

# UNC study raises questions about puberty

**THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
**CHICAGO** — American girls reach puberty earlier than commonly believed, with nearly half of black girls and 15 percent of white ones beginning to develop sexually by age 8, a study indicates.

The study raises troubling questions about whether environmental estrogens, chemicals that mimic the female hormone estrogen, are bringing on puberty at an earlier age.

It also suggests that sex education should begin sooner than it often does, researchers said.

"I don't think parents, teachers or society in general have been really thinking of children that young — second- and third-graders — having to deal with puberty," said the study's lead author, Marcia Herman-Giddens of UNC-Chapel Hill.

The research is in the April issue of the journal *Pediatrics*, published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Environmental estrogens occur from the breakdown of chemicals in products ranging from pesticides to plastic wrap. Real estrogen is used in some hair products, including pomades primarily marketed to blacks, said Herman-Giddens, an adjunct professor of maternal and child health.

She said research is needed to know whether real estrogen in products and environmental estrogen can affect sexual development.

The study involved 17,000 girls ages 3 through 12. They were seen in 65 pediatric practices around the country. About 1,600 of the girls were black.

At age 8, 48.3 percent of black girls

and 14.7 percent of white girls had begun developing breasts, pubic hair or both. Menstruation occurred at 12.16 years in blacks on average and at 12.88 years in whites.

The average age of menstruation for white girls has been unchanged for 45 years, Herman-Giddens said.

For black girls, the average is about four months younger than it was 30 years ago, when poor nutrition and poverty, which can delay puberty, afflicted more blacks, she said. "I think we may be seeing a catch-up," Herman-Giddens said.

She acknowledged that her findings may have been skewed if a significant number of the girls were brought to their doctors because of concerns that they were developing too early sexually.

The study, and other research, suggest

that blacks and whites have some inherent differences in sexual development.

Herman-Giddens said the findings also suggest that some girls who have been diagnosed with early puberty, and perhaps given drugs to delay it, may be developing normally.

An expert not involved in the study called the work very important but said it will probably not change doctors' practices.

"We've always known that there was a range of development," said Dr. Marianne Felice, chief of adolescent medicine at the University of Maryland.

"It may vary by race, it may vary by nutritional status and it may also vary by ... how old the mothers were or how old the older sisters were when they hit the same landmarks in sexual characteristics."

# Hunt, legislators called pork-barrel politicians

**John Locke Foundation members said Hunt and others spent funds poorly.**

**BY ROBIN SMITH**  
STAFF WRITER

Claiming that North Carolina legislators have spent state funds secretly and engaged in biased discretionary spending, critics say that the budget process must be reformed.

The John Locke Foundation, a conservative think tank in Raleigh, reported in February that a surplus of \$21.3 million, left over from the Repair and Renovation Reserve, was divided between N.C. House Speaker Harold Brubaker, N.C. Senate Pro Tem Marc Basnight and Gov. Jim Hunt for discretionary spending.



Don Carrington, vice-president of the John Locke Foundation, said the organization discovered this past weekend that weeks before the November election, Brubaker sent almost half of his \$9.7 million share to districts where fellow Republicans were campaigning in close races.

Basnight, who also received \$9.7 million, sent \$1 million to the Pavilion Foundation in Greensboro in October. Carrington said that three days later, Basnight accepted a \$25,000 to \$26,000 check from the organization as a campaign contribution.

The Locke Foundation has uncovered numerous cases of legislative "pork barreling" as well, defined by their magazine, the *Carolina Journal*, as "apparent breaches of the law by legislators

and legislators sending public funds to groups in which they or their family members are directly involved."

"The more you dig, the worse it gets," Carrington said.

Among these cases is Sen. Aaron Plyler, D-Union, who sent \$20,000 to Turning Point of Union County, where he is an emeritus member of the board of directors. He also sent \$20,000 to the Andrew Jackson Memorial in Waxhaw, where he serves as a board member.

Plyler said this was not pork barreling but legitimate discretionary spending. "It's the only way a small county can get a little bit of their taxpayer's money back," he said.

"I think the John Locke Foundation is just looking for something to try to stir up as much as they can."

The Locke Foundation also reported that Hunt tried unsuccessfully in 1995 and 1996 to get the N.C. General Assembly to approve funding for Exploris, a children's museum to be built in Raleigh. However, Hunt consulted with the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations, co-chaired by Brubaker and Basnight, last November. As a result, the commission allocated \$3.9 million to the project under the Reserve for Repair and Renovation.

Julia White, spokesperson for Basnight, said that the commission meets annually when the General Assembly is not in session, serving as a kind of "mini-General Assembly."

Carrington said the commission violated the law by using the Repair and Renovation money for Exploris, a private nonprofit museum.

Last February, Hunt allocated an additional \$1 million to Exploris, from his 10-percent cut of the \$21.3 million.

Carrington said that these legislative spending practices were improper. "It is inappropriate for the legislative branch to appoint money and the executive branch to decide where it goes," he said.

But White said the Senate projects sent money for a lot of good purposes. "We certainly rely on senators to be representatives of their community."

# Spring blizzard attacks towns in Minnesota, Midwest states

**THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**  
**GRANITE FALLS, Minn.** — Volunteers raced to stack more sandbags Monday, afraid that the meltdown from a spring blizzard could worsen what is already some of the most severe flooding on the northern Plains in years.

Across the Plains, fields were sheets of white stretching to the horizon after a storm over the weekend left more than two feet of snow in places.

In northwestern Minnesota, along the Red River that forms the state line with North Dakota, bright sunshine melted a little snow, but the real thaw is expected Thursday or Friday, said Mark Seeley, climatologist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Everything predicted for the Red is a flood of historic proportions," he said.

The National Weather Service issued a flood warning extending for the next two weeks along parts of three rivers in other parts of Minnesota — the Minnesota, Mississippi and St. Croix rivers.

**Granite Falls water supply.**  
 A highway-model snow blower was used as a pump, sucking water off the streets and spraying it in a 100-foot-high arc over the levee back into the river.

In northwestern Minnesota, rising water from the Wild Rice and Marsh rivers forced the evacuation of about 1,000 residents of Ada, a town of 1,700 people.

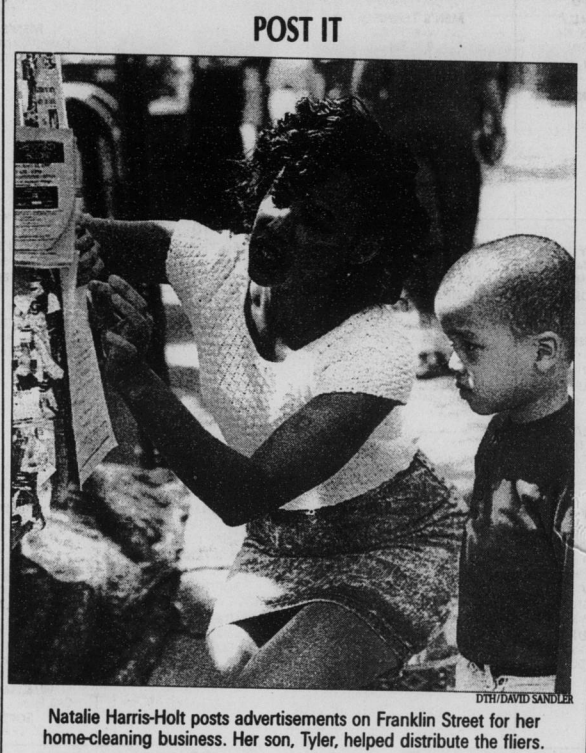
"We're absolutely overwhelmed," Mayor Russ Onstad said from one of the town's few working phones. "We're getting water from north, south and east."

President Clinton signed a statewide disaster declaration Monday because of South Dakota's blizzard and the flooding.

There was no immediate word on declarations for other states in the region. Thousands remained without power.

Floods across the Midwest in 1993 were blamed for 48 deaths and \$10 billion in damage in nine states.

Temperatures dropped to zero Monday at Dickinson, N.D., and Bemidji, Minn., recorded a wind chill of 37 below zero.



Natalie Harris-Holt posts advertisements on Franklin Street for her home-cleaning business. Her son, Tyler, helped distribute the fliers.

There was no quick way to gauge how bad the flooding might become once the snow melts, but four to five inches of heavy, late-season snow could be equal to one inch of rain, Seeley said.

In Granite Falls, wind-blown snow stung the faces of workers stacking sandbags on the levees as they worked to protect about 40 homes along the Minnesota River.

Flood victims and weary out-of-town volunteers trapped by the snowstorm stuck it out in a shelter at the high school gym.

"We've had so much fun here — floods, blizzard. We're expecting the asteroid next," said Red Cross volunteer Karen Barck from Marshall, 30 miles away.

She had been at the shelter since Thursday.

Residents were told to drink bottled water after sewage backed up into the

**BURROWS**  
FROM PAGE 1

(town officials) are not willing," he said, "our next step is to have a press conference where the boys can tell their story."

Anthony Burrow said he felt the police were keeping crucial information about the arrest from him and the public, and the only way to reveal this information was through a public forum.

"We want to make people aware of procedure that took place that night and have it changed so this won't happen again," Burrow said. "Basically, I would like an admittance by the police or the (caller) that one of the two sides is wrong for putting our lives in danger."

Although Anthony's father has received a tape of the 911 call made on the night of the incident, he said overall he has been given very little information from the police.

"We've listened to the tape, but it's only bits and pieces, not the complete call," James Burrow said. "We haven't got any information and that's where we are now."

Carboro Police Chief Ben Callahan said Burrow "got the same tape I got."

Morgan said Burrow's tape began in the middle of a previously taped conversation and then jumped into the 911 call. "This may have lead (James) to believe that the tape was incomplete," Morgan said. "We are getting him another copy of the tape."

Morgan said the town has been very open and is looking into the issues.

"We're trying to see if there were problems and if changes need to be made."

**TAXI**  
FROM PAGE 1

Tann, who also gets driver requests from fraternity and sorority members, drives his taxi based on a time-tested philosophy. "Good drivers should be friendly with the customers and carry on a conversation," he says.

As the crackle of the radio spits out assignments to fill his evening, Tann discusses the personal side of taxi driving.

"It's long hours, but my wife has gotten used to it," Tann says. "Besides, she knows we need the extra money."

Navigating the same streets on a nightly basis can also wear out any driver, he says. "You drive over and over the same routes, and sometimes it can get tiresome," he says.

Amidst the crowds of inebriated students clogging Franklin Street, Tann's midnight rounds continue.

"In the years I've been driving, since the DWI laws got stricter, more and more people are calling and riding taxis," he says. "Driving late at night is always the most interesting time because you get the majority of the drunks, especially after 2 a.m., when the bars close."

Heading away from downtown Chapel Hill's bustle, Tann picks up two men with beers in their hands. When they arrive at their destination, the Omni Europa Hotel, both men disappear inside the hotel.

Fearing that the men are going to leave without paying their fare, Tann goes into the hotel after them and comes back out with his fare and an annoyed look on his face.

"Sometimes when things look suspicious, they are," says Tann with relief. "Sometimes the worst customers are like those two men, strangers staying at hotels, but most aren't that way."

Despite some less than desirable confrontations with customers, Tann said many of his trips have turned out well.

"My best experience driving was after a football game, and this man wanted to go from the hospital to Carolina Inn," Tann said. "The fare was 90 cents, and he gave me a \$100 bill, telling me to keep the change."

One of his customers, the wife of another Tar Heel driver, praised Tann's driving demeanor. "I've known C.C. for

a long time, and it doesn't matter what time you see him, he's still jolly," said Jackie Parker, a Chapel Hill resident.

At 1:30 a.m., Tann settles in for the last stretch of his shift.

"I think people respect taxi drivers," he says. "I think (they) are just the opposite of their rough and tough stereotype, and people actually thank you for where you take them."

Looking tired from a long evening behind the wheel, Tann says, "I guess I've seen so much that sometimes I just need to tell somebody the truth about a taxi driver's life."

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Upcoming Events • Week of April 8 - April 15

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Students: UCS maintains a part-time jobs notebook in 208 & 211 Hanes; internships are available on our home page.

**CAREER FAIR:**  
Spring Job Fair Wed. April 9 11:00am - 3:30pm Carmichael Auditorium

**WORKSHOPS:**  
Introduction to Internships Tues. April 8 3:30pm 209 Hanes Hall  
Introduction to Internships Tues. April 14 3:30pm 210 Hanes Hall

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Division of Student Affairs

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