

Victims' rights groups say registry won't help

BY APRIL DEMERT
STAFF WRITER

Local victims' rights groups say state and federal legislation that monitors the 540 registered sex offenders in North Carolina won't keep N.C. kids any safer. The Amy Jackson Law, passed by the General Assembly in May 1996, is based on Megan's Law, a Congressional mandate passed four months ago. Megan's Law requires all states to set up registry systems to keep records of the residences of released sexual offenders, said John Aldridge, state assistant attorney general.

Supporters of the legislation say parents deserve to know the whereabouts of convicted sex offenders, but critics say the problem is more deeply rooted.

"Although it is critical to remember that (Megan's Law) is well-intentioned, it may cause a false sense of security in our communities," said Margret Henderson, director of the Orange County Rape Crisis Center.

"Most sex offenders know the children well, and if people are too concerned about the man down the

street, they may be missing what's going on in their own homes."

The state law requires all sexual offenders released from N.C. prisons after Jan. 1 of this year to register with their county sheriff's departments. Offenders must report address changes within 10 days of moving to new counties.

Nancy Kiesenhofer, the criminal information training coordinator for the State Bureau of Investigation, said neighbors could access registry information at their county sheriff's office by providing names of suspected offenders.

Businesses hiring individuals who will be responsible for the care of children and the elderly are given full access to the list of registered offenders in their area, Kiesenhofer said.

Rep. Fred Heineman, R-N.C., supported Megan's Law from its inception and hosted a forum in Raleigh to educate the public on the details of the law on Aug. 29.

"We are seeing a gradual progression away from criminal rights with this law and through the courts," said Ray Shepherd, Heineman's legislative director.

"We are beginning to define victims' rights in respect to the Constitution."

Some UNC students said they were concerned about the effects of Megan's Law on neighborhoods. "Our communities shouldn't need a blacklist of offenders. Communities should be looking out for each other," said John Hipps, a senior from Waynesville who is also the community coordinator at the Campus Y. "Megan's Law) takes the responsibility from communities and gives it to government, which takes away from people's responsibility to one another."

Other students have voiced their doubts about the intentions of the law. "It will be difficult to keep the law from being abused," said senior Catherine Petrusz from Chapel Hill. "Supposedly the system's goal is rehabilitation, and it seems like (Megan's Law) is contrary to that goal."

Despite the criticism, Shepherd said such laws were the only way government can address the issue. "Anything that we can realistically do to prevent sexual criminals from repeating their crimes is a step in the right direction."

Two Wake Forest students killed by drunken driver

BY WHITNEY MOORE
STAFF WRITER

Students at Wake Forest University are pulling together to mourn the loss of two students who were killed by a repeat offender in a drunken driving accident last Wednesday.

Two sophomores, 19-year-old Julie Hansen of Rockville, Md., and 19-year-old Maia Witzl of Arlington, Texas, were killed when a drunken driver plowed into their car.

Thomas Richard Jones of Statesville was charged with one count of driving while impaired and two counts of second-degree murder early Thursday morning.

The charge for DWI on Wednesday night was dropped to strengthen the two charges of second-degree murder, said Winston-Salem police Sgt. Steve Newsome.

"It's a technical aspect. You run into the problem of double jeopardy," Newsome said.

Jones has been cited 38 times for driving violations since 1983 in Forsyth County.

He is being held in the Forsyth County Jail under \$2 million bail.

Hansen and Witzl, both members of Chi Omega Sorority, were riding in a two-door Mazda hatchback with four school friends when they were hit.

The six women were less than two blocks from their destination when 39-year-old Jones crashed into them.

Witnesses reported that Jones was weaving through lanes and driving recklessly before the accident occurred. All of the people involved in the car accident were treated at Baptist Hospital.

Jones was charged with DWI in July, but he is still awaiting trial on that charge. He also has been convicted 20 times since 1975 for various crimes, including a 1982 conviction for DWI.

Vince Rabil, who is prosecuting Jones for the Forsyth County District Attorney's office, said it could be a while before the case went to trial.

"Well, you've got the preliminary hearings, the grand jury—it could be after the

new year," he said.

Kevin Cox, Wake Forest director of public affairs, said the campus held a special worship service Friday morning in Wait Chapel that about 1,000 people attended.

"To see so many people show up with so little notice... I felt good to be a part of Wake Forest, where so many people were concerned about each other."

Julie Griffin, university advisor for Chi Omega, said the deaths of the two young women were a loss to the community.

"When I looked around the room, (Hansen) caught my eye," Griffin said.

"She had such a warm, welcome smile, and beautiful eyes. She seemed sort of innocent and quiet, but she loved to have a good time."

Witzl was also a very caring person whose death was a nightmare, Griffin said.

"Maia was regal and sophisticated. She was selfless. She could bring different people together in harmony."

Griffin said she preferred not to talk about Jones except that he should not be driving.

"This guy has no concern for anybody else's life," Griffin said. "That's obvious by his past record and then this."

Jones' record is far from uncommon, though.

According to information from the Bureau of Justice Statistics supplied by the N.C. chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, more than half the people jailed for DWI in 1989 had previous DWI convictions.

Eighty-six percent of people in jail for DWI have previously been convicted and sentenced for past DWI offences.

Although the national number of drunken driving fatalities went up last year, the number of N.C. fatalities is in decline.

In 1994, 457 people died in DWI-related accidents, while in 1995, the number fell to 392 deaths.

Griffin said the sisters of Chi Omega at Wake Forest were planning to educate people on these statistics and the hazards of drunken driving.

Shortage will lead to higher milk prices in coming year

WASHINGTON — Milk shortages that have pushed supermarket prices past \$3 a gallon will continue through next year, the Agriculture Department said Wednesday. A leading economist said retail dairy prices could rise 12 percent this year.

Although dairy farmers who have weathered high feed costs and low returns finally have reason to celebrate, some worry that shoppers' demand for dairy products might decline.

That may be happening already.

"If it goes up too much I might stop eating cereal and eat something else," said Melissa Petersen, a college student who was checking milk prices in a downtown Washington, D.C., supermarket.

Even before Wednesday's report, the department was forecasting food prices to increase 3 percent to 4 percent next year. That's on top of an expected increase of as much as 3 percent in 1996. In recent years, food price increases have stayed below 3 percent.

The department has yet to calculate the retail impact of the new dairy numbers. But Donald Ratajczak, director of the economic forecasting unit at Georgia State University in Atlanta, said dairy prices should rise 12 percent.

As of July, he noted, Labor Department figures showed a 12-month increase of 8 percent for dairy products.

Some private economists have been forecasting higher rates of overall food inflation than those given by the department, because shortages of animal feed will work their way through prices for meat and other goods.

"The food price story is not over by any means," said private economist Paul T. Prentice, president of Farm Sector Economics Inc. in Colorado Springs, Colo. As for dairy, "The question is what kind of consumer resistance are we going to see."

"In the short run, they'll buy it anyway," said Ratajczak, but he added that

at some point in a year or so, shoppers will pass up ice cream, cheese or other dairy foods for something cheaper.

High costs for corn, soybeans, hay and other feed have put a damper on milk production all year.

Wednesday's forecast for an 8.8 billion bushel corn crop and 2.27 billion bushel soybean crop did little to ease supply worries, especially since early frosts could threaten harvests.

Dairy farmers couldn't earn enough from milk to justify the high cost of feed, brought on by poor weather in farm country. They cut back on herd size and fed their cows less.

Now production has fallen back so much that the prices farmers get for their milk will more than offset costs.

As a result, department economists on Wednesday raised the forecast for farm-level prices in the marketing year that begins Oct. 1 to nearly \$15 per hundred pounds of milk — about \$1.29 a gallon.

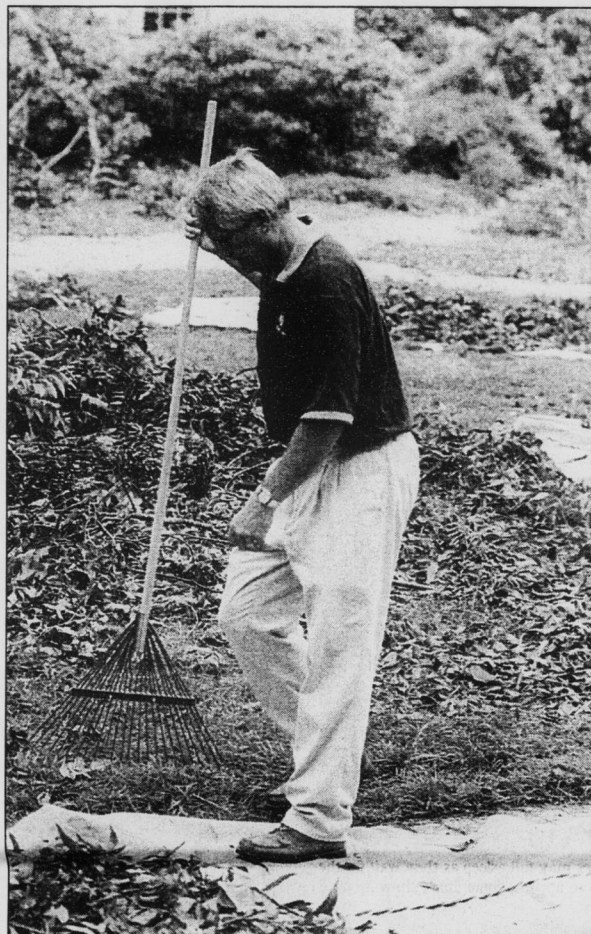
This follows a decade of prices in the \$12.50 to \$13 range.

By July, the store price for a gallon of whole milk averaged \$2.65 and low fat, \$2.44, up from \$2.48 and \$2.28 a year earlier, the Labor Department said. But prices of \$3 have shown up around the nation.

In Oklahoma, a gallon of Farm Fresh brand whole milk was selling for \$3.09 at Homeland supermarkets, while 2 percent sold for \$2.99. Borden's sold for \$3.76, while a gallon of Homeland 2 percent sold for \$2.59, and whole, \$2.55. Brand-name, or branded, milk usually sells for more than store brands.

In Atlanta and eastern Tennessee markets, Mayfield Dairy Farms Inc. has just announced a new round of increases effective Sept. 30 that will put the store price of its milk over \$3 per gallon.

"We're selling milk for more than we've ever sold it and the retailers are selling milk for more than they've ever sold it," said Scottie Mayfield, president of the Athens, Tenn., based company.



Chancellor Michael Hooker joined in with the campus cleanup Wednesday by raking away debris left by Hurricane Fran.

CLEANUP

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faculty and staff are doing," he said. "We're not used to having this much help."

Students said they weren't often able to work together around campus.

"It's neat," said Kelly Russell, a freshman from Kannapolis who helped out at the Arboretum. "There won't be many opportunities for the entire University to help out together."

Fewer volunteers went to the Wilson Library area than to the larger Old Well site.

Ann Hamner, chairwoman of the Employee Forum, aided cleanup crews at Wilson Library by removing debris. "I love the idea of faculty, staff and students getting together as a community to re-

store the campus."

Tom Sudderth, landscape supervisor for UNC, was in charge of the Wilson Library site cleanup. Sudderth said he anticipated that the majority of the brush and leaves would be removed on Wednesday.

Students also met at Chase Hall to clean up South Campus. Only 100 students arrived at the site, but the residence hall lawns were cleared by 2 p.m. The path from Morrison Residence Hall to Kenan Stadium was still surrounded by trees and debris, however.

Kenny Phillips, an employee of the grounds department, said he appreciated the student help. "I think it's great they came out here to help," he said. "Some came out on Saturday, without being asked. Without student help, this would have taken two weeks."

UNIVERSITY

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being overwhelmed by our size," Major said in reference to Ohio State's 49,000 students, 6,000 of whom are freshmen.

By contrast, Mercyhurst College in Erie, Penn., devotes more time to individual student advising.

"We track freshmen student performance, and by the end of first four weeks we begin identifying those with academic problems," said Gary Brown, assistant dean of students. With only 443 freshmen this year, the problems of freshmen can be quickly addressed.

Mercyhurst retention methods include a mandatory winter skills program for students with less than a 1.75 grade point average, full-time advisers in freshmen dormitories and exit interviews conducted by staff that seek to discover reasons for freshmen dropouts.

Brown said Mercyhurst's 80 percent freshman retention rate compared favorably to those of area private schools.

Larger private schools, like Notre Dame, have other ways of addressing freshmen retention.

"Since 1962 we've had First Year Studies, which is a specific course of study for freshmen," said Eileen Kolemian, dean of First Year Studies. "First Year Studies mandates basic general college requirements but allows new students the opportunity to get a feel for various programs of study."

Notre Dame's freshmen return is at a rate of 96 percent. Kolemian said Notre Dame's reputation was one reason for the extremely high percentage.

"We are the first choice for the major-

ity of our students, and they feel a certain affiliation with Notre Dame," Kolemian said. Notre Dame welcomed over 1,900 freshmen this fall.

Administrators from different schools said they believed freshmen dropped out for three main reasons: finances, academics and social problems.

"Two out of three who do not return (to Ohio State) are suffering from academic difficulty, a GPA under 2.0," Major said. "We are trying to understand why. Some of these students have excellent test scores and high school transcripts."

Kolemian said she believed the formidable academic requirements of universities might bring other problems to the forefront. "Recently, we are seeing more students with family or emotional problems that don't surface until they face the high pressure of university life," she said.

At Mercyhurst, financial problems are now being confronted in a different way.

"We used to send out the standard 'you must pay or be dropped' notice to those whose accounts were not paid," Brown said. "Now we have a financial counselor contact those students directly to begin trying to assist them with expenses."

Locally, UNC freshmen return for their sophomore year at an impressive rate, said Tim Sanford, the director of institutional research.

"UNC-Chapel Hill's freshmen retention is generally among the top five public institutions," Sanford said.

The 1994 freshman class returned at a rate of 92.3 percent. Similarly, the UNC system posts above-average marks for freshman retention each year.

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SUNCHASERS DIVE CENTER

IRAQ
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mission in the region best when we speak with one voice," McCurry said.

Earlier Wednesday, an Iraqi missile battery fired an SA-6 surface-to-air mis-

sile at two U.S. F-16s patrolling the "no-fly" zone in northern Iraq.

"Very foolish" is how Perry characterized the Iraqi decision to fire.

"Iraq air defense crews were playing some kind of a game. They will very soon learn we are not playing games," Perry told reporters.

The normally soft-spoken defense secretary, clearly irritated, said it was lucky the Iraqis activated their radar only long enough to wildly dispatch one missile. "If they'd had it on any longer than that," he said, "they would have had an anti-radiation missile down their throats."

Missiles used against such installations home in on radar emissions, find and destroy the unit. The F-16s returned to their base in Turkey unscathed. A pair of F-15 fighter jets was dispatched to search out the missile launcher but did not find it, Pentagon officials said.

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