

The Blue Banner



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NEWS BRIEFS

by Matthew Beardsley
Staff Reporter

CAMPUS CRIME

Campus Police foiled the plans of would-be partiers in Mills Hall after responding to complaints from housing staff last Tuesday. Two of the six students present voluntarily handed over small amounts of marijuana and a glass pipe, according to UNCA police report.

Allison Gaines and Sara Gaddis, both freshmen, were given student conduct citations for possession of marijuana. Gaines was also charged with possession of drug paraphernalia. Police also gave citations to the other students included for using fake I.D.s and drugs.

ASHEVILLE

U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao announced in Asheville last week a \$10 million grant to help businesses rebuild following flood damage from Hurricanes Ivan and Frances. The grant is also planned to help employees who have lost their place of employment in the storms.

NATIONAL

Polls for the upcoming presidential election show both candidates, George W. Bush and John Kerry, nearly even. With five weeks remaining, Bush continues to promote his roll as "Defender in Chief," while Kerry's campaign has described Iraq as being in a "State of Crisis."

Police in Houston, Texas, report that a teenager used a sword to kill his neighbor, according to the AP. 18-year-old Jose Alberto Martinez was charged with murder and aggravated assault following the attack last Friday. CNN reported that "the two were drinking together when the argument started, and Martinez allegedly stabbed [Gabriel Flores] several times before striking Flores' mother."

A test pilot took a privately-built rocket past the edge of the atmosphere September 29, completing the first stage of a quest to win a \$10 million prize. The X-Prize Foundation, based out of Saint-Louis, issued the challenge in order to inspire an age of public space exploration.

Space Ship One rolled almost uncontrollably toward space at nearly three times the speed of sound, and reached an altitude of 64 miles over the Mojave Desert, completing the first leg of the multi-million dollar challenge.

INTERNATIONAL

The price of oil, which reached a record high of \$50.47 per barrel, dropped by \$1.50 upon the arrival of news that Nigerian rebel leader Mujahid Dokubo-Asari had come to a cease-fire agreement with the Nigerian government.

Prices rose recently because of the insurgency's threat to attack the Delta, producer of 2.3 million barrels a day. The overactive hurricane season also affected oil production in past weeks, hindering production of oil for OPEC in the Gulf of Mexico.

Haiti is in a state of devastation following intense damage from Hurricane Jeanne.

Bush and Kerry go head-to-head

by Sarah Schmidt
Staff Reporter

The Bush and Kerry campaigns for the presidency continued this week as the candidates crisscrossed the country on campaigns and criticized each other's policies and records.

"My opponent is sending mixed signals," said President Bush. "He has had many different positions on Iraq. You cannot lead the war against terror if you waver or waver when things get tough."

The debate between Bush and Kerry over the Iraq war resurfaced

as Iraq's interim prime minister Ayad Allawi came to the United States to appeal to the United Nations for international help in stabilizing the Iraqi republic.

"(Bush) blundered saying there are only a handful of terrorists in Iraq," said Senator Kerry.

"George Bush retreated from Fallujah and other communities in Iraq, which are now overrun with terrorists and threaten our troops."

"The invasion of Iraq was a profound diversion from the battle against our greatest enemy, al-Qaida. Yet, in the face of all these judgments, all these miscalculations, and all the mistakes, the president still says he wouldn't do anything different."

Kerry accused Allawi of glossing over problems in Iraq after Allawi delivered an optimistic report on the progress of the country. Bush responded in defense of Allawi and his report, according to Reuters.

"You can't lead this country if your ally in Iraq feels like you

questioned his credibility," said Bush. "This brave man came to talk about how he's risking his life for a free Iraq, which helps America, and Senator Kerry held a press conference and questioned Prime Minister Allawi's credibility."

Other issues surfaced this week, including the draft and the budget plans of both candidates. Kerry said that Bush had a covert plan to call up more National Guard and Reserve troops after the election, according to the Associated Press.

"He won't tell us what congressional leaders are now saying, that this administration is planning yet

another substantial call-up of reservists and Guard units immediately after the election," said Kerry. "Hide it from the people during the election, then make the move."

The Bush campaign denied Kerry's allegations, according to the AP. Kerry's "conspiracy theory...is completely irresponsible," said Steve Schmidt, Bush campaign spokesman.

"John Kerry didn't launch this attack when he spoke to the National Guard because he knows they know it is false and ridiculous."

The Commission on Presidential Debates set three dates for Bush and Kerry to participate in televised debates. The first debate is set for Sept. 30 at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

Time Magazine's most recent poll taken on Sept. 24 showed a 48-42 percent lead for Bush over Kerry, with Independent Ralph Nader bringing in five percent. Nader is currently fighting several legal battles to be put on the vot-

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John Kerry
presidential candidate

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PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.GEORGEWBUSH.COM
President Bush and Senator Kerry continue their campaign trails in hopes of winning over a younger crowd.

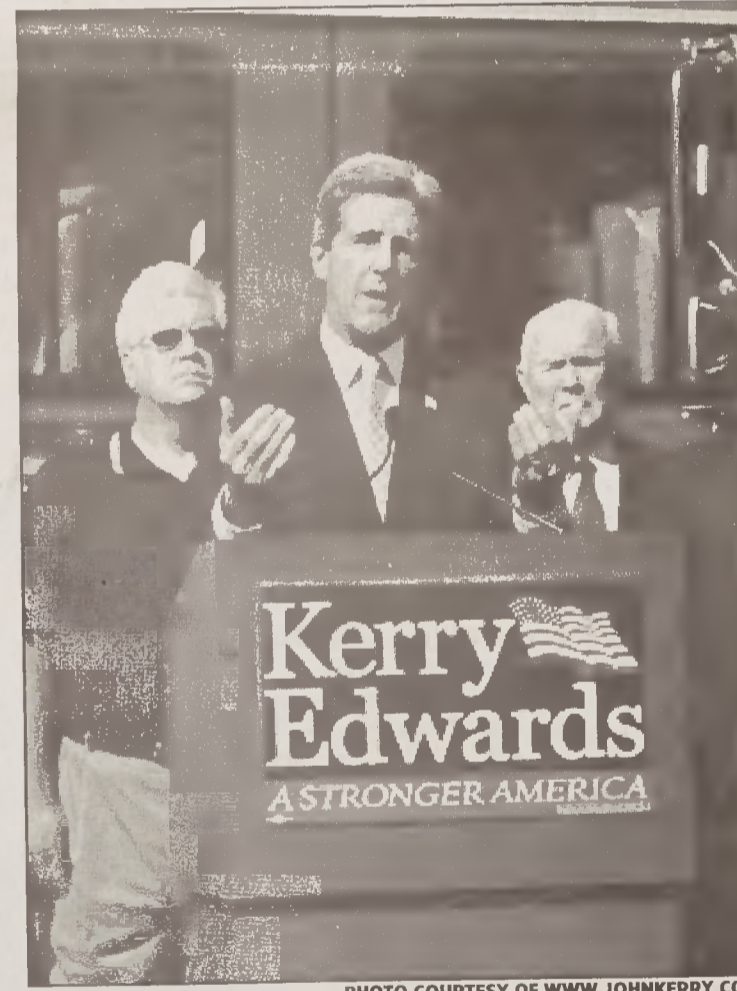


PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.JOHNKERRY.COM

Terrorists seige school leaving 200 dead

by Sean Robinson
Staff Reporter

More than 200 students, teachers and parents died in a Sept. 3 hostage situation in Moscow, an event that some UNCA students did not, until recently, know about.

A British Broadcast Company report reconfirmed, through a key negotiator in the Beslan school shooting of Sept. 3, that armed civilians who fired on the school ultimately caused the hostage slaughter that ended the tragic conflict in Russia.

The student body reacted to news of this story with sadness for the tragedy and with disdain for the media that, they say, left them largely uninformed.



BRIAN DAVIS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elodie Lecanu and Chad Pearson discuss the media's role in informing the public about the Russian school attack.

"The media did not do a very good job covering the story," said Christopher Kiley, undeclared freshman. "I think they're too caught up in our own problems

and our own situations with the war. It is important that the election is this year in November, but I think that they need to focus on world events, such as 200-plus

people getting killed in Russia."

Other students agreed that coverage of the Russian tragedy was not up to par and some took their comments a step further, indicting the media for engagement of corporate politics, a policy that Cyrus Atkins says is to the detriment of our First Amendment right to free speech.

"I think it's a shame that our freedom of speech is so easily presumed," said Cyrus Atkins, undeclared junior. "If public stations can be so overwhelmed by corporate stations, then it's not so much that you don't have the right to say something, but it's more like when you do say something, no one's going to listen."

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Bush tightens embargo on Cuba

by Angele Mainhart
Staff Reporter

The Bush administration tightened the embargo on Cuba, which reduces the amount of money and visitors from the United States to Cuba, in order to push out Fidel Castro and bring in democracy.

"I think it's way past midnight for Fidel Castro," said Gretchen Trautmann, assistant professor of Spanish and chair of the foreign languages department at UNCA. "I think it's time for him to go, and I think, in a paradoxical way, the embargo promotes and glorifies his stance there as the guy who could stand up to the big bully."

The tightening of the embargo resulted in restricting student visas for those wanting to study abroad in Cuba. This shut down programs in UNCA that sent students to Cuba in the past.

"The U.S. government policy has forced a temporary suspension on the academic programs in Havana, Cuba," said Pete Williams, director of the study abroad program. "In the past, we have had students that have gone to Cuba on this program through the Center for Cross Cultural Studies, and, because of the suspension of the program, we no longer have that option available to students."

"The students that have gone with the program have had a very worthwhile experience, and I'm sad to see that they no longer have that opportunity."

UNCA is not the only university that is restricted by the embargo. The study abroad programs are too similar to tourism, according to the new regulations, and this caused programs that ran for over seven years to be temporarily shut down.

"There was sort of a warming up, and more and more study abroad programs and academic visas were being offered for North Americans to study in Cuba," said Trautmann. "We had discussed and were eager to promote taking a class there hopefully next summer. There has been a tightening of that. The Bush administration has claimed that it's really just tourism in disguise."

"They have revoked most or all of the academic visas, including ones for the established programs. Oregon had a program running in Cuba for seven or eight years, and, for the first time, they are not going to be able to go back. So, visas are no longer being issued as far as that's concerned."

The embargo allows some of the same consequences of a war or other form of political tactic. It keeps the country from gaining strength economically, while not dealing with a physical battle.

"It's a measure from the U.S. to sort of antagonize the economic

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