

Law Students Work to Take Guns off Streets

BY MEGAN HANLEY
STAFF WRITER

A group of UNC law students are following in the tradition of "Buy Back the Hill" and plan to sponsor a gun buyback program in April. The program will allow people to sell back their guns in order to get them off the streets.

"We wanted to know what we could do to make our community safer, involving guns specifically, and we decided this more than anything was a tangible result," said UNC law student Allen Baddour, who is the task force chairman. The task force is a group of law students who have come together to prevent gun violence, he said.

Chi Psi fraternity became involved with "Buy Back the Hill" after an Appalachian State student was killed at its house last year. The fraternity sponsored a gun buyback program in May, and although Chi Psi is no longer involved in the project, several members of last year's group are

advising the new task force, Baddour said. "They (Chi Psi members) and the Buy Back the Hill group disbanded in January and kind of put out a call for new involvement, and we've pretty much taken over the group," he said. "Our purpose is the same thing."

The downtown shootings Jan. 26 prompted some to join the task force. "My initial reaction (to the shootings) was a sense of helplessness, that a person could take every precaution and still become a victim in such a senseless tragedy," said Jennifer Davis, vice chairwoman of the group. "I've tried to combat my helplessness by working on the campaign and help to prevent gun violence in Chapel Hill."

Most funding for the campaign will come from private contributions. Money from last year's effort is being held in escrow by the town. Baddour went to the Chapel Hill Town Council on Monday night to ask for a resolution to obtain the leftover funding. The council referred the matter to the town

staff, and it will probably come up at the next meeting, Feb. 27, council member Lee Pavao said Tuesday.

Several fund-raising events will also be held in early spring. The task force hopes to sell T-shirts, hold a benefit concert and set up a booth at local malls, Baddour said.

The Chapel Hill Police Department helped handle the purchasing and evaluating of the guns during the buyback last year, and the task force hopes to have its assistance in this buyback, too, Davis said.

Residents selling their guns could receive as much as \$50 last year, depending on the type of gun. This year's buyback will not have an upper price limit. "We decided to not limit the upper end in hopes of having more people to sell back their guns," Baddour said. He added that people who turned in guns would remain anonymous.

The returned guns are usually disabled, and a local artist is trying to build a sculpture with the dismantled guns. Members of the new task force will be able to decide

what to do with the guns. "We make sure that it (a gun) is not recycled back into the community; it's forever disabled," Baddour said. Some high-quality guns might be used for police training, he said.

The group decided to hold a buyback because it thought it was a way to directly affect the community, Davis said. "We can't assume that a gun buyback will prevent gun violence, but if it prevents one accident, one suicide or one child from using a gun, then in my mind it's had a positive impact on our community."

After the buyback, the group hopes to become involved in educational programs, such as awareness and gun safety programs.

The task force wants to involve other members of the University and town communities. Currently, all members of the task force are law students, but Baddour said he hoped other faculty, students and townspeople would support the task force and give it more ideas.

Orange County Looks at Alternatives for Children

BY LAURA GODWIN
STAFF WRITER

The Orange County Department of Social Services is looking for alternative ways to find care for the 35 emotionally or physically challenged children in the county's custody.

Because of a lack of suitable facilities for the children in Orange County, the children are being placed in locations outside of their home county.

A county task force has been investigating the problem of placing emotionally and physically handicapped children for about six months, DSS Director Mari Pryor-Cook said. "The need has been building for a number of years," she said.

Pryor-Cook said DSS was in the process of looking for ways to treat and house hard-to-place children within Orange County. "By this time in 1996, we will have a plan," she said. "We are looking at short-term emergency resources as well as long-term care."

Child Protective Service Supervisor Patty Clarke said the cost to the county to place a child in another jurisdiction could range from \$1,800 to \$10,000. "We are placing the children out of our county and paying tremendous amounts for their care," she said.

Clarke said that by keeping the children in Orange County, the county would save money and the children would reap the benefits.

"The cost (to the county) is more than I like to think," said Moses Carey, chairman of the Orange County Board of Commissioners. "It cost anywhere from \$50 to \$300 a day for each child."

Despite the department's best efforts to keep hard-to-place children in Orange County, the specialized care many children need is simply not available in the county. As a result, the county must place the children in other counties, Mack said. Pryor-Cook said DSS spent a great deal

of time searching for care for emotionally and physically challenged children.

"The department goes all over looking for group homes or specialized care," she said. "It takes an awful lot of time to try to find the resources."

According to a DSS report, a hard-to-place child falls into one of four different categories: children between the ages of 5 and 11 who suffer from severe psychological and emotional problems who require periodic hospitalization; children who frequently run away; children who are diagnosed as having mental retardation as well as psychiatric problems; and teenagers who have sociopathic behaviors resistant to treatment.

The county is responsible for these children because "the county will go to court and request custody of the children in a few instances when the family is unable to work with the Department of Social Services," said Julia Mack, director of programming for Guardian Ad Litem, a volunteer advocacy group for abused and neglected children in Chapel Hill. The group is often appointed by the court to care for hard-to-place children.

Although DSS tries to work with each family to avoid taking the child out of the home, neglect and abuse often warrant the child's removal, Mack said.

When appropriate homes and treatment cannot be found quickly, children can be placed in temporary housing with an available family, she said. "This is not designed to be permanent."

Sometimes, the children have a long wait before they are placed in a permanent home, Pryor-Cook said. "The children are moved from family to family," she said.

DSS presented the alternatives to placement outside of the county to the Orange County Board of Commissioners.

Carey said the board would wait until a final plan for action was issued by the county task force before budget considerations were made.

VOTING

FROM PAGE 1

which was then given to representatives from the Elections Board to post in 106 Carroll Hall.

Wingate said that although it might make candidates more nervous, he thought releasing the information poll site by poll site was better than giving it out all at once.

"It makes for a much more interesting elections process to do it in batches because candidates are stronger in certain areas than others," he said.

Elections Board Chairwoman Erin Lewis said improvements made from last year's tallying of student votes had speeded up the process this year.

"This year, it was a lot easier for poll-tenders to just come in and start working," Lewis said. "The instructions were self-explanatory and easy."

By 9:45 p.m. Tuesday, election results were reported from four of the six poll sites — and the remaining two, the two largest, were reported just before midnight.

Mike Thomas, who designed the system used at the polls this year and last year, said he had been able to avoid some potential problems through his experience from the previous year.

"Last year, I didn't have that much time to come up with something," he said. "But this year, I had experience and knew what problems would come up."

Thomas said the tallying of election results had been a collaborative effort between several University departments, including the two different sections of OIT, the Office of the University Registrar and Administrative Data Processing.

He said 10 to 12 OIT computers were used at various poll sites this year. "Last year, we were basically operating on borrowed computers," he said. "There were seven or eight computers campuswide."

He said the computerized system provided several conveniences.

"It moves the line along quicker, and it solves the problem of students voting twice."

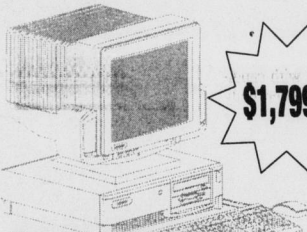
Thomas also said poll-tenders could automatically tell on-campus students what district they lived in by typing in their social security number.

"Students don't usually know what district they live in," he said. "This saves students having to look at a sheet."

Thomas said off-campus students were still on the honor system to tell what district they lived in. "Still, that's about 6,000 students who live on campus."

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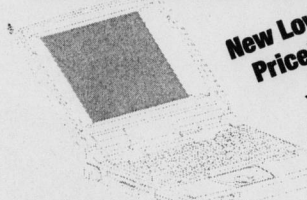
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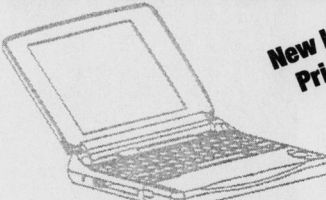


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Black History Month Spotlight

Eugenia Charles
Knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1991, Dame Eugenia Charles has served as the prime minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica since 1980. She is the first black woman ever to head a country. Dubbed by her contemporaries as "The Caribbean's Iron Lady," Charles is credited with having turned around Dominica's weak economy. Now, at age 75, she is completing her third and final term in office.

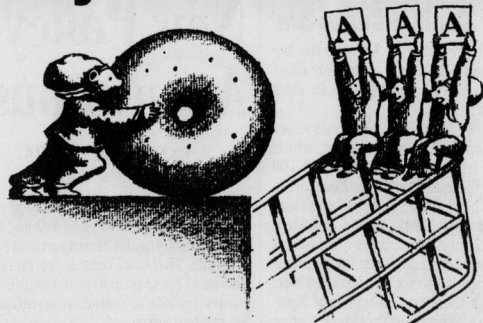
Campus Calendar

WEDNESDAY

10 a.m. CAMP DAY - summer jobs, Great Hall.
11 a.m. SFC Volunteer drive in the Pit.
1 p.m. Peace Corps presentations in Union 213.
3 p.m. Support Group for Women Graduate Students in the counseling center, 101 Nash Hall.
Dissertation/Thesis Support Group in the University Counseling Center.
3:30 p.m. Lesbian Support Group in 210 Nash.
Job Hunt 101A: decide which career field is best for you, in 209 Hanes Hall. Sponsored by UCS.
4 p.m. Panel on Science Careers in 210 Hanes.
5 p.m. Guided "tour" of Iran in the Union.

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