

KinderCare Settles on Child Neglect Charges

BY LYNN HOUSER
CITY EDITOR

Chapel Hill's KinderCare Learning Center reached an out-of-court settlement last week with state child day care officials, following allegations of child neglect at the center last year.

The settlement called for KinderCare Learning Centers Inc. to pay \$4,300 in penalties and for 13 of its 47 North Carolina centers to abide by a set of special operating procedures for one year.

The N.C. Division of Child Development initiated action in December to close the center on South Elliott Road and another KinderCare on New Bern Avenue in Raleigh. A Cary KinderCare received a written warning about improperly caring for an infant about that same time, said Lynne Garrison, director of public affairs for the N.C. Division of Human Resources.

The other 10 centers involved were in Raleigh, Greensboro, Charlotte and Winston-Salem.

"All of them had one or more administrative actions taken against them since 1992, many of which were related to child

abuse and neglect," said Karen Dunn, state child abuse and neglect supervisor.

At the Chapel Hill center, state child care officials, along with representatives from the Orange County Department of Social Services, substantiated allegations in 1993 that children had wandered away from the center unnoticed and that unsupervised children had engaged in "sex play."

The Chapel Hill center was one of only two centers that had its license revoked by the state last year for problems involving child abuse and neglect, Dunn said.

But KinderCare appealed the revocation, and the center was allowed to operate until the hearing, she said.

In the settlement, KinderCare never admitted to the allegations of child neglect or to violations of child day care rules. But the state maintained that the substantiated cases of child neglect were valid.

KinderCare is the largest child day care chain in the nation, said Jane Josephson, KinderCare district manager, who was brought in a year and a half ago to fix the problems.

"We're just paying for sins that hap-

pened two years ago," Josephson said. "The parents we had were very supportive, and most of those children are still there. They realize that what happened was in the past."

Connie Shuping, whose 4-year-old son has been at the center since he was 3 months old, said her son had not had any problems at the center and was happy there. "They do seem to have gotten a better caliber of staff," she said. "Everything seems fine."

Dunn said it was fairly rare for the state to find situations that warranted action to close a center. But reports of child neglect in North Carolina's day care centers are more common, she said.

"There were 921 reports investigated of child abuse and neglect in centers, registered homes and illegal day care operations for the fiscal year 1992-1993," Dunn said. "That's about the same number as the year before."

She did not have the data for 1993-94 but said she thought there had been fewer cases last year.

The procedural changes were designed to address the situations that led to the problems in those centers, Dunn said.

"They had difficulties with inadequate supervision of children as well as some training inadequacies with staff," she said. "There were substantiated cases of child neglect at many of the centers that stemmed largely from inadequate supervision of children."

The operational changes include:

- Each child must be permanently assigned to an age-specific group, and cannot be moved to another group between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to keep staff/child ratios correct except under extraordinary circumstances.

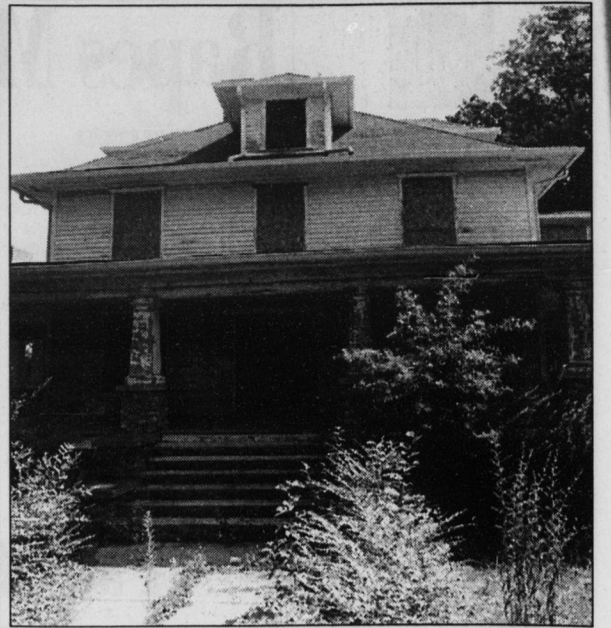
- Parents will receive written notice of the location, teacher and maximum number of children allowed in the group their child is assigned to.

- Arrival and departure times of teachers and children must be recorded.

- New staff members must undergo an orientation program before they can be counted toward staff/child ratios.

- Administrators and caregivers must undergo specific training in addition to training already required by state rules.

- Enrollment at the Chapel Hill center will be restricted during the provisional period.



Sallie Michie was determined that the University would never own her house, but the fate of her home is now uncertain.

DAR, Magna Carta Dames Contest Michie House Future

BY MATT REHM
STAFF WRITER

The dilapidated Michie house, the only private property surrounded by the University, continues to be the center of a complex legal battle involving two women's groups.

The local and national Daughters of the American Revolution and the Magna Carta Dames are battling in court to determine whether the property may be sold.

The house, located next to the Ackland Art Museum at 121 S. Columbia St., was owned by Sallie Michie, a longtime DAR member. Michie left the property to the groups when she died in 1992.

"Her will was very specific about what she wanted done with the estate," said Betty Ibrahim, secretary of the local Davie Poplar chapter of the DAR.

Ibrahim said the house was intended to be the site of chapter meetings, teas and luncheons. Michie supposedly wanted her 113 acres of farmland sold to create a trust fund to support the house financially.

Chapter treasurer Caroline Ward said, "She was trying to do something nice for the local people."

However, the national DAR wants to sell the house rather than pay the cost of its mortgage and renovations. DAR and the Magna Carta Dames sued Wachovia, the executor of Michie's will, to lift restrictions on the house's sale.

Wachovia's lawyers declined to comment this week on the current litigation.

The national organization's eagerness to sell the property angered the local members.

"The national society wants to sell everything and take the money back to Washington," Ward said.

Ward said Michie's estate included valuable antiques intended to be used in chapter functions, which Wachovia had placed in storage.

In its attempt to keep the property, the

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CAROLINE WARD
DAR chapter treasurer

local DAR chapter won the right to intervene in the suit.

"This allows us to ask questions about what has been done and what they intend to do with her will," Ibrahim said. "Our contention is that the wording of her will is very clear and its terms must be carried out."

Ward said the house was important to the chapter because it provided a convenient meeting place.

"Many of our members are older, and they need a place which is accessible," she said.

The chapter now has to pay for the use of meeting facilities, which strains its budget and limits its ability to do charity work. "We barely get by on our dues," Ward said.

Although Michie disliked the University and hoped to prevent it from obtaining her home, campus property officer Michael Fox said the University was a likely buyer.

"We'd definitely like to acquire the house," Fox said. "I do not believe the house could be restored, so it would probably be demolished. Initially, the land would be used for parking."

The DAR is a group of women whose ancestors fought or were otherwise instrumental in the American Revolution. They hold local educational programs in order to raise awareness of the history of the Revolution. The Magna Carta Dames, which has no local chapter, is an organization of women descended from the barons who signed the Magna Carta.

BARS

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get food sales up."

Determining whether to take action against a bar for not maintaining the correct percentages is subjective, Lassiter said.

"It's fairly obvious which ones are trying and which ones aren't," Lassiter said. "If you walk into a place at lunchtime and

there are trash cans full of beer bottles, the smell of stale beer and sticky floors, you know they aren't catering to lunch crowds."

Some bar owners said the 50/50 requirement had kept them constantly worried that they wouldn't sell enough food and would come up short at the end of the month.

To deal with this, Bain said he had had to run promotions for food items or raise the prices of some food items to raise the amount of food receipts.

Sen. Howard Lee, D-Orange, said he thought that was true of many places. "I think they found that on many occasions bars were fudging on food sales," he said. "I've never found the 50/50 mix to be magical. I don't see it as getting out of hand."

But Rep. Joe Hackney, D-Orange, said he had voted against the bill.

"In my experience with drunk driving cases, as an attorney, the higher food requirement promotes safety," Hackney said.

Bain disagreed. "That has absolutely nothing to do with drunk driving," Bain said. "People who are going to drink and drive are going to do so regardless."

The Chapel Hill-Carboro Chamber of Commerce did not take a stand on the issue, said Joel Harper, chamber president. "In a town like Chapel Hill, with a lot of bars, it's going to be helpful for them. The question is — what will this do to public safety?"

Harper said he didn't think a 10 percent increase in the limit for alcohol sales would cause a problem because insurance liability costs made most restaurants police themselves. "Everybody is scared to death about being sued," he said. "If a restaurant serves somebody who is drunk who gets in an accident, the restaurant is liable."

The Charlotte Chamber of Commerce proposed the bill last year, but it was not approved, so legislators reconsidered it this year, Lassiter said.

Bain said he believed that all alcohol restrictions were on their way out.

He proposed that once the Carolina Panthers football team started playing and people started going out to drink after the games, restaurants would begin putting pressure on legislators to drop the restrictions so they could sell more alcohol. "I'll be willing to bet that within the next 10 years we'll see no restrictions," Bain said.

Lassiter said he hadn't seen any movement to abolish alcohol regulations. If all restrictions were lifted, he said, restaurants would lose their monopoly on mixed drink sales, so the N.C. Restaurant Association, which has an effective lobby at the General Assembly, probably would block it.

SALARIES

FROM PAGE 1

recruit and retain quality teachers and employees.

Like other UNC leaders, Hardin acknowledged that one year could not erase the years that state employees had gone without pay hikes.

"My guess is, judging by what I've heard in other states, this will put us in a good position," he said.

"North Carolina is better positioned than other states right now because North Carolina had the guts to raise taxes five years ago."

N.C. Sen. Howard Lee, D-Orange, said the salary increases reflected that the General Assembly knew it had not been fair to state employees in the past. He acknowledged that while the increase would put the state in a stronger position, teachers still would lag a bit behind.

"We'll have to give serious attention to this in the future as well," Lee said. "Certainly, it's a good commitment by the General Assembly in recognition that we should give all employees an increase because they all deserve it."

After a financial crisis in 1991, the assembly made a commitment to prepare for other hard times. That year, the legislature was forced to lay off state employees and raise taxes.

Legislators anticipate that late 1995 or early 1996 could be difficult for the state.

"The University simply made itself available to answer questions and provide information," Lee said.

"They were not overbearing or twisting arms. Their presence was very much welcome."

Now that the increase has taken effect, UNC lobbyists can renew their push for education by thanking local legislators.

"They have been stalwart in representing our interests," Hardin said. "They have our support, and we are fortunate to have theirs."

N.C. Rep. Joe Hackney, D-Orange, said the raises amounted to slightly less than the House had hoped. But he added that the boosts still were significant.

"We had hoped to have a little bit more, but we put \$400 million in savings," he said. "The raises were pretty good. It does not make up for the raises they didn't get in the years that were tough."

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CAROLINA Union SUMMER PROGRAMS

July 21
Sleepless in Seattle
The Pit (Rainsite: Union Auditorium) • 9:30 P.M.
Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan star in this long distance romantic comedy. Hanks is a widower in Seattle who gets roped into a radio call-in show by his young son. Ryan hears the show and becomes obsessed with meeting the man behind the voice.

July 26
Farewell My Concubine
Union Cabaret • 8:00 P.M.
A historical melodrama with a touch of taboo, this epic love story follows the lives of two Peking Opera singers through the turbulent years of the Japanese occupation, the Communist victory, and the Cultural Revolution. A co-winner of the grand prize at Cannes, Farewell My Concubine is the most expansive Chinese production in history and is considered the Chinese Gone with the Wind by Hollywood types. Based on a Hong Kong novel, produced by a Taiwanese, and directed by a mainland, this visually lavish film is the first to incorporate the diverse cinematic resources of China.

July 28
Philadelphia
Union Auditorium • 7:00 and 9:00 P.M.
Academy Award winner, Tom Hanks gives the performance of a lifetime as Andrew Beckett, a young attorney who is confronted with bigotry and injustice when he reveals that he has AIDS. Dismissed from his prestigious law firm, he hires Joe Miller (Denzel Washington), a brilliant, but homophobic, personal injury lawyer to sue his former employers.

July 21 • The Pit (Rainsite: Union Auditorium) • 9:30 P.M.

July 26 • Union Cabaret • 8:00 P.M.

July 28 • Union Auditorium 7:00 and 9:00 P.M.

All the Carolina Union Summer Programs are open to currently registered UNC students and their guests. Admission to films is free with UNC-ID, faculty/staff privilege card or conference identification. Programs indicated as open to the public require no identification and may be limited in space availability.
The Carolina Union would like to thank all those students, staff and faculty who attended the Summer Program Board events and made them such a wonderful and successful success. Special thanks to the students who helped make those events happen: Wendy Mascetti; Mont Davis; Ebony Grissett; & Janet Engleke.