

# the stentorian

north carolina school of science and mathematics

vol. XX

1219 broad street, durham nc 27705

february 2001

## North Carolina School Bonds

IGOR GORODEZKY

Though November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2000 may best be remembered for creating some of the greatest confusion in the history of American politics, it was also a landmark day for educational institutions in North Carolina. That day, the citizens of North Carolina approved the Higher Education Improvement Bond Package referendum, which called for \$3.1 billion to improve and renovate the state's public universities and community colleges. Currently, the student enrollment in these public institutions is rising dramatically, and many colleges already have problems with space and obsolete facilities.

The bond money will be given to North Carolina's 59 community colleges and 16 public universities, including our own school (registered as part of the UNC system), which will receive \$5.2 million. The package also directs a portion

of the money to UNC-TV. A similar package was proposed last year but was not approved in a referendum due to lack of promotion and the funds' proposed source, increased property taxes. This package will consist solely of borrowed money, and so will nearly double North Carolina's current debt in 5 years. Some also have a problem with the unequal distribution of money between the state's "flagship" institutions (such as UNC-Chapel Hill) and other schools, including historically black universities. But all proponents of the package applaud the state's education initiative.

At NCSSM, the Board of Directors was relying on the passage's approval to complete renovations of Royal Center (formerly Wyche House) and Bryan Center, which Board member Ed McBride calls "criti-

cal to NCSSM." The school has already completed preliminary work on both of the buildings, including removing lead point and asbestos from the Royal Center and completing electrical upgrades in Bryan. The

school has also designated designers for both projects, and will also form planning committees to oversee the work.

No major renovations have been performed on the Bryan Center since 1953, and the current plans call for renovation of the Physics floor and student life offices. These have not been worked on since the school's opening. The building is to be brought to current building codes by upgrading the mechanical and electrical infrastructure. About \$3.2 million have been assigned to this project.

The Royal Center, unused since 1989, will also have mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems replaced at a cost of \$2.0 million. The building will provide housing and services for residential students, as well as those participating in outreach programs at NCSSM.



The Royal Center, formerly Wyche House

jamie shin

## Cheating at Science and Math

THERESA ANASTI

Finding solutions to test problems, plagiarizing papers, and copying someone's homework: all of these acts have been done in schools around the world. But what if you are discovered cheating at a vigorous academic institution such as NCSSM? In looking over surveys of students around the country, many believe that cheating is not a serious ordeal, and should be dealt with depending on the situation and the circumstances of the student. According to these same surveys, many students state that cheating is necessary in certain cases; the case most often cited as necessary is the conflict between athletics and academics. As NCSSM is academically focused, the school does not stress athletics as much as other schools. However, at NCSSM, students deal with other pressures, such as keeping up in their classes and trying to get into a prestigious college. But do these difficult circumstances justify cheating?

"Sometimes, on college transcripts, that C makes a big difference, and you may be pressured to cheat though you are working as hard as possible," says a senior.

"Here, you really can't

spend all your time learning everything you have to know, and so you may resort to cheating," says a junior.

"I can't understand why students can't just resort to getting a lower grade; it won't make that much of a difference," says Dr. Britton.

Though rumors of cheating and plagiarism float around on campus, most students and faculty members agree that the amount of cheating here is equal to or less than the amount of cheating at other, less academically challenging schools.

"I have heard a few anecdotes about students cheating at this school over the last couple of years, but they were mostly rumors from students and teachers," says Warren Basket.

"I think at NCSSM, people are more concerned about learning rather than about the grade. I feel that the students at my old school cheated a great deal more," says a junior.

"Percentage wise, we probably have about the same amount of cheating as other schools," says Dr. Barber. Thus, while NCSSM may have a high incidence of cheating it is not that different relative to other schools.

What exactly defines cheating? Should cheating on little assignments such as homework and quizzes have the same consequences as cheating on test or exams? Or are they completely different actions which should have different consequences.

"There really should not be any minor or major cases. You are either academically honest or you are not. All cases of academic dishonesty should go to a dismissal hearing," says Dr. Barber.

"I really don't think that minor cheating should have the same consequences as major cheating. They both have much different effects on your grade, so they should have more serious consequences in the long run," says a senior.

"I can't imagine cheating in any form being acceptable. Every situation involving cheating will come to us, and all situations involving cheating are dismissable," says Warren Basket.

"A good way to deal with this issue is to have an open forum discussing this issue, and the honor code. I love the idea of how I believe schools like ours are moving ahead, and developing an honor code where we can trust the students not to cheat," says Dr. Barber.

## Pets that Glow in the Dark...

KITTY FROMSON

We have all heard the debates that rage about genetically modified food and its benefits and dangers. We have heard of scientists who experiment with genetic engineering to produce new and possibly better organisms. The Human Genome Project is in full swing to map out exactly where our genes are located. Dolly the cloned sheep became famous. Manipulating an organism's DNA for scientific purposes is not a new concept. But what about genetic art? Eduardo Kac is dealing with the implications of using scientific procedures to create what he calls transgenic art. Ever since he created Alba, a glow-in-the-dark rabbit, the fur has been flying.

Kac (pronounced Katz) specifically stated that Alba was not created for breeding purposes; she is pure art. This raises ethical questions about artists using genetic manipulation. Is art as valid a pursuit as science? Is it acceptable to mix genes from different species? Does the gene that makes her glow hurt Alba in any way?

Most of the time, Alba looks exactly like any other albino rabbit, with white fur and

pink eyes. Under ultraviolet light, however, she glows a brilliant lime green. She is a transgenic organism, which means that she has another organism's DNA in her own. Kac created Alba by injecting an ordinary rabbit zygote with a gene that produces and expresses green fluorescent protein (GFP) and which comes from jellyfish. Each of her cells has normal rabbit DNA and the inserted sequence. Kac says that Alba's creation is only one part of his artwork, entitled 'GFP Bunny'. The other parts are "the public dialogue generated by the project and the social integration of the rabbit."

There certainly is not a lack of dialogue about Alba. As well as all the large-scale ethical questions scientists and philosophers are debating, there are specific issues about Alba herself. She was born in a laboratory in Jouy-en-Josas, France, in February 2000.

"I will never forget the moment when I first held her in my arms... She immediately woke in me a strong and urgent sense of responsibility for her well-being," Kac states.

Kac's intent was to bring Alba home with him to complete her socialization. French authorities intervened in his plans,