

THE BLUE BANNER



Sports

Men's basketball team record at 1-5

■ see page 3

Features

"Bad Santa" delivers a bad-ass comedy

■ see page 2

Opinion

"What a long strange trip it's been"

■ see page 4

Volume 38 Issue 12

The University of North Carolina at Asheville

December 11, 2003

NEWS BRIEFS

By Jason McGill
News Editor

UNCA

UNCA offices will be closed for the holidays Dec. 22 to 26 and Jan. 1. Some offices will be open on a limited basis Dec. 29 to 30 and Jan. 1. Ramsey Library will be closed, or open for limited hours only, from Dec. 15 to Jan. 13. A complete listing of library hours during winter break is available online. The coming semester begins Jan. 14.

ASHEVILLE

Local area restaurants will be featured in the 12th annual Culinary Showcase Thursday, Jan. 8. The Grove Park Inn will host the event from 8:30-8:30.

NORTH CAROLINA

Site Selection magazine has named North Carolina as top in the country for business climate in its November issue. This is the third year in a row that North Carolina has earned this ranking.

UNITED STATES

Massachusetts senator John Kerry used profane language to express his dismay over President Bush's handling of Iraq in a *Rolling Stone* interview.

WORLD

Bombings at two U.S. bases in northern Iraq wounded at least 33 American soldiers Nov. 9. The attacks occurred less than three hours apart, according to military officials. A suicide truck bombing wounded members of the 101st Airborne Division at Tall Afar while a second suicide bomber attacked Forward Operating Base Thunder 40 miles northeast of Baghdad.

As news editor for the *Blue Banner*, I was privileged to work with many wonderful people. To their credit, they have kept me sane each Thursday morning through their solid work. I'd like to thank, in no particular order, the people who made this semester that much easier.

My writers:

Suzanne Aubel, Erin Beretit, Hilary McVicker, Adam Pollock, Kristen Ruggeri, Ryan Sniatecki and Cindy Steele

My photographers:

Jay Adkins, Michael King and Hilary McVicker

The *Blue Banner* staff:

Madam-in-chief Dearborn McCorkle, Adam Brooks (on the ones and twos), Beth "B-Money" Wyche, Terrence "Evil Empire" Basso, Whitney "Nippy" Setser, Sara "Drop it like it's hot" Miller, Maximillian Taintor, Shelby "Me fail English? That's impossible" Thompson, Sweet Ed Fickle, Stu-bear Gaines, Crazy J and of course...all the little people.

-Jason McGill, News Editor

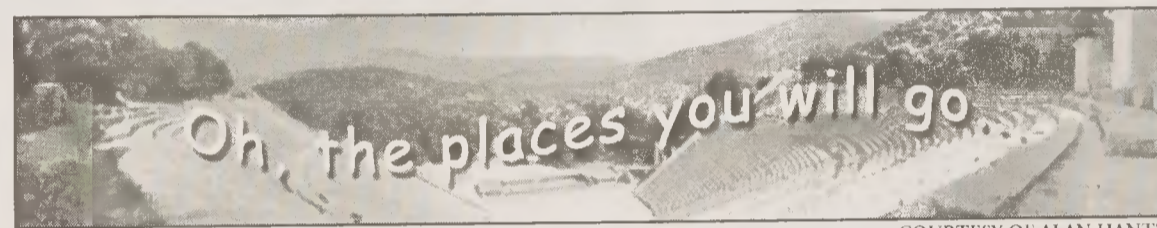


COURTESY OF ALAN HANTZ/KRISTEN RUGGERI



COURTESY OF ALAN HANTZ

Photos from abroad: Theatre at Epidaurus (below), Ftelia on the island of Mykonos (above right), Perugia, Italy (above left).



COURTESY OF ALAN HANTZ

By Adam Pollock

News Reporter

By Ryan Sniatecki

News Reporter

UNCA's study abroad program continues to grow despite concerns over global, anti-American sentiment and unfavorable economic conditions.

"We tell them that it would be best to leave the American flag off of their T-shirt," said Peter Williams, director of UNCA's study abroad and study away programs. "Clothing is probably the biggest thing that identifies you as an American."

UNCA's study abroad programs send UNCA students to other universities within the United States and on trips abroad to pursue a unique academic experience and to participate in other cultures. Participants in the annual trip to Italy can study humanities, photography, music or literature.

When on trips like these or when visiting universities, students pay for their tuition, textbooks and food. The university pays for transportation, living and other expenses.

"For UNCA students, it's a wonderful experience to be in a different culture," said Eric Iovacchini, former vice chancellor of student affairs for UNCA.

Iovacchini said that the organized, curriculum and group oriented trips gave students the opportunity to learn in a social atmosphere.

"It's kind of a learning community," said Iovacchini, describing the typical environment during one of the university-organized trips to Italy. "We're together from early in the morning until late in the evening, either in specific classes, or on walking tours of the community, or in a museum, or in a park or just experiencing the local market."

The study abroad trips and programs have a very clear, academic purpose, Iovacchini said.

The programs exist to help educate students in ways that might not exist here at home, according to Iovacchini.

"I'm going to stress the learning component of what we do. We really are together as a group," said Iovacchini. "It was an academic and social experience together. We want students who want that kind of experience."

Nearly all of the students who participate in the program return with a positive evaluation.

"I went in the summer of 2003," said Liz Poole, an undeclared sophomore who participated in the 2003 Italy trip. "It was an eye opening experience. You get to not only look at a different culture, but you get to experience it for almost six weeks."

UNCA's study abroad programs offer students many travel options for broad-

ening their educational and cultural horizons, according to Williams. Students can choose "pretty much anywhere that has an accredited university."

European nations constitute the most popular study abroad destinations for UNCA students, according to Williams.

While everyone said the benefits of UNCA's study abroad program far outweigh any of the potential risks, program coordinators and faculty participants take measures to protect students from harm.

"We ask them to try not to make it overly obvious that they are Americans," said Williams. "University policy here is that we won't send anybody to a country that has a State Department travel warning."

Iovacchini currently works with the university's career center. UNCA's study abroad program brings many benefits to UNCA students, according to Iovacchini. He also said that travelers notice a heightened security presence in some of the countries they visit.

"In European countries, at the airports, you'll find military folks with weapons. That was a part of that culture even before 9/11. I think as Americans, we notice it a little more," said Iovacchini.

Not everyone around the world resents the American presence, according to Iovacchini.

"They're very friendly, very gracious and very hospitable," said Iovacchini, referring to the people of Italy.

'Tis the season for finals stress

By Suzanne Aubel

News Reporter

By Cindy Steele

News Reporter

Stress and anxiety are common among students during final exams week.

As the end of the semester approaches, UNCA students find ways to relax.

"Exam week is the most intense week of the year," said Sean McDonald, a senior ethics and social institutions major.

He said his remedy for stress relief is to "have as much sex as possible."

There were also several campus-sponsored events offered by the student activities office during finals week.

Events with names like Exam Program, Exam Slam, Exam Scram, Exam Cram, Exam Jam, and Exam Bam offered stu-

dents the opportunity to watch a movie, get a massage, eat a good breakfast, drink free hot chocolate, have a music jamming session and even participate in dog therapy.

These events culminate in Exam Wham, a jousting session in front of the dining hall, Dec. 11 at 11:30 a.m.

"I find that the weeks leading up to exam week are more stressful because there's a lot more work due," said Christie Gait, a senior psychology major.

"Exams themselves aren't so bad. I'll probably stress a lot right before I have to go take them."

Reducing stress, including test anxiety, helps to improve mental and physical health.

There is a strong correlation between exam-related stress and acne severity in college students, according to a recent study by Stanford University's School of Medicine.

To reduce test anxiety, students should

study ahead of time instead of cramming, get enough sleep, approach the exam with confidence and eat fresh fruits or vegetables before the exam, according to the counseling center.

"Yes, absolutely, I am more stressed (during exams)," said Kevin Perrett Gentil, a senior business management major. "The way I relieve that is to drink a little bit of wine and try to get as much sleep as I can."

To stay calm during an exam, students should sit in a comfortable location and read all directions. Students should plan an approach, stay focused and take deep breaths if panic sets in, according to the counseling center.

After a stressful exam situation, students should reward themselves by watching a movie, going out to dinner or pampering themselves in some way.

"I read books, ride my horse and practice archery," said Jaclyn Stacy, an undeclared freshman.

Exposing the ghosts of UNCA

By Erin Beretit

News Reporter

By Kristen Ruggeri

News Reporter

Strange occurrences on campus may cause many to think twice about their beliefs in the supernatural.

"I would like to say that I don't believe in ghosts, but I do believe that anything can happen," said Heather Vint, a senior drama student.

Vint claims she experienced a ghost one night inside Carol Belk Theater.

"I saw what looked like a little girl ghost hovering in front of me in the costume shop," said Vint. "I (turned) off all the lights. Walking to the door to leave, I blinked, and there was this little girl with long, wavy hair. She smiled at me, and looked more like a chalk outline than a person."

Vint is not the only one to experience the ghost in Belk Theater. Robert Bowen, chair of the drama department, said Vint's story is very similar to the stories Amanda Bayne, a former student, used to tell.

"The two never met before, and the story had never been really told completely. That was kind of interesting," said Bowen. "I thought it was just Heather's imagination. Then, all of a sudden, it hit me that Amanda used to talk about a little girl (from a) description of what she saw."

Although some may not believe in ghost stories, few have no other explanation for their experiences.

"If it didn't happen to me, I would not believe it," said Jaqui Justice, the drama department office manager.

About five years ago, Justice went into the scene shop to get some water for her plants. As she was standing at the sink, she heard a voice calling her name. When she turned around, no one was there.

"I kept filling up the water and I heard, 'Jaaaaaqui.' I looked again and there was nobody there, so I thought somebody was playing a joke on me," said Justice. "I went to the sound proof booth...because they can project any kind of sound from up there. There was no one in the booth (or) the arena. I checked both restrooms and the lobby. The costume shop doors were locked and the lights were off everywhere."

Justice said she doesn't know what else could explain this weird incident besides a ghost. Before this incident, she had never heard a word about a ghost at the theater.

"Theaters can get very scary and weird when the lights are out because you're in very big, dark areas," said Bowen. "And also, you can all of a sudden hear all these other noises."

The theater is not the only purportedly haunted building on campus. Ghost reports also come from the library and Governor's Village.

"The only thing I have heard is from other people describing their experience, saying that they hear a voice call out their name while they are shelving," said Noel Jones, circulation supervisor at Ramsey Library.

Jeremy Fisher, a former student, claims he actually did see a ghost at UNCA. In fact, he recently wrote an article for the *Forest City Daily Courier* about his ghostly encounter.

Fisher saw the ghost one night in November 1999. While laying in bed in Governor's Village, he noticed something blocking the light coming into his room. When he sat up, he saw an old woman. Rather than walking out of the room, the figure floated backwards through the door, according to Fisher.

"I jumped up in bed and kind of shook my head," said Fisher. "When I looked back at this thing, it was still there, staring at me. There is a big part of me that just wants to completely write it off. I don't buy into the supernatural all that much, but ever since that night it kind of changed my mind about things."