

Proposed Plan Would Link Triangle by Rail

BY LAURA GODWIN
STAFF WRITER

The Triangle Transit Authority Board of Trustees approved on Wednesday a plan to bring a commuter rail system to Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill sometime in the next 25 years.

For the past three years, the TTA has studied possible ways commuter rail systems could be brought to the area, and it might be several more years before funding for the program is found.

"The Triangle Fixed Guided Study began two years ago to develop alternatives in transportation scenarios," said Juanita Shearer-Swink, a senior transportation planner with TTA.

As a result of the study, TTA devised the Regional Transit Plan Recommendations, a plan for implementing commuter rail service. The first phase of the plan

would connect Durham, Research Triangle Park, Cary, downtown Raleigh and the North Raleigh area of Spring Forest, Shearer-Swink said.

"We are working with the existing bus systems so people can walk, park and ride, or take the neighborhood bus to the stations," she said.

The first phase would use existing railroad tracks and would cost \$150 million to start up, Shearer-Swink said. The transit authority might ask the state for funding.

"Right now, the state doesn't provide a permanent source of public transportation funds," Shearer-Swink said.

The TTA Board of Trustees will ask the General Assembly for permanent state funding, rather than a grant, she said. One possibility for funding the project, in addition to the state money, could be a slight increase in gas taxes, she said.

The second phase in the effort to bring

commuter railroads to the Triangle would be the possible connection of Chapel Hill and Durham by rail, Shearer-Swink said.

"We have not determined what type of rail to use because there are no existing rails," she said.

A commuter rail system would not be delayed by the traffic jams that hold up the existing express bus service, said senior transportation planner Joe Huegy. "The trains would be running on a dedicated facility, so they will not be caught in traffic problems."

"You can depend on the schedule of a train," he said.

Huegy said the trains would be able to transport passengers in half the time of buses. Also, the trains would be able to carry more people per driver than buses.

If a commuter railroad system is implemented in the Triangle, some changes would need to be made to the existing bus

system, Huegy said.

"We would no longer run some routes," he said. "It is a different concept in terms of operation."

He said that by canceling some routes, the TTA would be able to extend bus services to other areas. "It gives us an opportunity to reassign our resources."

Huegy said that a fare would definitely be charged to riders but that the TTA Board of Trustees would not set the fare until all plans were definite.

The TTA will present the idea of commuter rail system to the cities that would be affected by the plan, Shearer-Swink said. The transit authority will present its plan to the Chapel Hill Town Council March 27.

Shearer-Swink said the TTA should complete its presentations by March and would then hold a regional public interest meeting in April to get feedback from the general public.

Training Day Emphasizes Importance of Diversity

BY SONYA BUCHANAN
STAFF WRITER

To help eliminate discrimination against students with different sexual preferences, certified staff of the Chapel Hill-Carboro City Schools participated in a mandatory, three-hour session Monday that focused on the district's cultural diversity plan with specific emphasis on its inclusion of sexual orientation.

The Multicultural Education Action Plan for the Promotion of Respect for Diversity advocates shared responsibility between the school system and the community at large for achieving the goals of the plan. According to the plan's mission statement, the plan is one way to foster and promote a caring environment in which individuals grow through understanding and accepting all people with their differing values and qualities.



School Board Chairman **KEN TOUW** said district employees were working to improve minority sensitivity.

ing a three-year period and must focus on those events that have the potential for broadening a staff member's understanding of multicultural issues.

Harris said parents and former students of the Chapel Hill-Carboro school system had attended the training session to share their personal experiences with cultural diversity.

School board member Sue Baker said different episodes in the past had caused "sexual orientation" to be implemented into the multicultural plan because there were different kinds of diversity in the school system.

One episode occurred when some Chapel Hill High School students vandalized school property after learning that one of the teachers on staff was gay, Harris said.

"There is a need to focus on sexual orientation so that students and teachers will not be discriminated against or subjected to a hostile environment," she said.

Touw said a community without understanding would be hostile and unsafe for everyone. "In order to be safe, we have to have an appreciation for different viewpoints, lifestyles and cultures within the community," he said.

Although Touw said sexual orientation was more controversial than the issue of race, he said race was the most significant problem in the school system because there were racial stereotypes about achievement.

"For African Americans, there are stereotyped expectations for achievement in math and science that have not been founded," he said. "Ability and intelligence are not fixed; that's the purpose of education."

"We hope the teachers will model the kind of behavior that will make our society more trusting," he said. "If we set challenging goals for all our children, they will do well."

Carboro Cable Viewers to Get 'Toons and Testaments

BY JENNIFER MIHALTIAN
STAFF WRITER

Cablevision Industries announced Wednesday the addition of four new cable television channels to its service in Carboro, Hillsborough and part of Orange County effective March 28.

E! Entertainment Television, Home Team Sports, Trinity Broadcast Network and the Cartoon Network will join the 44 channels already offered by CVI.

"The new channels add variety to our overall lineup, and they also have broad appeal," CVI Site Manager Alex Ritter said. "Both the Cartoon Network and Home Team Sports are among services most requested by our subscribers, and customer interest in religious programming guided our decision to add TBN."

Channel Changes

- Home Team Sports Ch. 46
- Trinity Broadcast Network Ch. 48
- E! Entertainment Television Ch. 49
- The Cartoon Network Ch. 54

Sports events like ACC basketball and NASCAR auto racing will be shown on Home Team Sports, cable channel 46.

The Cartoon Network offers new cartoons as well as characters from Hanna-Barbera, MGM, Warner Brothers and Paramount studios.

TBN will present 24 hours of inspirational programs that represent various religious denominations.

E! features highlights from the entertainment world by covering film, television, music, theater, books, sports and fashion.

The new channels will not be part of the basic service and will be provided at an extra cost.

Ritter said that CVI would change the price of its services to adjust for inflation and to reflect a boost in programming costs but that the new price had yet to be determined.

The Federal Communications Commission establishes guidelines that allow cable companies to adjust the rates due to rising inflation. "We are working out the details of moderate pricing adjustments that are planned to take effect in May," Ritter said.

CVI has an ongoing file of letters from customers who want new channels added

to their cable service. "We take the input from our marketing and operational departments, along with the requests, and decide what we think will best serve the community," Ritter said.

What CVI management thinks is best for the community has upset some UNC students who subscribe to the cable service in Carboro.

"I wish they wouldn't add more channels to flip through," said Leigh Dail, a senior English major from Raleigh. "You can't even get reception well without cable, so it's almost like you have to have it."

David Pair, a senior biology major from Roanoke Rapids, said, "I'm glad they are expanding. I'll probably watch the new sports channel, but I don't think those channels will serve a lot of people except for the Cartoon Network for the kids."

Blue Ribbon Program Aims to Boost Minority Scores

BY SUZANNE JACOVEC
STAFF WRITER

Chapel Hill-Carboro City Schools officials are concerned about the lack of sufficient funds for the Blue Ribbon Task Force program, which aims to improve the academic performances of minority students, school board Chairman Ken Touw said.

In a planning conference last week, school officials reviewed the district budget requests, Touw said. The Blue Ribbon Task Force is still not fully funded after one year of implementation, he said.

"From the beginning, the school board has not been able to provide necessary funding for the program," Touw said. "We're looking to 'steal' from other programs to provide for the Blue Ribbon pro-

gram. It is still one of our top priorities."

The Blue Ribbon Task Force was not fully funded in its first year because there has been little money available for the expansion of new programs, said Kim Hoke, spokeswoman for the Chapel Hill-Carboro schools. The school district implemented the plan as fully as possible, but not as intensely as its creators had originally envisioned, Hoke said.

A districtwide, seven-member review committee examines new recommendations to the plan every year, Hoke said. Two recommendations that exist now are after-school transportation for students and a mentorship program, according to Mark Royster, vice chairman of the school board.

"Our purpose is to ensure that all students within the school system are success-

ful, especially African-American students," Royster said. "We cannot pull up the success rate of African-American students without pulling up the success of all students."

"The purpose of the task force is to

narrow the gap of academic achievements between African-American and white students," Touw said. "African-American students are sort of a marker of students in our school system who come from lower socio-economic backgrounds and do have, by nature of race, special problems with self-perception and perceptions of members of the community, especially the school system."

Testing showed a large discrepancy between the scores of African-American students and others, Hoke said.

She said the Blue Ribbon Task Force served students from kindergarten through high school and aimed to achieve 60 objectives ranging from the inclusion of more minorities in after-school activities to the development of multicultural curricula.

Black History Month Spotlight

Vanessa Gilmore
Thirty-seven-year-old Vanessa Gilmore is the country's youngest federal judge as well as the only black woman on the federal bench in Texas. A native of Silver Spring, Md., Gilmore was appointed by President Clinton as a federal judge to the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas. Although she graduated from Hampton University with a degree in clothing and textile

marketing, she became interested in pursuing a career in law after she represented herself in a lawsuit against the managers of her apartment complex.

Gilmore later enrolled in the University of Houston, where she passed the bar after only 2 1/2 years. She worked 12 years as a civil litigator with a private firm before being nominated to the federal bench.

Campus Calendar

FRIDAY
NOON "The Uses of Violence on Various Daily Occasions in a Post-Reform Chinese Village" will be held in 02 Manning Hall.
1 p.m. Astrophysics Informal Brown Bag Lunch will be held in 277 Phillips.
Condensed Matter Informal/Internal Seminar will be held in 258 Phillips.
2 p.m. Faculty, are you interested in developing a course with a service-learning component? Meet in Frank Porter Graham Lounge of the Union to meet with a representative of a.p.p.i.e.s. and the Center for Teaching and Learning to discuss developments. Refreshments will be served.
4 p.m. UNC Physics and Astronomy Colloquium will discuss "Non-Thermal Gamma Ray Bursts: A Relativistic MHD Wind Model," in 265 Phillips.
5 p.m. "Korean-American Night" will be held in the Great Hall. Admission is \$5 for UNC students and \$7 for the general public.
6:30 p.m. FOCUS invites you to an informal potluck dinner and a panel discussion on "A Personal Relationship With God: Examining a Cliche." For rides or directions, call Elaine at 932-3781.

SATURDAY, FEB 25 1:00 PM

at Carmichael Auditorium

#12
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VS.

#19
DUKE

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