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Council Passes Aggressive Panhandling Law

A resolution also requested that habitual offenders of the ordinance not be fed at the IFC shelter's kitchen.

By ALYSON PEERY
Staff Writer

After months of discussion, the Chapel Hill Town Council adopted an ordinance Monday night prohibiting aggressive panhandling downtown.

"It's important for the council to pass this in order to improve the general atmosphere in Chapel Hill," Mayor Rosemary Waldorf said.

The ordinance calls for an end to aggressive begging and panhandling in all public places, as well as simple panhandling near banks, ATMs, public buses, bus stops, roadways and on medians.

Aggressive panhandling is defined in the ordinance as intimidating or accosting someone else while asking for money or other valuables. This means the aggressive panhandler is threatening physical violence.

The ordinance was accompanied by a resolution requesting that the Inter-Faith Council establish rules regarding its community kitchen.

Habitual offenders of the new panhandling ordinance and existing state laws might not be allowed to eat at the IFC Community Kitchen if the IFC complies with the resolution.

But IFC officials were reluctant to agree.

"I don't want the blame for this problem to be laid at the feet of the Inter-Faith Council," said Rita Gray, president of the board of directors of the IFC.

"In discussing it with Mayor Waldorf, we came to the conclusion that it's a community problem, not just an IFC problem, so we wanted to work together," she said.

Chapel Hill Police Chief Ralph Pendergraph said the ordinance could mean that residents and visitors will enjoy a less threatening atmosphere downtown.

Pendergraph said he did not plan to increase police presence downtown because of the ordinance.

Police do not want the courts to be flooded with criminals because of the ordinance, he said.

But the ordinance may have legal implications because it prohibits simple panhandling in some places without specifying the use of physical force.

Deborah Ross, executive director of the North Carolina affiliate of the American Civil Liberties Union, said this might be unconstitutional.

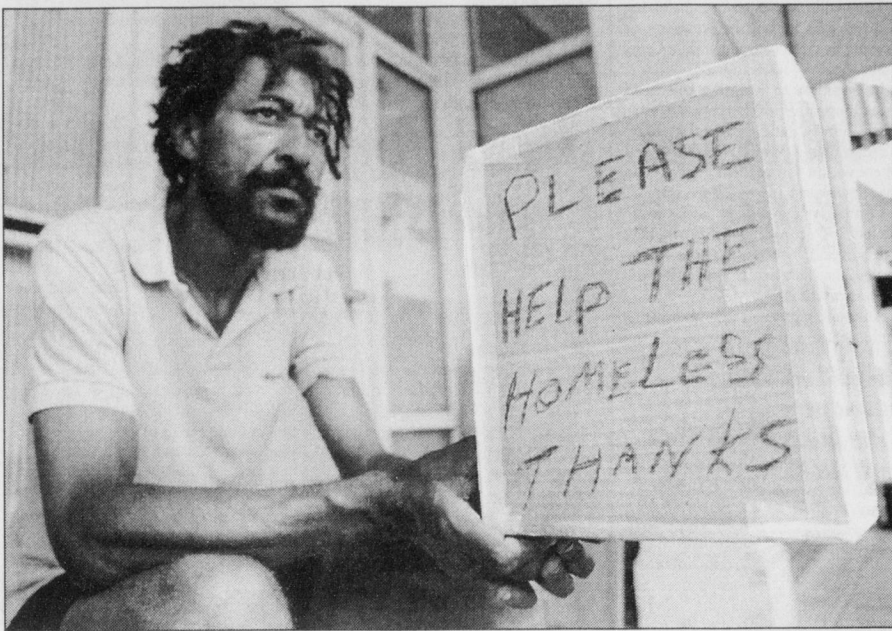
"You can't prohibit asking other people for money, but you can prohibit physical violence," she said.

Some community members said they doubted the ordinance would be as effective as other possible measures.

Top of the Hill restaurant owner Scott Maitland suggested positioning donation boxes for the IFC on downtown streets, so people have the opportunity to give to a less aggressive cause.

"Let's not talk about aggressive panhandling, let's just become better at begging than (panhandlers) are," he said.

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.



Lendale McCall, who is homeless, watches passersby as he sits along Franklin Street on Monday afternoon. While some people ignore McCall, he said quite a few help him out as well.

DTH/JENNIFER GUTHRIE

Colleges, Businesses Split on Problem's Severity

By COURTNEY HATHAWAY
Staff Writer

While Chapel Hill took action against aggressive panhandling Monday, officials from other college towns across the country said their problems were minimal.

"It gets to be bothersome, but it's not

a big problem," said Joe Walters, the sergeant of crime prevention in Athens, home of the University of Georgia.

Walters said recent actions taken by the police department had helped alleviate panhandling-related concerns.

But such measures have not calmed business owners who say the problems affect the appeal of the area.

"It's absolutely atrocious," said Will Oldham, an employee at Wuxtry Records, a store located on College Avenue, UGA's equivalent to Franklin Street. "It makes the area look really terrible."

Katherine Speck, a senior at UGA,

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Young Boy's Body Discovered in Mebane Field

The child was determined to be a white or Hispanic boy who had been dead for about four months.

By MATT LECLERCQ
Assistant City Editor

The Orange County Sheriff's Department is searching for the identity of a young boy whose body was discovered Monday by a man mowing grass along Industrial Drive in Mebane.

County sheriffs report that the body, which was found 100 feet from the road near a billboard, was that of a 10-to-12

year-old white or Hispanic child.

No cause of death had been determined late Monday, sheriff's department Major Don Truelove said.

The body was fully decomposed and had been at the scene for about four months, he said.

"There was no detectable blood on the clothing or shoes." The investigators were unable to detect indications of any obvious trauma at the scene.

A pair of brown shorts with Fox Polo Club inscribed on the inside label were found on the body, reports state.

Black and white athletic shoes in a size three with "ZXS" stamped on the heels were also found on the body,

reports state.

No shirt or other clothing was found in the area around the body.

Truelove said there were no reports of missing children in the area who fit the description of the body.

The sheriff's department has sent out information about the remains to authorities across the state and to state and national missing children agencies.

After sheriff's deputies arrived at the scene Friday, the remains were collected and taken to the Orange County Medical Examiner's office, Truelove said.

The skeleton contained dental evidence that will help identify the child, reports state.

The dental work could have been provided by a private dentist or the health department, and investigators will try to match the evidence with dental records of children reported missing on the state and national level, Truelove said.

However, making a match could take several months, Truelove said.

If the dental records do not match those of other missing children, identification of the body would be difficult, he said.

"We have to take records of people not accounted for and try to compare their dental make-ups with the remains," he said.

Friday's discovery was the first time

an unidentified body had been found in Orange County in eight years, Truelove said.

In Sept. 1990, the decomposed body of a woman was found near Interstate 40, but investigators were unable to identify the remains.

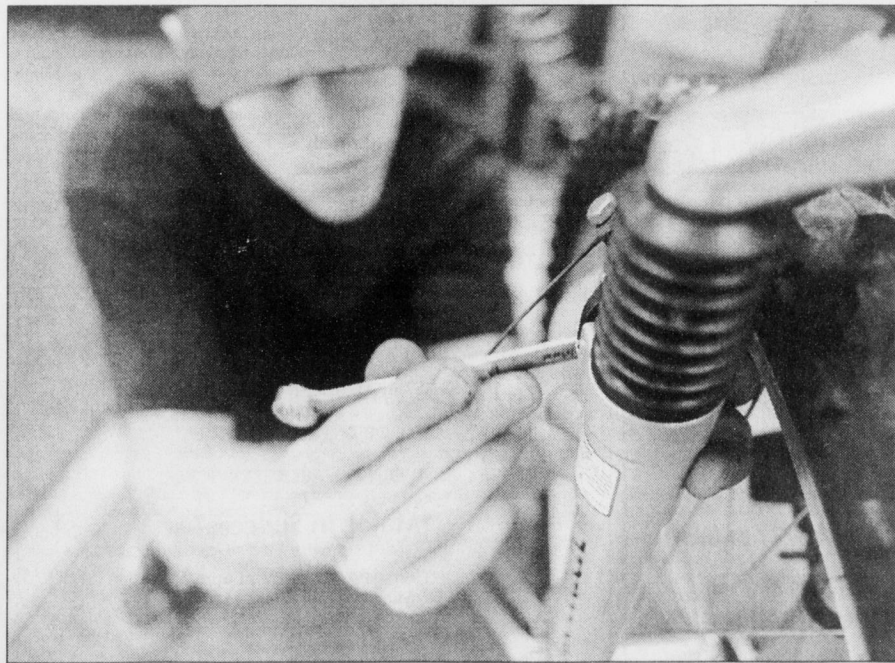
"(The woman's body) was not decomposed to the state of the (child's) body," Truelove said.

Industrial Drive runs parallel to Interstate 40 and 85.

The body was found near the intersection of Industrial Drive and Mattress Factory Road.

The City Editor can be reached at citydesk@unc.edu.

FINE TUNING



DTH/JENNIFER GUTHRIE

Carrboro resident Rob Noti repairs a bicycle Monday afternoon at Franklin Street Cycles. Noti started riding when he was 12 years old and never stopped, he said. He has been working at Franklin Street Cycles for almost two years.

Tuition Plan To Make Rates More Consistent

The Board of Governors' tuition task force called for smaller, more incremental increases in student tuition.

By KEITH TAYLOR
Staff Writer

The Board of Governor's Tuition Policy Task Force met Monday to discuss a proposal on tuition reform, which will probably take effect next year.

Members of the task force, which formed in response to student concerns about inconsistent tuition hikes, discussed clarifying the Tuition Policy report and the need to emphasize financial aid and slower rises in tuition costs.

Task force member Katherine Kraft said most students would probably prefer small, consistent tuition increases over large, occasional increases.

"It is much easier for students to plan for consistent increases," she said.

Smaller tuition increases could prevent large tuition hikes like the one enacted in August 1997 that cost out-of-state students over \$500 more per semester.

In November, the task force will pre-

sent its report to the BOG.

If approved, the BOG will then propose new tuition rates for each year to the General Assembly, UNC-system President Molly Broad said.

Task force chairman Gary Barnes said task force members believed the BOG would address the financial needs of students better than the state legislature.

The board has much more knowledge of what students face financially because they are charged with governing the UNC system, he said.

Broad said the plan would help clarify the cost of attending system schools.

"It will give students and their families an assurance that undergraduate tuition rates will stay low," she said.

The N.C. General Assembly previously set the cost of tuition based on how much money remained in their budget, Barnes said.

"I think that's had several unforeseen consequences," he said.

He said those consequences included the increase of tuition faster than the growth of per capita personal income.

Because the legislature had set student tuition before, students were forced

See TUITION, Page 4

Registering For Classes To Hit Web

About one-fourth of seniors could register for spring classes through the Internet to test a new online system.

By KATIE ABEL
Staff Writer

On-line class registration may be a reality as soon as next semester if trials with the new system are successful.

The first trial run, which will take place Oct. 12, will involve student government cabinet members, Student Body Secretary Minesh Patel said.

"If the trial with the cabinet is successful, then a higher volume of students will be part of a second trial." Patel said about 1,500 seniors who have the Oct. 24 registration date would have an opportunity to register for classes on the Web between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on Oct. 23.

The University's Student Information Systems Committee made World Wide Web registration a priority last spring.

"They pushed it really hard and have done a lot of work in a short amount of time," said Sally Chadbourne, information technology chairwoman for student government.

The University's last attempt at registering students on-line has its problems. The Department of University Housing's backed down from its plan to have students register on the Web last spring after students had trouble accessing the Web site.

Officials at the Department of University Housing had to extend the housing request deadline to allow all students the opportunity to register.

But Chadbourne said the trials would help determine what would be technically possible for the on-line system.

"Our first concern right now is making sure this service will really be a benefit to students," she said.

The on-line service will not be available to these seniors on Saturday or Sunday during the normal registration period, Chadbourne said.

She said seniors participating in the trials would be asked to complete a survey that will consist of eight questions examining the Web site's accessibility, whether "drop/add" functions work and the time it takes to register.

Chadbourne stressed that the experimental trials were optional for students. Associate University Registrar Donna Redmon said seniors would be

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INSIDE Tuesday

Sprawl Solution



Urban expansion has caused many problems for the Triangle. A proposed areawide rail system could remedy traffic and environmental problems.

See Page 5.

Blue Cross' Blue Days

Chapel Hill's largest private employer, Blue Cross & Blue Shield, might eliminate 150 positions as part of an effort to reduce the \$62 million in operating costs the insurer lost last year. See Page 2.

West Bank Agreement

Israeli and Palestinian leaders say they might have reached a compromise on talks that would give some portions of the West Bank back to Palestine. See Page 4.

Today's Weather

Partly cloudy;
Lower 80s
Wednesday: Partly cloudy;
Lower 80s.

Bed is the poor man's opera.
Italian proverb