

THE BLUE BANNER



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The University of North Carolina at Asheville

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NEWS BRIEFS

By Kristen Ruggeri
News Reporter

UNCA
UNCA's music department will wrap up the fall semester with swing and holiday music concerts. The UNCA Jazz Ensembles will feature a wide variety of big band music, ranging from classics of the Great Basie Orchestra to original compositions by David Wilken, at 8 p.m. Dec. 4. The annual holiday concert, performed by the choir and instrumental ensembles, is scheduled for Dec. 7 at 3 p.m. in the Lipinsky Auditorium. The swing dance is scheduled for Dec. 7 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. in the Student Center. Beginner and intermediate swing dance lessons will also be offered.

IN OTHER NEWS...
Approximately 165 graduating seniors will be honored at a winter graduation reception Dec. 13 at 2 p.m. in Lipinsky Auditorium. The event is open to the public, but reservations are required.

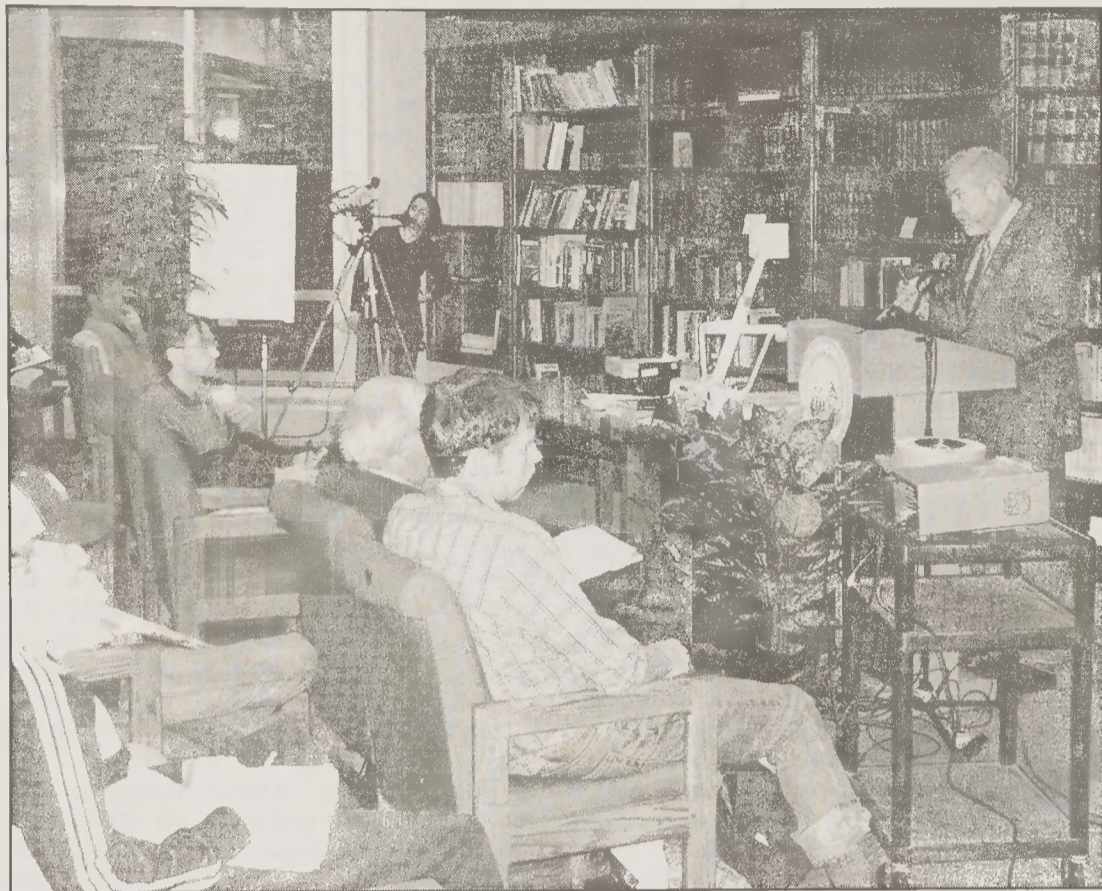
ASHEVILLE
Asheville offers shoppers a chance to help victims of domestic violence by holding its seventh annual Shop for Change benefit Dec. 5 and 6. Shop for Change raises money for Interlace, a program that provides transitional housing and supportive services for abused women and children. More than 100 downtown businesses are involved in the benefit. Participating stores will fly lavender balloons outside their shops. The participants will make donations to Interlace, enabling them to help more families.

NORTH CAROLINA
Twenty-one North Carolina state laws took effect on Monday. Included is a state law against the unauthorized downloading of copyrighted music from the Internet. The law also makes it illegal to have pyrotechnics at an indoor concert without permission from the fire marshal.

The law requires the local or state fire marshal to certify that the venue has proper fire extinguishers and adequate fire exits available, based on the size of the crowd, before allowing indoor fireworks to be used at a concert or public exhibition.

UNITED STATES
President Bush visited the troops in Iraq to celebrate Thanksgiving. On Nov. 26, Bush left his Texas ranch and flew to Washington D.C. where he picked up a few of his staff members to accompany him on his flight to Iraq's capital. Bush met with 600 soldiers at Baghdad International Airport for a Thanksgiving celebration.

"By helping to build a peaceful and democratic country in the heart of the Middle East, you are defending the American people from danger, and we are grateful," Bush told the soldiers. His two and a half hour visit was the first by any American president to Baghdad. The trip



JAY ADKINS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Scott Dedman gave a lecture on affordable housing in the Laurel Forum Nov. 20. The issue came under scrutiny in recent city council elections and could affect 30 percent of Buncombe County households.

Campus holds affordable housing lecture

By Ryan Sniatecki
News Reporter

Scott Dedman, executive director of Mountain Housing Opportunities, spoke at the UNCA Issues Forum Nov. 20 about unsafe housing, segregation and the cost of living within the community.

Thousands of Buncombe County residents can't afford to pay their rent, and many live in dangerous living conditions, according to Dedman.

Mountain Housing Opportunities, founded in 1988, makes emergency repairs on substandard housing in Buncombe County and builds affordable housing, mostly with the help of more than 400 volunteers.

"On one hand, this topic seems to get relatively little play in the Asheville press," said Joseph Sulock, professor of economics at UNC Asheville, who introduced Dedman. "On the other hand, judging by the questions at the meet-the-candidates sessions in the recent city council election, it

seems to be a rather important topic."

"I think it's important for people to know what's going on," said Desiree Washington, a freshman business major. "(It is also important) for people to know about their services, like my friend who had a baby and is living with her parents. This could really help her get out on her own."

Washington attended the forum because she plans on moving out of her dorm soon and wants to understand the housing situation in Asheville.

More than 8,000 county residents can't afford their rent, according to Dedman.

"Affordable housing is housing which costs less than 30 percent of the gross income of the resident," said Dedman. "That's what most people in the industry, in-

cluding the federal government, agree is roughly an affordable rent or home-ownership cost."

Approximately 8,800 households in Buncombe County pay more than 30 percent, and 6,700 have incomes of less than \$20,000, according to Dedman. Buncombe County has 17,000 jobs that pay an average wage below the \$8.56 per hour needed to pay rent on a 1-bedroom apartment. This includes retail cashiers, food-preparation workers, waiters, maids and hand packers.

"At one point in time, I was working for Sam's Club, and I'm going back, making about \$9 an hour," said Washington. "So I couldn't really afford a one-bed-

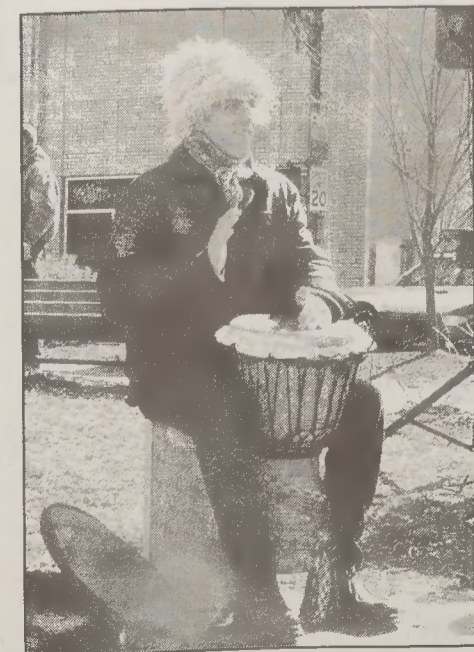
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Joseph Sulock
professor of economics

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JAY ADKINS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Community protestors rallied in Prichard Park against recent media concerns.

Protestors meet in downtown Asheville

By Adam Pollock
News Reporter

Asheville business leaders and community members gathered in Prichard Park Nov. 14 for a rally supporting local media ownership and control.

"This is about our concern about the media consolidation going on in this country and the radio and television being owned by just a few companies," said Bob Phillips, executive director of Common Cause of North

Carolina. "What we see on television, what we hear on the radio, what we read in the newspapers; it largely shapes what we think."

"When you think about our sources of information, our sources of news and our sources of entertainment being owned by a very, very few wealthy special interests, that's a danger," said Phillips.

Over 100 people participated in the event, which lasted roughly an hour.

Speakers at the event in-

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UNCA Athletic Director resigns

By Suzanne Aubel
News Reporter

UNCA Athletic Director (AD) Joni Comstock is resigning from her position and will be transferring to American University in Washington, D.C.

"I have had such a positive experience at UNC Asheville that I was really interested in that position because of the similarities with our school. The only difference is that it's a bit larger," said Comstock. "Where we're like 3,300, their school is between 10 and 11 thousand, so it was intriguing to me."

Dr. Comstock, who has been at UNCA for three and a half years, will accept an AD position for American University, a 19-sport Division I program. She will begin her duties there in January 2004.

"We are pleased to have attracted someone of Dr. Comstock's caliber," said American University President Benjamin Ladner in a press release. "Having worked in the University of North Carolina system for a number of years, I know the quality of UNC Asheville and have great respect for the leadership."

Dr. Comstock was first approached by American in September of this year and has high hopes for the athletic teams there, which compete in the Patriot League.

"They've had a fair amount of success in the last several years so we want to make sure that we continue to win in the Patriot League," said Comstock. "Like most institutions right now, there are always issues of resources, and so we're going to need to address a plan to get more resources for the athletic program. I want to be certain that we have a very high quality student experience (also)."

Dr. Comstock began her career in athletic administration over 20 years ago in graduate school, and worked at Purdue University before coming here. For Comstock, working at a school the size of UNCA was a new experience.

"When I started my career, I was on a campus of about 700, then I jumped to 38,000 (at Purdue) and did that for 16 or 17 years," said Comstock. "Working on a campus this size wasn't known to me. It took some getting used to, but I really like it."

After the initial adjustment period, Comstock quickly came to feel at home at UNCA and was impressed by the atmosphere she found herself in.

"I think the thing that I have really enjoyed about coming from a very large university to a smaller one is the camaraderie and the support that people have for one another, and the idea that the way you can create and have the most success is if people work together



COURTESY OF BLAKE MADDEN

AD Joni Comstock spent three and a half years at UNCA.

to use resources, to use ideas and to use their time to better the entire university and/or the athletic department," said Comstock.

"(There's a) feeling of incredible sharing and pride in the university, that everybody will pitch in to move the institution forward. I think that's a tremendous strength of this school."

UNCA Athletics have seen much success in the time that Comstock has been here, with the 2003 men's basketball team winning the Big South Conference last year and bringing UNCA its first ever NCAA tournament victory.

Also, the 2002 women's volleyball team took first place in the regular season, the men's tennis team had its most winning record ever and the baseball team tied its record for most wins in a single season. Athletes have also performed well in the classroom under Comstock, with almost half of all UNCA student-athletes making the Big South Honor Roll last year, according to a UNCA press release.

"I think we've accomplished an enormous amount in three and a half years," said Comstock. "There were probably one or two (more) things that we could've gotten done, but I think what the coaches and student-athletes have done in the time I've been here has been fabulous."

Associate Athletic Director Mike Gore will serve as the interim leader of the department while the search for a permanent AD is conducted. His job will be to continue the work Comstock started and help to ease the transition of a new director.

"Across the board, the whole department has improved (under Comstock)," said Gore. "Financially you can tell we're in better

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"Joni (Comstock) has built a most impressive record at our university. She has insured that academics remain at the center of our athletic program; she has worked with coaches and staff of the department to compete successfully in the Big South Conference; she has established a sound foundation of fiscal stability in the department; she has led us to achievement of NCAA certification without conditions; and she has expanded the level of community and donor support for Bulldog athletics."

-Chancellor James Mullen

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