

The Blue



Banner

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NEWS BRIEFS

by Jamie Ellingsen
Staff Reporter

Campus Crime

Campus Police issued a citation for underage possession of alcohol to one occupant and a trespass warning to another occupant of a UNCA dorm Feb. 8. Campus Police responded to a call from housing staff reporting underage drinking, according to the report.

Campus Police arrested one student for underage possession of alcohol after detecting alcohol on the student's breath, according to Campus Police. The officer encountered the student in a dorm hall while on a walk-through Feb. 8. The student refused a breath test, resulting in a state citation for possessing alcohol according to the police report.

North Carolina repossessed \$875,000 worth of gas masks purchased for police officers. Officials repossessed the masks due to their ineffectiveness, according to the Associated Press.

Useless against toxins as basic tear gas, the 2,400 masks do not meet federal protection standards for safety masks.

The masks will be improved until they meet federal safety standards. Until then, the state purchased an additional 300 masks, which do not meet federal standards for key personnel, totaling about \$45,000.

Notion

Ray Kurzweil reportedly lives his life with intentions of living forever. Kurzweil takes about 250 supplements and drinks eight to 10 glasses of alkaline water and 10 cups of green tea daily, according to the AP.

Kurzweil wrote "Fantastic Voyage: Live Long Enough to Live Forever," a guide for people to follow who enjoy immortality.

Although criticized by some for irrational theory, Kurzweil received recognition from MIT. In addition, he won the National Medal of Technology Award in 1999 and was inducted into the Inventor's Hall of Fame in 2002, according to the AP.

World

After spending nearly 10 days in a hospital in Rome, pope John Paul II returned to the pulpit Feb. 13, according to the AP. Although an aide gave most of this Sunday address, the pope wished everyone a happy Sunday and thanked them at the end of the message.

The hospital admitted the pope Feb. 1 for breathing difficulties from the flu. The hospital released the pope Feb. 10.

The pope also suffers from Parkinson's disease and weakness in his hip and knee, according to the AP.

Iran demonstrated the seriousness of its warnings to the United States Feb. 13 by denying the European request to halt preparations for a heavy-water nuclear reactor, according to the AP.

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Students question safety after intrusion

by Natalie Jones
Staff Reporter

Some students at UNCA worry about their safety after a student's report of a male hiding in the women's restroom of the Highsmith University Union.

Campus Police received a call about a male in the women's restroom of the Highsmith University Union Jan. 25, according to Sgt. Jerry Adams, investigator on the case.

The caller said the male hid inside one of the stalls and tried to look under the stall wall at a female student.

"When I heard about the bathroom incident, I thought it was scary. I have been nervous about going places alone," said Natasha Creticos, junior psychology student. "It made me more aware of what is going on around me."

After the female student left the restroom, she asked someone else to report the male to Campus Police, according to Adams.

"The suspect did not physically hurt the young woman, and we have no idea what his intentions were," said Adams. "He left the building within seconds of our arrival, and we never actually saw him."

A surveillance camera caught the male on tape hanging around the bathroom, and Campus Police was able to get a description from the tape.

Police described him as a white male in his mid-20s with black hair and a slim build. The video tape provided Campus Police with enough information to conduct a search.

"We did conduct a search of the Highsmith University Union and the entire campus," said Adams.

"We were looking for someone meeting the description of the suspect. In the video, he looked just like another college student to me."

An e-mail sent to students warned them to be aware of their surroundings and to call Campus Police if they saw anything suspicious. The e-mail did not include details about the incident. Some students said the university should have warned them of the immediate danger.

"When I got the e-mail warning students to be safe, I skimmed over it but didn't pay much attention to it," said Creticos. "I didn't understand that there was such a big threat. I think the university should have emphasized the fact that there is someone on campus targeting women. I would have paid more attention to the warnings."

The university's decision to send out an e-mail to students rather than to warn them immediately was enough for some students to complain directly to the administration, according to Creticos.

"I made a request to the administration to warn students about the incident because the victim wanted us make other students aware of the situation," said Adams.

"The university has guidelines about those kinds of things, and the administration decided what could be put out. The e-mail was the result."

Campus Police sponsored a table in the Dining Hall Feb. 10 during lunch time. The table consisted of brochures on crime prevention and safety tips.

"We have also increased our foot patrols of the Highsmith University Union during both the



TYLER BREAUX/PHOTO EDITOR

A female using the Highsmith Union restroom caught a male intruder peeking under the bathroom stalls.

day and evening," said Adams.

There have been two reported forced sex offences in the last three years, according to the Campus Security Statistics Web site.

"I feel like two reported rapes are average for our campus because we haven't had many reports in the 13 years I have been here," said Adams. "I do think there are some rapes that take place that aren't reported."

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U.S. develops military robots

by Justin Wagner
Staff Reporter

The Pentagon plans to deploy 18 machine-gun-equipped, remote-controlled robots to Iraq this spring, according to a recent USA Today article. They are the first armed robots to participate in combat.

"Hopefully, we won't have to worry as much about being drafted now," said Larkin Ford, undeclared sophomore. "Mobile, robotic death units are just what America needs."

Foster-Miller Inc., a private Massachusetts company, developed the technology to add machine guns to an older robot model used by the U.S. military to detonate roadside bombs.

Despite the fact that the technology now exists, no one expects either private businesses or the U.S. military to manufacture an entire robot army in the foreseeable future, according to the USA Today.

"You can't really put them on an assembly line and make them like you can with cars," said Stan Frady, senior engineering student. "Not yet."

Operators control the Special Weapons Observation Reconnaissance Detection Systems, (SWORDS) with a remote control and view its movements through a video monitor. Soldiers can operate the robot from a location of up to half a mile away.

The robots operate continuously for up to four hours. They fire between 300 to 350 rounds before running out of ammunition when fitted with an M240 or M249 machine gun.

Aside from making soldiers less vulnerable to attacks, U.S. military officials also laud the SWORDS for their accuracy. A soldier operating the vehicle can hit a nickel-sized target up to 300 meters away, according to USA Today.

The vehicle's precise movements owe its link with the Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite network. The system can accurately relay information about the location of a person or object anywhere on Earth within 30 meters, according to a Georgia State University physics department Web site.

"Most of them seem to be hooked up to GPS, which is able to relay back coordinates as they need to," said Frady.

The robot withstands abuse which would easily prove fatal to a human soldier. In Iraq, a roadside bomb explosion catapulted a robot similar to the SWORDS model into a river, according to a USA Today. Operators used the robot's remote control unit to maneuver the still-intact vehicle out of the water.

Though the robot's operators hold responsibility for pulling the trigger, the SWORDS have a limited degree of artificial intelligence. This allows the robot some navigational autonomy.

"A.I. (artificial intelligence) can

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UNCA reforms health and wellness program

by Leah Shellberg
Staff Reporter

UNCA approved a new health promotions and wellness major effective this semester.

A new building and also a North Carolina Center for Health and Wellness Promotion, will accompany the new major for health and wellness promotion, according to Keith Ray, vice chancellor of academic and student affairs and chair and associate professor for the department of health and wellness.

The developers scheduled the construction of the new building to begin in 2006 and to finish by 2008.

Students can formally declare the major next fall, however UNCA offers some of the curriculum this semester.

"The new facility will house the department of health and wellness, this new degree program and all the other minors that we offer, and it will house an outreach initiative that we are going to call the 'North Carolina Center for Health and Wellness Promotion,'" said Ray.

Students will engage in service learning by developing partnerships across WNC that deal with health promotion and disease prevention.

After considering the history of UNCA's current health program, the next logical step included a new major, according to Ray.

"During that 20 year history, we slowly moved forward and developed an academic department where we offered courses in health and wellness, and we started offering a minor in health promotion," said Ray.

Ray based his decision to create the major on the current experience with the minor and the societal need for students with this back-



OLIVIA KORMAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Students currently attend health and wellness classes in the UNCA Health and Fitness Center, where fitness and lab equipment are available to students.

ground, according to Ray.

The interdisciplinary major involves required courses in biology, psychology, sociology, statistics, environmental studies, management, multimedia arts and science and philosophy.

"This is an interdisciplinary degree program," said Ray. "So, I can see students and faculty in other departments, such as psychology and sociology, having opportunities to do internship work and undergraduate research through this center."

The program also allows students opportunities for multiple employment and post-graduate options for students participating in it. It will also benefit pre-med or pre-physical therapy students by preparing them for immediate entry into the work force, post graduation. Those who plan to enter graduate school in health promotion will also benefit from this major, according to Ray.

The major and the North Carolina Center for Health and Wellness have three main focal points.

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