



The University and Towns
IN BRIEF

Mebane Woman Seen At Bar Prior to Death

More details are surfacing in the disappearance of a Mebane woman whose body was found off of Interstate 40 in Orange County last week.

Rhonda Eason, 31, was reported missing by her husband, Phillip Eason, on March 27. Eason told police his wife left their home at about 8 p.m. March 25. She told him she was leaving to "go party" but then never returned home.

Lt. Paul Fine of the Alamance County Sheriff's Department said witnesses saw Eason at the Outback Saloon in Mebane that same evening.

Fine said a cause of death had not yet been determined because police were waiting for toxicology results, which normally takes two weeks. He said that although police did not know how Eason died, they could confirm that she was not shot or stabbed to death.

At this point in the investigation, Fine said any explanation the sheriff's department could provide would be pure speculation because investigators had not reviewed the toxicology report.

"She could have shacked up with someone and died of an overdose," he said. "That person could have been too afraid to report it and dumped her body on the side of the road."

Eason's body was found at about 1 p.m. April 5 by N.C. Department of Transportation workers near the 260-mile marker on I-40.

University Service Day Scheduled for Saturday

All interested students and organizations are encouraged to register for Project UNC: Uniting and Nurturing our Community.

The first-ever University Day of Service will begin at 8:30 a.m. Saturday and will include a day packed with volunteering opportunities and events.

The day will kick off on Polk Place, with a rain site location at the Great Hall. Breakfast will be provided.

Those interested should register at www.unc.edu/cps. For more information, e-mail punc@unc.edu.

UNC Safety Board Studies Data, Reports

Pedestrian Safety Committee members gathered Wednesday to discuss future implementations on campus concerning pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

Led by Public Safety Director Derek Poarch, committee members outlined their strategic principles for the semester and analyzed problem areas, funding issues and engineering projects that would enhance safety measures.

The committee was joined by Anna Wu of Facilities Planning, who displayed a map of UNC's Master Plan in relation to improved safety proposals. Wu said the Master Plan proposed pedestrian bridges connecting buildings on campus, including one from the Student Union to the Student Recreation Center.

Poarch said the committee agreed safety awareness was the most crucial step in moving forward.

Bob Schneider, of the Highway Research Center, presented in-depth data about pedestrian and bicyclist accidents in Chapel Hill and on campus.

Poarch said the committee hoped to draft a final report with proposals and a preamble to present to interim Chancellor Bill McCoy by June.

Workshop for Teens To Teach Writing Skills

The Hot Ink writing workshops are sponsored by the North Carolina Writers' Network and are offered to teenagers in eighth through 12th grades at UNC this summer.

Teenagers will have the opportunity to work with some of the most accomplished writers in the Research Triangle Park area. The writers will work with various styles such as poetry and creative nonfiction writing.

The workshop will be from July 17 to July 21. The cost is \$125 a session and \$225 for both. To register to receive additional information, call 967-9540.

Towne Center to Hold Special Olympics Event

The Cary Towne Center is holding the Special Olympics North Carolina Volunteer Recruitment Extravaganza this Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Hecht's Court.

The Bouncing Bulldogs, N.C. State University Cheerleaders and Dance Team and the "One Heart Trio" will be performing along with several others.

The 2000 Special Olympics North Carolina Summer Games will be held in Raleigh from June 2 to June 4.

From Staff Reports

Anonymous Gift Honors Hooker

By ALEXANDRA MOLAIRE
Assistant University Editor

A \$1 million endowed professorship created by an anonymous Raleigh couple will honor the late Chancellor Michael Hooker.

The Michael Hooker Distinguished Professorship in Biology was set up this month and is aimed at professors inter-

ested in genomics, a field of genetic research, said Speed Hallman, the director of development communications.

Hallman said the couple, which has close ties to the University, was

impressed with Hooker and agreed with his vision for the University.

"Chancellor Hooker saw genomics as an emerging field in science, and he wanted Carolina to be at the forefront of this discipline," he said. "It's also key to unlocking secrets that can lead to better healthcare and better quality of life."

The donors will pay \$666,000 over five years, and the N.C. Distinguished

Professors Endowment Trust Fund will match the gift with a \$334,000 grant.

When the endowment accumulates \$1 million, a portion will be used to hire and pay the first Michael Hooker Distinguished Professor of Biology, Hallman said.

"Funds like this help us attract out-

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NRC Study Targets County Concerns

By WALTER HERZ
Staff Writer

Orange County officials claim that a new study by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission confirms security concerns with the proposed expansion of a local nuclear facility.

A county press release issued Monday stated that the agency had identified several risks associated with spent fuel pool storage, a method used by the Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant in Wake County.

The release is the latest installment in an 18-month dispute between Carolina Power & Light Co., owner of the nuclear power plant, and Orange County.

In June 1998, CP&L proposed to increase its waste fuel storage capacity at Shearon Harris, making it the largest storage facility east of the Mississippi.

Orange County officials, concerned that a potential storage leak would have serious environmental consequences, asked the agency to intervene to perform an investigation of the plant.

Orange County Engineer Paul Thames said the study bolstered the county's argument against a proposed expansion of the nuclear power plant's waste storage units.

"The county has always contended that there are some unevaluated risks associated with this kind of long-term

storage," he said.

CP&L spokesman Mike Hughes said the study did not apply in this case.

"This was a generic study of decommissioned plants, not of Shearon Harris," he said. "It has no relevance in our situation."

Hughes explained that decommissioned facilities were those no longer in use or in the process of being shut down. He said there were fundamental differences between such facilities and working plants like Shearon Harris.

Jim Warren, director of the N.C. Waste Awareness and Reduction Network, an environmental watch group, said the study was highly relevant to the ongoing struggle between CP&L and Orange County.

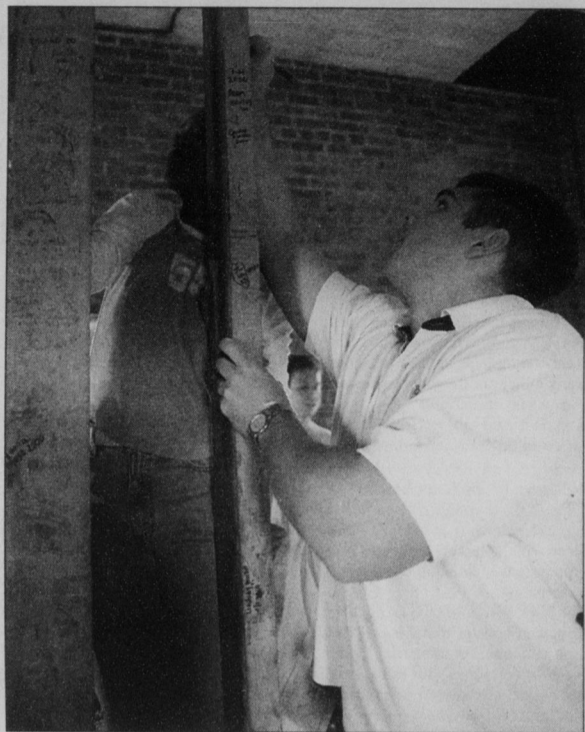
"The concerns are actually greater with a working reactor right next to the pools," he said. "However, it is predictable that CP&L would try to do everything to say the study doesn't apply."

NRC spokesman Roger Hannah admitted that the study did not strictly apply to the Wake County facility. He said it was released on a public level and was not meant to directly shed new light on the ensuing conflict between CP&L and Orange County.

Warren questioned the agency's

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SENIORS SIGN OFF



DTH/VICTORIA ECKENRODE

Shane Page, right, of Gastonia and Erin Petty of Washington, D.C., sign their names on the post of the Bell Tower on Wednesday. The two seniors climbed to the top of the Bell Tower, taking advantage of one of the many scheduled activities held during Senior Week.

Coalition Expands, Focuses Tuition Hike Battle

By GEOFF WESSEL
Staff Writer

UNC-Chapel Hill students opposed to potential increases in the cost of tuition are expanding their connections with other UNC-system schools in their campaign to keep education affordable.

The Coalition for Educational Access, a subgroup of the Progressive Coalition, has prepared to fight the increase in the state legislature since February, when the Board of Governors approved a proposal that would raise tuition at UNC-CH by \$600 over two years.

The coalition is now ready to draft a

constitution and to go to other campuses, said member and former student body president candidate Erica Smiley.

"After (the proposed increase) went to the BOG, it was a domino effect," she said, referring to other schools in the system that began drafting tuition plans in the wake of UNC-CH's efforts. "With our main goal being educational access for all, we're talking about all students in our state."

The coalition has held meetings with N.C. Central University, Winston-Salem State University and N.C. State University, and eventually hopes to unite all 16 schools, members said.

"We're building this into a statewide movement," said member Michal Osterweil. "We don't have a paid lobbyist, but we're doing the job that a paid lobbyist would do to ensure that the legislature has someone advocating for students and, ultimately, for the citizens of North Carolina."

Osterweil said the coalition expected the tuition increase to pass the legislature but said the group did not plan to abandon its efforts.

"It's a really exciting moment," she said. "We're making a constitution and a statement of our principles, which are to keep education accessible in this state."

"We're looking for students to get involved."

Provost Dick Richardson said the coalition was justified in trying to raise awareness about the issue as long as it presented its case fairly.

"I certainly think they're well within their rights to oppose tuition increases and to try to convince other people to come along with them. But I disagree with their position. We've tried to be extraordinarily sensitive to ensure the tuition increase will not limit access."

He said UNC-CH's proposed increase included plans to earmark 30 percent of the generated funds for financial aid.

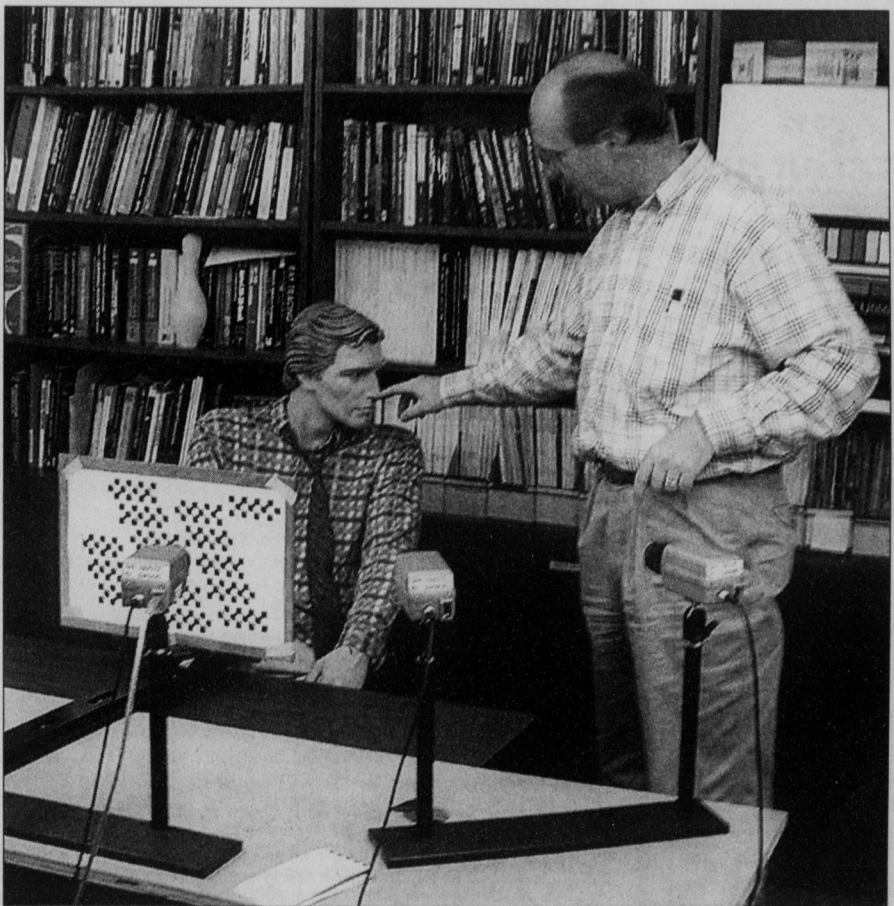
Smiley said the coalition would lobby legislators to stop the BOG proposal from being implemented but would support increasing financial aid regardless of the proposal's success.

A proposed \$36.8 million financial aid proposal would be the first state-based source of financial aid if approved by the legislature.

"We're still trying to kill the tuition increase, which is still possible," Smiley said. "Even if they kill the tuition increase, we'd like this financial aid."

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BIG DUMMY



DTH/ELAN DISSANI

Professor Herman Towles uses a bank of cameras pointed at a mannequin to construct a three-dimensional representation in real time. The cameras will use the light and dark pattern in front of the mannequin to calculate 3-D position. This system is used for applications such as 3-D video conferencing.

Colleges Consider Rank-Based Entry

By LANI HARAC
Staff Writer

A movement among several universities to institute class-rank admissions policies is gathering steam, but a UNC official says the University will not join the trend anytime soon.

Rank-based programs have been touted as a way to increase minority enrollment at state universities, but opponents - including those at UNC - argue that the number of minority students would not necessarily increase under a blanket admissions policy.

The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education is the latest in the nation to consider implementing a policy that would guarantee admission to system schools to the top 15 percent of each high school class in the state.

According to an article in the April 7 Chronicle of Higher Education, Pennsylvania's SSHE would adopt the plan to augment its affirmative-action admissions policies.

Pennsylvania's SSHE is comprised of 14 schools, including Bloomsburg, Edinboro and Slippery Rock universities of Pennsylvania.

UNC's peer schools in the state, such as Pennsylvania State University, Temple University and the University of Pittsburgh, are part of a different system of state-related institutions and would not be included under the new plan.

Admissions policy discussions in Pennsylvania come on the heels of the adoption of a similar plan in California.

On March 19, the University of California Board of Regents approved a plan resulting in the automatic acceptance of the top 4 percent of students from each California high school.

"It's in the implementation stage right now," said UC-system spokesman Terry Lightfoot. "Probably the first class to be admitted will be the one applying in Fall 2000. We are moving in that direction, but the program is not in place yet."

Lightfoot said the majority of students would still be accepted under a general admissions process, but the new policy would provide an additional way to increase minority enrollment.

Raising the number of enrolled minorities was also the impetus behind the adoption of a class-rank admissions policy in the University of Texas system.

UT spokesman Monty Jones said the system's program, which was adopted after affirmative-action admissions policies were overturned, had been in place for two to three years.

"Each individual institution (in Texas) had its own policy, and most institutions had some type of affirmative action program," Jones said.

Texas has 35 public institutions total; the UT-system comprises 15 of them.

The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned all affirmative action programs several years ago, Jones said, and the state legislature worked to find an alternative that would encourage

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