

The BLUE BANNER



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compiled by Sandy LaCorte and Gise Dillhoff
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THE NEWS IN BRIEF

Local restaurant shuts down after more than a decade of service

Rio Burrito closed its doors yesterday after a 12-year run in downtown Asheville. The husband-and-wife team of Tom Kearns and Andrea Twilling opened the restaurant, bringing gourmet burritos to Western North Carolina.

Kearns said the passing of his wife prompted the decision to close the restaurant, but he plans to keep the Skyland location open.

Bill of Rights visits university on statewide seven-city tour

North Carolina's copy of the Bill of Rights comes to the UNC Asheville campus next Thursday. The university is the only college campus on the document's brief, seven-city tour.

From Nov. 8 to 10, the document will be available for public viewing in Ramsey Library for limited hours each day. To see the hours or view the various events taking place during the three days, visit UNC Asheville's Web site at www.unca.edu/bill-of-rights.

Residents return to homes after wildfires begin to die

California residents began returning to their homes after wildfires destroyed more than 2,000 houses last week. Federal Emergency Management Agency reported 8,300 applications for aid, and homeowners are only eligible to receive \$28,200 in aid from the agency.

The flames destroyed about 1,700 homes, causing damage estimates to climb about the \$1 billion mark. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger passed legislation speeding up aid to fire victims on Friday.

Drug policy hurts more than helps, students say

By Caroline Fry
STAFF WRITER

Students for a Sensible Drug Policy, a recently formed on-campus group, is focusing on key issues pertaining to current drug laws both locally and nationally.

"It's important to stress that what we're trying to do isn't simply to grant people the legal right to get high," said Laura Eshelman, vice president of SSDP. "Fighting the war on drugs is much more significant than that, and it extends to so many other areas of society."

SSDP, a national grassroots activist organization created in 1998, has chapters on col-

lege campuses nationwide, including three others in North Carolina. The main goals of SSDP are pushing for a sensible federal drug policy, as well as fighting back against the drug war policies, which harm many students, according to Eshelman.

"Overall, we're trying to cultivate awareness on campus about the long-term harm that the war on drugs inflicts on the country and how it affects us directly or indirectly as students," Eshelman said. "It would be ideal to get more students involved because a lot of them already disagree with current policies, but I think they feel like they can't do anything about them."

Zachary Rosenberg, president of the UNC Asheville chapter of SSDP, said one of the group's main goals is to reverse a small part of the Higher Education Act.

"The organization was founded specifically to reverse a small part of the Higher Education Act which was slipped in by Congressman Mark Souder (R-IN) during reauthorization in 1999," Rosenberg said. "This part says that any student receiving federal funds to go to college will have their federal funding revoked if convicted of a drug offense. SSDP has since expanded its scope to include all aspects of illegal drug and student interaction, and many outside

that relationship."

There are many students who feel the negative effects of this law, according to Eshelman.

"Over 200,000 students in the United States have been denied federal aid for school because of drug convictions," Eshelman said. "That can be for anything from cocaine possession to a mere gram of pot, but doesn't apply to convictions for any violent crimes."

SSDP has criticized the war on drugs, a series of measures enacted by the United

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Urban renewal jeopardizes residents

Asheville considers renovating Pisgah View Apartments while residents continue building a community

By Jon Walczak
STAFF WRITER

On a sunny Saturday afternoon, a dreadlocked Bob White sat on a picnic table overlooking the community garden he started at Pisgah View Apartments, one of Asheville's oldest public housing projects, and told of a recent encounter he had with two drug dealers.

"I was standing there one day, and these two drug dealers pulled up in their Jeep," said White, who has lived at Pisgah View for seven years. "I thought they were going to shoot me, but they both stuck their hands out the window, shook my hand, and said, 'You know what, man, that's a really good thing you're doing down there.'"

The Pisgah View Community Peace Garden, an idea which White said came to him one day while he was in his living room listening to Miles Davis, is an example of good news in a place where

after a murder. After White approached Pisgah View management with the idea, they gave him permission to transform a little-used baseball field into the garden.

"From the first day I started really working on this soil, there were kids standing outside the fence asking to get involved," White said. He added that more than 45 children have become actively involved with the garden since the first seeds were planted about three months ago.

Pisgah View, completed 55 years ago, is one of eight housing projects under the supervision of the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville. Gene Bell, executive director of HACA, said the future of public housing in Asheville and around the country is transforming projects like Pisgah View into mixed-income neighborhoods.

"The national trend is to tear down public housing, and to build mixed-income housing," Bell said.

A City of Asheville donation of more than 50 boxes of files and photographs to UNC Asheville last month reignited the discussion over the future of public housing in Asheville. The files document the redevelopment of a low income Asheville neighborhood more than 40 years ago.

Reed Fornoff, junior student, processed the files last spring during his semester-long internship with Mountain Housing



Pisgah View Apartments residents gather at a cookout in Pisgah View Peace Garden, a community garden project started by resident Boh White, on Saturday afternoon.

Opportunities, a local nonprofit which provides affordable housing to low-income residents. They document the East Riverside Neighborhood Urban Renewal Project, which began in the late '60s, and demolished or renovated more than 800 run-down homes and businesses to make way for new

development.

"We had the largest project in the southeast," said Marjorie Scavella, who began working for HACA in 1969.

The city also donated \$10,000 to the university to archive and preserve the files.

Redevelopment of low-income neighborhoods, especially public housing, is necessary once again, according to Bell.

"Anything that's based on a large population of low-income people has been a failed model," he said.

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Students go green during a rainy week of environmental activities

By Courtney Metz
STAFF WRITER

UNC Asheville welcomed needed rain last week even though it hampered Greenfest activities designed to bring environmental awareness to campus.

"I thought it was pretty good, especially considering the horrible weather that we had," said Royce Breckon, sophomore mechatronics engineering student. "I know that some stuff had to get cancelled, which I was really sad about. But the few stuff that was there, I thought was pretty good, considering the weather."

Student Government Association sponsors Greenfest annually, promoting environmental awareness on campus. This year, SGA tried to create a mix of both old and new activities.

"I love Greenfest," said Student Body President Tristyn Card. "I've done it all four years and it's always fun, and I really liked this year, honestly, because we had a lot of new events and we had a lot of new ideas."

These new ideas were additions

to many traditional activities that are the backbone of Greenfest, according to Kim Quick, SGA executive for sustainability and organizer of Greenfest.

"We did a lot of the same events that have been done in the past," Quick said. "We're doing exotic invasive removal, planting and a new one is actually trail clearing. Those are the outdoor service-oriented activities. But some of the new things that we've done this year are the trash walk about, where students came by the Student Environmental Center and picked up a clear plastic trash bag and then anything that would be thrown away throughout the week would go into the clear plastic bag, minus food remnants and things like that."

Approximately 15 students and faculty participated in the trash walk about, including Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Bill Haggard, according to Quick.

"It was just basically to give students an idea to be more aware of their consumption levels," Quick said. "Some of them found it

shocking because they didn't consume nearly as much as they thought they would. Their bags ended up being very small, and then other people, their bags were very full."

There was also a special focus this year on education, unlike in years past, according to Card.

"It was really educational this year and I think that's what it's supposed to be," Card said. "That's what is really important about the event and I think we really accomplished that this year. (Quick) is really working hard to educate students about the issues, and I thought that was important."

Education is key to having students change their lifestyles, according to Quick.

"I think that people will be willing to change their behavior to be living more sustainably but only if you actually educate people on how their actions are going to contribute to promoting environmental wellness," Quick said.

One of the main new events this year was a compact fluorescent light bulb giveaway. SGA, in

cooperation with the Better Asheville Recycling Coalition gave away approximately 170 bulbs on Wednesday.

"They went really fast," Quick said. "We got rid of all of them in about two hours or so. Students seemed to be really excited about that because that's something that if you go to a hardware store you're going to pay \$4 for, and we were just giving them out to students for free."

Attached to each light bulb was a fact sheet informing students of how much money and energy they were saving by using compact fluorescent light bulbs, according to Quick.

"The bulbs that we gave out amounted to preventing around 35,000 pounds of coal from being burned and something like 78,000 pounds of greenhouse gas emissions from going into the atmosphere," Quick said. "So I felt like that was pretty big, and I'm hoping that students will actually switch out those bulbs."



Two students ride their bikes on campus during Greenfest to promote more environmentally friendly modes of transportation. Despite the rain, some students said they learned a lot from SGA's event.

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