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Baby's death death controversial

By Davon Heath
Staff Writer

UNCA faculty, staff and students reacted to the grand jury indictment of a Western Carolina University (WCU) student who is accused of killing her newborn infant.

"I know she must have been really scared to do what she did," said Leslie Whitmore, a senior literature major. "I think (it) was awful. It is hard to put yourself in someone else's shoes."



PHOTO COURTESY OF CITIZEN-TIMES
Christina Fiske, a WCU sophomore, allegedly killed her baby.

Christina Marie Fiske, a 21-year-old WCU sophomore, has been accused of first-degree murder, concealing the birth of a child and felony child abuse, according to the March 14 edition of the *Asheville Citizen-Times*.

In order to combat similar instances, UNCA offers assistance to students through the health services office and the counseling center, according to Rick Pyritz, director of health services.

"You don't just wake up one morning and decide you are going to kill your baby," said Cheryl Garvey, a senior accounting major. "I am sure most people who do those kinds of things have some underlying problems."

"Unfortunately, this incident is not so unusual anymore in higher education," said Eric Lovacchini, vice chancellor of student affairs. "We reflect society on every college campus in the country."

This kind of incident has not happened at UNCA, according to Lovacchini. "It is an awful thing for a campus community to deal with," said Pyritz. "I am pleased with the programs we offer at UNCA."

"I would encourage any student who felt they were in crises to use our

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Math conference teaches teachers

By Allison Watson
Staff Writer

The 27th Western Regional Mathematics Conference was held at UNCA on March 10. The conference was sponsored by the N.C. Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCCCTM) and the department of education at UNCA.

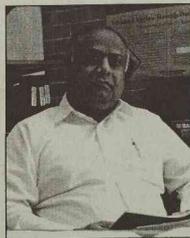


PHOTO BY JASON GRAHAM

Eman Hoosain, professor of education, chaired the conference.

The conference was very successful. It was a very informative event," said Gary Kadar, president of Western Regional NCCCTM. "The conference theme was 'New Facets, New Places, New Ideas.' The conference introduced new ideas about mathematics for teachers. The conference had not been held at the school in over 25 years. Asheville is somewhat central for the western region, and the facilities were ideal for it, according to Kadar.

Over 225 pre-service and in-service mathematics teachers (K-16) attended the conference. Several pre-service math teachers from UNCA, Appalachian State University (ASU) and Western Carolina University attended the conference.

Students from these universities presented at conference sessions and assisted with planning and preparations.

"The students attended these sessions and helped to organize it," said Eman Hoosain, professor of education and chair of the conference.

The conference consisted of 23 sessions. There were 14 hands-on and four computer workshops.

Presenters included in-service math teachers from across N.C. and speakers from Georgia and

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Defense class attracts few

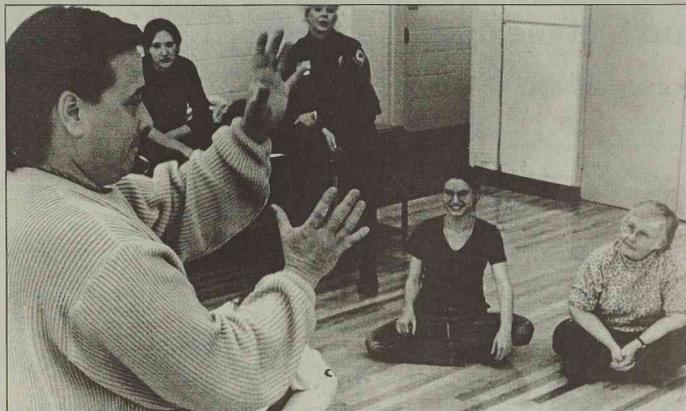


PHOTO BY WALTER FYLER

Students participated in a self-defense class nearly a month after an intruder attacked a female resident. The participants received a brass whistle as a part of a new defense program at the end of the class.

By Kathryn Krouse
Staff Writer

Six female students gathered for a self-defense class on March 13, organized in response to a resident student being attacked by an intruder on Feb. 18.

"I was very disappointed in the turnout," said Vicki Harris, public safety victim/witness officer. "I thought since everyone's awareness was heightened by the incident in (Governor's) Village that it would be a great time to have the course."

The class is the second organized by Harris. The first class occurred on Feb. 16, in which six people

also participated. "I hope it does not take someone getting hurt even worse to get students to participate in courses like this," said Harris.

Dave Torbett, a self-defense instructor, with the help of his assistant Jon McCoy, instructed the class on various techniques someone could use to escape an assailant, according to Harris. "Some girls got in touch with me about doing a self-defense course, and I really didn't know who to contact," said Harris.

Harris contacted Maggie Smith, director of recreation, who suggested Torbett, who used to be a teacher at UNCA.

"This is the second time he has come out and taught a self-defense course," said Harris. "I think

he is great." "I thought they were excellent instructors, very nice and practical," said Claire Ellington, a junior history major. "Most self-defense classes I have taken have been real fancy schmancy."

The class gathered in a circle around Torbett in the beginning. He explained why self-defense was important and talked about the techniques he would be teaching the class throughout the evening, according to Harris.

The maneuvers he taught were based on martial arts. However, instead of being engaged in a fight, the movements centered around inflicting pain on the assailant, according to Harris.

Most types of martial arts are futile, according to Torbett.

"They are very impractical," said Ellington. "I have been attacked twice (and) a lot of it does not work."

"The idea is for the victim to have a window of opportunity to run away, according to Harris.

"The best thing about these courses is that they teach you to move," said Ellington. "Americans are so anti-movement. We sit still. We do not know how to react quickly."

At the end of the course, Harris passed out brass whistles, part of the whistle defense program she has begun as an effect of the attack.

Anyone who would like a whistle can pick one up at the public safety office, according to Harris.

Endowment brings writers

By Susan McCord
Staff Writer

The P. B. Parris endowment, named for Peggy Parris, a retired UNCA creative writing professor, plans to bring "big names" in writing to UNCA for readings and workshops, according to Rick Chess, associate professor of literature.

"We wanted to honor Peggy's contributions to our creative writing program, and to the life of writing in Asheville," said Chess.

Once fully operative, the endowment will provide a permanent source of funding for visiting writers. "We have never had any reliable source of funding, and so we often have had to scramble at the last minute to figure out who to invite, based on how much money we could scrape together," said Chess. "That was no way for a serious program in creative writing to operate."

The New Leaf Foundation provided the basis for the endowment by giving a large contribution recently, which enabled the endowment to bring its first writer to UNCA.

Charles Frasier, an acclaimed author from N.C., will speak on April 13, and is the first "big name" to appear at UNCA that is funded by the endowment. Frasier has written several novels, including "Cold Mountain," a Civil War love story.

The novel reached *The New York Times* best-seller list, won the National Book Award in 1997 and will be made into a motion picture, according to Frasier.

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"We've had money to bring the endowment to a point where it can support the visiting writers series. At the moment we have a good start," said Chess. Parris retired last spring to write full-time, but she continues to work as a volunteer tutor at the writing center.



PHOTO COURTESY OF UNCA PUBLIC INFORMATION

Charles Frasier, author of "Cold Mountain," will speak at UNCA on April 13.

"To see light bulbs go off over people's heads is very rewarding," said Parris. Parris is currently working on her third novel, a fictional autobiography of

the English suffragette, Lady Constance Lytton. Parris is known for forming writing groups with former students. One of her groups has been together for 12 years, and

members have published over a dozen novels and short stories. "I could not write without getting some knowledgeable feedback as I am going along," Parris said.