

Commissioners mull park plans Symposium leader soaks in cash prize

BY BRIANNA BISHOP
STAFF WRITER

The Orange County Board of Commissioners received preliminary plans Tuesday night for two county park projects that are expected to open within the next few years.

The board received conceptual plans and a proposed schedule for the construction of Northern Park and Fairview Park, which are slated for completion in fall 2006 and spring 2007, respectively.

Fairview Park will be located in northern Hillsborough in the Fairview Community, near the Orange County Public Works Department.

"We still have a bit of work to do with (Fairview Park)," said David Stencil, director of Orange County's Environment and Resource

Conservation Department.

Topographic and biological surveys are still needed for the park, he said.

The Fairview Park site was once the location of the Hillsborough landfill, which consisted mostly of yard waste and left little contamination, said Lori Taft, the county's recreation and parks director.

"Our challenge is trying to build the park in a stable area, one that was not affected by the landfill," Taft said.

Northern Park is planned to be an extension of the Northern Human Service Center on N.C. 86, north of Hillsborough.

The center now sits on eight acres of land that includes a playground and ball field.

The park will include this land, as

well as an additional 40 acres of land owned by the county since 1998.

Both parks have been funded by voter-approved bonds for parks and open space, which were passed in 2001. The bonds allocate \$850,000 for Fairview Park and \$1.2 million for Northern Park.

A total of \$49,416 has been spent so far for work at Northern Park. No funding has been used to date for Fairview Park.

"We won't precisely know the cost until we know what is going to be built," Taft said.

Environmental conservation will be taken into consideration during the design and construction of both parks, Stencil said.

Both parks are expected to have flexible open space for the public without affecting the existing envi-

ronment, Stencil said.

The preliminary plans for both parks also provide space for athletic fields.

A wetlands conservation area will remain unaffected during the planning phases of Fairview Park. Taft said that people might want to see this type of habitat in the park and that a site of hardwood trees will not be cut down for field use.

"They're beautiful, and they contribute to the environment and the quality of life," she said.

Stencil said the project now will move to a design phase, which will take about three to four months and will include meetings open to public input.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

BY KELLY OCHS
FEATURES EDITOR

August Turak spent three weeks writing an essay that would later win him \$100,000.

Although Turak didn't start writing the final draft of the essay until three weeks before the deadline, his younger brother Chris said the essay was 35 years in the making — from the time Augie, as he is known by friends, began to ask serious questions about life.

"In a sense, he was like anybody else in college and high school," Chris Turak said. "He went to school, he went to class, he got average grades, he played football. And right around the time he hit 19 or so, he became interested in much larger questions."

At about that time, August Turak left school to study with a Zen master.

It's an experience he refers to in many speeches as founder of the Self Knowledge Symposium Foundation, which has chapters at N.C. State University, Duke University and UNC-Chapel Hill.

SKS is a nondenominational organization that encourages students to ask challenging questions about their lives and to search for answers to those questions.

Georg Buehler was a freshman at N.C. State in 1989 when he went to a speech given by Turak.

"I walked out of that hall feeling like, 'My life is going to be very different now,'" Buehler said.

Buehler and three other students approached Turak after the speech, hoping to start an organization for students trying to find answers to tough questions.

The first chapter of SKS started that spring.

Now, each of the three chapters has between 20 and 30 students who attend weekly meetings.

Every year, members take a Spring Break trip to Meppin Abbey in South Carolina, where the inspiration for Turak's prize-winning essay came.

Ed Cheely, executive director of SKS and a member of the organization at Duke eight years ago, has been to the monastery several times.

"It's literally like walking into an enchanted realm," he said. "After being there a day or two, all of the typical, petty concerns of running to your next class ... all of that stuff kind of melts away, and you find yourself with a much more peaceful, grounded, relaxed sense."

Turak's essay, "Brother John," is a story of his encounter with a monk one night at the monastery. The monk left an impression on Turak one Christmas night when he stood in the cold, icy rain with an umbrella waiting to walk people to their rooms while the other monks enjoyed the rare pleasure of cookies. "I just couldn't believe he was doing that," he said.

With the encouragement of students, Turak entered his essay in the first Power of Purpose Awards, a worldwide essay competition. The contest is sponsored by the John Templeton Foundation, which supports research in theology and science.

Turak's essay was selected from a pool of more than 7,000 submissions. He plans to give the award money to charity.

When he received the call two weeks ago about being selected as the grand-prize winner in the contest, Turak said, he thought it was friends teasing him.

"It's been an incredible 10 days."

Contact the Features Editor at features@unc.edu.

Med school reps recruit at health fair

BY GEORGIA CHERRY
STAFF WRITER

The students of Alpha Epsilon Delta, a pre-health honors society at UNC, are hosting their annual Health Care Fair from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. today in the Great Hall of the Student Union.

Members of the honor society coordinate the event each year to address the many questions and concerns shared by students hoping to pursue careers in the field of health care.

Representatives from more than 30 medical and health professional schools throughout the country will be attending the event to entice undergraduates with information about educational programs.

"We've recruited a lot harder and

have gotten some of the top medical schools in the nation to come, and we're very excited about that," said Brittany Semones, head coordinator of the health career fair.

Officials from dental schools, optometry schools and general medical schools will answer questions regarding admissions requirements for medical school programs.

The fair will enable the various schools to reach exceptional students on campus, said senior Rohit Prakash, president of Alpha Epsilon Delta.

"I want to make sure pre-med students have the best chance to go where they want to go," he said.

Many officials from schools that will be represented at the fair said

they are excited about the opportunity to recruit UNC students.

"I hope to generate interest and recruit some great potential medical students from (UNC)," said Lana Cook, assistant dean for admissions in the College of Graduate Studies at the Medical University of South Carolina.

Kathy Moore, director of the Office of Admissions and Student Services at UNC's School of Nursing, said she will be searching at the fair for "bright and capable" students who might help alleviate the state's nursing shortage.

A 2002 study conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimated that the number of unfilled nursing positions nationwide will increase from 6 percent to 20 percent by 2015. The

shortage is expected to worsen until 2020, the study predicted.

"We are hoping to attract talented students who are interested in nursing and serving the public in a health profession," Moore said.

The fair will resemble a career fair, with the notable exception that students are conducting it, Prakash said.

Semones said students should be more comfortable at this event than at a typical career program since the fair was organized with the student perspective in mind.

A complete list of the visiting institutions can be found on the society's Web site, at <http://www.unc.edu/student/orgs/aed/>.

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

Triangle crops escape worst of stormy weather

BY ASHLEY HART
STAFF WRITER

Rainfall from this season's hurricanes and tropical storms flooded parts of the state and caused agricultural damage totaling \$55 million, according to the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

President Bush has declared 15 counties in western North Carolina major disaster areas.

The Department of Agriculture asked the state's representatives in Washington, D.C., to lobby for additional funds for farmers who lost crops due to flooding.

Western counties, where rainfall reached 4 to 12 inches in towns such as Black Mountain and McDowell, were hit the hardest by the storms.

"The western counties, particularly Ashe County, lost a substantial amount of crops," said Ronnie Best, market manager of the Farmer's Market in Raleigh. "They have had problems with pumpkins, and tomatoes from the west have decreased."

Best said crops from central North Carolina have fared much better in comparison.

"A farmer off of (N.C. 42, between Wake and Johnston Counties) had

a dry crop for most of the year until these rains, and now his crops look good," Best said.

The Jordan Lake Christmas Tree Farm in Chatham County also largely was not damaged by the rain.

"This rain was not anything like last summer," said Diana May, owner of the farm. "So we did not lose any crops."

The crops hit the hardest include hay, corn, tobacco, pumpkins and other fruits and vegetables.

Anne Brown, owner of the Brown Farm Corn Maze in Clayton, said her agricultural tourist attraction has had to close due to damage her crops suffered from the storms.

"We did lose our corn maze because of so much rain," Brown said.

Farms were not only flooded from excessive rain, but soil stayed wet, making it difficult for farmers to work and make repairs. But the damage to agriculture in Florida surpasses that of North Carolina, with a total cost of more than \$1 billion.

With more storms headed toward North Carolina and the eastern coast, farmers are bracing themselves for more rain and dam-

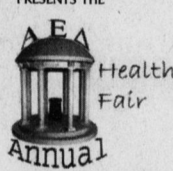
age before the end of hurricane season.

But Best said the agriculture industry of North Carolina will not collapse.



"There are problems, but as



farmers do, for one that loses there will be one up the road that doesn't."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

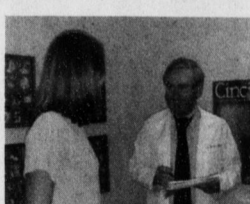
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