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New York City, New York, USA

Oscar-winning actor Philip Seymour Hoffman, 46, died in his Manhattan apartment on Feb. 2. According to CNN, Hoffman's friend and playwright David Katz found Hoffman lying on the bathroom floor with a syringe in his left arm. In the aftermath of his death, investigators discovered several used syringes, prescription drugs and nearly 50 envelopes of what is likely to be heroin. Police believe that heroin overdose played a role — if not the primary role — in Hoffman's death and are currently searching for others linked to the drugs that killed the actor.

Lyon, France

"New cancer cases will rise from an estimated 14 million annually in 2012 to 22 million within two decades," according to a report released on World Cancer Day by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Headquartered in Lyon, France, the IARC is the World Health Organization's specialized cancer agency. Its director, Christopher Wild, told CNN that in the future, a greater focus on preventive care would be essential to countering the rising incidence of cancer. As it is, the financial cost of treating cancer worldwide is an estimated \$1.16 trillion annually.

Baghdad, Iraq

The U.S. military is no longer on the front lines in Iraq. But 24 Apache attack helicopters and 500 Hellfire missiles, part of a \$6 billion military equipment package, will be. Hundreds of contractors currently working for U.S. defense companies will take on the task of training the Iraqi military in the use of these weapons. The U.S. believes that the new weapons will aid Iraq in its battle against Islamic insurgents. The Wall Street Journal reports.

Beijing, China

A nation of 1.35 billion, China is understandably the world's largest consumer of cigarettes and tobacco products. "Smokers can be spotted everywhere, even in schools and hospitals," the Huffington Post reports. Hospitals? Quite possibly. Schools? Not anymore. On Jan. 29, the Chinese government's Ministry of Education imposed a nationwide ban on smoking in public schools. The ban is the latest step in China's anti-smoking initiative, motivated in part by the country's growing public health burden.



Columbia, MD mall shooting adds to growing trend

BY ALLISON STALBERG
STAFF WRITER

2014 began with a not-so-fresh start: a contemporary American trend — mall shootings — continues to grow.

A shooting occurred on Jan. 25 at 11:15 a.m. within the Mall of

Columbia in Columbia, Md. Panic spread through the mall when 19-year-old Darion Aguilar entered Zumiez, a skate store, and shot and killed two employees with a 12-gauge shotgun. Aguilar also shot and killed himself.

"Our hearts and prayers go out to the victims, as well as the

Columbia and Baltimore-area communities," Ashley Venable, the mall's senior general manager, told The Guilfordian in an email.

Last month, USA Today reported that in the past seven years 934 people have been killed in mass shootings. A crowd-sourced count on Reddit totaled 365 mass shootings (gun used, at least four people dead) in 2013 alone.

"It is interesting that we've had more of these shootings, and that says something about our society and something about our priorities," said Jeremy Rinker, visiting assistant professor of peace & conflict studies.

Aguilar's mother told CNN that her son was a "gentle, sweet kid." The young man had had no previous run-ins with law enforcement. He bought his shotgun legally at the United Gun Shop in Rockville, Md. The store proprietor who sold Aguilar the gun, Cory Brown, mentioned to the Washington Post that Aguilar seemed to be the "ideal customer" and sparked no red flags.

A clear motive for Aguilar's violent actions has yet to be discovered. Investigators found his journal containing entries that described "general unhappiness"

but lacked the psychological behavior expected of a man planning to go on a shooting rampage.

Aguilar's motive is not the only issue of public concern. Shoppers all over the nation are asking: exactly how safe are our malls?

"We have a public safety program that entails different measures for various scenarios," said Venable. "Some are visible to our shoppers; other measures are not as visible."

"We're constantly evaluating our security procedures to ensure the safety of everyone who walks through our doors."

John, an employee at the Tailgators store in Four Seasons Mall, told The Guilfordian that the latest mall shooting at Four Seasons Mall occurred four to five years ago.

"Not since I've worked here, but there have definitely been some shootings in the mall," John said. "Especially with the area around here — it's not the greatest area in Greensboro."

Debates on ways to enhance public safety continue, bringing into the spotlight other issues such as income gaps.

"Think about what the president said in his State of the Union address in terms of bridging the

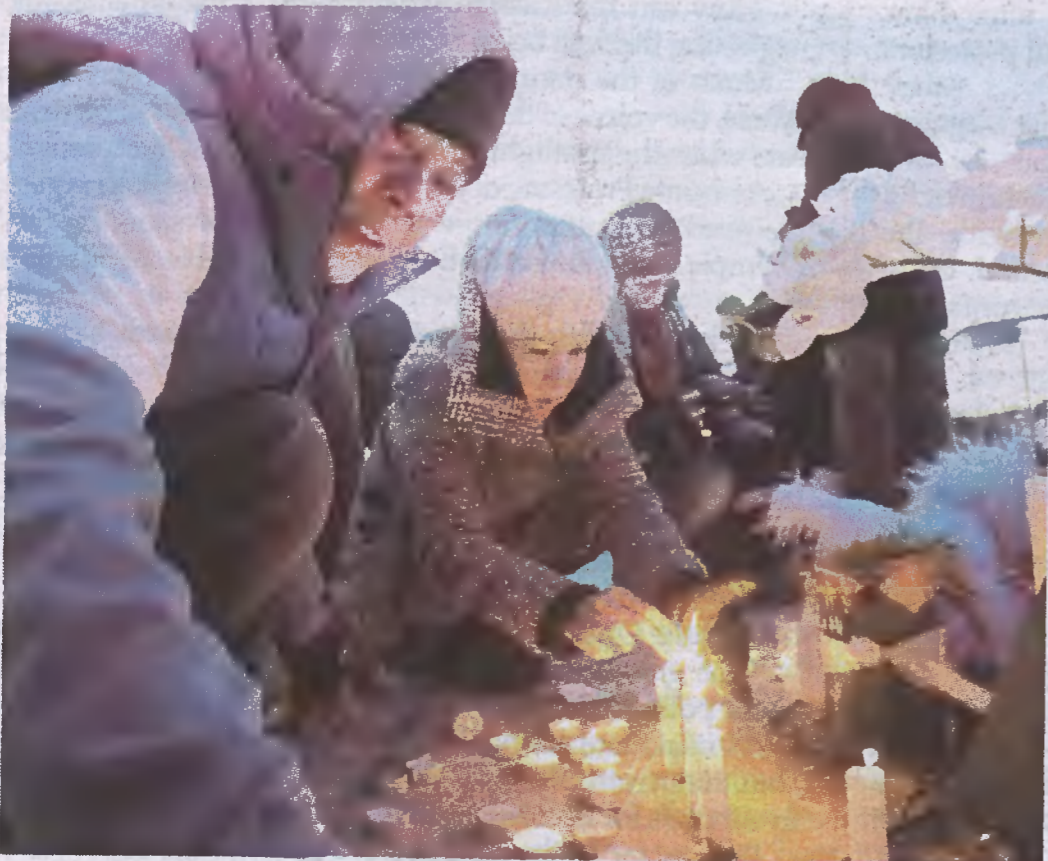
income gaps between people," said Rinker. "Providing services for those who feel outcast by society could take care of issues of relative deprivation (feeling deprived after comparing one's situation to that of others)."

Gun control is also considered. "I'm a big Second Amendment guy, so I love the right to bear arms," said John. "If more people were allowed to carry guns, there would be less gun violence because you don't know who's going to have a gun on them."

"Look at Chicago," he continued. "They have the strictest gun laws and the highest murder rate per capita by firearms. Then (there are) towns like Kennesaw, Ga., where every household has to have a gun. They have the lowest crime rate in the country."

After closing for two days in memory of the victims, The Mall of Columbia has reopened, signaling the beginning of a long healing process.

"The well-being of our shoppers is always our top priority, not just when events/tragedies like this occur," said Venable. "I want to emphasize, safety and security are our priorities every day."



Mourners lit candles at a vigil for victims Brianna Benlolo and Tyler Johnson.

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