

News

Community gathers at observatory to view lunar eclipse

Celestial spectacular brings out well over 100

By Grace Whiteside
Special to The Pilot

It wasn't the average moonrise Saturday, because a spectacular and transformed "red" moon emerged out of the horizon. Approximately 120 people gathered at the Williams Observatory on Gardner-Webb University's campus to view the total lunar eclipse.

GWU students and faculty, and families from the community roamed in and out of the observatory, gazing at the clear sky through telescopes and binoculars, or projected onto a screen inside the observatory from a webcam in Belgium.

Dr. Don Olive, associate professor of physics and director of Craven E. Williams Observatory, expected around 25 people to attend.

"I'm excited about how many people showed up," he said.

A lunar eclipse occurs whenever the moon passes through the Earth's shadow. It can only occur when the sun, Earth and a full moon are in a direct line with one

another. The moon generates no light of its own, so its red glow is caused by the bending of the sun's light around the Earth. A total lunar eclipse occurs when the entire moon passes through the Earth's shadow.

Excited children impatiently awaited the appearance of the "red moon," but when it finally rose, it had a distinctly pink color. Having ascended during the "total" phase of the eclipse, the moon was already glowing red when it came into view. It rose in the east, which, from Williams Observatory, was just above and to the right of the KFC/Taco Bell restaurant.

The eclipsed moon was not clearly visible until about 6:15 because, according to Don Brooks, president of the Cleveland County Astronomical Society, the sky was hazy and the moon was still in the earth's shadow. However, as it slowly emerged from the darkness, it became brighter and more illuminated.

In a solar eclipse, the moon is directly in be-

tween the sun and Earth, which blocks our view of the sun. In a lunar eclipse, the Earth is between the sun and moon, thus blocking the light that usually reaches and illuminates the moon.

"Usually a lunar eclipse lasts a lot longer than a solar eclipse," Brooks said.

Because this was the first total eclipse since October 2004, many amateur astronomers were eager to snap a picture. Spectators at Williams were taking pictures with all different types of cameras: digital, exposure, and, yes, even cell phone.

It took Dr. Kent Blevins, professor of religion, several shots before he obtained a good cell phone picture of the moon through the telescope.

Brooks encouraged anyone interested in viewing the sky to join the Cleveland County Astronomical Society. It meets every fourth Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

For more information, visit its Web site at www.ccastro.org, or contact Brooks at (864) 839-9424.



This montage shows the stages of the eclipse. The pictures were taken by Associate Provost Dr. James Dire with a telescope at his observatory in Shelby.

County Shrinkdown makes for a healthier GWU

By Ashley Chatham
kchatham@gardner-webb.edu

Today is the last day for Gardner-Webb University students and faculty to weigh in after their 10-week participation in the Cleveland County Shrinkdown.

The program, sponsored by the Cleveland County YMCA, is designed to make people aware of the obesity problem in our country, and how to change it.

Steve Varley, vice president for development, participated in the program and said he enjoyed it very much.

"I thought it was informative and exactly the type of program the YMCA should provide, particularly at this time of the year," he said.

The Shrinkdown's timing was right. At the semester's beginning, Sandy

Hammett, assistant director of student activities, was looking for ways to help lifestyle improvements for people at GWU.

She knew the campus would benefit from the free, 10-week healthy living awareness program, which started in January.

Jyma Atwell of the Kings Mountain YMCA said that there were 96 people on the GWU team.

According to program officials, the Shrinkdown is not a diet. It focuses on nutrition, exercise and continuing education as pathways to a healthy life.

Program participant had to weigh in every Friday at the designated weigh-in sites, where they would receive information packets for the upcoming week. These packets include healthy eating, exercise and shopping list information,

and recipes.

Experts in the county also conducted a "health talk" every Monday for support and encouragement.

"I think it has been a great effort to try to address a national problem and hope it has been a success to those that became involved in it here on campus," said Hammett, adding that the program will be offered next year.

"We want to find ways to integrate more programs to make it more powerful overall."

Dr. Franki Burch, associate professor of physical education, wellness and sports studies, was a member of the education committee for the GWU participants. She said that some of the students used the Shrinkdown is a service-learning project, doing the weigh-ins and distributing the information

packets.

"As a campus, I think we're focusing more on wellness issues and have a higher quality of life in mind," Burch said. "The formal part has ended, but hopefully the behavior will continue."

Beginning in April, the Cleveland County Health Department and Cleveland Regional Medical Center will have stepping programs. Both organizations will distribute devices to track how many steps an individual is taking each week, which serve as a way to promote and calculate exercise.

Participants in the Shrinkdown this year, in addition to the YMCA were GWU, the Shelby Star, Cleveland Regional Medical Center, Cleveland Community College, Alliance for Health, and Alpha Mailing.

Bonner: Community praises school's anti-tobacco policy

By Matt Tessnear
matthewt1984@earthlink.net

Some students may be unhappy with Gardner-Webb University's decision to go tobacco-free, but GWU President Dr. A. Frank Bonner said he has been greeted only with community approval since the Jan. 29 announcement.

Bonner has received mail from the North Carolina Banker's Association, the Cleveland County Health Department, the Cleveland County YMCA and former GWU staff members, among others, voicing their approval of the new policy that will ban all tobacco use on campus as of Aug. 6.

"I haven't heard the first critical word whatsoever, externally," said Bonner. "I've had people approach me at the (YMCA) and at Rotary.

"My wife's had people approach her at the grocery store and places like that. I

was at a meeting of college pastors and they congratulated me on the decision."

Bonner also quelled the rumors that GWU made the policy to get money from the North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund.

He said the NCHWTF will pay for policy implementation costs, such as signs, nicotine patches and information printing. However, the university will not make a profit from the policy, he said.

Recently, USA Today ran an article about schools contemplating smoke-free policies for the health benefits. GWU made the decision for similar reasons, said Bonner.

"We're not trying to force health on anybody," said Bonner, adding that second-hand smoke is dangerous and affected the decision.

"You can go across the street and smoke to your lungs' content."

RA termination upsets students

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ing with Facebook.

"I'm willing to sit down with students," said Ingram. "I need students to come to me instead of talking to each other."

Tim Lanning, an RA in Mauney Hall, had until today to move from his current housing location.

Lanning, a junior international business major from St. Petersburg, Fla., was originally put on probation for joining the Facebook group.

However, a key to his RA master key disappeared recently and he was given until Feb. 27 to find it.

On March 5, Lanning said he found a sealed envelope sticking out of his door.

It was a letter from residence life, dated March 2, informing him of his termination, the reasons and his requirement to move.

Lanning said he believes the key was stolen.

"It sucks that I have this key issue because it says in the handbook they can fire me (for such an offense)," said Lanning, adding that the Facebook problem was unexpected.

"This was completely left field because we had no idea it was coming. Not in a

million years would I have thought we would have gotten in any trouble."

Lanning said he met with Ingram, Stephanie Moore and his GRD, Daniel Abraham, to discuss his original punishment.

"My joining of that group says, in no way, that I have anything against (the staff member)" said Lanning.

"Myself, as an RA, I thought it was funny in an ironic sort of way. I even posted on the wall that 'my RA sucks' and I am the RA. Obviously I'm not attacking anyone and loosely, you could argue that I'm attacking myself."

Vickers' roommates wrote a letter to the housing department to express their disapproval. Junior Mike Bechtel, one of the roommates, drafted the letter.

"Because Trae is the best RA Gardner-Webb has had and you would be a fool for firing him because of a Facebook group," Bechtel said in the letter, "we find it very hard to believe that the organization known as residence life has little or nothing else better to do than to search through an interactive Web site, looking for dirt on employees."

Far from home

Going home the best destination of all

By Samba Fall
Special to The Pilot

College breaks generally bring opportunities for students to visit parents and siblings. This spring break will not be an exception to the rule. From today through March 18, many Gardner-Webb students will seize the annual chance to visit home. But not all of us will.

I, Samba Fall, will stick around campus for a third straight break. The distant location of my home and the expensiveness of a round trip will not make me one of the lucky GWU students going home during this break.

My hometown is Senegal, a nation in Western Africa. I left it three years ago for the pursuit of my academic and sportive fate; a blessing from Heaven. Yes, I consider myself blessed to have the chance to be here and to do something with my life. Nevertheless, I miss home a lot, especially with this period of vacation.

Styles of life in the United States and Senegal are very different, so I experienced a big culture clash in my first months in America.

The main differences are in the relationships among people, the attachment to traditions and the food.

The latter is the one I miss the most. Food in Senegal is very symbolic. The way you prepare and serve it to people can tell a lot about you. Often very spicy, Senegalese food is based on rice, millet, corn, vegetables, fish and meat. All three meals of the day are cooked at

home, which creates a special smell that I miss.

Meals are eaten together and this brings opportunities to discuss each other's activities.

Sharing those meals with my parents and some of my 11 siblings allowed us to remain close. Each meal seemed to be a ceremony in my house.

Other aspects of life in Senegal that I miss are the warm weather and hanging out at some very special places that Boiling Springs does not offer. My home is five minutes away from the beach, and the neighborhood has a basketball playground where I learned how to hoop.

Every morning before classes, I used to jog to the beach, run on the sand and swim in the sea. I bet that many people will spend entire days at the beach and enjoy themselves, during spring break.

I miss my very warm and welcoming house, siblings, friends, former classmates and teammates, trips to the beach and the playground. Most of all, I miss my mom and the last-born of my family, baby Abdou. He was born while I was in the States.

Once again, it is not that I am not enjoying myself in the U.S. Gardner-Webb and Boiling Springs are a blessing to me.

Only, far from home, my mind and spirit travel very often throughout journeys back to Senegal. For this break, only those dreams will help me "get close" to the food, good times and family meetings that I miss so much.

Cancun tops list of spring break spots nationwide

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man Bryan Fair.

Some seniors, such as Aimee Boswell, have lined up interviews during the break, in an effort to figure out post-graduation plans. Boswell is a psychology major from Black Mountain.

"UNC Greensboro is where I want to go," said Boswell, in reference to graduate school interviews. "I definitely don't want to have nowhere to go once graduation rolls around."

Seniors aren't the only students using the break for career opportunities. Eric Schmittle, a freshman from Vienna, Va., plans to use the break to get an early start on his summer internship.

"I have got to get this started or I will be lost come graduation," said Schmittle.

Other students don't have such detailed plans.

"I am going to do something," added freshman Matt Stoval. "I promise you that. There is no way that I will spend my first spring break sitting on the couch."

Where's everyone going? Here are the top 10 spots for 2007 spring break trips, according to Kathleen Crislip, writer for about.com.

Visit studenttravel.about.com for more information.

1. Cancun
2. Rosarito Beach, Baja
3. Acapulco
4. Panama City and Miami, Fla. (tie)
5. South Padre Island, Texas
6. Negril, Jamaica
7. North American Ski Resorts
8. Maui, Bahamas
9. Puerto Vallarta
10. Hawaii, Paris, Puerto Rico (tie)