

The Banner

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UNCA performs with MacDowell

By Johanna Luks
Staff Writer

Andie MacDowell will costar in a performance of the play "Love Letters" at the Diana Wortham Theatre on Valentine's Day as a fundraiser for the UNCA drama department, according to members of the department.

"I think this is the first step toward really having a relationship with Andie MacDowell that's really positive for the whole university," said Scott Walters, assistant professor and chair of the drama department and MacDowell's costar.

MacDowell's interest in the drama department at UNCA stems from her involvement with the theater department at the University of Montana in the town she lived in before moving to Asheville, according to Walters.

"She is very interested in setting up a summer program where people do readings of new plays. She had a similar program to that in Montana," said Walters.

Alex Comfort, assistant vice chancellor of the development office,

had been trying to get MacDowell to visit UNCA's campus and become involved with the university since she moved to Asheville, according to Walters.

"It wasn't until this summer that we were able to connect. We went out to lunch, and (the fundraiser) was her idea," said Walters. "We were talking about the department and how she might be connected with it, and she said, 'How about we do a production of "Love Letters" on Valentine's day as a fundraiser?' said Walters.

The drama department really needs a fundraiser, according to Tracy Hackney, a senior drama major.

"If we're going to be any sort of theater force, we need money, and we don't have it," said Hackney.

The reason that the drama department has as many students as it does now is because of scholarships, according to Hackney.

The money raised by the ticket sales for "Love Letters" will be put into a fund until faculty members in the department decide what to

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Drawing crowds



PHOTO BY TRAVIS BARKER

As on previous visits to UNCA's free-speech zone, Reverend Gary Birdsong drew a crowd in front of UNCA's cafeteria Nov. 17. Students, angered at his religious views, raised their voices to Birdsong as campus police stood by.

Program studies potential Athletic director to retire in April 2000

By Sarah Wilkins
Staff Writer

In the spring of 2000, the Learning Circles program, part of a self-study of UNCA, will begin looking at how the university succeeds with its programs in developing students' full potential, according to a representative of Learning Circles.

There are only six students serving in the program. "We'd like to have more student participation," said Bruce Larson, chair and professor of economics. "Maybe if a few more people knew what we were up to, more would come forward."

The program will "give a broader population of people on campus a larger degree of knowledge about what student development is all about," said Larson. It will also try to give the campus community "a sense of what our development of student programs and activities ought to look like."

"We may gain some people (once they) get excited about it," said Sherry Gale, chair and associate professor of mathematics.

Even though the majority of the group consists of faculty and staff, "the people who are in the group care a lot about students, are sensitive to them, and they have a great concern for the development of students," said Larson.

The program will cause the

university to re-evaluate itself and question whether certain programs need to be improved, dismantled, or if new programs should be created. "Part of what we're thinking about is, 'When a student graduates from UNCA, what skills, what abilities, do we hope will be developed?'" said Gale.

"We're going to try and look at everything that we think has a vital impact on students," said Gale.

The self-study conducted by UNCA occurs every 10 years when the university goes through an accreditation process with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

However, the prior studies only consisted of the compli-

ance section. The enhancement is an alternate self-study that is available through SACS.

The alternate study was a success with other colleges that tried it, and several professors at UNCA wrote a proposal for the university to do it.

"In the self-study there are basically two parts. There's a compliance part, which deals with the stuff you must do, and there's an enhancement part, which deals with the stuff that you would really like to do in order to help build your institution," said Larson.

"The Learning Circles are one part of the whole self-study," said Gale.

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UNCA athletics director, Tom Hunnicutt, announced his April 15, 2000 retirement on Nov. 17, according to a UNCA press release.

"It's just time for me to move on," said Hunnicutt in the press release. "I'm 61 years old, and I just feel it's time for me to retire and do some other things in my life."

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here at UNCA, and I am very proud of the things (the athletic department) accomplished," said Hunnicutt in the release.

Hunnicutt has been direc-

tor of athletics for the past six years. He has increased fundraising for athletics and brought success to the field, according to the press release.

A leader in the Big South Conference, Hunnicutt helped bring the conference's men's and women's basketball tournament to the Asheville Civic Center last year and for the coming season, according to the release.

"Hunnicutt is most pleased" with the success of student-athletes in the classroom.

Fourteen students have won awards for their academic ef-

orts, according to the release. "We have really elevated our performance in the classroom, and that is very pleasing. I'm very proud," said Hunnicutt.

"Tom has done an outstanding job building our athletic department during his tenure, and the person who will replace him will have big shoes to fill," said Chancellor Jim Mullen in the release.

"I wish Tom nothing but the best in retirement, and we're hopeful that when he does step down, we will still see him on our campus whenever the Bulldogs play."

Swingin' jazz

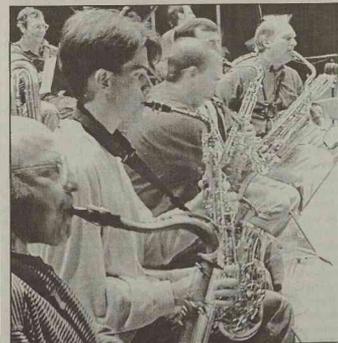


PHOTO BY WALTER FLYLER

The UNCA Community Jazz Band swings with their saxophones. They will perform as a cultural event on Nov. 21 at 4 p.m. in Lipinsky Auditorium.

Search begins for new officer

Background check questioned after Rathburn's release

By Greg Sessoms
Staff Writer

With the administration's decision to terminate former Public Safety Officer Darrell Rathburn's employment, public safety will soon begin searching for his replacement and conducting background checks on the applicants.

However, despite the inability of public safety's pre-employment background check to turn up any of the actions that led to Rathburn's nine-count federal indictment, no changes in hiring procedure are planned.

"I do not see any reason to change" the procedure, said Dennis Gregory, director of public safety.

Some students said they feel the administration's decision to hire someone with Rathburn's back-

ground will compromise the trust students have in the administration and public safety.

"I think if the administration wants students to have any trust in their policies and actions, they should look out for our welfare, ensure us that they do thorough background checks, and make sure the people they are letting to protect us on campus are not people who are going to go out and violate our civil rights," said Michael Kelley, senior history major.

Gregory would not comment directly on why public safety's background search did not turn up any problems that would have precluded Rathburn's employment, citing personnel confidentiality laws.

Gregory did say that a background check on why public safety's candidate was under investigation for any crimes, as Rathburn was at the time he was hired.

The procedure and standards used for checking applicants' backgrounds are mandated by the State Justice Department's Standards and Training Commission, and cannot be altered by public safety.

"We would not have the authority to change" the commission's standards. "That is a requirement," said Gregory.

As it stands now, the procedure for checking an applicant's background include searching a computerized criminal history through the National Crime Information Center, a computerized record search of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and a search for certified, true copies of warrants for arrest and criminal summonses, according to a document obtained from public safety.

The computerized record search of the AOC should have shown if a candidate for employment had been convicted of a misdemeanor.

Rathburn had previously been convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence and misdemeanor assault with a deadly weapon, according to count IX of his federal indictment.

Gregory would not comment on whether Rathburn's misdemeanor domestic violence conviction was discussed, or why he was hired in spite of it.

"Misdemeanors would not exclude you from police work. Serious misdemeanors would at least be given some discussion" and misdemeanors such as "assault with a deadly weapon could be a serious misdemeanor that could cause some discussion. It would not necessarily mean we would disqualify you," said Gregory.

Rathburn and his attorney refused to comment on his dismissal from the university or anything concerning the federal charges he faces.