

# The BLUE BANNER

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## The News in Brief

### New liaison to help with school money

Wilma Sherrill, former General Assembly member, started as special assistant to Chancellor Anne Ponder for external affairs Monday. Sherrill will volunteer for her first six months because of a provision requiring a cool-off period before lawmakers can become lobbyists. Campus functions and education will not be included in her duties, according to Sherrill, who will serve to help lawmakers understand what is being done with university money.

### Conference addresses diversity issues

"The State of Black Asheville" Conference, the brainchild of UNC Asheville political science professor Dwight Mullen, will be held on Saturday, Feb. 17. Sessions will cover such issues as housing, law enforcement and healthcare. Each panel will also include a member of the Asheville City Council. Childcare and lunch will be free and open to the public.

### Teen kills five in Utah mall

An 18-year-old Bosnia immigrant killed five people in a mall in Utah earlier this week before being shot dead by police officers. Investigators say they do not know what made Sulejman Talovic open fire, although speculations have arisen over Bosnia immigrants having higher mental health trouble because of their experiences in the war. Local leaders and community members are attempting to quell off any anti-Bosnia sentiment that arises.

## Woodfin power plant stirs residents into action

By Ashley Horne  
Copy Editor

Authorities arrested two local residents after they posted a large banner in protest of Progress Energy's and the Buncombe County Commissioners' plan to build a new oil-burning power plant in Woodfin.

"Climbing up on a billboard and dropping a giant banner is kind of a way to draw a lot of attention to this issue going straight to the public because the elected officials and the government are not listening," said Micah Lee, environmental activist and member of Rising Tide North America, an organization trying to fight the root causes of climate change.

Lee and fellow protester, Abigail Singer, 27, local resident, climbed a billboard off of U.S. 19-23 early last Tuesday morning and displayed a banner saying, "Burning Oil Ain't Progress - No New Woodfin Power Plant in Woodfin."

The protesters planned the event ahead of time and alerted the media in order to let more residents know about this issue. Their protest lasted for three hours until the Asheville City Police Department and Fire Department removed them from the billboard and charged them with trespassing and resisting arrest, according to Lee.

"Global Warming, it's got to stop. There's no reason to be burning any more fossil fuels at all," Lee said.

Several hundred county residents began talks with the County Commissioners after Progress Energy announced in December plans to build the new plant to meet the high demand for energy.

The plant will be considered a "peak" plant running only 10 percent of the time, and to be used when energy needs are highest.

The energy produced will replace 250 mega watts of energy but the company will lose in 2009, when a 20-year contract expires, according to Ken Maxwell, Progress Energy Community Relations Manager.

"In an ideal world, we would love to build a plant that could generate 130 mega watts on demand and have zero emissions," Maxwell said. "That would be the best of both worlds, but that is currently not available."

The County Commissioners recently voted to lease county-owned land in Woodfin that lies



Environmental activists and Rising Tide North America members Micah Lee and Abigail Singer stand on top of the billboard they covered with a banner to protest the new Woodfin power plant. They stood up there for three hours before they were ordered down by Asheville Police Department and Fire Department. Later, Lee and Singer asked for donations at a climate change lecture to help pay for their \$800 bail.

along the French Broad River to Progress Energy for the plant. The site is an old landfill, which limits county uses and this power plant will produce some form of tax revenue for the county, according to Maxwell. In January, 200 residents gathered at a Commissioners' meeting to ask them to consider alternative energy sources, according to Lee.

"Every chance there has been for public input, lots and lots of people have put in public input, but the County Commissioners just leased the property for the Progress Energy plant for a \$1 a year," Lee said. "They leased it unanimously after dozens of people spoke on why they shouldn't."

Most public concerns surround the environmental impact of the fossil fuel plant.

The conservation organization Western North Carolina Alliance predicts the plant will produce 247 tons of nitrogen oxide, 97 tons of particulate matter and 2.4 tons of sulfur dioxide per year, which they

believe are small estimates as many peak plants end up running an average 80 percent of the time.

"Of course the emissions are the main concern," said Dee Eggers, UNC Asheville associate professor of environmental studies. "We have emissions that will contribute to global warming, ozone and particulates."

Those things, ozone and particulates especially, have a strong, scientifically validated negative effect on respiratory health.

We've already got a higher rate of respiratory illness in this area than national averages because we've already got such significant air quality problems."

Progress said they first tried to contract energy capacity from other generators in the Southeast, but most regions are experiencing

the same growth and high demand for energy, according to Maxwell.

"So most likely, a lot of those power generators do not want to commit their capacity for the long term," Maxwell said. "They didn't want to make a long term commitment knowing they might need that capacity for themselves with their own growth."

For immediate resources to fulfill the demand, Progress saw building the Woodfin plant as their only real option, according to Maxwell.

Environmentalists suggest the company look at safer alternative sources of energy or decrease the high demand through efficiency and conservation programs.

"If we build this plant, one thing we could do that would set it up to be a part of a sustainable energy future, would be to make sure Progress Energy purchases equipment that can run on biodiesel," Eggers said. "Biodiesel has far fewer emissions associated with it and it can be part of a sustainable

energy system."

Progress considered biodiesel but current concerns with the quantity available, price and quality of the product had them looking elsewhere, but they have not ruled out biodiesel for the future.

Progress chose an environmentally safe product using ultra-low sulfur fuel, which will significantly lower levels of sulfur dioxide, according to Maxwell.

"Our first priority is our mandate which is to provide reliable, affordable energy to this region, and we want to do that with minimum impact on the environment," Maxwell said. "Certainly the \$200 million we have invested in the clean smoke stacks project out at our Skyland plant, coal plant, speaks to that level of commitment."

With an ever-increasing demand for energy, environmentalists see conservation as the only real long-term solution.

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Micah Lee

## LoveFest educates, titilates students

By Sara Pardys  
Staff Writer

A few student organizations spent this week showing the love at LoveFest, a week full of events and activities geared towards healthy relationships, safe sex and alternative choices. "LoveFest is a week of love-related issues," said Bobbi Castrovinci, sophomore student and LoveFest organizer. "We're just trying to get people aware."

SGA kicked off the week's events with the Condom Olympics and an Alliance-sponsored kissing booth on the Quad, according to Castrovinci. The condom fairies, members of Peers Advocating Wellness Strategies, handed out condoms and information. The festival also included events such as a screening of the movie "Rent" with a chocolate fountain, a recycled Valentine card station, making Valentines for troops overseas and a retirement home, a Pizza n' Porn discussion with Campus Crusade for Christ, an HIV/AIDS Myth Buster session, a women's health fair and an osteopathic medicine forum.

At Monday's Condom Olympics, students learned about proper condom use. "We showed people the correct way to put them on and take them



SHANNA ARNEY - STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Senior psychology student Sara Livingston and sophomore student Lara Martini hand out condom roses as Condom Fairies, representing the peer education group, Peers Advocating Wellness Strategies.

off," said Castrovinci. "People came out and put condoms on a gourd to show that they'll fit everybody." Condoms, however, were not the

sexually transmitted diseases and abstinence, according to Castrovinci.

"It's important at our age to know about condoms and different birth control options," Castrovinci said.

On Tuesday, NSCS made a donation to fund AIDS research for every student that stopped by their booth in Highsmith University Union wearing red. Later on Tuesday, the Western North Carolina Aids Project participated in a Myth Buster-style panel about HIV/AIDS in America.

"We're trying to break the myth that it's a far away, exotic virus," Castrovinci said. "It is here at UNC Asheville. It's going to really hit home."

On Thursday, the women's health fair had a variety of activities for students. Students indulged in complimentary mocktails (alcohol-free cocktails) while various speakers held informational sessions, including a speaker from Mary Kay Cosmetics on skin care.

Throughout the week's events, ASIA sold Hershey's Kiss roses to benefit the Breast Cancer Society.

"It is National Sexual Health week this week and it is Valentine's Day week,"

SEE LOVEFEST 2

## Global warming causes dangerous climate changes

By Aaron Dahlstrom  
Staff Writer

In a lecture given at UNC Asheville, Environmental Consultant Lenny Bernstein spoke about his work with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, warning of the dangers the planet faces as a result of global warming.

"If half of Greenland and half of Antarctica melts or breaks up, sea levels worldwide

will rise by 18 to 20 feet, displacing 40 million people in Shanghai alone and putting much of south Florida under water," said Abigail Singer, a member with Rising Tide, an organization seeking awareness on global warming.

Mountain glaciers and snow cover decreased in both hemispheres, and continues to do so, but at faster rates, according to a report filed by the IPCC.

Singer is one of many voices speaking out in response to U.S. inaction on the subject.

"One-hundred-and-fifty-thousand people are already dying every year directly from the effects of climate change, and many thousands more are becoming environmental refugees," Singer said. "Within 50 years, nearly 40 percent of terrestrial plants and animals are expected to be driven to extinction as their native ranges are eliminated by changing temperatures."

UNC Asheville students agree something needs to be done to slow down climate change.

"Nothing that we do today will make things stop right away, but the United States

needs to produce legislation that is going to curb CO2 emissions," said Kristen Masi, senior environmental studies student.

Global warming occurs because of the accumulation of greenhouse gases, according to Singer. These gases, predominately carbon dioxide and methane, accumulate in the

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