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Rob Foss, manager of alcohol studies for the UNC Highway Safety Research Center, speaks at a press conference Tuesday. Foss discussed the upcoming use of breathalyzers to gauge alcohol use among students.

UNC researchers to study drinking vices of students

■ Administrators want to use the results to plan more fun, non-alcoholic events.

BY EVAN SAUDA
STAFF WRITER

The next breathalyzer test you take might not result in a suspended driver's license or a public drunkenness ticket.

The UNC Highway Safety Research Center wants to better understand the habits of students who have been drinking.

Researchers will ask students returning to residence halls and fraternity and sorority houses Thursday through

Sunday nights to take a voluntary breathalyzer test and participate in a voluntary survey about their drinking patterns.

UNC administrators will use the results of the research to design programs similar to Fall Fest that provide students with a convenient alternative to drinking.

Fall Fest, held on the Sunday before classes began, was the first time the University provided a schoolwide organized alternative to drinking.

"I think this is a wonderful program," Student Body President Mo Nathan said.

"We're getting information that will be useful to all manner of efforts."

The research center will give results

of the study to the University as soon as they become available.

"Unless we can use the results of this study to direct benefit, the study has fallen short of its mark," said Lauren Marchetti, co-director of the project. "Our goal is to quickly get this information into the hands of people on campus."

The survey, which includes a battery of questions as well as the breathalyzer test, will be administered by groups of three researchers from the center beginning in early October and lasting until they have polled between 1,200 to 1,500 students.

All students, regardless of age, can be

SEE ALCOHOL, PAGE 2

Female students, faculty move to head of class at University

■ New departments have changed the role played by female students and faculty.

BY ASHLEY STEPHENSON
STAFF WRITER

In 1917, UNC's female students created their own version of the Honor Court because they weren't allowed to serve with the men. Last year, a female student chaired the Honor Court.

Women's involvement in the University community has made great progress since the University first opened its doors to women in 1897.

Before the enrollment of women, a few were allowed to attend one class informally.

The class was botany, and the women had to sit in the back row and could not make a sound.

In his book on UNC, "Light On the

Hill," David Swain wrote, "The conventional argument prevailed that to educate women would deprive worthy men of the privilege and subject future mothers to evil influence."

In 1897, women were admitted to post-graduate courses, and Mary MacRae was the first of five women that registered.

Jane Brown, a professor of journalism and mass communication who has been with the University for 20 years, said many changes have taken place regarding the number of female faculty and students.

"Now, students are much more likely to have a woman faculty member than they would have had 20 years ago," she said.

Although women comprise 60 percent of the student population today,

female enrollment 30 years ago was less than 30 percent.

"It wasn't until 20 years ago that women began to hit equity," Brown said.

Ninety years ago, when enrollment equity was nowhere in sight, women could not participate in the Honor Court or any other governing body, so they established their own.

In 1917, women organized to form the Women's Association. The association dealt with only women's violations against the Honor Code and other campus codes, representing an entirely separate form of government for women.

The 20-year-old curriculum in women's studies has contributed to some of the most recent changes regarding women's roles at UNC.

Barbara Harris, chairwoman of the curriculum, said that at its inception, the curriculum changed the face of academics at UNC.

"The student response has been fabulous and enrollment has been amazing.

"We need more women in administration and in the chairs of departments and distinguished professorships."

JANE BROWN
Journalism professor

Every class we've put on the books closes immediately," she said.

Harris said the women's studies curriculum brought a new perspective to existing courses.

The Department of History has created courses on the history of women, the Department of Political Science has added a feminist theorist and classes in African & Afro-American Studies focus on women and AIDS, she said.

Harris said the department has helped create a community for students

interested in women's studies.

"I don't think the faculty would teach as much regarding women without the Women's Studies Department."

Brown said despite such advances, she still didn't think women were on equal footing with men at the University.

"We still need to get a woman to head student government and a woman chancellor," Brown said.

"We need more women in administration and in the chairs of departments and distinguished professorships."

Rachel Willis, an associate professor of American studies and economics, said she was confident women's involvement would continue to increase.

"I anticipate a second century of exciting progress," she said. "I'm very optimistic."

Progress in the women's studies curriculum should continue, Harris said.

"We're still catching our breath after seven or eight years of enormous growth."

CAA revives camping out to net seats

■ The student group will return to the way it gave out tickets two years ago.

BY SHARIF DURHAM
UNIVERSITY EDITOR

After last season's hiatus, basketball fanatics will return to South Campus next month with camping tents and sleeping bags, trying to get the best seats to home games.

The Carolina Athletic Association will revive the tradition of allowing students to sleep out for basketball tickets at the beginning of October.

"When you have a scarce resource like basketball tickets, you need to find an equitable way to distribute them," said Charlie Roederer, co-president of the Carolina Athletic Association.

For years, students got tickets for the 1,500 lower level seats and some of the 4,000 seats in the upper level of the Smith Center by sleeping outside in line.

Students would turn the Smith Center parking lot into a shanty town, setting up tents, throwing informal parties and meeting new people. Many South Campus residents would set their alarm clock to go off every hour so that they could make the random checks made by CAA members.

Erica Camp, co-director of sports marketing for CAA, said she spent hours talking with friends she rarely saw.

"It's just something really neat that you have to experience at least once," she said.

CAA changed the distribution policy

SEE TICKETS, PAGE 2

FDA, state unlikely to outlaw 'fen-phen'

■ The FDA said it did not see just cause to impose a ban on the diet drug.

BY KANIKA HEARTLEY
STAFF WRITER

Florida's emergency ban on the diet drug "fen-phen" seems unlikely to spread, state and national officials said Tuesday.

The ban — in place until further research can determine proper regulations — stemmed from extreme side effects in patients and from a recent Mayo Clinic study that raised national concerns over the drug's health hazards.

But the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and N.C. legislators said further regulation attempts were improbable for now. "We don't regulate doctors and pharmacies," said FDA spokesman Don McLearn.

He said that in order to ban a drug an eminent hazard must be involved. "What we have here is an unapproved use of an approved drug," he said.

But N.C. legislators said the state might take stronger action than the FDA when the spring session of the General Assembly starts.

"There will be study commissions looking at health issues, but no action can be taken until the session begins," said Sen. William Martin, D-Guilford, and vice-chairman of the Senate Children and Human Resources Committee.

Rep. Verla Insko, D-Orange, and Sen. Jeanne Lucas, D-Durham, said they didn't remember any attempts to ban the drug in the previous session through the introduction of bills, but that was no indication of possible future attempts.

Problems with the diet drug combination recently surfaced despite the FDA's approval of the drugs years ago.

"What we have here is an unapproved use of an approved drug. No one has ever brought a combination of 'fen-phen' to us."

DON MCLEARN
FDA spokesman

The FDA approved the separate drugs phentermine and fenfluramine as appetite suppressants for short-term use.

But doctors approved the off-label "fen-phen" combination in their practice of medicine, creating potentially deadly side effects. "No one has ever brought a combination of 'fen-phen' to us for approval," McLearn said.

At least one person has died while using the drug, but no concrete links were made between the drug and the death. "This is a case where there appears to be evidence of a strong association, but we're monitoring it," McLearn said.

"Fen-phen," a combination of the appetite-suppressant drugs fenfluramine and phentermine, was associated with the development of a heart valve problem called pulmonary hypertension.

As of Aug. 22, more than 80 cases of the rare cardiac valvular disease in patients on "fen-phen" were reported to the FDA, but an FDA health advisory said the relationship between the drugs and the development of the valvular disease was not conclusively established.

With the latest research, the use of "fen-phen" dropped severely. In the last four years, new prescriptions for fenfluramine had increased 6,390 percent.

Though a national ban isn't feasible right now, the FDA took measures to warn the public. The FDA requested that the manufacturers revise "fen-phen's" label.

BRICKING THE WAY



Brian Keck (front) and Clayborn Baker work Tuesday afternoon outside Gardner Hall laying the brick walkway. Construction continues to be the theme of the campus this fall.

Doctors not surprised by diet pill ban

BY REYNOLDS RICHTER
STAFF WRITER

Florida's ban of the weight-loss drug commonly known as "fen-phen" did not surprise many area physicians.

The pill, once used to treat obesity, has been found to cause numerous side effects, the most serious of which are pulmonary hypertension and valvular heart disease, Dr. Glenn Withrow said.

Withrow, a physician at The Family Doctor in Chapel Hill, has stopped prescribing the drug to his patients.

"The medications for obesity should only be used for people whose health risk outweighs the risk of the medication," Withrow said.

Martha Mills, a licensed dietitian nutritionist with Profile Associates, said "fen-phen" should only be prescribed for patients with a body mass index of 30.

For example, a 6-foot-3-inch man should weigh 240 pounds before being considered for "fen-phen" treatment. Normal weight for that height ranges from 170 pounds to 200 pounds, Mills said.

"I have seen it prescribed in all different weights of people," Mills said. "The people I've seen have taken themselves off it, or their doctors have taken them off it because of high risk."

The medication is only intended to be used for less than one year, and the effects usually wear off after three to four months, Mills said.

"We really don't know the long-term consequences of being on this drug for very long," she said.

SEE DIET PILL, PAGE 2

INSIDE Wednesday

Sweeping away litter

Gov. Jim Hunt's Litter Sweep program fights roadside trash. The program takes place this month. Page 5

Reaching for the stars

Programs and shows at Morehead Planetarium offer education and excitement for audiences. Page 3

Today's weather

Cloudy;
low 80s
Thursday: Partly cloudy;
low 80s

When you get to the end of your rope, tie a knot and hang on.

Anonymous