

Phillips Middle School Tackles Principal Search

By COURTNEY MABEUS
Assistant City Editor

School officials say they hope to have a new leader at the helm of Guy B. Phillips Middle School within two to four months to replace former Principal Alton Cheek.

Cheek, 57, was found dead of natural causes in his home by Chapel Hill police Aug. 22. Concerned school officials alerted police when Cheek did not arrive for work that morning.

For now, Assistant Principal Richard Pierce is serving as interim principal.

Pierce said he will apply for the job along with other applicants in the search for a new school leader.

"It is something that I'd like to do," Pierce said.

Superintendent Neil Pedersen said officials are in the process of advertising the position's availability nationally.

"(Pierce) can be an applicant," he said. "This is just normal procedure."

Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education member Nicholas Didow said the board is awaiting Pedersen's recommendations before taking action.

"I don't know what (Pedersen's) plans are for the long run," he said.

From May until July Pierce honed his skills as principal when Cheek left to undergo surgery.

"Since May 15, I've really been doing this thing," Pierce said.

Though accustomed to his new role, Pierce said he is wary of making many changes in the school's operation.

"Until our principal picture is clearer, we're mainly just making sure the school is working like it's supposed to work," he said.

The day school officials announced Cheek's death, counselors arrived from across the county to help students and

staff handle the shock. Pedersen said the atmosphere at the school has since calmed.

"I think this week people have gotten back to their normal routines, and it feels very normal out at the school," he said.

Still, parents have stepped up to lend support to both staff and students at the school, bringing food and offering assistance as needed, Pedersen said.

"(Parents) have probably been volunteering more than usual," he said. "I think everyone's been willing to chip in to compensate."

In lieu of flowers, officials ask that donations be made to a scholarship fund that will be developed in Cheek's name and administered by the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Public School Foundation.

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MERCHANTS

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Bars and restaurants also prepared themselves for the rush of fans before and after the game.

"A lot of people came in and ate," said Spanky's manager Chris Ijames. "It was hectic, but it was controlled chaos."

Spanky's handled the steady influx of diners by streamlining its menu for the game, allowing the cooks to efficiently prepare the food, he said.

Incident weather made business even more profitable for restaurants Saturday.

"During the game, the rain drove people out of the stadium," said Locke Page, manager of Woody's Tar Heel Tavern & Grill. "We were packed with a lot of wet people."

The Carolina Brewery shielded its drenched customers with its unique trolley, which runs to and from the stadium 1 1/2 hours before kickoff until 30 minutes after the game.

"They show a receipt from the Brewery and then hop on for free to the stadium," said manager Matt Clements, who said business increases by 30 percent on football weekends.

"The better the team, the better the

business," said Clements after the Tar Heels' topping of Tulsa. "It seems like everyone's hoping for a good team, but (the fans are) holding back a bit (in coming out to watch the games)."

Still, some merchants believe their businesses do not live and die with Tar Heel football.

"A lot of people just love to come back to Chapel Hill," said Carolina Pride manager John Hudson. "Even if there wasn't football, people would find an excuse to come back."

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BOND

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make repairs," Chambers said. "(The funding) is not enough to meet the needs but will be a big help."

Many people at Sunday's game were completely unaware of the bond, volunteers said, and focused on football.

"The game is the biggest thing," Maxine Hurdle, a volunteer from Edgecombe Community College said. "I don't even think they care today."

Other events similar to Sunday's are planned during the coming months. The next will be Saturday in Rocky Mount at

the Down East Classic, another annual football game between Elizabeth City State and Fayetteville State universities, two more HBCUs. Walters said campaign volunteers will hold a workshop at a community college conference in October and also promote the bond at Wilmington's Riverfest in conjunction with UNC-Wilmington and Cape Fear Community College.

"Student outreach is critical," Walters said. "Students need to take the lead. If they don't, no one else will. They are the ones who will directly benefit."

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CANDIDATES

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ran for ASG president last September. Wheelahan has been involved in student government, both at ASU and through ASG, since his freshman year.

He also said he hopes to strengthen ASG's constitution to make the association more efficient. Wheelahan also said he would aim to increase student awareness about how the legislature allocates funds to UNC-system schools.

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Firestone Averts Worker Strike

The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — With the threat of a strike over and a tentative contract in hand, troubled tire maker Bridgestone/Firestone Inc. and its workers said Monday they're ready to get down to the business of making good tires and replacing those under recall.

"We're going to do everything we can to restore the public's faith in the company," said John Sellers, a lead negotiator for more than 8,000 Bridgestone/Firestone workers represented by United Steelworkers of America.

Union negotiators announced they had reached a tentative contract agreement with the company just before dawn Monday.

The agreement between the union and company managers came after a weekend of around-the-clock negotiating that had continued beyond the union's initial strike deadline of Friday night.

Once the agreement is ratified by union members, expected to happen later this week, "then everybody will be focused on the business of making tires,"

Sellers said.

The three-year deal governs workers at nine of Bridgestone/Firestone's 28 U.S. factories.

While Bridgestone/Firestone managed to avoid a strike, the company's troubles are far from over.

It is in the midst of an effort to replace 6.5 million recalled tires in the United States, and an ongoing federal investigation into at least 88 U.S. traffic deaths allegedly linked to the brands under recall.

Last week, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration warned that an additional 1.4 million tires could be dangerous and should be replaced.

This week, Congress begins hearings to find out when the companies knew about the defects.

The problems continued to mount on Monday when Venezuela's consumer protection agency announced that Bridgestone/Firestone would recall 62,000 tires made there that are believed to be linked to at least 46 fatal accidents in Venezuela.

Venezuela officials already had recommended the tire maker and Ford Motor Co. — which used the tires on

some trucks and sport utility vehicles — be held criminally responsible and be forced to reimburse family members of the deceased.

All of this loomed in the background as negotiators bargained day and night for most of last week in a suburban St. Louis hotel.

"The timing could have been better," Bridgestone/Firestone chief negotiator Saul Solomon said. "But I think both parties here wanted to get this done."

Labor Day was a holiday for Nashville, Tenn.-based Bridgestone/Firestone.

"We need the company for jobs," said Firestone employee Jim Ash, "but they need us for quality products, particularly with the mess they're in now."

Normally the company hosts a picnic for workers at its LaVergne, Tenn., plant, said employee Frank Tuttle.

"I guess they were just a little too busy with other things," he said.

The contract includes workers at plants in LaVergne and Morrison, Tenn.; Bloomington and Decatur, Ill.; Des Moines, Iowa; Oklahoma City; Akron, Ohio; Noblesville, Ind.; and Russellville, Ark.

REACTION

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"Maybe (the new arrangement) will give us more of an exciting game atmosphere."

But many students who attribute the Smith Center's reputation of subdued crowds to less boisterous donors and alumni say the new seating plan won't help the situation.

"You have to question whether or not it's even worth it to play in the Smith Center if only the rich get the good seats," said Peter Johnston, a freshman from Chapel Hill.

Duke University fans and the nationally recognized ferocity they exhibit in their Cameron Indoor Stadium are the gauge by which some evaluate the new

seating arrangement.

"Cameron is still a better place to play (for Duke) than the Smith Center is for us," Earle said.

But Pruitt said much of the Smith Center's atmosphere can be attributed to the size of the building and where students were previously seated.

"It's not the loudest building in the conference — it's the biggest," he said. "It's difficult for all the students cooped up in one corner to make enough noise to permeate the building."

Pruitt said he believes the new arrangement will create a livelier Smith Center.

"I think it will most definitely be louder."

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PROVOST

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ment salaries.

But she said it should be an option in the future as long as the increase is accompanied by scholarship funds.

Lawrence said she was most impressed with the sense of community she saw on campus during her two-day tour. "There's a sense of place and connection with (UNC) that's quite striking," she said.

"It's seemed that the people I've talked to in the past few days are very happy here. Maybe all the unhappy people have all been kept away from me."

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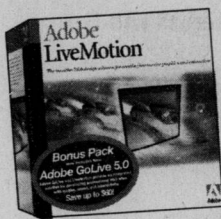
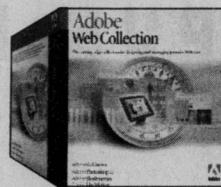


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