

The BLUE BANNER

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The News in Brief

Man sentenced to death in killing of supposed royalty

Thai courts charged a man for the murder of Phillip and Ashley McRowan, sentencing him to death on Jan. 18, marking the one-year anniversary of their deaths. The couple claimed to be of royal Lao heritage, and officials believed their murder had to do with anti-Laos rebels.

Ashley McRowan was an international studies major at UNC Asheville, and the McRowans are honored by a commemorative oak tree on the Mini Quad.

Prehistoric shark found off Japan coast

A Japanese fisherman spotted a frilled shark, a species rarely seen alive because they live deeper than humans can go, over 2,000 feet under water, off the coast of Japan on Jan. 24.

Japanese scientists at Awashima, who were able to get what might be the first video ever of the shark after they captured it, said the animal was probably sick and disoriented, causing it to surface. The frilled shark, considered prehistoric, died after a few hours of capture, according to officials at Awashima Marine Park, south of Tokyo.

Charter schools to open via Act

The Bush administration plans on proposing new changes to the No Child Left Behind Act, including closing failing schools, by the Act's standards, and reopening of charter schools. Local superintendents would also be able to transfer teachers to poorly performing schools, even if union contracts banned such moves.

Gay sheep?

Dr. Charles Roselli, researcher at The University of Oregon, has been wrongly criticized for his study of gay sheep, according to Roselli.

Dr. Roselli, whose research is supported by the National Institutes of Health, insists that he is not attempting to find a cure for homosexuality.

Residents question safety of The Grove

After a resident at The Grove Apartments is held at gunpoint, the complex defends its security measures

By Neal Brown
STAFF WRITER

An armed robbery at The Grove Apartments this month forced the complex to address security issues while some residents feared for their safety.

Sarah Chase, junior Spanish student, said she felt "completely bewildered" after the Jan. 14 incident, which also involved her roommate Amanda Guske, sophomore Spanish student, and Guske's boyfriend Michael McCormick, an Asheville resident.

"I thought it was a joke at first," Chase said.

The robbery occurred around 11 p.m. when Chase, Guske and McCormick were watching a movie in the women's apartment. Chase heard a knock at the door, and, expecting her neighbor, answered it, even though she saw no one through the peephole. According to Chase, three men entered the apartment wearing face masks, gloves and hoods.

While two of the men cornered Chase, holding a gun in her face, the other man ran into the living room, where Guske and McCormick sat, according to Chase.

"I didn't expect anything like this to happen at The Grove."

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AMANDA GUSKE
Sophomore Spanish Student

The man locked eyes with McCormick, and then the three men ran from the apartment, according to Guske.

"I don't really know what their intentions were," Guske said. "I didn't expect anything like this to happen at The Grove. We pay a lot of money to live here." Chase, who spent one night in her apartment since the incident, said she does not associate with violent people.

"No one would have motivation to do this," Chase said. "It was either a random act of violence, or a case of mistaken residence."

The men did not take anything from the apartment, and they did not fire the weapon, according to



TREY BOUVIER - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sarah Chase, sophomore Spanish student, stands outside her apartment, a couple weeks after three men forced their way in and held her and her roommate at gunpoint. The men didn't take anything, but Chase worries about The Grove's reaction to the incident.

the Asheville Police Department investigation report.

When exiting the apartment, one of the men struck Chase in the head with the barrel of the gun, according to Chase.

Both women said they continue to fear for their safety and want to see action taken by The Grove management. Chase said she was angry by the way The Grove treat-

ed her and the situation.

"Our focus at The Grove Apartments is to provide the safest possible environment to our wonderful residents," said Amanda Wiles, UNC Asheville alumnus and general manager at The Grove, in a letter sent to all Grove residents on Jan. 18.

The letter also said The Grove performs in-depth background

checks.

"We do turn people down on a daily basis," Wiles said.

It took the apartment management too long to alert other residents of the issue, according to Chase and Guske, who both want something done about the security problem at The Grove.

The Grove has a 24-hour on-call phone manned by staff members,

as well as an on-site resident police officer from the Asheville Police Department, according to Wiles. All doors also have dead bolts and peepholes, and Campus Crest, which owns The Grove and specializes in student housing, spends hundreds of dollars on lighting each month to ensure the property is well lit, according to Wiles.

"We take every internal measure to ensure safety," Wiles said.

Some amount of personal responsibility is necessary when it comes to safety, according to Wiles.

"Our staff sends out monthly tips to remind our residents of personal measures one should take as an individual to help ensure personal safety," Wiles said. "Keep in mind, however, that all of these provisions do not guarantee your safety."

Wiles said she urges residents to keep an open line of communication with management in order ensure safety measures are not flawed.

"The best plan for safety is using common sense," Wiles said. "The number one prevention to home invasion is a locked door."

In Sept. 2006, an unknown individual or individuals stole an Oldsmobile, belonging to Ben Walsh, senior political science and mass communication student.

"My initial reaction was that I had forgotten where I parked it," Walsh said.

Walsh parked the vehicle somewhere on Laser Circle, the upper level of the parking lot near The Grove Club House, on a Monday night around 11 p.m., which was the last time he saw it, he said.

After walking the entire property looking for his vehicle and making sure The Grove did not tow it for a parking violation, he found glass in the empty parking spot and presumed it stolen, according to Walsh.

"I don't blame (the theft) on The Grove," Walsh said. "But they should have informed people that it occurred. I did not want it to happen to anybody else."

The problem with The Grove management is they are not openly honest about the goings-on around the complex, according to Walsh.

"It is a mismanagement and lack of public relations," Walsh said. "There needs to be more open dialogue with residents."

Casey Roberts, senior APD police officer and resident officer at The Grove, lives at the complex to resolve issues among the residents. Roberts said safety is (Wiles') top priority.

"He, as well as other members of the Asheville Police

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TREY BOUVIER - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Alex Bowser, junior multimedia student and station manager of UNC Asheville's online radio station, the Blue Echo, sits in the Blue Echo office, located in the Highsmith Student Union. Bowser, along with the Echo staff, hope to provide the student body with fun competitions and interesting radio shows, and eventually turn the online station into a broadcast station on FM radio.

Blue Echo re-launches, rocks on

By Aaron Dahlstrom
STAFF WRITER

Last semester's re-launch of the Blue Echo continues in 2007, with many more reasons for listeners to tune in and listen.

"This semester the Blue Echo should be more accessible," said Alex Bowser, junior multimedia arts and sciences student and station manager of UNC Asheville's Internet radio station.

The Blue Echo underwent many changes to make it more rewarding for listeners and disc jockeys alike, Bowser said.

One reward the offers listeners the to win concert tickets to local Asheville music venues.

"The Grey Eagle has agreed to give us tickets to every event, and they will all be posted on the Web," Bowser said.

Listeners hoping to win these tickets and other prizes will have opportunities to call in throughout the semester. Eventually, the Blue Echo will sponsor concerts and

hold other special events, Bowser said.

"We need student support," said Jonathon Czarny, an alumnus of UNC Asheville and current marketing director for the Blue Echo. "The more listeners we get, the more power we will have."

Bowser and staff revamped the Blue Echo from the inside to make it more listener-friendly.

"We have show descriptions with genre information, plus we have a reorganized schedule," Bowser said. "Certain days carry more of a certain genre than other days of the week, so now back-to-back DJs aren't harsh genre jumps."

Bowser made the change due to comments he received from listeners who turned off the station because the style of music changed too abruptly.

"I am more inclined to listen to people I know," said Shelia Steelman, freshman student.

The fact that the Blue Echo

broadcasts online helps the station reach listeners beyond the mountains, Steelman said.

"I know people at other colleges who listen, too," Steelman said.

As for DJs, they now have a much more professional workstation, according to Bowser.

"We have gotten new furniture to help facilitate a more proper radio environment," Bowser said.

The new furniture comes as a welcomed addition to DJs like freshman student Alyssa Teat, who said she is looking forward to a more organized setting.

Clear Channel, which owns and operates a radio station in Asheville, donated some of its equipment, which the station will be implementing over time, Bowser said.

The new environment should positively affect the quality of the station, according to freshmen DJs Sam Griffin and Amber Davis.

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