



Radiators fizzle. Page 6

Eating disorders screening 8

Ski trips offered at low prices 5

Tarheels defeat Bulldogs 6

Weekend Weather: Chilly and clear. Highs in the 30s, lows in the 20s.

The Blue BANNER

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Suspended athlete charged with attempted murder after shooting into student's home

Andrea Lawson
News Editor

A UNCA student who was suspended for communicating threats to a female student in a dorm last semester was charged with assault with a deadly weapon and intent to kill by the Beaufort police after he shot into the home of the female student on Jan. 1.

Clayton R. Cochran was suspended from school last semester after entering the dorm room of a female student and threatening to rape and kill her, according to university officials. Warrants were issued in Buncombe County on Jan. 5 which charged Cochran with communicating threats and the felony charge of possession of a weapon on educational property, said Dennis Gregory, investigation/crime prevention officer for UNCA.

According to Steve Lewis, detective with the Beaufort police department in Carteret County, on Jan. 1 at approximately 5:45 p.m., the female student and three friends from UNCA were eating dinner at the student's home when someone knocked on the door. When the female student went to answer the door, she could see Cochran standing outside. Lewis said the student was terrified by the look on

Cochran's face, and as she turned to run upstairs and warn her parents, Cochran allegedly shot twice through the door with a shotgun.

Lewis said one bullet went over the heads of the girls sitting at the table and hit a mirror behind them. Two of the girls ran into the kitchen closet, and one ran out the back door, according to Lewis. The girls in the closet told Lewis that they heard Cochran enter the house, then flee after hearing police sirens.

Lewis said officers found eight empty shotgun shells on the doorstep of the house and several others in the yard and on the road that had not been fired. After the investigation of the crime scene, Lewis said he contacted the Guilford County sheriff's office, where Cochran had previously pled guilty to burning of personal property. Lewis said officers in Guilford were taking a report from Cochran's stepfather of a stolen shotgun at roughly the same time as the Beaufort incident was taking place.

Cochran turned himself in to police in Guilford County on Jan. 2, according to Lewis. He was brought to Beaufort and charged with three counts of assault with a deadly weapon and intent to kill, one count of attempted

murder, one count of first-degree burglary, and one count of shooting into an occupied dwelling. Bond for Cochran was set at \$750,000, an amount that is not unusual considering the attempted murder charge, Lewis said.

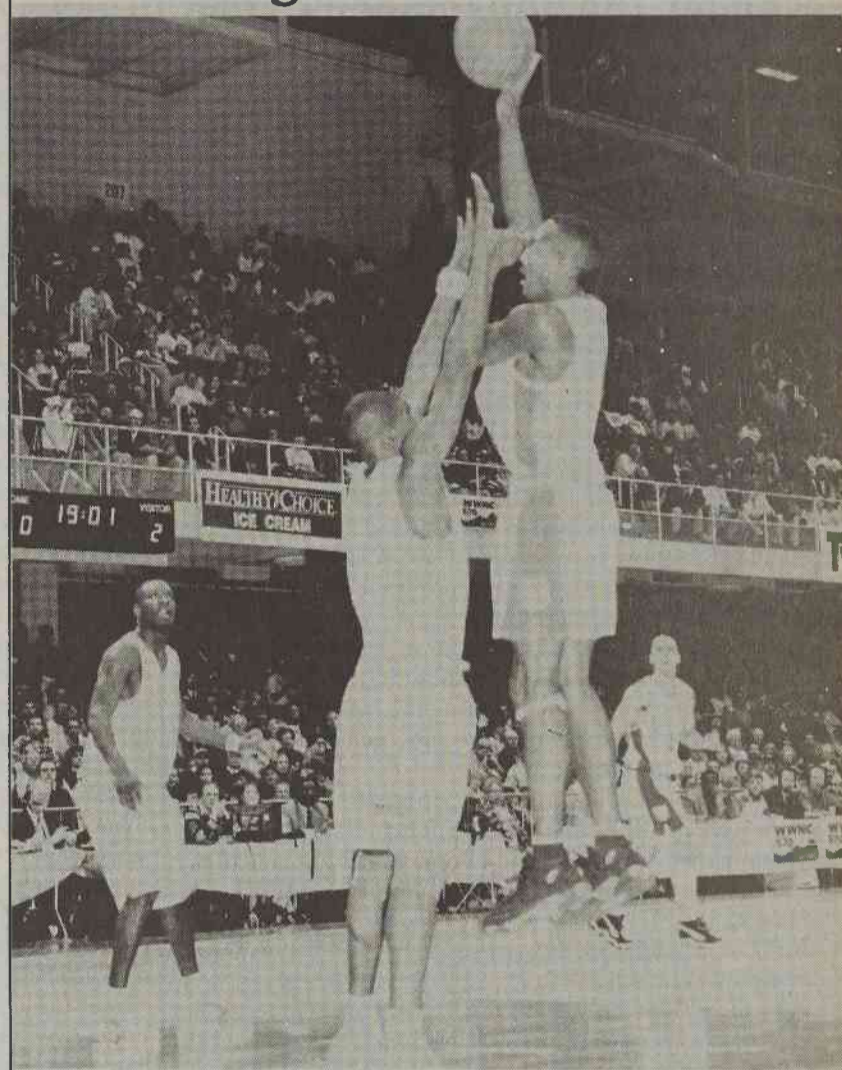
The incidents in Beaufort are a violation of Cochran's probation because he committed a crime while on probation, according to Bill Wood, Guilford County district attorney. Wood said Cochran pled guilty to felony charges of burning personal property at the end of November, 1995, after he burned down the playhouse of a 15-year-old girl in Greensboro in June of 1995.

Wood said Cochran received intensive probation and was ordered to pay restitution of \$250 to the girl, \$2000 to the fire department, and was ordered to receive mental health treatment. Also, Cochran received a suspended sentence of six to eight months. Wood said the suspension on Cochran's sentence will probably be revoked because of the violation.

Lewis said that Cochran was currently being held in a hospital in Raleigh for psychiatric evaluation. After his evaluation, Cochran will be re-

ATHLETE cont. on pg. 8

Bulldogs battle Tarheels



Senior William Coley pulls up to shoot a jumper during the UNCA-UNC basketball game Dec. 28. The Bulldogs lost 49-66. For more information, see story on page 6

Cancellation of classes prompts student questions concerning snow policy

Jeanie Peek
Staff Writer

According to Margaret Downes, vice chancellor for academic affairs, UNCA's snow policy has not changed, but the recent bad weather prompted her to cancel classes on Jan. 12, because she believed road conditions would be too dangerous for the majority of students to make it to their classes.

The university's snow policy tries to determine if weather conditions are so bad that it makes it dangerous for a large number of students to go to class, said Downes. If such a situation is present, then the policy is for the university to either adjust the time of classes or cancel them altogether, she said.

"The unpredictability of the weather

can make the policy look like it's changing," said Downes. The cancellation of classes is something which has been a rare occurrence in the past.

Thomas Cochran, vice chancellor for academic affairs, usually makes the decision of whether or not to delay or cancel classes but was unable to at the time, and the decision rested upon her shoulders, said Downes.

The start of UNCA's spring semester received a set back due to the effects of two winter storms moving through Western North Carolina during the first part of January. The icy roads and snow forced the university to cancel night classes on Jan. 10 and 8:00 a.m. classes on Jan. 11.

The cancellation of all classes on Jan. 12 was because of a second blanket of

snow covering the region. Classes were cancelled Jan. 15 in honor of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. The regular class schedule resumed on Jan. 16.

"What the experts said, what I saw and heard convinced me that we were going to get snow," said Downes. Forecasts from the Weather Channel and the department of atmospheric sciences, combined with the 100 percent chance of the area getting some type of frozen precipitation, persuaded Downes that it was going to snow again.

The new snow on top of what had already fallen made for bad road conditions, said Downes. She said conditions on campus were snowy and icy but that the physical plant did a tremendous job in trying to clear the walkways and roads.

"It's a judgment call," said Downes, "because such a decision cannot be based upon exact predictions." Downes said she tries to determine if it is a wise request to ask people to come to class.

Downes said the semester got off to a rocky start and described the situation as a glass which can be looked upon as half empty or half full.

"If we had gone ahead with classes, they would not have been half full," said Downes. Then because of the Monday holiday, Downes thought it would be best to start "clean" on Tuesday. Thus it was a predicament that did have both its good and bad points.

Because of the rocky start, offices involved with orientation, housing, registration, and drop/add tried to accommodate students as much as possible.

Dorm rooms opened on Jan. 8 so that new students could start moving in and an information booth was set up in Rhodes-Robinson so they could check in and get information, said Rebecca Sensabaugh, registrar.

"Registration went as we had planned on Jan. 10 but we requested that the Business Office not cancel the schedules of those students who had not paid and that they should not be charged a late fee," said Sensabaugh. It was a critical point in the semester and Sensabaugh said students should always call if they are unsure the university is open.

"I set us back one more day and I know it is frustrating for teachers and

SNOW cont. on pg. 8

Undergraduate research conference gives student groups volunteer opportunities

Renee Slaydon
Staff Writer

UNCA will host the tenth anniversary of the National Conference for Undergraduate Research (NCUR 10) on April 18-20. The conference, which will give students from all over the United States the opportunity to present their undergraduate research and results, will allow UNCA students to fill volunteer positions, according to the chair of the student participation committee.

"Our task is to find UNCA students who are willing to help with the conference. We need about 200 student volunteers to do a whole variety of tasks, said Phyllis Lang, director of the honors program and a lecturer in mass communication. Volunteers will be needed to sell compact disks and take tickets at the David Holt concert scheduled for the Thursday night of the conference, said Lang.

Other possible tasks for the students

will be to help out with registration in Justice Gym, work information tables at the hotels where conference participants will be staying, and to check and straighten rooms after presentations. Also, volunteers will be needed at the refreshment center and outside all of the classrooms being used for oral presentations, said Lang.

"We thought the best way to solicit volunteers would be to ask campus groups to talk to their members," said Lang.

Some of the campus groups already involved include Habitat for Humanity, North Carolina Teaching Fellows, Undergraduate Fellows and Scholars, Presbyterian Campus Fellowship, North Carolina Student Legislature, and Alpha Xi Delta.

According to Allison Jordan, president of Alpha Xi Delta, the sorority decided to get involved with the conference because one of their members was already an active part of it. The sorority always tries to support the

activities of each of their members, as well as help out the university in any way that they can, Jordan said. Jordan also said about half of the organization's members are currently planning to work for the conference.

Lang said the current schedule is to solicit volunteers from UNCA through the month of February, begin making task assignments in March, and hold training sessions in early April.

In addition to campus organizations, individual volunteers are also welcome. Currently, NCUR 10 has about 60 to 65 volunteers already signed up.

Most of the campus organizations involved are using the conference as a philanthropy project, said Lang.

UNCA will not hold classes on the Thursday and Friday of the conference. There will be about 35 to 40 sessions taking place simultaneously on campus in the different classrooms of Owen Conference Center, Karpen Hall, Zagier Hall, Rhodes Hall, and Robinson Hall.

"The actual conference sessions are Thursday, Friday, and Saturday morning. And then there are various kinds of special activities scheduled for Saturday afternoon, like trips to the Biltmore House and Mount Mitchell," said Lang.

The National Conference for Undergraduate Research began in 1987, and the first two conferences were held at UNCA, said Lang.

Lang is working with Pam Laughon, co-chair of the event and an assistant professor of psychology, and Holly Beveridge, conference coordinator.

"The thing that's unique about this is that professional conferences seem to be around one subject area. What we're doing here is bringing together people from all disciplines. There will be papers in mass communication, art, and biology. So we really are an interdisciplinary conference," said Lang.

Lang also said the second thing that makes NCUR 10 unique is that it will draw undergraduate students as well as graduate students and faculty mem-

bers. "This is one of the biggest conferences that's ever come to Asheville," said Lang.

Lang said she hopes to have some of the volunteer organizations make welcoming banners to post up around the campus for the conference participants. "One of the things that makes us very different from the University of Minnesota or the University of Utah, where we've been before, is that we're small and friendly and congenial," said Lang. Lang believes that the conference will draw an audience made up of many different members of the Asheville community.

"People in this community who are just interested I think will probably be attending too because its such a diverse collection of research. And our students are welcome to attend all of the sessions at no charge," said Lang.

Lang also said that right now more organizations need to look at their calendars and decide if they will be able to help out with the conference.