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THE BLUE BANNER



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Volume 37 Issue 1

The University of North Carolina at Asheville

February 6, 2003

UNCA students march in peace protest

Reported drug use escalates

Beth Wyche
News Reporter

UNCA students joined anti-war protesters in Washington, D.C. to voice opposition against President Bush's push for war with Iraq Jan. 29.

"This protest was pretty ominous and everyone there knew we were going to war anyway," said Katie Morris, an undeclared freshman. "It just felt kind of hopeless. This was the last, desperate attempt. I don't think we can change what other people think, but we're just standing up for what's right."

Estimates of the crowd size varied, ranging from 30,000 to 500,000, said *The Washington Post*.

Despite the controversy over the crowd size, UNCA students dotted the largest protest held in the nation's capitol since Vietnam, according to *The Washington Post*.

"Over 500 people from Asheville" participated in the protest, estimated Jim Brown, a member of the Western North Carolina Peace Coalition's steering committee.

"It was really peaceful and there were not even many cops there," said Cyrus Tashakkori, a senior environmental science major. "Everybody was just vibrant and were really there to take a stand on what they think is right."

The WNC Peace Coalition organized five charter buses to attend the protest, each carrying 57 passengers. The protesters left on Friday and returned on Sunday, said Brown.



COURTESY OF MELISSA ENGLER

People from across the nation converged on the nation's capital to protest possible war with Iraq.

"Asheville was really well represented. There were a lot of Ashevilleians up there, and a lot of people from North Carolina in general."
-Cyrus Tashakkori senior environmental science major

Take our online poll and tell us how you feel!
"Do you think the US should go to war with Iraq?"
The question will be on our Web site by 5 p.m. this Friday. Let your voice be heard!

give peace a chance and give the inspectors more time to disarm Iraq."

Protesters marched towards the Washington Navy Yard.

"The point of a march is to spread it across the city, so you're not contained in one place, to crowd the crowd, and to give the people something to do," said Morris. "It's kind of a nice feature to get the media to cover it."

Protest organizers called the gathering the largest modern-day grassroots protest assembly according to the ANSWER Web site.

"It was incredible to see that many people that believe enough in something to come from all over the country," said Bridget Nelson, a senior chemistry and biology major who also attended the protest.

Nelson's two children, ages seven and four, also participated in the protest, "for political education purposes."

"For me personally, I feel like I'm required in my life to follow what I believe in and to continue to demonstrate out loud and try to articulate what I feel is the difference between right and wrong, not just to my children, but to other people," said Nelson.

The protest coincided with the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend and large crowds also protested in San Francisco, other American cities and Europe, according to the CNN Web site.

"It's very inspiring. It shows me that people are really concerned enough to speak out for peace," said Brown.

While many praised the protest's successful turnout, some doubt its ability to impact the current Bush administration's decisions on war

See PROTEST Page 8

Space shuttle Columbia and crew lost

Dearborn McCorkle
News Reporter

The space shuttle Columbia disintegrated in the skies above Texas killing all seven astronauts onboard Feb. 1.

"Columbia's lost. There are no survivors," said President Bush in an address to the nation. "These astronauts knew the dangers, and they faced them willingly, knowing they had a high and noble purpose in life."

The Columbia broke up into flames approximately 200,000 feet over North Central Texas shortly before its scheduled landing at Kennedy Space Center in Florida, according to CNN's Web site.

NASA officials first contact with the shuttle around 9 a.m. EST.

"This is, indeed, a tragic day for the NASA family, for the families of the astronauts who flew on STS-107, and, likewise, tragic for the nation," said NASA Administrator Sean O'Keefe in a press conference Feb. 1.

Ground controllers noticed a rise in temperature and pressure in the shuttle's left-side landing gear before losing data from three temperature sensors in the shuttle's left wing at approximately 8:58 a.m., according to CNN.

At approximately 9 a.m., mission control lost all vehicle data and contact with the crew.

Witnesses on the ground in Texas and Louisiana reported loud noise and flashing lights as the shuttle moved towards the earth traveling about Mach 18, or 12,500 mph, according to CNN's Web site.

Teams of federal investigators arrived in Texas and Louisiana Feb. 2 to begin the process of determining the cause of the break up of the space shuttle Columbia, according to CNN.

"Investigators have determined that something happened to make the temperature on Columbia's left side increase significantly faster than on its right side," said Ron Ditemore, NASA's top shuttle program manager in a news



COURTESY OF GOOGLE.COM

The crew of the space shuttle Columbia died when the shuttle broke apart during its return descent.

conference at Johnson Space Center near Houston, Texas, Feb. 2.

Investigators will also examine the role of the heat resistant tiles damaged when foam fell off of the external fuel tank during liftoff, according to CNN.

"We're going to provide all the information in our internal investigation and let the facts speak to what happened," said O'Keefe during a news conference Feb. 2. "And we're going to correct it and move on and be sure that we fly safely, as

is our commitment, each and every time we launch and each and every time there's a landing."

Recovery efforts for pieces of the shuttle and any human remains

See COLUMBIA Page 8

Kristen Ruggeri
News Reporter

Public safety has issued four state citations and three campus citations for marijuana usage since Jan. 13.

"To have that many in such a short period of time...that's a lot for us," said Sergeant Jerry Adams.

Public safety typically lists theft and vandalism among its most frequent violations, but said reported marijuana usage has occurred frequently this semester. Public safety usually encounters approximately seven marijuana violations during an entire semester, said Adams.

The reason for so many recent marijuana busts probably has more to do with their reporting suspicion than increased marijuana use or public safety doing a better job patrolling the campus, said Adams.

"More people are aware of what it smells like and they are aware that they should call us if they do suspect marijuana use," said Adams. "I think that contributes to more people calling in and more people talking more of it."

Student Services Manager Melanie Rhodamer said 50 percent of the time students call the housing office to report their peers using marijuana.

Many other students do not want to be held responsible for getting someone in trouble so they make an anonymous phone call or tell their residents assistant, who calls the residence life coordinator, who then makes a call to public safety.

"Those who call in range from resident assistants to resident directors to the next-door neighbor," said Adams.

Jesse Dail, residence life coordinator, said almost all the marijuana-related calls he receives are anonymous.

"You follow the guidelines and report it. I mean, that's just doing your job," said Alex Williams, a residence assistant in Mills Hall.

"It's not just us associated with the investigation of marijuana," added Williams. "There are a lot of other factors. A lot of times people associate RAs with being snobby and gunning to bust people, and that's really not how it is. We do our job. We're supposed to enforce the policy as it's written."

Students complete satisfaction surveys about once every two years, said Rhodamer. According to the survey results, an overwhelming majority of students do not want to live in residence halls with students using marijuana.

But Max Abbott, a sophomore history major, said he would not mind living in a dorm where someone used marijuana.

Although there are probably a lot of people who smoke marijuana on campus, Abbott said he does not necessarily think of it as a problem and would not report anyone for using marijuana.

"I would not report it because I think it's just people having a good time," said Lindsey Stack, a sophomore biology major. "That's what they want to do and I shouldn't be

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