



UNCW has new queen

(L-R) Melissa Davis of Raleigh, Miss UNCW, and Paul Bell, student government president, discuss their roles as campus representatives.

UNCW professors author book about mammals

For the nature-lover on your Christmas list, a new book by three UNCW professors will be a perfect choice. *Mammals of the Carolinas, Virginia, and Maryland*, just released by the University of North Carolina Press, will be a welcome addition to any backpack or book-bag for those who are thrilled to catch a glimpse of the animals which live around us.

The authors are Dr. Walter C. Biggs, Jr., professor of biology; Dr. James F. Parnell, professor of biology and co-author of *Birds of the Carolinas*; and Dr. William David Webster, assistant professor of biology and curator of mammals. Webster received the bachelor of science degree in biology from UNCW in 1976. The book is a natural follow-up to *Birds of the Carolinas* and *Amphibians and Reptiles of the Carolinas and Virginia*, published earlier by the UNC Press for general interest audiences.

This beautiful book, with 117 color photographs mostly by Parnell, also features range maps of the mammals' distributions. Written as a popular guide, the book will acquaint readers of all ages with the great variety and abundance of mammals in the four-state area.

Three years in the writing, *Mammals of the Carolinas, Virginia, and Maryland* describes in detail the 88 terrestrial mammals as well



The Southern Flying Squirrel is common in the Carolinas, Maryland and Virginia.



(L-R) Walter C. Biggs, Jr., W. David Webster and James Parnell.

as 33 marine species that inhabit the area's offshore waters.

With mountains, piedmont, and coastal plain present in all four states, the region is rich in fauna. In a brief overview, the book describes each of the three regions, gives a description of characteristics and adaptations of mammals, offers hints for observation and study, and discusses conservation efforts.

The bulk of the book is devoted to accounts of all species of wild mammals known to occur in the region and in the Atlantic Ocean adjacent to the four states. The mammals are grouped into these categories: pouched mammals; shrews and moles; bats; armadillos; rabbits and hares; gnawing mammals (rodents); meat-eating mammals; cetaceans (whales, dolphins, and porpoises); manatees; and hoofed mammals (even-toed, non-domesticated).

In each species account, there is a description of the mammal, including size, physical characteristics and coloring; distribution and abundance; particular habitat considerations; and natural history of the animal, giving what it feeds upon, its activity cycle, how it relates to other animals, and reproductive biology.

Among the tidbits one learns from reading the book is that 17 species of bats occur in the Carolinas, Virginia and Maryland, including Townsend's Bigeared Bat,

Alumni Spotlight

She's the head of her class

UNCW alumna Valvria Blanding has always loved school. An outstanding graduate of both Hogard High School and The University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Val has turned her dedication as a student into dedicated service to the teaching profession. She has taught fifth grade at E. A. Alderman School in Wilmington for two years.

"I've always wanted to be a teacher. You have to love to teach and enjoy working with kids and people to be a good teacher," Val explained.



UNCW alumna Val Blanding with her fifth grade class.

an endangered species. While not seen very often this far north, the nine-banded armadillo is expanding its range northward and eastward and has been reported in South Carolina; (other reports of the armadillo from the Piedmont of the Carolinas and Washington, D.C. probably represent animals that have escaped or been released from captivity). And, did you know that armadillos are susceptible to leprosy, making them valuable in medical research?

The photos themselves make the book worthwhile. Photos of the star-nosed mole, a fang-baring big brown bat, the adult eastern cottontail and four juvenile eastern cottontail rabbits in a nest are excellent. Getting the photographs required a number of field trips to capture animals for the photos. Other pictures were taken in zoos such as at Brookgreen Gardens and Charles Town Landing where the animals are kept in more or less natural surroundings. The bear was photographed at Grandfather Mountain. A lot of small animals were caught in live traps and placed in a terrarium set up to resemble the natural habitat.

While the book was purposely designed for the general audience and is not written as a scholarly work of scientific research, the book is accurate and contains new information on several species not previously published. The book is also unusual in that it is one of the few books on mammals that covers marine mammals as well as terrestrial mammals.

Mammals, which sells for \$16.95, is available in area bookstores now.



The Least Weasel is the smallest carnivore in North America.

Val's love for working with the public is equally important in her second job. For five years, she has worked one night per week as the receptionist at the information desk at New Hanover Memorial Hospital. The public relations experience has helped in her career.

"UNCW prepared me for the real world of teaching; the hospital provided the experience of working with the public," Val said. "As a teacher, you're faced with all sorts of situations. You have to learn to deal with the many social situations, such as divorce and child abuse, and how those situations affect your student(s)."

While at UNCW, Val was vice-president of the Student North Carolina Association of Educators and a UNCW Student Ambassador. She was selected for inclusion in Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities and Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society. She graduated magna cum laude with the bachelor of arts degree in elementary education in 1984. That same year she was selected as an Outstanding Young Woman in America.

Her commitment to UNCW continues after graduation. In 1985 Val was elected to the Alumni Association Board of Directors.

"I enjoyed the Ambassador program and gained so much from it that I wanted to continue being involved with the Alumni Association and the campus," Val explained.

She is also enrolled in the graduate program for the master of arts degree in reading education. Upon completion of her master's degree, she plans to continue teaching elementary or junior high grades, or serve as an instructor at the college level.

Val's enthusiasm for her profession and her dedication to the importance of quality education is being passed on to others. She shared her experiences as a minority student with others during Minority Visitation Day held at UNCW in November.

"I told students that you must have confidence in yourself and be dedicated in everything that you do," Val said.