World and Nation

Bush consoles families of lost sailors

From Associated Press reports

NORFOLK, Va. — In a chilly airplane hangar, President Bush choked back tears Monday as he comforted grief-stricken relatives of the 47 sailors killed on the battleship Iowa and offered "the sympathy and appreciation of all the American people."

Greeting relatives one by one, the president wore a nervous smile as he shook hands, moving briskly from person to person waiting along rows of folding-back chairs.

Some of the relatives showed him a picture of their lost ones. "This was our only son, this was our only boy," Bush recalled one couple as saying. Several women stopped him for a comforting hug.

It was an emotional beginning to the president's four-day swing across the country as he nears the 100-day milestone of his administration.

Later, addressing the annual luncheon of The Associated Press, Bush spoke of the loneliness of the office when it comes to dealing with situations like the deaths of U.S. military personnel or the holding of Americans hostage abroad.

"I vowed, when I came into the presidency, not to talk about the burden of the presidency, the loneliness of the job or the great toughness that nobody understands," Bush said. "I learned that from my immediate predecessor."

But, said Bush, "when you do take that oath of office, you do feel perhaps a disproportionate concern for a fallen sailor or an individual held hostage against his or her will anywhere in the world."

On Air Force One, en route to Chicago, Bush told reporters that the Norfolk ceremony had been one of those difficult moments.

"Tough day down there, it was so moving," Bush said, explaining that his smile had belied the emotions he felt.

"The Bush family is not very good at that kind of thing, anyway. This was tough," he said."But you've got to deal with it, you've got to show them concern."

Bush said: "You know how you get through it? You pray for strength.

"Although I did choke up at the end there, I did feel kind of an inner peace about the thing. I had to represent our country."

Accompanied by his wife, Barbara, the president flew to Norfolk at the start of a long travel day, with stops later in Chicago for the Associated Press luncheon, a tree-planting ceremony during a centennial celebration in Bismarck, N.D., and an overnight in San Jose, Calif.

The 100-day mark of his administration falls on Saturday, and Bush was expected to beat the drum for his presidency in a succession of out-of-Washington engagements. Before returning to Washington on Thursday, Bush will make appearances in California, Texas and Florida.

Condoms

from page 1

machines, will be under the supervision of Auxiliary Services."

Fearrington said he did not know how much the machines would cost, but it shouldn't be a great deal. "I'm not sure what the final price for the machines will be. We're looking into it right now to figure out what the investment will have to be.

"We don't know yet where the funding will come from. The machines should cost between $100 and $200 apiece. We're not yet sure of the exact number of machines we'll need."

Fearrington said, "We're seeing if it behooves the institution to go with a private contractor or to stay within the University."

After the original purchase, revenues from the machines should provide funds to keep them operating, Fearrington said. "The machines will be able to support themselves, and even generate a profit. Revenues over and above the costs of the machines will go toward AIDS education. But I'm not sure how much the condoms will cost."

Judge requests examination of juror in Oliver North trial

News in Brief

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — One of the jurors deliberating Iran-Contra charges against Oliver North has high blood pressure and will be examined by a doctor, the trial judge said Monday.

U.S. District Judge Gerhard Gesell identified the juror as Jean Johnson and said she has been experiencing high blood pressure during the jury deliberations, which began Friday.

Johnson is a 53-year-old cashier whose husband is disabled.

Meanwhile, Gesell said NBC News left unsigned letters at the homes of jurors in the North case, inviting them to do interviews after the trial ends.

"I think it's most inappropriate," said Gesell, "quite disrespectful of the situation we are dealing with."

Peggy Hubble, NBC network news spokeswoman in New York, said: "The jurors are sequestered, so they're not at their homes . . . It was intended for them to see them when they got home after they made their decision after the trial, and the letter specifically requested an interview after the trial."

Salaries

from page 1

aware of the need of higher state salaries.

"It's not a lack of action by the University. The problem lies in state fees. The legislature is well aware of the facts."

While the administration has brought the need for higher salaries to the legislature's attention, it hasn't done enough to make the legislature aware of the economic benefits the state derives from UNC's reputation as a premier research university, Gooder said.

"I don't think we've done a very good job of pointing out the economic benefits brought to the state by the University. If they had plunged the money into Appalachian and UNC-Charlotte and allowed UNC and North Carolina State to wither, would they realize the economic difference?

"The economy of the state can't any longer be based on textiles and tobacco. Pharmaceutical products are becoming increasingly important, and they (producers of pharmaceutical products) won't locate here unless we have superb research universities."

While UNC's faculty salaries are poor, the fringe benefits are even worse, said Richard Shiff, former assistant chairman of the art history department. Shiff left UNC after last semester to accept a position at the University of Texas.

"The benefits are a disgrace — the salaries are a problem. They're (benefits) about the worst I've ever heard of."

The main problem with the benefits is that the state still uses the same plan it did 40 years ago, while the rest of society has increased fringe benefits, said Tim Sanford, director of institutional research.

"I'd say there's a tremendous amount of things to be improved. The problem that we have found is that the state has not kept up with the times. The state has not continued the level of support that it started with."

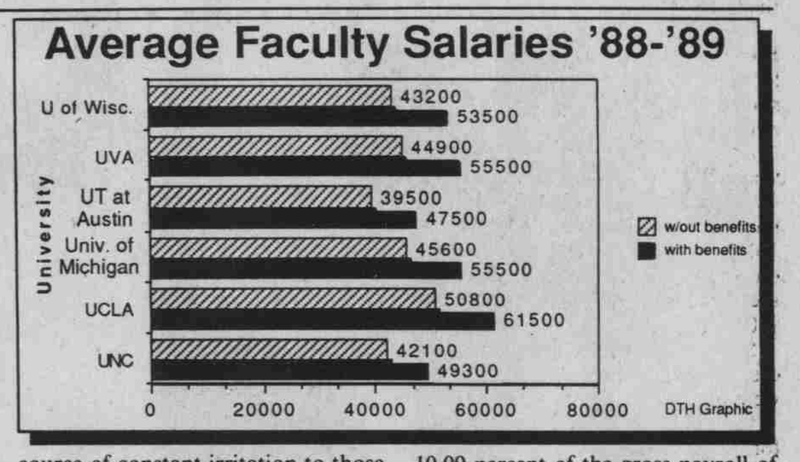
The benefits UNC faculty receive are the same as those given to all state employees, except for an optional retirement plan and health insurance, Sanford said.

Benefits including a private disability plan, an accidental death plan, life insurance, dental insurance and homeowner's and auto insurance are also optional, he said. Any University employee can take one course per semester free of charge, he said.

UNC faculty are provided the State of North Carolina Comprehensive Major Medical Plan at no cost but must pay for the coverage of spouses and dependents.

Because of this system, employees at UNC must pay almost $1,600 a year in after-tax dollars to cover their families, the report said. "This situation is not competitive with the vast majority of the 41 peer institutions examined.

"(This disparity) puts UNC-CH at a disadvantage in recruiting and retaining faculty and serves as a source of constant irritation to those employees who live under the plan," the report said.



The University has taken steps to improve its medical fringe benefits with the establishment of a dental insurance plan in November 1988, Gooder said.

The non-medical fringe benefits also need improvements, the report said. "In the area of retirement benefits, improvement in current state support is needed to approach parity with benefits at peer institutions."

In the Teachers' and State Employees' Retirement System of North Carolina, employees are required to contribute 6 percent of their gross salary each month to the system, and employers contribute 10.09 percent of the gross payroll of members each month.

In October 1988, UNC Chancellor Paul Hardin established a leave of absence policy that entitles all faculty to a semester of leave during their first six years, Sanford said.

The Board of Visitors report suggests that the University implement several new non-medical benefits: mortgage assistance, housing assistance and programs to increase faculty contact with the non-academic world.

"If the University were able to implement all the recommendations (increase base pay and improve the medical and non-medical fringe benefits), it would only be nearing or reaching parity with its peer institutions," the report said.

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