

# THE BLUE BANNER



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## NEWS BRIEFS

**Suzanne Aubel**  
News Reporter

**UNCA**  
UNCA Asheville will host a talk on the Recently Discovered Archaic Temple of Apollo in Thessaly by archaeologist Manolis Korres Oct. 3 in the Owen Conference Center.

**CAMPUS CRIME**  
UNCA campus police charged a student with underage possession of alcohol Sept. 26. Another student from Founders Hall was charged with possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia Sept. 29.

**ASHEVILLE**  
Asheville's Manna FoodBank has been designated by Gov. Mike Easley's office as a collection point for food drives to aid coastal counties impacted by Hurricane Isabel. The center, located at 627 W. Main St., will be open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 6 through Oct. 11. Needs include food goods, canned foods, peanut butter, powdered drink mixes and paper products.

**NORTH CAROLINA**  
Commercial fishermen on the North Carolina coast headed back to work this week after Hurricane Isabel forced them to take a week off. Over 100,000 people in the hardest-hit coastal areas were still without power Sunday.

**UNITED STATES**  
A 300-pound gorilla escaped from its enclosure at Boston's Franklin Park Zoo Sunday, injuring a toddler and a teenage girl before being captured.

**WORLD**  
The one-year anniversary of the Washington-area sniper is this Friday, with suspect John Allen Williams awaiting his Oct. 14 trial date in Virginia.

A recent Gallup poll of registered voters in California indicated that a majority of them support Republican candidate Arnold Schwarzenegger as the current favorite to replace Gov. Gray Davis in the recall elections.

## Freshman student succumbs to heart disease

**Suzanne Aubel**  
News Reporter

The UNCA family lost one of its newest members Sept. 15 when freshman Russell Thomas passed away at the age of 18.

"He got to do a lot of things in his 18 years," said Russell's father, Tom Thomas. "Russell lived each day to the fullest. He always stayed busy."

Russell worked hard in his classes and had a strong interest in studying chemistry, according to Thomas. Russell earned a scholarship for students interested in science and math, and his dream was to go to medical school and become an oral surgeon.

"He was determined to be a doctor, and he could usually do pretty much whatever he set out to do," said Thomas. "His grades weren't the best, but he did well."

Russell applied the same determination in all aspects of his life, and many of the people he met never knew that he had a serious heart condition called cardiomyopathy.

"He did not tell people that he had a problem," said Thomas. "He didn't want to be treated any differently and we didn't keep him in a bubble. We let him do the things that he wanted to do. He just had to be self-limiting. It was just an unfortunate disease."

Cardiomyopathy is a congenital defect that runs in the Thomas family. It causes the heart to become tough and resilient to the

point that it becomes overworked and wears out. Diagnosed at the age of three, Russell had been receiving treatments at the Sanger Heart Clinic in Charlotte ever year and was fitted with a pacemaker as part of an experimental treatment for his disease.

"Russell was one of the youngest people in the state to ever have a pacemaker. It didn't make his heart beat. It enhanced the beating," said Thomas. "With him, the pacemaker helped his heart. The tests he had every year showed that his heart was getting better. (His death) was totally a surprise because we did so much to prevent it."

Campus police received a 911 call Sept. 15, which reported that a student had collapsed in the South Ridge dormitory parking deck. Upon arrival, campus police checked Russell's vital signs and immediately initiated CPR and phoned EMS.

EMS took Russell to Mission Emergency Room, but were unable to revive him. A memorial service was held at the Kanuga Conference Center in Hendersonville Sept. 21 in Russell's honor. "It was a very nice service in an older chapel, kind of out in the woods as Russell would have liked," said Thomas. "It holds 300 people and I was worried that it would be kind of empty, (but) the bottom line was there were 500 people in that place."

Born and raised in Hendersonville, Russell adopted an extremely active lifestyle and spent the majority of his time pursuing outdoor activities. He spent seven years in the school band at Hendersonville High School,



PHOTO COURTESY OF TOM THOMAS

Freshman Russell Boyd Thomas died after suffering from cardiomyopathy, a disease of the heart muscles. The Hendersonville native took part in several student organizations including the UNCA Outdoor program.

Cardiomyopathy causes the heart to lose its ability to pump blood. Heart rhythms are often disturbed as the condition causes arrhythmias (irregular heartbeat). The disease affects roughly 50,000 Americans.

which was voted the number one small school band in the country, according to his Thomas. Russell played percussion.

"Russell was really into the outdoors," said Thomas. "Mountain biking, hunting, fishing, wakeboarding, snow skiing, he never met an activity he didn't like."

Through his involvement in the band, Russell enjoyed the privilege of playing in both the Sugar Bowl and Rose Bowl, according to his Thomas. The Rotary Club offered Russell a chance to spend a month in Germany last summer as part of an exchange program.

"He stayed with a family over there that had a son his age, and they just hit it off wonder-

fully," said Thomas. "The son came back over here and they had a big time for a month. They spent a lot of time camping outdoors. (They) went to the beach and did a lot of wakeboarding."

After high school Russell looked into a few universities, but always knew that UNCA would be his first choice. Although his family lives only 25 miles away, Russell decided to live on campus so that he could get the full college experience, according to his Thomas.

"He wanted to come to UNCA. It was the only school he seriously applied to," said

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## Local residents to vote in upcoming city council elections

The Oct. 7 primary will decide six finalist for a Nov. 4 vote

**Adam Pollock**  
News Reporter

**Ryan Sniatecki**  
News Reporter

13 candidates are running for three city council positions. The Blue Banner asked the applicants for their thoughts on the following subjects: the Asheville Civic Center, the Grove Park development in Pack Square, a minimum housing code and the economy. Candidates William McKinley Stamey III, Chris Pelly and Adam Leslie McBroom could not be reached for comment.

**Terry Bellamy, West Asheville, 31**

### Civic Center

"The Civic Center is going to be an issue until we can get the support of our legislators and get funding (for) necessary renovations and modifications that need to be made to the facility. We need the support of our legislature so we can potentially get a food and beverage tax or room tax so tourists can help us pay for it."

### Pack Square development

"I approved the option of the development so we can see what they're putting on the table and see if they'll work with the community. I have not made my mind up about the overall project. I required them to have a public input process so that people would have the opportunity to talk with the developer."

### A minimum housing code

"I think there are very few things that I can say I was ashamed of in my life, but I think I am ashamed of what was proposed and what passed. I think it does our community a

disservice. You have your property inspected once and it's brought up to code, but never again. Most people aren't electricians, so they need an inspector to come in every few years just to make sure the wiring is ok."

### Economy

"Asheville has a diversified economy. It's three-legged. We have health care, manufacturing and tourism. I don't think we should move away from tourism completely, because it's a one billion dollar industry for our community (but) we need to invest more into small business manufacturing."

**Jan Davis, North Asheville, 55**

### Civic Center

"Asheville has to have a public gathering place, and it bothers me when I see ours lagging behind. I have friends that tell me about going to the Peace Center, or even to Spartanburg. Spartanburg should not be on the same cultural level as Asheville. One of the things I'd like to see change would be to foster a better relationship with our state legislators (so) that we can call on them for some advice."

### Pack Square development

"I would be in favor of (developing). The Grove Park is just doing what's in that plan (the Pack Square Conservancy plan). I think it will add new life to that end of Pack Square. We're talking about a very small amount of green space, and I think they're willing to bring a lot to that."

### A minimum housing code

"Doing away with it in its entirety is not the right thing to do, but I think we're on the right track with what he's (city Director of Building Safety Terry Summey) recommending, and I think we need to strengthen that somewhat."

### Economy

"That is our greatest and most pressing issue. We need to attract better-paying jobs and develop our tax base into a stronger, more viable tax base. We need to make the citing processes and permitting processes a little easier to deal with. I know it discourages a lot of small businesses and large businesses from locating here. We need to look at inspections. We need to look at zoning."

**Jim Ellis, North Asheville, 68**

### Civic Center

"We should try to refurbish it in its current location. It would be my proposal that we ask the North Carolina General Assembly to allow Buncombe County to vote on imposing a one-penny prepared food and beverage tax. That would pay for it."

### Pack Square development

"I voted to allow them to proceed with design and bringing it back to council. Council gave them an option on that piece of property, and I voted for it for several reasons. Every study that's been done says you should have people living around a park. And secondly, that exact site, when I was growing up in Asheville, had buildings on it. Those buildings were torn down in the early 1960s to put a new road through there. What we're talking about is taking up that road and one tiny green space, and putting a building back."

### A minimum housing code

"We've had the present code in place for ten years, and I think looking at some changes has the possibility of assisting affordable housing. There are a lot of individuals who feel that the very restrictive code that we've had has limited

developers in building affordable housing."

### Economy

"I think if we clean up our air, and make it even better than what it is, I think more businesses will want to move out of areas of the country where their environment is not nearly as attractive as ours. One (high tech) company made a commitment to move from San Francisco to Asheville. It's a matter of elected officials from the city and the county working with the chamber of commerce."

**Bryan Freeborn, West Asheville, 27**

### Civic Center

"Everyone that I've spoken to likes having the Civic Center downtown. However, they don't like the current Civic Center. The sound system is inadequate. No one really likes playing the Civic Center, so let's all agree to do something different. Instead of rebuilding the Civic Center, let's just build a new one out by the airport so that way it has more access regionally."

### Pack Square development

"If we're going to sell public land, then it needs to be a public referendum, put to a vote, and the citizens of Asheville should vote on it. If the Grove Park Inn wants to spend

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For more information, visit <http://www.bcboe.org> for instructions on registering and voting. Or call (828) 250-4200 for assistance. City Council primary is Oct. 7. The general election is Nov. 4.