

Kellin Watson



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Theft most common crime on campus

By Paige Reinhard
STAFF WRITER

Despite many attempts by campus police to improve the safety of UNCA, the same crimes remain in the forefront.

Assistant Professor of Drama Danelle Smith has taught at many different kinds of schools.

"This is my second university," Smith said. "And I've also taught at a middle school and an intermediate school. Crime was an issue at all of those schools."

Sergeant Jerry Adams of campus police said the crime that remains most common at UNCA is theft.

"Theft is our number one crime, basically because when people leave stuff out in plain view and leave things unattended, they can be easily taken," Adams said.

According to the Office of Postsecondary Education's Campus Security Statistics, over the past few years there have been more reported incidents of robbery, burglary and motor vehicle theft than any other criminal offense.

From 2001 to 2003 there were 14 instances of burglary in the residence halls alone.

Smith said she knows all too well about theft at school.

"We knew when we were just running down the hall, to the ladies room for example, we should lock our doors or not leave our purses," Smith said. "That fast, that kind of thing would happen, money would go missing."

Megan Williams, junior, also has personal experience dealing with theft.

"I lived in South Ridge last year, on the first floor," Williams said. "Someone climbed in our window and stole my jewelry."

Williams said she and her roommate had taken the normal precautions before leaving the room that day.

"We weren't there, but (the window) was closed and, I think, locked," she said.

Williams said she called campus police to report the break-in and missing jewelry, but nothing came of it.

"They looked around and asked us and our neighbors a lot of questions, but nothing really happened," Williams said.

Despite high numbers in theft, Adams said there is not much more campus police can do.

"We continue to do what we have been doing all along," he said. "That's more foot patrol in these areas and more awareness of those situations that took place."

Neither Williams' jewelry, which included a pearl necklace, or the person who stole it were ever found.

"I guess most stuff like that is random and we'll never know anyways," Williams said.

While theft remains the most prevalent crime on campus, the most infamous recent crimes involve flames. Ask any returning UNCA student about the crimes committed on campus next year and you are likely to hear about fire.

There were two criminal cases involving fire last school year, the latter of which occurred within a residence hall.

Police said Dean Shaffer and Steven Manuel confessed to burning several pieces of furniture and parts an elevator in Governors Hall.

These burnings were reported on April 5th and cost the accused students \$1,859 and their rights to live on campus.

Disaster severs WNC oil supply

Gas stations close shop as fuel availability drastically shrinks

By Sean David Robinson
NEWS EDITOR

Gas prices soared and service stations closed Wednesday in Asheville as residents experienced the effects of a major shortage of gasoline and natural gas.

The shortage is a result of the loss of electricity to oil pipelines in Mississippi and Louisiana that supply WNC.

According to Jerry Veach, Buncombe county emergency services director, power to these pipelines may be restored in 24 to 48 hours, but the availability of any gasoline to Asheville residents in the coming days is uncertain, as many gas stations had already closed by Wednesday afternoon.

"There are probably going to be localized problems (across the U.S.) like there are here," said Robert C. Tatum, economics professor.

Tatum has taught in the economics department for one year, and has a Ph.D. in economics from Indiana University with a specialization in international and Macroeconomics. According to Tatum, the shortage should be relatively short-lived and is not as severe as it has potential to be.

"It's going to be a problem," Tatum said. "I don't think it's going to be a huge problem. Relative to other goods and services, gas prices are no higher than they were in the '70s."

The difference between our current oil crisis and the rise in prices the U.S. has experienced in recent years is the abruptness of the rise in cost, according to Tatum.

"What's probably going to hurt is, since this has been such an unexpected jump, people who were already kind of tight-budgeted will feel it," Tatum said. "Companies who are on tight profit margins will feel it. It's a negative shock that could be detrimental."

Our economy as a whole will probably come out unscathed in the long term, as other factors of measuring success have been positive as of late, according to Tatum.



BRIAN DAVIS/PHOTO EDITOR

Enmark gas station attendant Jeff Overas bags a fuel pump nozzle Wednesday afternoon as the station runs completely out of fuel and must close (above). More than 25 Asheville residents flock to the Merrimon Avenue Shell station at 11:30 p.m. Wednesday night (below).

"Things in our economy have been going fairly well otherwise, despite these recent events," Tatum said. "Unemployment is low. GDP growth is pretty good. So, I don't think (Hurricane Katrina) is going to have an impact on the long-term economy."

According to Kimberly Drey, senior literature student, the shortage may not be a completely bad thing.

"Well, actually, it doesn't really suck that bad, because maybe people will start looking for alternative energy sources," Drey said. "Maybe people will eventually realize that we are going to run out of gas. It has to dry up sometime, and besides, it's such a waste."

Tatum conferred this same sentiment from an economic standpoint, citing that necessity is the mother of invention.

"As prices go up, you might start seeing more technology coming out of that," Tatum said.

"The incentive, from an economics perspective, to come up with alternate resources usually comes out of need rather than just some idea."

The shortage may serve as a wake-up call to oil happy American auto owners, according to Will Troxler, junior.

"It's flashing lights for people to start being more conscious of how they consume," Troxler said. "I'd say going over \$3.00 makes start being more aware, or considering getting my bike back out. I'd quit driving at \$5.00 per gallon."

Junior sociology student Maggie Ulrich did not echo this sentiment of optimism entirely, though she did say she expects the situation to improve in the short term.

"Well, I'm sure it's going to get worse before it gets better, but it'll get better," Ulrich said. "Americans are stubborn. It doesn't really matter if there's a gas crisis going on. They're still going to want to buy their



SEAN DAVID ROBINSON/NEWS EDITOR

Hummers and drive them around."

According to Ulrich, not even an absence of oil from the planet altogether could stop the aggres-

sion of American consumer mentality.

"They'll put their Hummers in neutral and let gravity take its course."

Earthquake shakes Western North Carolina

By Allie Haake
STAFF WRITER

A minor earthquake shook the ground and buildings of Asheville on August 24.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the earthquake occurred at 11:09 p.m. and had a 3.7 magnitude.

With a depth of five miles at its base in Hot Springs, environmental science professor Bill Miller said although the earthquake was not major, it was still significant for our area.

"I asked the students in my geology class, and at least ninety percent said they felt it," Miller said.

Miller said he was asleep when the earthquake occurred, but is glad that most of his students were able to feel it.

"What an awesome experience," Miller said. "That's one of the topics we talk about in class, so to actually feel one is great. Some said they noticed the walls shaking back and forth. A few others even said they saw things fall off the shelves."

Many students said they were not sure what was happening at

first.

"All of a sudden my friend told me that my building was moving," said Andrew Link, sophomore environmental science student. "It sounded like thunder, but it was really slow and distant. It lasted for about eight seconds."

Link said as soon as he knew it was an earthquake, he wanted details.

"I was wondering where most of the earthquake had gone down, and how devastating it was," Link said. "I wanted to know the overall outcome."

Miller said he is thankful there were not any reported injuries.

"No one was hurt, but they got to feel it," Miller said. "That is the best situation."

There were all sorts of reactions from his geology class, according to Miller.

"Some of them said it sounded like an explosion," Miller said. "Others said it sounded like a vehicle hitting the building, and a few said it sounded like someone running in an upstairs apartment."

Miller said there are certain positions that are optimal for feeling an

earthquake, including sitting on a couch or lying in a bed.

"Let's say you were sitting there on the couch, wide awake and quiet. You're likely to wonder why you're sitting there shaking," Miller said. "That is what you would call an advantageous position."

Miller said while there was no warning that this was going to happen, small earthquakes should be expected in our area.

"We have small earthquakes that happen all the time, we just don't feel them," Miller said. "This one was on the higher end of seismic activity that we have."

One student said the building started shaking as he was watching television with some friends.

"We weren't sure what was going on," said Scott Sherman, senior psychology major. We switched to the Asheville news, but they didn't say anything about it. The next morning we found out it was an earthquake."

Sherman said that it was an exciting night.

"It was kind of cool," Sherman said. "I thought I left earthquakes

behind at that summer camp in California."

Sherman said that he does not expect more earthquakes in the near future.

"This is not necessarily the warning of more severe earthquakes to come, so I guess things will probably go on as usual," Sherman said.

California experiences so many major earthquakes because of its location on the San Andreas fault system, according to Miller.

"Those earthquakes tend to be more vigorous," Miller said. "The Geological Survey thinks there's going to be a big earthquake that will occur there in the next few decades. We just have no idea of exactly when."

Miller said that unlike California, our area is not predicted to be greatly affected by earthquakes because we're not on a plate boundary.

"We're on what is known as a passive continental margin," Miller said. "Unless something happens that defies science, we probably won't see any major earth changes because of earth-

quakes. It's always possible though."

Miller said that man-made structures are the main danger. He suggested building a house with an earthquake-resistant structure.

"Large earthquakes can be devastating," Miller said. "As Charles Richter said, 'earthquakes don't kill people, buildings do.' So if you are in a building that is not earthquake resistant, you could be injured or killed pretty easily."

Although not major in our area, Miller said that earthquakes are not rare. He said that he has experienced two or three earthquakes since he moved here in 1989.

"The biggest one ever recorded was a five-point-something in Waynesville a long time ago," Miller said. "We could have a gigantic earthquake under us tomorrow, but the chances of that are very, very small."

Miller said that we have used earthquakes to tell us where plate boundaries do exist.

"The earth is divided into mosaic plates," Miller said. "When they scrape by each other, the rock is actually breaking."