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IN THE NEWS

Top stories from the state, nation and world

Secretary of Agriculture Resigns Following Inquiry

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy resigned Monday, saying an investigation into allegations that he improperly accepted gifts from people and companies who do business with his department had distracted him from his duties.

His resignation was effective Dec. 31. Espy apologized to President Clinton for any embarrassment he had caused the administration.

But he said the allegations that he improperly billed the government for travel or other expenses were "untrue and unfounded." Espy said he could not comment specifically on the allegations because of a pending investigation by a court-appointed special prosecutor.

U.S. Soldiers Raid Haitian Paramilitary Headquarters

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — In the most dramatic strike yet at Haiti's ruling military, U.S. soldiers raided the headquarters of a hated pro-army militia Monday, seizing weapons and arresting more than three dozen people.

A joyous crowd of Haitians gathered to cheer the Americans. As the soldiers pulled away from the paramilitary headquarters, the Haitians surged forward in a jubilant mass and gleefully trashed the place, smashing everything they could lay hands on.

The club-wielding demonstrators smashed furniture and beat on mattresses, water bottles, refrigerators, telephones — anything associated with the militia. One man even turned his anger on a stapler, repeatedly throwing it to the ground.

Jordan Says It Will Agree To Peace Plan With Israel

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The pace of Middle Eastern peacemaking picked up Monday: Jordan informed Israel it should be ready for a peace treaty by year's end, and Secretary of State Warren Christopher made final plans for more shuttle diplomacy on the Syrian front.

Christopher will go to Israel on Sunday to begin his fifth attempt since May to hurry a peace agreement with Syria. While in the area, he will open a new border crossing between Israel and Jordan on Oct. 15.

Diplomatic sources said differences over their border and over access to scarce water supplies were holding up a formal treaty but that Jordan's Prince Hassan had told Israeli officials it should be ready by the end of the year.

Clinton Lifts 20-Year Ban On U.S. Contacts With IRA

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A telephone call from Vice President Al Gore to Irish nationalist leader Gerry Adams ended the 20-year ban on official U.S. contacts with the political wing of the Irish Republican Army.

President Clinton's decision to lift the ban Monday was a reward for Sinn Fein's support of a cease-fire in Northern Ireland. But the step was not enough to get Adams through the White House gate.

A senior administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Adams would meet Tuesday at the State Department with mid-level officials.

The officials are John Kornblum, deputy assistant secretary of state for European Affairs, Leon Feurth, Gore's national security adviser, and Nancy Soderberg, staff director of the National Security Council.

Christopher Requests Aid For Former Soviet Union

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Secretary of State Warren Christopher is asking the Treasury Department to hold up requests by American firms to import \$1 billion in weapons and ammunition from the former Soviet Union.

He wants to see first whether the huge increase in trade would affect the foreign policy and security interests of the United States, the State Department spokesman said Monday.

More than 250 requests for licenses to import 7 billion rounds of ammunition and 7.6 million rifles and pistols are involved, Michael McCurry said in announcing that the State Department would conduct a review.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Weather

TODAY: Mostly sunny, cool; high mid-60s.

WEDNESDAY: Partly cloudy; high mid-70s.

UNC Joins Minority Partnership

BY LEAH MERREY
STAFF WRITER

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute has awarded UNC \$2 million to establish an alliance with historically minority universities in North Carolina that will encourage minority students to pursue careers in science.

Associate biology Professor Walter Bollenbacher, who has been leading the project, introduced the University's partnership with seven historically minority universities at a press conference Monday.

Elizabeth City State University, Fayetteville State University, Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, N.C. Agricultural & Technical State University in Greensboro, N.C. Central University in Durham, Shaw University in Raleigh and Pembroke State University will join UNC in the partnership.

The money granted to the HMUs by the Hughes Institute is part of \$86 million in four-year grants awarded to 62 research and doctorate-granting U.S. universities. The \$2 million will be divided among the eight universities involved in the partnership.

The faculties of the eight universities will work together to stimulate minority participation in the study of science and medicine. "We're not competing; we're forming alliances to achieve advancement of the students we're educating," Bollenbacher said.

Julius Chambers, chancellor of N.C. Central University and a partner in the program, agreed with Bollenbacher. "We're trying to build a better university system; this program is an example of working together."

Bollenbacher said the program was unique. "It's important to know that [the program] is an experiment," he said. "If we get some support from the state, we can move a lot faster and a lot further."

He said the grant would be used to encourage minority education in the sciences beginning at the high school level, mainly by working directly with high school teachers.

"The sciences are typically the most difficult for minorities to do well," he said.

Lloyd Hackley, chancellor of Fayetteville State University, criticized the absence of minorities in the sciences while at the press conference. "Our record is

deplorable," he said. "The ratio of black to white Ph.D.-holders is one to 26."

Hackley said the lack of minority scholars could stem from a lack of support from educators. "I think we wait too late to talk to them about the possibilities of studying for a Ph.D.," he said.

But Hackley also noted that the ratio had a potential to change. "We are enrolling large numbers of minority students in the HMUs," he said.

Chambers emphasized that the program addressed the historical problem of the lack of minority students choosing science-related careers.

"It is possible for all people to get into this kind of work," he said. "We're looking for a student body that is not all-black but rather an even representation of students from all over North Carolina as well as the rest of the nation."

Thomas Meyer, vice chancellor for research and development, said University officials were pleased to be a part of the program. "This is a proud moment for us," he said. "We think that this is a place for us to begin."

The partnership's goals include:

- Providing curricula, supplies and

equipment for minority university science classes.

- Strengthening a mentoring program between faculty at the minority schools and UNC science departments,

- Allowing reduced teaching loads for science faculty to give them time for research and scholarship,

- Improving faculty members' ability to attract research grants,

- Offering a yearlong independent study course for high school science teachers in school districts with heavy minority enrollments, including four weeks of intense laboratory work that will translate directly into the classroom,

- Funding summer research jobs for talented and motivated rising minority seniors interested in science careers,

- Establishing a graduate school admissions and job placement program for minorities,

- Fostering daily communication among members of the partnership through computer networks; and

- Expanding an existing relationship with the Hoechst Celanese Corp., which would help the universities maximize cooperation and effectiveness.

Business School Gets \$9M Grant

BY STEVE MAGGI
STAFF WRITER

A \$9 million gift to UNC's Kenan-Flagler Business School from the William R. Kenan Jr. Charitable Trust will help strengthen the school's executive education programs.

Paul Fulton, dean of the Kenan-Flagler Business School, said the gift was extremely important for the business school. "The grant is a milestone for the school," he said.

Of the \$9 million total, \$8 million will be used for the construction of a new Center for Executive Education, a residential executive conference facility that will provide a living and learning environment. It is designed to enhance case learning, business simulations and teamwork, according to a news release from the business school.

The remaining \$1 million will be used to

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Spangler Listed as One of Wealthiest

BY HEATHER N. ROBINSON
STAFF WRITER

UNC-system President C.D. Spangler has moved up in the world. The business world, that is.

Forbes magazine rated Spangler as the 150th wealthiest American in 1994. Spangler is said to have a net worth of \$615 million, up from \$475 million last year, according to the magazine.

Spangler was the only North Carolinian on the Forbes list. When Spangler was questioned Monday, he said he was not aware of his placement on the 1994 list.

Spangler ranked 220 last year.

"I usually do not comment on the ranking because it does not serve any useful purpose," Spangler said.

In 1992, Spangler's had a net worth of \$390 million. During that poll, Spangler's assets came from more than 8 million shares of stock in the Charlotte-based NationsBank.

In the 1960s, Spangler became the president of the C.D. Spangler Construction Co., which developed the Golden Eagle motel chain. He sold the chain in the 1980s and invested in more than 2 million shares of R.J. Reynolds stock before it sold out in 1989.

Spangler serves as director of the BellSouth Corp. and as the chairman of the board to the National Gypsum Co.

In the past, he has served as director of the NCBN Corp., the Hammermill Paper Co. and the Equitable Life Assurance Society.

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Forbes magazine listed UNC-system President C.D. SPANGLER as the 150th wealthiest American, with a net worth of \$615 million.

Town Suspends Worker After Parking Receipts Don't Add Up

Superintendent of Parking Services Was Suspended Without Pay Last Week

BY GRETCHEN HOFFMAN
STAFF WRITER

While the Chapel Hill police are investigating missing funds in the Chapel Hill Parking Services, the current parking services superintendent has been taken off the town payroll.

Erik Luther, the parking services superintendent, was suspended Sept. 26, according to Chapel Hill Personnel Director Pat Thomas.

The discrepancy in the parking services' receipts was discovered in a routine internal audit of the town's cash handling services Sept. 26, Thomas said.

"We had an employee in the finance department examine the records," Chapel Hill Finance Director Jim Baker said. "Based on the information we saw, we were concerned that some money was missing."

The audit was the first one done in a concentrated manner, but the town plans to continue the process, Chapel Hill Assistant Town Manager Sonna Loewenthal said.

Parking services was the first department audited because it is a major source of the town's cash transactions, she said.

The missing funds were reported to Chapel Hill police Chief Ralph Pendergraph Sept. 26, the day of the audit and the day that Luther was released from the payroll.

"[Pendergraph] had been informed that there were indications of possible missing funds from parking services," Chapel Hill police spokeswoman Jane Cousins said.

It is not unusual that the police are involved in the case, Cousins said.

"It was reported to us as if a private business was missing funds," Cousins added.

An investigator has been assigned to the case, but it is too early to determine where the discrepancies in the receipts occur, Cousins said.

"There is no investigation of Erik Luther," Cousins said.

The police department would not comment on possible suspects in the case. Luther began working for parking services on Sept. 1, 1981.

When he was taken off the payroll, his salary was \$36,241.

The release of any other information regarding his employment or suspension is prohibited by law, Thomas said.

The money Chapel Hill receives from parking services is mainly drawn from off-street parking lots.

"Our revenue estimates for this year are \$950,000," Baker said.

The town has not yet determined where the discrepancies, if any exist, stem from, he said.

"It is really too early to say where funds are missing," Cousins said. She was unsure how long the investigation would last.

"It was discovered that money was missing on Sept. 26," Cousins said. "Sept. 1, 1993 was the last secure date."

That is the earliest date that the funds could have been missing, she said.

"This is the first situation like this that I know of," Baker said.

There have been no problems in the past requiring the release of town employees because of missing funds that he knows of, he said.

Loewenthal said the routine audit had been ordered by Town Manager Cal Horton.

A Potpourri of Culture



Neelam Patel performs a traditional southeastern Indian dance Monday night at Cross Cultural Night, which was presented by the CAA and the class of 1995. Journalism Professor Chuck Stone was the keynote speaker. See story on page 3.

ONE Card Suspect Linked to Theft in Library

Student Checkbooks Stolen From Davis Library Used in Fraud Ring, UNC Police Say

BY CHRISTINA MASSEY
STAFF WRITER

A former University of Virginia student arrested Wednesday for the January theft of more than 400 UNC ONE Cards has been linked to the larceny of checkbooks from students in Davis Library, University Police Lt. Clay Williams said Monday.

On Wednesday, police arrested Canu Cassio DiBona of Durham and charged him with felony transaction card theft for his role in stealing the ONE Cards, Williams said.

DiBona's arrest comes after almost a year of investigation into a multistate fraud ring based at a UVA. fraternity, he said. DiBona is the third person to be arrested in connection with the ring, reports state.

DiBona, who was taking classes at UNC, visited the ONE Card office at least nine times in January, probably surveying the office to determine how the system operated, Williams said.

On Jan. 10, DiBona and his accomplices went to the office and stole the cards when no one was looking, he said.

Williams said the theft of the identification cards was only a small part of an intricate plan involving fraud. "The one purpose for the theft of the ONE Cards was fraud," he said.

DiBona and his main partner, Marcus A. Tucker of Charlottesville, Va., reportedly took several checkbooks from students in the library and used the stolen ONE Cards to cash and write checks, Williams said.

He said DiBona and Tucker had used the ONE Cards to obtain identification cards in North Carolina and Virginia. They then opened new banking accounts and

"A lot of people do not realize they've been victimized. If people have lost a checkbook or a wallet in the last seven months, they need to check with the credit bureau to clear any possible problems."

DOROTHY BERNHOLZ
Student Legal Services director

post office boxes using fraudulently obtained identification cards and altered ONE Cards, he said.

DiBona and Tucker wrote fraudulent checks in Raleigh, Durham, Charlottesville and Richmond, Va., and used the checks to purchase a wide variety of merchandise at department and grocery stores, Williams said.

Philippe Zamore, 21, of Charlottesville, Va., was another person arrested in connection with the fraud ring. Zamore was arrested in April and charged with felony larceny for trying to use a stolen credit card. But DiBona and Tucker were mainly responsible for theft of the ONE Cards, according to reports.

Williams said he had received calls from Paul Graham, one of the students whose checkbook and ONE Card had been stolen. The student's bank account had been cleared and hundreds of checks sent back to him, yet at the time he only had four checks to his name.

University Police began monitoring the checks sent back to Graham as soon as they came in and discovered that the checks had been fraudulently obtained through a mail-order check company, Williams said.

In March, the police were able to obtain suspect photos through a computer digital image system used to make identification cards in Virginia.

In September, Tucker was arrested in a Durham shopping mall for trying to cash counterfeit payroll checks from N.C. Children's Hospital, Williams said.

Tucker was placed in the Durham County Jail, and Williams said police had monitored his visitors in hopes of finding his accomplice in the ONE Card theft and fraud ring.

DiBona visited Tucker using an assumed name Sept. 26, and Williams and Durham County Detective Sgt. Jeremiah Davis were able to arrest him, Williams said.

DiBona was released on \$1,000 bond Friday after spending a night in the Orange County Jail. He is currently awaiting a probable cause hearing.

Myrna Graham, whose son Paul was a victim in the scam, said she was relieved that the two men had been arrested in connection with the fraud ring.

"It's been a real nightmare," Graham said. "Paul spent hours and hours and dollars and dollars on long distance trying to convince merchants that he was the victim of fraud."

"Most people don't believe you when you say there's been fraud and forgery," she said. "They're not very nice."

Williams said he encouraged anyone who felt he or she might have been the victim of the fraud ring to contact Dorothy Bernholz, director of legal services.

Bernholz said only three people had contacted her for help in the fraud ring case so far. "A lot of people do not realize they've been victimized," she said. "If people have lost a checkbook or a wallet in the last seven months, they need to check with the credit bureau to clear any possible problems."

Bernholz said she could help students who believed they were victims of the fraud. "You can't be held responsible if someone fraudulently uses your name and social security number," she said. "You have to have a signature."

If ifs and buts were candies and nuts, we'd all have a merry Christmas.

Brian Benton