogs were sicced on them," said Dan Pence, professor of history.

By 1963, Birmingham was widely known for its strong segregation. Alabama's governor, George Wallace, said, "Segregation today, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever."

There was violent opposition to civil rights activity in the segregated city, which had been called Birmingham, according to Pence.

The students got a first-hand view from their tour guide, who was 17 years old when he participated in the Birmingham demonstrations.

He was able to walk our students

to the very places where those events took place," Spellman said.

The guide took the students to the 16th Street Baptist Church, one of the focuses of the Birmingham civil rights movement.

The church was bombed right after Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington.

In Atlanta, the students toured the Martin Luther King, Jr. national historic site, as well as his birthplace and grave.

"King, from 1960 until his assassination, based his operations in Atlanta. He was co-pastor, along with his father, of the Ebenezer Baptist Church," Pence said.

"The park service has built a really nice facility to commemorate his life, which is run by the King family. The Center for Nonviolent Social Change is there," said Pence.

The students also visited Underground Atlanta, a large restored historic section of downtown.

On the bus trip to Birmingham, the students watched two episodes of the Public Broadcasting Service documentary, "Eyes on the Prize," which was about the civil rights movement. The students saw footage of the firehoses and attack dogs being used at the sites where the events occurred.

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Ruiz awarded national prize

By Alison Watson
Staff Writer

Michael Ruiz, chair of the physics department, won the award given by the Outstanding Society of Physics Chapter Advisor for 1998-1999 by the National Society of Physics Students. The award is given to only one advisor nationwide each year.

"I am honored, of course, to get the award. The chapter works very hard," said Ruiz.

"When the Society of Physics Students (SPS) received their second award for outstanding chapter in three years, Ruiz was eligible for nomination.

According to Ruiz, there are approximately 700 SPS groups in the United States. The UNCA chapter has received the award for outstanding chapter five times in the last 13 years.

There were two letters of recommendation written in Ruiz's behalf. Katherine Whartley, professor of physics, and Charles Hudson, a senior physics major and coordinator of SPS, wrote the letters commending Ruiz on his achievements.

"The physics majors as a group have become more visible on campus during Ruiz's tenure as SPS

advisor. With Ruiz's leadership, the UNCA chapter has been motivated and productive," said Whartley in her recommendation.

Ruiz received the award in Kissimmee, Florida in January. Along with the award, Ruiz was given \$3,000 to be split up among the departments: the chapter and himself.

According to Ruiz, the money in the department and chapter is usually spent on new equipment for demonstrations and other needs.

As advisor, Ruiz helps the SPS in many activities.

The chapter is active in Super Saturday, which is a series of classes taught at UNCA to children. SPS has also taken demonstrations into elementary, middle and high schools.

Ruiz said, "The club's main activities include a connection with the community. We are trying to bring science to the general public."

The group participates in numerous other service projects, including ones that benefit charities.

In 1984, Ruiz and John Stevens, professor of chemistry, co-founded the undergraduate research program at UNCA, which later

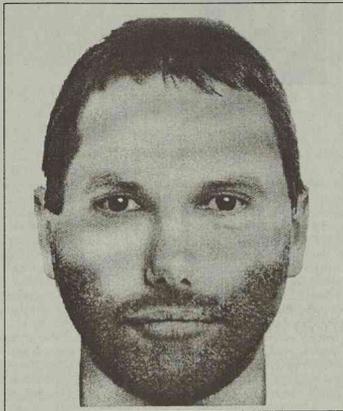


PHOTO BY JASON GRAHAM

Ruiz hangs his certificate on the wall.

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Intruder attacks resident



COMPOSITION COURTESY OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Several students put together a composite of the suspect. He was described as being 5 feet 10 inches tall, and weighing around 180 pounds.

By Kathryn Krouse
Staff Writer

An unidentified male assaulted a UNCA student when she came back to her room after showering the morning of Feb. 18 in Ashe Hall, located in Governor's Village, according to Nancy Williams, associate director of the housing office.

"The man was in there waiting for me, and (he) came out. I immediately started screaming, and he started touching me to make me be quiet. He never said anything to me. I just kept screaming the whole time," said the victim, who asked to remain anonymous.

The victim closed her door, but did not lock it when she went into the bathroom to shower. When she returned to her room,

she went to put her laundry in the hamper in her closet. Then the suspect approached her, according to the victim.

"I want people to realize that it could have been much worse. He could have had a weapon, or he could have been a lot bigger than me and gotten me to be quiet," said the victim.

"If I had not locked the door to the bathroom, he could have gotten into the shower with me, and maybe then my neighbors would not have heard me screaming," said the victim.

The victim's neighbors heard the screams and called public safety, who responded to the call in minutes. They began to act immediately.

"My steps were to contact her and make sure she was okay, (then) talk to her (and) security. We immediately wanted to notify the other students in the Village," said Williams.

Public safety believes that the suspect is a man who had previously been reported walking around the Village and West Ridge Hall, according to Jerry Adams, public safety investigator.

"At first I was not sure if it was the same person, but I talked to each of the people who had had encounters with him and asked them to go to public safety and give a description. It was really scary how much they were alike," said the victim.

Although public safety has not determined how the suspect gained entrance to the building, he could have followed another student into the dormitory that night, according to Williams.

"It is hard for us to determine right now, but we did find an area under the stairwell where some recycling bins had been pushed out. It may have been possible for someone to be hiding under there," said Adams.

However, "we cannot confirm that he had been there prior to the incident," said Adams.

Soon after the incident, a memo was released to students reminding them to be careful, and also giving a general description of the suspect, according to Williams.

The suspect is believed to be in his late 20s or early 30s and has a medium build, according to a public safety memo.

"I do not feel he was targeting me. It could have happened to any of the girls who lived on my hall. One of them had slept the whole night with her door open," said the victim.

"It definitely was not my fault. I did not do anything to bring it on myself," said the victim.

Students at UNCA generally feel safe on campus, according to Williams.

"We tell them all the time to lock their doors. They consider their home, but they have to lock their doors," said Williams.

"Students have to be our partners

in safety. They are the ones who prop the (outside) doors; they are the ones who do not lock the room doors," said Williams. "Incidents like this really raise everybody's awareness to what can happen."

To accompany the 24 hour locks in the Village, public safety is also increasing their rounds.

"We have been walking through the halls during the day-time, and there are still people leaving their doors unlocked," said Vicki Harris, a victim advocate public safety officer.

"We urge the students to take more precautions to protect themselves," said the victim. An open meeting was held Feb. 20 for residents to share ideas and concerns about how safety can be improved on campus, according to Williams.

"They say that resident assistants are now more aware, but people are still being careless," said the victim. "It did not happen to them, so people still think they are invincible."

The victim returned to UNCA on Feb. 21.

"I could not imagine going to another school where everyone looks unfamiliar and scary. It is still not easy to sleep and (I am) always looking at people, thinking to (myself), 'That could be him,'" said the victim.

Two days prior to the incident, a women's self-defense class had been offered. However, only six people attended.

Public safety is putting together another self-defense class for March, according to Harris.

"We are also working on a whistle defense program. Every female on campus will have a brass whistle, one that you can put on your key chain and have with you," said Harris.

"The whistles have been ordered and they should be here soon," said Harris.

The housing office, public safety and the victim urge students to be more protective of themselves and each other.

"It could be a lot worse for people if they do not think about what they do," said the victim.

Humanities offers opportunity

By Davon Heath
Staff Writer

The Humanities Junior Fellows Program has begun funding students interested in learning about subjects in greater depth by doing individual research, according to a representative of the humanities department.

"The Humanities Junior Fellows Program started as a response to students talking about subjects in the humanities curriculum that either weren't covered or weren't covered particularly well," said Margaret Downes, director of the humanities program and professor of literature.

Each Humanities Junior Fellow will work with a faculty member on the research project of his or her choosing. Each Fellow will formally share their research results to the humanities faculty. Fellows are also encouraged to present their work at an Undergraduate



PHOTO CONTRIBUTION BY BETHANY JEWELL

Bethany Jewell, a senior political science major, participates in a ritual dance with the natives of Senegal.

Research Symposium and to submit it for publication in the "Journal of Undergraduate Research," according to the humanities Web page.

"Our attempt is to allow students to think about ways of diversifying the curriculum, and to allow students

another context in which they can undertake independent research," said Jeffrey Konz, director of the Humanities Junior Fellows Program and assistant professor of economics.

"We can offer students some funding to help them in their research, with travel

or supplies expenses," said Downes. "It depends on much how it is in the budget."

Currently, fundings coming out of the humanities budget, but there is a need for more funding, according to Downes.

"The program doesn't nec-

essarily involve travel," said Konz. "We have one student who's working on issues to do with ethnobotany with the Cherokee. That involves minimal travel. Some students have

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