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proposals this year to lower GPAs.

Alton Banks, co-chairman of the academic advisory committee at N.C. State, said the issue had not been brought to the academic policy committee this year, despite the fact that N.C. State's aggregate GPA increased 17 percent from 1990 to 1999. UNC-CH's GPA rose 18 percent during the same time period.

Similarly, UNC-W administrators said they were not overly concerned about a GPA increase there. The school saw a 24 percent boost in aggregate GPA from 1990 to 2000, well above the increases at UNC-CH and N.C. State.

Melton McLaurin, UNC-W associate vice chancellor of academic affairs, said the increase was not a concern for two reasons. First, UNC-W's aggregate GPA is 2.55, well below UNC-CH's 3.0. Second, the school has seen an enormous jump in SAT scores, indicating students are better prepared for college and thus, able to garner higher GPAs.

Other system schools have also seen an increase in the SAT scores and GPAs of incoming freshmen. At ASU, GPA has increased 16 percent from 1991 to 1998. "(Grade inflation) is something of a concern but not a front-burner issue right now," Ward said.

Gary Lowe, interim vice chancellor of academic affairs at ECU, said that while statistics reflected a 17 percent GPA increase between 1992 and 1999, grade inflation was not the only explanation. Lowe said other reasons could be an increase in student quality. This is the explanation several UNC-CH stu-

dents offered as part of backlash to the committee's report.

UNC-Pembroke saw the smallest increase in GPA during the 1990s at only 3 percent. Charles Jenkins, provost and vice chancellor of academic affairs, said he was not aware GPA had risen.

Not all system schools are experiencing increased GPAs. One school where the aggregate GPA actually decreased was UNC-Charlotte, falling by 4 percent between 1991 and 1999. UNC-C administrators attributed the decrease to changes in academic policy.

Administrators speculated on why grade inflation had become a concern at UNC-CH. UNC-W Faculty Senate President Lynne Snowden said concern over grade inflation at UNC-CH might be due to the fact that the aggregate GPA at UNC-CH had reached 3.0.

Monika Moore, UNC-CH student body vice president, said the University had to research SAT scores of incoming freshmen and advanced class enrollment more before acting on grade inflation. She said rumors that actions amending grading policies would be taken in April were false. Economics Professor Boone Turchi, chairman of the UNC committee and primary author of the report, said fall was the earliest time changes could be implemented.

Moore said, "The fact that other universities in our system have researched the issue and have not opted to make changes says to me that they have come to the decision that it would be more harmful than helpful to students to implement a grade inflation plan."

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she said. "I'm a senior, and I can't even get a permit."

Bates said she had not been able to park anywhere lately without receiving a ticket. "I've gotten four or five tickets in the past year. I've noticed the officers more, and they just don't care."

University Police Officer Doug Arwood said parking tickets were a nec-

essary evil on a campus with a messy parking situation.

"There's no good solution," he said. "The parking guys are just doing their job."

Hawkins said the DPS, which accrues \$850,000 a year from parking fines, did not want to issue a lot of tickets.

"We just want to catch the people who are in violation."

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equipment, Weiss said.

What all this really does is take care of the expenses and logistics of starting a new business so the student teams can focus on their concept and vision, he said.

He said StartEmUp would take the student's business from "dorm room to board room."

UNC students must submit their ideas online through the StartEmUp.com submission form by 11:59 p.m. March 31.

StartEmUp is not necessarily looking for extensively thought-out plans, Weiss said. The submission form requires a summary of the idea along with what market the business would target and a background of the team members.

"There is a lot of value in a new idea," Huang said. And that is how these guys sold their own idea to investors.

StartEmUp is funded by a private group of investors out of Miami as well as by the families and friends of the

founders. It has an advisory board made up of business executives and entrepreneurs who help the founders evaluate the entries as business models.

StartEmUp will take a 20 percent cut of the profits from the new Internet companies it helps found, once they are up and running.

But do not be fooled by the extensiveness of the backing these students were able to procure. The brunt of the work is done by the four students.

"It is for students, by students," Weiss said. The company is based on a partnership between StartEmUp and its incubator companies.

Weiss said, "Our success depends on the quality of the companies we help."

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Nudity, Drunkenness Mark La. Mardi Gras Free-for-All

Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS, La. - Revelers shed inhibitions - and some their clothes - as hundreds of thousands of people jammed the streets for Mardi Gras, the final fling before the austerity of Lent.

While families with children gathered along mansion-lined St. Charles Avenue for a day of parades, a police ban on nudity went mostly unenforced in the French Quarter.

"I haven't had a shirt on in five days," said Ashley Kennedy, a New Orleans bartender.

While an artist painted designs on Kennedy's breast, four police officers watched from across the street.

"It's Mardi Gras, and a little flash of flesh adds to everybody's fun," Kennedy said.

Judi Jones strolled down Bourbon Street with her breasts concealed only by a layer of paint and carrying a sign that read "The right to bare breasts."

"They cost me a fortune, so why shouldn't I show them off?" asked Jones,

24, of Dallas.

No problems were reported, police Chief Richard Pennington said.

The annual celebration is normally trouble-free and most arrests are only for drunkenness, which police say usually means a drunk who bothers people around him, and public urination.

Police do not release arrest figures until after Mardi Gras, which ended at midnight Tuesday - the last day of feasting and celebration before Ash Wednesday and the sacrifices of Catholics during Lent.

Southern Louisiana is heavily Catholic.

This year's later-than-usual Mardi Gras, coinciding with Spring Break for many colleges and 80-degree weather, was expected to produce a record crowd in excess of the million or so that usually jam New Orleans and its suburbs.

"This is my sixth Mardi Gras, and it's the largest crowd I've seen," Pennington said. "I'm sure we'll set a record. I'd estimate we have well over a million, maybe a million-and-a-half people on the streets."

Outdoor Theater Seeks Talent

BY MATT MANSFIELD Staff Writer

When performing, the last thing an actor wants is to be heckled by a "baaing" goat.

But the actors in the Snow Camp outdoor drama program in Burlington last summer had to contend with that mishap for half an act.

"We had live pyros for battle scenes," said Christa Arnold, a Snow Camp veteran, whose play used livestock. "It just freaked the animals out," she said, recalling the animals rioting backstage.

These instances highlight some of the unique aspects of working in an outdoor drama production.

The Institute of Outdoor Drama will hold auditions at UNC for 16 outdoor theater companies, hailing from states as far away as New Mexico and Texas. And the 13th is the final deadline for aspiring actors to register to audition.

The Carolina-based program brings in performers from across the nation, but its home school is continually underrepresented, said Cindy Biles, an Outdoor Drama representative.

To encourage involvement, UNC students will receive a \$5 discount from the \$30 cost of auditioning this year.

The companies put on historical plays local to the area, Shakespeare fes-

tivals, or religious dramas called passion plays. They hire actors, singers, dancers and technicians to work on shows running 10 to 12 weeks in the summer.

"They try to tie it in with most college summer breaks," Biles said. In fact, 90 percent of the performers are college-age, she said.

"I auditioned here at the Great Hall with the Institute of Outdoor Drama," said Amber Sherrill, a sophomore graphics design major.

After being called back by three companies for her dancing, Sherrill signed on to the Manteo production of "The Lost Colony."

"I moved after school and stayed there the entire summer," she said.

The actors move into apartments or communal housing offered by the company, and Arnold said she experienced the most unique living conditions. "There were 14 people living in one house in the middle of nowhere," she said. "We were together 24-7."

In addition to tolerating dirty dishes all over the living room, the performers spent a grueling 10 hours a day in the hot sun rehearsing for the production.

"You're trudging in the hot sand, it's a hundred degrees outside and even at night it's hot," Sherrill said.

But all the toil and suffering paid off when performances started.

"You're out there performing for an audience that wants to see you perform, and it's exciting," she said.

If the two weeks of rehearsals are rough, the nightly shows are arduous.

In a 30-minute process, Sherrill would routinely paint her whole body in brown paint to transform into an Indian. Add a wig, braids and skimpy leather outfit, and she was ready.

Her first of two quick changes had her rinse the paint off her body in four minutes and change into Elizabethan garb for her character as a queen's page.

But the pressure gave Sherrill new strength. "You just have to go out there with a confident attitude that you can conquer the audience and that you're professional, even at the age of 19."

Most companies put on three shows during the summer as well as a children's show, so performers who audition this year will have many opportunities to take the stage, Biles said.

Arnold said the experience the program offered outweighed the hardships, and she encouraged others to audition. "It was hard work, but I learned a lot."

So never mind the "baaing" goats, they're just keeping in spirit with the rowdy, front-row hecklers in the outdoor drama of the Shakespearean era.

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Dilbert



THE Daily Crossword

By James E. Buell

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes a word search grid at the bottom.

Advertisement for The Burrito Bunker. Features a logo with a burrito character and text: 'Food Without Fuss!', 'Daily Specials 932-9010', '161 1/2 E. Franklin St.', 'Beyond Bandido's ALL the way thru the Rathskellar Alley'.

Advertisement for Blue Hand clothing. Features a woman in a dress and text: 'polecì susan monaco bisou2', 'fabulous spring lines arriving daily', 'Blue Hand', '405 E. Main Carrboro 932.4263', 'jane doe tessuto juicy icon'.

Advertisement for 30 Great American Breweries... All In One Place. Features a beer mug and text: '7th Annual Southeastern Microbrewer's Invitational MARCH 24-25', 'The Durham Marriot at The Civic Center', 'Live Music: Fri., March 24 Blues-A-Matic, Sat., March 25 The Heaters', 'Ticket Outlets: Carrboro: Weaver Street Market and Tyler's Restaurant & Taproom, Chapel Hill: Carolina Brewery, Mellow Mushroom and Wellspring Grocery', 'Event Sponsors: CAROLINA BLONDE BEER, BUB QUALITY CRAFT BEER', 'Additional Sponsors: North Coast Brewing Company, Fit South, Clock Work Advertising and Promotions, Tyler's Restaurant & Taproom, Armadillo Grill, Cottonwood Grill and Saw Mill Taproom', 'www.beerhunter.org • for info call 484-1128', 'A portion of proceeds to benefit Single Women With Children, Inc.'.

Advertisement for Patio Loco. Features a logo with a sombrero and text: 'NOW OPEN FOR LUNCH & DINNER NIGHTLY SPECIALS', '407 West Franklin Street Chapel Hill, NC 27516 (919) 967-9060', 'LIVE Mariachi band Performing March 16th', 'Menu: Mon-Fri Lunch 11:00-2:30, Mon-Thurs Dinner 5:00-9:30, Fri & Sat 5:00-10:30, closed Sunday, Lunch Two Tacos \$1.95, Burrito \$1.95, Two Enchiladas \$1.95, Dinner Empanadas \$4.95, El Patacón \$6.95, Make your own nachos! & Much More Available'.