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NEWS BRIEFS

by Rheannon Yokeley
 Staff Reporter

CAMPUS CRIME
 Campus police received a report of vandalism to a motor vehicle Nov. 12, located on Ridge Drive and South Ridge Hall, according to police. The case is still undergoing investigation.

NATIONAL
 Colin Powell, U.S. Secretary of State, resigned from his position Nov. 12 in a letter to President George W. Bush. U.S. officials named Condoleezza Rice as his likely replacement, according to the Associated Press.

In West Memphis, Ark., a bus was involved in a crash, killing 15 and injuring over 200 passengers, Nov. 13. The cause of the crash has not been determined, according to the AP.

The U.S. Interior Department approved oil drilling in Alaska Nov. 12. The drilling is set to begin by Nov. 16. Drilling would take place on the north slope of the state and involve moving power lines, and raising pipelines in the area, according to Reuters.

Police officers found \$40,000 hidden from Lucky Dollar Casino in Leesburg, La. in a nearby creek when it was diverted to a beaver dam. A lawyer filed a lawsuit to force the casino to pay officers the location of the hidden cash, as part of a plea bargain agreement, according to the AP.

A jury found Scott Peterson guilty of first-degree murder for the slaying of his wife Laci in December 2002. They also found him guilty of second-degree murder for the death of his unborn son, Connor. Peterson could face the death penalty. The sentencing phase of the trial will begin Nov. 22 after a one-week break for the jury, according to the AP.

Mohammed Alanssi, 52, handed a letter to security officers outside the White House Nov. 15. He asked the guards to deliver the letter to President Bush and then lit himself on fire outside the northwest guardhouse on Pennsylvania Avenue. Officers put out the fire and took Alanssi to a local hospital. Alanssi is in critical condition with burns covering 30% of his body. Alanssi claims to be an FBI informant, according to the AP.

Rapper Old Dirty Bastard (Russell Jones) died Nov. 13 in his South Florida recording studio. Jones, 35, died after complaints of chest pains and shortness of breath. Medical examiners did not release the cause of death. They are awaiting results of toxicology and tissue tests, according to the AP.

Police arrested Marie Robinson in Kent, Wash. Nov. 16 for second-degree murder of her 16-month-old son. The children were found dead in her apartment by police after their paternal grandfather said she could not get in touch with Robinson, according to the AP.

Students form academic bonds with teachers

Increased class sizes may diminish student and teacher relationships

by Angele Mainhart
 Staff Reporter

Teacher involvement with students decreased over the years due to more caution and a separation of work and friendship, according to a professor at UNCA.

"There's suspicion and ickiness that probably wasn't there 10 or 15 years ago when I was in school," said David Hopes, professor of literature.

"It seems to be that UNCA is very 'when I'm at school, I'm at school. When I'm not at school, that's a different world.' It seems to me that people are very careful here that work is work."

This sentiment does not stop most students from visiting professors for both class related and friendship reasons. Even former students show up at times to visit old professors.

"Well, I certainly meet with students quite a bit, individually," said Lorena Russell, assistant professor of literature and language at UNCA. "Today, I guess I met in-

dividually - of course I'm doing conferences with my composition class - with five students in my office. I consider it part of my pedagogy, but it goes beyond that. We chat individually. I had a couple of students come by today, who I've had in class two years ago, who stopped by just to chat. So, sure, there's opportunity for friendship as well."

In some cases, student and teacher involvement goes beyond just talking face to face in the office. Technology enables people to get in contact in ways that were not possible years ago.

"Dr. Russell has an MSN messenger thing, and I think she also has AOL instant messenger," said Chris Salt, undeclared freshman. "When it's just a little question, and she's there on the instant messenger service, I can just write her a quick little thing. She can help me figure it out really fast over the Internet. I think if every professor was in their office enough that it would help a lot because you could just ask them a quick question, and they'd be able to answer."

"I think that here, since we do have a smaller school, that most students have at least one professor that they go to. If it's not their advisor, it's someone that they can ask questions and kind of talk to."

Casey Colahan
 senior creative writing major



Lorena Russell, assistant professor of literature and language department, meets with undeclared freshman Chris Salt.

Most people believe that an increase in involvement between students and professors leads to improved education. The reasons for this vary.

"Well, people think that education is instruction in the classroom and that sort of thing," said Hopes. "I think that too, but I

think example is a better educator because students should be able to see in the life of their professors some indication that the things that they teach are worthwhile. If I say that poetry makes you a better person, I should be able to ex-

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Professors propose new major

by Sarah Schmidt
 Staff Reporter

UNCA administration and faculty created a new field of study for education majors and have plans in the works for a religious studies department due to changes from outside and within.

"There was a lot of excitement about the religious studies program, a lot of discussion about how to make sure it is balanced, so it represents the major religious traditions of the world," said Mark Padilla, provost and vice chancellor for academic and student affairs. "This comes from the realization that a large college ought to have expertise in this area, the realization that religion is one of the most important expressions of the human condition, especially today in the early 21st century."

"It also comes from the recognition that there seems to be a lot of student interest in this area, as reflected through the minor and in the way in which the courses that feature religious topics are quickly filled."

UNCA currently offers a religious studies minor to students, but with the institution of a religious studies program, students would be able to major in it and continue on to higher education with a better grounding in their field.

A group of UNCA faculty made the recommendation of beginning a religious studies program to Padilla. A forum on religious studies held, Nov. 15, approved the program, the first step of many in creating a new academic department.

"The outcome of yesterday's meeting to discuss the idea of creating a religious studies major here at UNCA ended with the consensus to create a task force to put together a document called the 'Intent to Plan' proposal," said Padilla. "This is the initiatory step that allows the next step to occur, which is the establishment of the program plan."

The "Intent to Plan" proposal will go through several faculty senate meetings and receive the approval of both the chancellor and the office of the president before UNCA can establish a religious studies major. The lengthy process of approving and instituting a religious studies major could take over a year, according to Padilla.

"I would say that the earliest date for the department to be established is the fall semester of 2006," said Padilla. "It would require a search for someone with a Ph.D. in religion, someone with some experience who could build a department and a program, and it takes about a year to find such a person, so we hope to be moving through the first step of the 'Intent to Plan' proposal this spring 2005 term, and then next year have permission to establish the program and search for a department chair."

An increased student interest in religious studies led to the call for

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Fuel-efficient vehicle visits UNCA campus

by Matthew Beardsley
 Staff Reporter

A natural-gas-powered Honda Civic is on campus for two weeks. Yuri Kolsen, UNCA transportation planner, hopes it is the first of many.

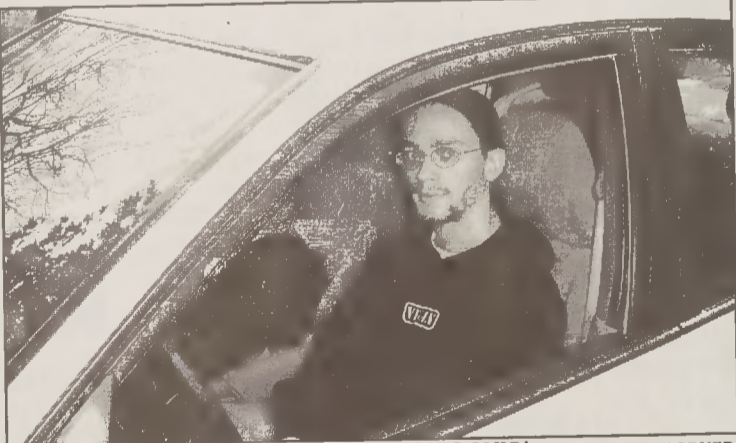
"This car demonstrates UNCA's commitment to diversifying the fleet," said Kolsen. "UNCA is definitely interested in looking at alternate fuels."

Honda loaned the car to the Land of Sky Clean Vehicles Coalition as a demonstration project for local fleet managers, according to a press release from the campus operations department.

The coalition includes, among others, the City of Asheville, Warren Wilson College and Mission Hospital, all of whom are considering options to incorporate more environmentally friendly vehicles in their fleets.

Natural-gas-powered cars run with near-zero emissions of nitrogen oxides and non-methane organic gases, according to Honda.

Students experienced firsthand how cleanly the car runs



Timothy Putnam, senior environmental studies major, takes a seat in the natural gas vehical during its visit to UNCA.

when Kolsen invited several to sniff its tailpipe. Students were able to see the clean-burning Honda in front of the Highsmith University Union Nov. 12, and many were excited to see an alternative to gasoline power be considered for UNCA.

During the car's two weeks at UNCA, many students and faculty took advantage of an extra set of wheels, whatever the engine.

"It's kinda like a normal car,"

said Ronald Sebilo-Tibbitts, undeclared senior, who benefits from using the car instead of his usual scooter, according to Kolsen.

Erich Melville, senior political science major, said he does not have a car of his own but has been able to use the natural gas Honda.

Although he normally depends on carpooling or his bicycle, he hopes environmentally friendly cars become more popular and convenient for the public, according to the press release.

Others who will have turns with the car include Diane Williamson of Campus Police and Anna Moyer, senior biology major, who will be using the car to return salamanders to their native habitat, according to Kolsen.

"They are available to consumers, but fueling the cars in Asheville will be difficult until service stations begin offering compressed natural gas alongside traditional octane," said Kolsen.

Although no convenient refueling options are yet available, consumers can install a natural gas refueling appliance in their home. UNCA plans to begin reducing the emissions of its vehicles as soon as possible.

"Our first attempt is to make the shuttles run on bio-diesel," said Kolsen.

Natural-gas-powered engines emit fewer pollutants than dual-source systems that include both gasoline and electric power.

Natural gas consists mostly of methane, although it can contain ethane, propane, butane, carbon dioxide, oxygen, and nitrogen, according to Natural Gas Supply Association. It is a colorless, odorless gas.

"This car demonstrates UNCA's commitment to diversifying the fleet. UNCA is definitely interested in looking at alternate fuels."

Yuri Kolsen
 UNCA transportation planner

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