

Officials Have to Talk Trash

You're worth about a ton of garbage. Well, maybe not you personally. But in the Triangle, our trash heap grows at about one ton per resident each year. That's a lot of junk to deal with.



JONATHAN CHANEY
CITY COLUMNIST

Waste management isn't exactly the most exciting subject in the public policy world. But if the garbage trucks suddenly stopped coming and your front yard turned into a reeking compost heap, you'd get a sudden burst of civic interest.

Luckily, local leaders are trying to head off any problems with your garbage before the flies start swarming.

In a new bout of regional cooperation, the mayors of Raleigh, Cary, Durham and Chapel Hill discussed last Friday possible ways to cooperate in waste management and recycling.

They came to the conclusion that if the municipalities worked together to create regional landfills and recycling centers, everyone could save money. Additionally, by working together, the mayors can have more leverage when it comes to just how the garbage is disposed of in the future.

Such mayoral solidarity isn't new. The mayors of the Triangle's four largest cities and towns - Charles Meeker in Raleigh, Glen Lang in Cary, Bill Bell in Durham and our own Kevin Foy - have held monthly meetings to hash out ways to handle the Triangle's burgeoning population.

Primarily, the leaders have talked about improving the mass transit systems and other transportation infrastructures linking the metropolitan areas.

But while solid waste isn't the most appealing dinner table topic, it's a problem that every town has to deal with.

Particularly those in the Triangle. Right now, both Cary and Durham contract waste disposal with BFI/Allied, a company that runs a landfill in Lawrenceville, Va. They have to renew their contracts annually.

Orange and Wake counties own their own landfills in-house. However, space is expected to vanish in those landfills by 2006.

That's alarmingly close at hand, especially considering the snail's pace speed of building any new dump or waste facility.

It's not, however, very surprising. The population boom over the last decade or so has left most municipal services strained: water, schools, roads.

As more people toss more trash, waste could overwhelm a city or town. But by working together, area mayors hope to make things much easier on themselves and their neighbors.

One benefit of cooperation: cost. By banding together into a collective, local governments can get better rates on dumping, hauling and recycling contracts.

Think of it like buying in bulk: Getting a 48-pack of toilet paper at Sam's Club can save you a lot more money than if you got it in smaller packs at Harris Teeter - even if it is on VIC special.

Unfortunately, there are many hurdles on the horizon. Ideally, the Triangle could utilize a single landfill for all of its dumping needs.

But which county will take it? And more importantly, which residents will refrain from shouting "NIMBY!" (Not in My Backyard)?

Everyone wants their garbage taken away. But "away" means "not within 50 square miles of my house."

A proposed landfill for Wake County in Holly Springs is stalled in court. Plans for a regional landfill in Chatham County were scrapped last year due to residents' protests.

The Orange County Regional Landfill, built in 1972 along Rogers and Eubanks roads, has spawned accusations by residents near the site that water contamination has made them sick and that the landfill deflates home values, keeping their socioeconomic status low. The fact that there is a sizable black population near the landfill fuels the suspicion and anger.

The mayors realize that the next few years will not be easy. They plan to take the baby step of building a regional composting facility or recycling center before looking for landfill space.

Though caution may stave off residents' ire for a few years, the trash will keep piling up. We can't wait forever.

Columnist Jonathan Chaney can be reached at jhchaney@email.unc.edu.

Town Struggles With Budget, Lost Funds

By NATE DEGRAFF
Staff Writer

With Tuesday night's Chapel Hill Town Council budget hearing just minutes away, Town Manager Cal Horton checked his e-mail one last time.

Given the town's dire financial situation, the disheartening message in his mailbox was almost appropriate. These days Horton seems to bring more bad news than good to the council.

"It seems that the only good news I bring you is that things have not gotten worse," Horton announced at the start of the meeting. "Well, they have gotten worse. This evening we are short \$75,000 that we had at the beginning of

the day."

The e-mail told Horton that the town would lose the money as a result of a recent Federal Communications Commission ruling prohibiting the town from taxing cable Internet service. This latest withholding comes nearly two months after Gov. Mike Easley's announcement to hold back more than \$1 million from the town, and officials say next year's outlook is bleak as well.

"Some way, somehow, we've got to find \$3 million," said Mayor Kevin Foy. "It's not going to be easy. It's going to be painful."

Tuesday night, Horton presented the council with a status report on next year's budget. The report outlines three

possible budget scenarios that hinge on the state's own revenue disbursements. All three call for no expense increases next year.

Foy and others expect the worst of the bunch next year - a \$3 million shortfall for the town.

"Although that's unfair, it appears that's what's going to happen," he said. "We've got to raise taxes."

If the state holds back the anticipated \$3 million, Horton's plan calls for a potential 7-cent property tax increase, from 46.1 cents to 53.1 cents per \$100.

Another revenue generator would be to raise commercial garbage collection fees. The proposal calls for the establishment of a \$750 to \$800 annual fee

for once-weekly collection.

"We're looking for any way we can to find money," Foy said. "So it's possible there will be some increase in fees."

The town's plan said the fee would generate additional revenues of about \$300,000. But the recent economic downturn, coupled with the town's high living costs, drew a negative response from one agency representative.

"Since September 11, five businesses have closed in downtown Chapel Hill," said Robert Humphreys, executive director of Chapel Hill's Downtown Commission. "Any change in service will result in higher rents."

The town also is likely to trim its capital improvements program, which tra-

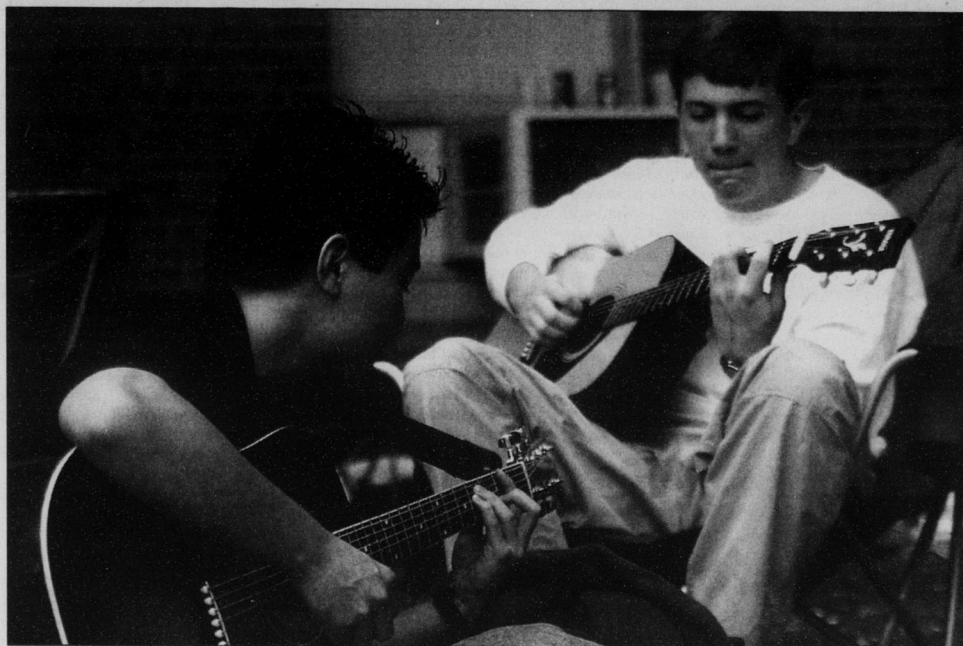
ditionally funds town infrastructure improvements like sidewalk repair and greenway development.

But with the town's constrained fiscal situation, the program's \$438,000 will fund debt payments and repairs at the Hargraves Center and Inter-Faith Council Shelter.

Horton said the town's outlook for the next few years is brighter but that any economic uncertainty warranted the conservative spending plan.

"My crystal ball is not any better than the next person's, and I can't see that far out."

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



DTH/BRIAN CASSELLA

Freshmen Eden Kung, left, and Brian Robertson play their own rendition of Live's "Lightning Crashes" on Tuesday morning. Some students waited more than 24 hours in line for a room in the new South Campus residence communities.

Students Camp Out for Rooms

The first student in line at the additional chance for recontracting rooms at the new residence halls arrived at 4 p.m. Monday, 26 hours early.

By JOELLE RUBEN
Staff Writer

The ground floor of Morrison Residence Hall was a clutter of pillows, laptops and guitars as students lined up Tuesday for a first-come, first-serve housing recontracting procedure.

Some students stretched out on futons, counting down to the 6 p.m. start time, while others bent over their books waiting for pizza delivery men to arrive. But all the students were gathered for a similar goal - to obtain a coveted room in one of the four new South Campus residence halls.

Many of the students waiting in line were successful in their quest for housing. Moments before the recontracting ended at 8 p.m., only five spots remained, Morrison officials said.

The need for Tuesday's recontracting process originated after Friday's registration for upperclassmen left 240 spots open in the new residence halls. About 70 spaces for men and 170 spaces for women were available. The distribution was open to any student currently living on South Campus.

Department of Housing and Residential Education Director Christopher Payne said several freshmen living on South Campus approached him during Friday's room distribution asking for preference in any extra spots.

Payne said the housing department held the recontracting Tuesday so any students who were initially turned away had time to reserve their current room before Wednesday evening's deadline. "We didn't want these students to be denied any options."

Sophomore Laura Smith was the first person to line up at 4 p.m. Monday. Smith, who secured her own new room Friday, arrived early to save spots for friends Tony Pentz and Ryan Browning.

Pentz and Browning, who hope to be roommates in "Ehringhaus South" next year, were two of the students who approached Payne ask-



DTH/BRIAN CASSELLA

Freshmen huddle beneath sleeping bags and blankets on the Morrison ball courts as midnight strikes on Monday.

ing for the first-come, first-serve process. "I'm really against an online process because so many things can go wrong with it," Browning said. "With this method, if you really want it, you can get it."

While neither Pentz nor Browning missed class for the lineup, they said several of their friends skipped class to avoid losing their places. But Payne said there was no reason for students to skip class. He said that his department took schedule conflicts into consideration and that students who were unable to wait in line could fill out worksheets authorizing their roommates to reserve their spots.

Yet freshman Anthony Stokes, who arrived at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday after a full day of work and classes, said difficulties remained for those roommates with similar class schedules.

"It's kind of unfair because people who skipped class or had no class got out here first," he said. "The rest of us are at a disadvantage."

The University Editor can be reached at udesk@unc.edu.

Council Mulls Replacements For Halloween

The council is considering options that range from creating a town-sponsored event to totally eliminating the celebration.

By BEN BROOKS
Staff Writer

Imagine Oct. 31 with the streets of Chapel Hill devoid of partyers. Although it might seem like an unlikely event to those who have participated in Franklin Street revelry in the past, it's an idea being entertained by some local officials.

Chapel Hill Town Manager Cal Horton issued a memorandum for the Town Council's consideration Monday containing seven options for managing the 2002 Halloween celebration. The options ranged all the way from a town-sponsored event to total elimination of the festivities.

The town will weigh each option against a set of criteria including crowd size, resource requirements and cost.

Despite last year's crowd of about half the size of the previous year, the event cost the town \$23,000 more. Council member Pat Evans cited "less need for town expenditures" as one of a few reasons why the town is considering revamping the event.

Last year's plan to limit the size of the crowd and the amount of traffic entering the downtown area was successful in those areas

See TOWN COUNCIL, Page 11

CAA President-Elect Kris Willett Selects New 2002-03 Cabinet

The upcoming CAA Cabinet aims to improve programs like the Hooker 5K and create ones like "Answer the Bell with Bunting."

By JENNY MCLENDON
Staff Writer

Carolina Athletic Association President-elect Kris Willett has selected a team that she said will help her "enhance the fan experience at UNC."

Willett, who vowed to recruit a diverse Cabinet in her election platform, said her CAA Cabinet selections were made Thursday after a selective interview process.

Of the 26 applicants, 14 received seats on the Cabinet, and the remainder were offered committee positions.

"We had a very qualified group of candidates, and it was really hard to pick," Willett said. "But I was pleased with the final group, and we encouraged those who did not get a spot to be on committees."

Willett named sophomore Sherrell McMillan as vice president, junior Sarah Davis as secretary, junior Chase Chopin as treasurer and junior David Forsythe as chairman of Carolina Fever, the fan organization within CAA.

See CAA, Page 11



CAA President-elect Kris Willett says she is confident that the CAA is on the right track with its plans.

Bus Driver Arrested For Assault

By KELLIE DIXON
City Editor

A bus driver for Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools was arrested Monday for assault with a dangerous weapon and vandalism to property.

Natasha Garnetta Snipes, 22, of 6108 Green Hollow Lane in Durham came to the Chapel Hill Police Department on Monday evening after being notified about the outstanding warrants.

She was charged with two misdemeanor counts of assault with a dangerous weapon and vandalism to personal property. In addition to the charges, Snipes was ordered to avoid contact with the victim, a 22-year-old female.

Reports state that the incident happened at 6:18 p.m. Sunday at Gomain Avenue and Sykes Street in Chapel Hill.

"The victim reported she got into an argument with Snipes that escalated into a physical altercation," said Jane Cousins, Chapel Hill police spokeswoman.

Cousins said the victim reported that Snipes then kicked the right rear door of the victim's 1996 Dodge Stratus, causing \$150 worth of damage.

"Then (the victim) said that Snipes pulled out a pistol and pointed it at her," Cousins said.

Reports state that the suspect pointed a gun at the victim's head, causing minor injury. The extent of the injury is not known, and a spokesman with UNC Hospitals said the hospital's records did not indicate that the victim had sought treatment.

The pistol was black and gray in color, Cousins said.

The victim then went to the police department to swear out warrants for Snipes.

After turning herself in, Snipes was held at Orange County Jail on a \$500 unsecured bond.

Snipes' court date is set for May 5 at the Orange County District Court in Hillsborough.

Mary Lin Truelove, the school sys-

tem's transportation director, said the matter, which is classified as a personnel issue, is still under investigation.

Truelove said new employees will not be hired if they have a felony record. She also said any charges that show up on a background check are investigated fully.

The system employs 76 bus drivers who operate 55 different buses.

"You cannot have a felony record or criminal activity. Each record is reviewed," she said. "Of course we do criminal record checks."

Truelove said that to her knowledge, Snipes has not had any prior run-ins with authorities.

Truelove said Snipes has been employed by the system for about three or four years and refused to comment on her future employment with the system.

"We've never had any problems."

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

TAKE THAT!



DTH/ANNE MEADOWS

Meghan Carmody, a resident assistant in Alderman Residence Hall, practices the knee-to-the-groin kick Tuesday during an introductory self-defense class sponsored by the Department of Public Safety.