

# The Daily Tar Heel

105 years of editorial freedom  
Serving the students and the University  
community since 1893

TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 1998  
Volume 106, Issue 22

News/Features/Arts/Sports: 962-0245  
Business/Advertising: 962-1163  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina  
© 1998 DTH Publishing Corp.  
All rights reserved.

## Girl dies from self-inflicted gunshot wound

■ School officials have not yet released the name of the middle-school student.

BY MICHAEL KANAREK  
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

A seventh-grader who shot herself in a Grey Culbreth Middle School bathroom died Monday afternoon, Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools officials announced.

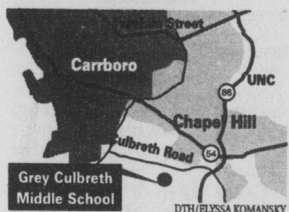
The 13-year-old girl, whose name is not being released until her entire family can be notified, died at 1:55 p.m. at UNC Hospitals, a hospital spokesman said.

According to police reports, the girl went into the school bathroom at about 11 a.m., where she shot herself in the head.

School system Superintendent Neil Pedersen expressed sympathy after the incident.

"Our condolences go out to her family, her friends, to all who know her," Pedersen said.

Officials would not comment on any of the student's possible motivations and did not know if the girl had previously sought any kind of counseling.



Pedersen said there were no known witnesses to the shooting, and school system spokeswoman Kim Hoke said a teacher had discovered the girl.

Chapel Hill Police Department spokeswoman Jane Cousins said that while they knew the girl had used a handgun, there was little other information available.

"From our point, it's still early," she said. "Our focus today has been helping the school."

Chapel Hill police blocked the entrance to the school after the incident, only allowing parents of students onto school property.

"We needed to make sure we could provide the best environment possible," Pedersen said.

Pedersen said many parents heard about the death through the media since they could move information faster than the school system.

After hearing reports, many parents picked up their children from the school.

Some parents and students were visibly distraught as they left the school.

"It seems like such a waste," said Ben Waugh, a parent of a student.

Rita Burnette, whose son attends Grey Culbreth, said she had rushed to the school after hearing about the shooting on the radio.

"I just dropped everything and ran right here," she said.

Eddie Jones, the husband of a counselor at the school, said he hurried to the scene because initial reports were not specific about the nature of the shooting.

"I've spent 25 years here, and this is probably the first time something like this has happened in Chapel Hill."

Miles Parker, a sixth-grader at the



A weeping student, distraught over the news of a shooting, is consoled while being led away from Grey Culbreth Middle School.

school who said he heard the gunshot, gave an account of the events following the shooting.

"Everybody was going kind of

crazy," he said.

Parker said teachers moved students into the cafeteria where the windows had been covered so the children could

not see the scene. The children were not allowed near the bathroom, he said.

SEE SHOOTING, PAGE 4

## School officials, parents praise response

BY ROB NELSON  
CITY EDITOR

Despite the shock surrounding the Monday death of a Grey Culbreth Middle School student, parents and officials say the school responded well to the tragic circumstances.

School administrators, Red Cross personnel and members of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools' Crisis Prevention teams were at the school to counsel both students and faculty throughout the ordeal.

"It was my understanding that within five minutes of being notified of the incident, the superintendent, the two assistant superintendents and other personnel were on site," school board member Nicholas Didow said.

"Everything I've heard is that the Culbreth teachers and Culbreth parents

"We believe it is important for students to have as normal a schedule as possible. We believe it is important to provide stability."

NEIL PEDERSEN  
Superintendent of schools

handled the situation in a very reasonable and effective way."

In an effort not to alarm students, school officials did not suspend classes following the incident.

Superintendent Neil Pedersen said it was necessary to keep the situation relatively under control.

"We believe it is important for students to have as normal a schedule as

possible," he said. "We believe it is important to provide stability."

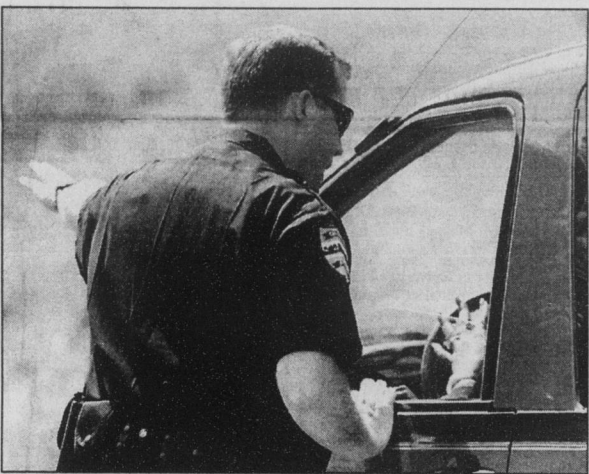
Assistant Superintendent Ann Hart said the Crisis Intervention Team at the middle school went into action immediately and district personnel and resources were later brought in.

Hart said there would be more than 40 support people on hand today during classes to help with students, adding that a counselor was also on duty at the school until 6:30 p.m. Monday.

She praised both the Chapel Hill police and fire departments as well as county personnel who had been contacted for help. "We believe we'll be able to draw on this community," she said.

Ben Waugh, whose 13-year-old daughter attends the school, said he was pleased with the response from officials. "They handled it well," he said. "They

SEE REACTION, PAGE 4



A police officer talks to a parent of a Grey Culbreth Middle School student after police released news of a shooting inside the school.

## Malfunctioning parking meters lead to tickets downtown

BY TONY MECIA  
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS EDITOR

When Karin Hughes parked her white Mercury Capri on Franklin Street last week, she made sure to pump two quarters into the meter.

She'd been burned before.

"I've experienced a lot of tickets," Hughes said. "There's some (meters) on Henderson Street — if you put in a quarter you're supposed to get, what, 15 minutes? And you get 12 minutes."

The Daily Tar Heel tested downtown parking meters on Franklin Street and found that several expired too soon. An analysis of town parking ticket records suggests that the town has ticketed cars parked at these meters.

The DTH tested the 26 meters on Franklin Street between the courthouse and Spanky's Restaurant in October and retested them March 22.

In both tests, the DTH inserted 50 cents in the meters, which should have bought 30 minutes. In both October and earlier this month, five meters expired before 29 minutes. Three meters — numbers 76, 61 and 4 — expired too soon in both tests.

The town issued 106 parking tickets to cars at those three meters between October and the end of February, according to figures from the town's parking database. At \$10 a ticket, that's \$1,060 flowing into town coffers from faulty meters.

Robert Godding, Chapel Hill's trans-

"There's some on Henderson Street — if you put in a quarter you're supposed to get, what, 15 minutes? And you get 12 minutes."

KARIN HUGHES  
Chapel Hill motorist

portation director, said parking enforcement officers do not intentionally give citations on busted meters.

"If the meter's broken, they won't write a ticket on it," he said. "If there's an indication there's a problem with it, then we'll get it fixed."

The town does not check whether a meter works unless a citizen complains about a particular meter, Godding said.

Drivers who thought they received a ticket unfairly could appeal their citations, he added.

In the DTH tests, the digital meters all worked correctly. The faulty meters were all the older, mechanical version.

In the October test, seven meters did not work at all — they were jammed or otherwise broken. Those seven were repaired by March. In the March test, one meter was jammed.

Chapel Hill parking officers write tickets on expired meters between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday, excluding holidays.

Although some meters expire too



The Daily Tar Heel tested parking meters on Franklin Street and found that several expired too soon. Some motorists have complained that they have been ticketed unfairly.

soon, others give too much time. In the March test, six meters expired several minutes after the 30-minute mark was reached, including two meters that were stuck on 60 minutes.

Drivers aren't complaining about those.

As Deirdre Norton crossed Franklin Street near Henderson Street, she looked at the windshield of her gray Ford

Taurus and breathed a sigh of relief — no ticket.

"I've been gone for an hour and it's gone down 10 minutes," she said. "Maybe it is broken."

## Transfer GPA requirements set to change

■ Junior transfers entering in fall 1999 must earn a 1.5 GPA to maintain eligibility.

BY LESA NAGY  
STAFF WRITER

Junior transfers entering UNC in fall 1999 will have to earn a 1.5 grade point average during their first semester to maintain eligibility, half a point up from current standards.

The Faculty Council approved the higher GPA requirement on Friday.

Bobbi Owen, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, said the increase would make it easier for junior transfers to enter their senior year and graduate.

Anthony Passannante, chairman of the council's Educational Policy Committee, said he supported the increase because it was almost mathematically impossible to pull a 1.0 up to a 1.9 in one semester.

"It makes it harder for students who do badly but still maintain eligibility to graduate," Passannante said.

Owen said she proposed the GPA requirement increase not to punish junior transfers, but to allow time for junior students to catch academic problems before it was too late. Both "native students" — students who enter UNC their freshman year — and junior transfers need a 1.9 GPA to enter their senior year and a 2.0 to graduate.

"What we are doing is telling students to 'slow down, fill the pothole, and proceed,'" Owen said.

The increase also resulted from the disparity in requirements for "native" students entering their junior year and junior transfers starting their second semester: a difference of one grade point. "Native" students must earn a 2.0 while junior transfers must earn a 1.0.

Jean Girtman, assistant director for Undergraduate Admissions, said the lower requirement for junior transfers did not accurately reflect the pool of admittants, who average a 3.0 GPA upon admittance to UNC.

In addition, transfer students must take courses at the community colleges that correspond to courses at UNC and must meet the same high school requirements as students who entered their freshman year.

Owen also said the current GPA requirement did not reflect the majority of performances of junior transfers once they reached UNC. According to a transfer student performance report,

SEE GPA, PAGE 4

## INSIDE Tuesday

### High and dry

The number of students joining fraternities this year rose, which Director of Greek Affairs Ron Binder attributed to dry rush. Page 5



### More about the candidates

Read more about the two people who want to be editor of The Daily Tar Heel next year. Leslie Wilkinson and Sharif Durhams share their plans for the newspaper. Page 2

### Today's weather

Partly cloudy; mid 80s  
Wednesday: Showers likely; low 80s

### Get published!

Got a great idea for an in-depth story? If so, submit a proposal for the Joanna Howell Fund. The Daily Tar Heel will publish the winning proposal at the end of the semester. Competition will be fierce, so get your applications in as soon as possible — by April 3. Questions? Call 962-0245 for more details.

*I've had a lot of experience with people smarter than I am.*

Gerald Ford