

Officials to Restrict Parking at Pasture

By JENNY BEAVER
Staff Writer

The Chapel Hill town manager's office is looking at options to bring before the Town Council at the end of April on how to deal with parking problems at the town-owned Merritt Pasture.

Officials said Monday they were planning on enforcing ticketing on the N.C. 54 Bypass exit ramp, which is the only spot to park near popular meadow.

By the end of the month or during the beginning of May, the Chapel Hill Department of Transportation will post "No Parking" signs along the ramp, said Assistant Town Manager Sonna Loewenthal.

During the warm weather, the pasture, with grass as green as a golf course, is often full of people playing with their children and dogs.

She said parking on the shoulder of highways was banned because of the danger associated with pulling off a highway into heavy traffic.

"If you have kids or pets that could run out in the street, then parking there is extremely dangerous," she said.

Chapel Hill police Capt. Tony Oakley also emphasized the danger with the parking situation at the park.

"If cars are lined up along the ramp, then a car driving off the shoulder back onto the highway can't see around the curve to see if another car is coming," he said.

Oakley said a parking ticket at Merritt Pasture would depend on the specific violation. "If it's a state violation, the ticket can cost between \$75 and \$80. If it's a town violation, it can cost around \$25."

The town has not yet decided what kind of violation it would be, he said.

Council member Joyce Brown said the council first looked at the parking area at the request of residents who complained the parking was dangerous.

"When citizens asked that we look into the problem, we had some staff to do it, and they agreed the parking was a problem," she said.

Brown also said access to the pasture had been an issue since the town bought the land about 10 years ago and designated it an open field. "The problem is we have no direct access to the land."



Florence Mernier and her mother-in-law, Nadine, bring her dog Simba to Merritt Pasture to play. Mernier says she comes to the field every few days.

Those who visit the pasture said they did not approve of the parking prohibition. UNC graduate student Robert Miller was at the pasture Monday with his two Weimaraners. "The field is such a nice area to take

dogs to play and run around," he said. "I guess I'll just have to find a way to sneak in."

Chapel Hill resident Frank Jones said it was ridiculous to keep people away. He was at the pasture Monday with his

5-year-old daughter and their dog. "I'll just drive inside the park or in a nearby residential neighborhood."

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

1 Guilty Plea in Shepard Case

Associated Press

LARAMIE, Wyo. — One of two men charged in the killing of gay college student Matthew Shepard pleaded guilty Monday to murder, admitting he tied the bleeding young man to a wooden fence and left him for dead.

Russell Henderson, a 21-year-old high school dropout and roofer, avoided a trial and a possible death sentence with his plea. He was sentenced to two consecutive life terms and will not be eligible for parole. His only hope for release is a pardon.

Judy Shepard cried at the courtroom podium while talking about her son, then turned to Henderson: "I hope you never experience another day or night without experiencing the terror, humiliation, the hopelessness and helplessness that my son felt that night."

Authorities said Henderson and Aaron McKinney, 21, posed as homosexuals and lured the 5-foot-2, 105-pound Shepard out of a bar last October, kidnapped and pistol-whipped him and left him tied to a fence in the cold.

The 21-year-old University of Wyoming student died five days later at a hospital. The crime led to demands for stronger hate-crime laws around the country. Although he pleaded guilty to felony murder and kidnapping, Henderson said his friend and co-defendant delivered the fatal blows.

He matter-of-factly recounted the grisly beating and his attempts to cover up his role, then asked forgiveness from his and Shepard's families.

"There is not a moment that goes by that I don't see what happened that night," he said. "I hope one day you will

be able to find it in your heart to forgive me."

Henderson said he tried to stop the beating, but McKinney struck him with a gun when he spoke up.

"Matthew looked really bad, so I told (McKinney) to stop, he's had enough," he said.

Judge Jeffrey Donnell told Henderson he did not believe he was remorseful. "The pain you have caused here, Mr. Henderson, will never go away. Never," Donnell said.

McKinney will be tried in August on first-degree murder, kidnapping and aggravated robbery charges. He could be sentenced to death.

There had been speculation that if Henderson pleaded guilty, he would end up testifying against his friend and co-defendant, but officials would not confirm that will happen.

Campus Calendar

Tuesday

1:30 p.m. — "Networking and Cultural Heritage," a talk by Daniel Green, executive director, National Initiative for a Networked Cultural Heritage, in the Pleasants Family Room, Wilson Library.

2 p.m. to 4 p.m. — Pet visit with residents of Carolina House Retirement Home as part of Senior Service Week. For more information, e-mail Lauren at lthrower@email.unc.edu.

4 p.m., 8 p.m. — Lab! Theatre presents "War of the Worlds" by Howard Koch at Playmaker's Theatre. Free.

Wednesday

noon — The Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center presents an Around the Circle discussion: "Millions for Mumia: Get on the Bus!" Come find out why and how you can attend a rally in Philadelphia on April 24 for Mumia Abu Jamal. In the BCC.

12:15 p.m. — The Department of Environmental Sciences and

Engineering will present the next installment in its Environmental Engineering Teleconference Seminar Series. Dr. Carl F. Cerco of the U.S. Army Waterways Experiment Station in Vicksburg, Md., will discuss "Ecosystem Modeling in the Chesapeake Bay." The presentation will be broadcast from the G. Fred Mayes Telecommunications Center on the second floor of Rosenau Hall.

3 p.m. to 5 p.m. — Morrison Residence Hall will be hosting the South Campus Majors Fair for all residents on South Campus. Department representatives will be available to provide information and answer questions in the lobby of Morrison.

3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. — Dr. Joel Schwartz, associate professor at the Harvard School of Public Health's environmental epidemiology program, will discuss "The Distributed Lag Between Air Pollution, Mortality and Morbidity" in the Ibrahim Seminar Room, 1301 McGavran-Greenberg Building.

4 p.m. to 6 p.m. — Games with residents of Carolina House Retirement Home as part of Senior Service Week. For more information, e-mail Lauren at lthrower@email.unc.edu.

Items of Interest

International student and scholar orientation counselor applications are available at the International Center in Student Union. Help the International Center welcome newly arrived international students and scholars to UNC before classes begin in August.

For the Record

Wednesday's article "Rough-Housing: Women's Rugby Club" should have stated that competitors in the UNC women's rugby club's league are club teams.

The Daily Tar Heel regrets the error.

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The Sports Fan

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