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Reference

UNC librarian wins a lifetime achievement award.
See Page 3



End of the Season
Gourmet food store A Southern Season gears up to change venues.
See Page 5

Agent K Returns
"Men in Black II" revisits alien culture's cartoon comedy.
See Page 4



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Green Day sings a Familiar Tune on its 8th Album

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Committee Gives Nod To Lottery

After failing repeatedly in the legislature for 20 years, a lottery referendum could be on the ballot in November.

The Associated Press

RALEIGH — A House committee narrowly approved a bill Tuesday to allow voters to say in November whether they want legislators to create a state-run education lottery.

In a victory awaited for months by Gov. Mike Easley and other lottery boosters, the House Rules Committee voted 15-13 to recommend the advisory referendum to the full House.

Easley and pro-lottery organizations have worked the phones in recent days to get enough votes for Tuesday's panel vote and a floor vote that could come as early as Wednesday.

Results of the vote were not available as of press time early Wednesday.

"We're close," said the bill's sponsor, Rep. Bill Owens, D-Pasquotank. "It could be any way. There's a little bit of jockeying for positions."

The lottery question has been repeatedly and unsuccessfully brought before the General Assembly over 20 years.

Its chances started looking much brighter when Easley, who had campaigned on a lottery platform, took office in 2001 and the state budget fell into disarray as the economy faltered.

This year, South Carolina started a lottery, leaving Tennessee as the only neighboring state without one.

The legislation before the committee would ask voters on Nov. 5 to check yes or no to "North Carolina should have an Education Lottery." Whatever the results, the General Assembly would still have to approve a game for it to become reality, possibly next year.

All but two Democrats on the committee, Reps. Joe Hackney of Orange County and Paul Luebke of Durham County, voted for the legislation.

All but two Republicans, Reps. Cary Allred of Alamance County and Wilma Sherrill of Buncombe County, voted against it.

House Speaker Jim Black, D-Mecklenburg, stacked the committee with three "floaters" — House members who are authorized to sit on any committee — who voted for the referendum to provide the margin of victory.

The lottery question largely has been a nonpartisan issue in years past, with a coalition of Republicans and conservative and liberal Democrats blocking any legislation on moral and religious grounds.

The debate has taken a political tone in recent months as Democrats see a referendum as a way to increase turnout in a state with voting registration that favors them.

A high turnout in November might negate Republican gains that result from redistricting.

Revenue Debate Stalls House Budget

By ROHIT PATEL
Staff Writer

As the N.C. House of Representatives concludes its second week of working on a state budget, legislative leaders say that several options have emerged to raise additional revenue but that it is doubtful if any have the votes to pass the closely divided chamber.

The state Senate passed a budget on

June 20, and some House budget leaders have set a mid-July target for the House to unveil its version of the budget.

Once the House approves a budget, leaders from the two chambers must compromise on one plan.

Members of the House have expressed dissatisfaction with the Senate plan — namely for its use of \$800 million in one-time funds to fund permanent

programs. As a result, House members have brought forth proposals for raising revenue, ranging from eliminating certain tax breaks to targeted tax increases.

Legislators would use the additional revenue, as well budget cuts, to fill a \$2 billion hole in this year's state budget.

Some House members have also complained that the Senate budget cut too deeply into some human service programs.

Rep. Warren Oldham, D-Forsyth, co-chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, said he is not sure about which proposal, if any, will emerge from the House.

"There are a multitude of proposals being debated on in the House," he said. "If we can get a consensus on any particular plan or a combination of some, it

See BUDGET, Page 2

Raising Revenue

The state House is considering a variety of options to raise the revenue it might need to balance the budget.

House Is Considering

- \$330 million from withholding reimbursements to local governments by allowing them to raise the sales tax
- \$168 million by raising the sales tax on cigarettes by at least 25 cents
- \$85 million from closing a tax loophole for banks
- \$180 million from closing a tax loophole that allows manufacturers to pay less sales tax due to an \$80 sales tax cap on machinery
- \$8.7 million by eliminating a tax credit that tobacco companies get for exporting cigarettes

SOURCE: DTH RESEARCH

DTH/STAFF



DTH/MELISSA LIN

OWASA employee Ben Nichols measures the water level at Cane Creek Reservoir, which is about 11 feet below full. OWASA officials said Orange County only has 131 days left of water usage, but University officials are not anticipating a problem.

Drought Could Cause Water Restrictions

By PETER GILCHRIST
Staff Writer

The Orange Water and Sewer Authority Board of Directors is scheduled to meet today to consider a resolution that will put residents in the area under mandatory water restrictions.

On June 27, OWASA adopted a resolution requesting voluntary water conservation, but since then the available supply has continued to decline.

OWASA officials are predicting the county has only about 131 days of water left. University Lake is more than 5 feet below full, while the Cane Creek Reservoir is about 11 feet below full. These conditions are likely to force OWASA to declare a stage one water shortage, which could take effect Friday.

"Stage one means several things, one of which is limiting outdoor watering with sprinklers to three days a week," said OWASA public affairs spokesman Greg Feller. "More specifically, people with odd-number addresses could water on Monday, Wednesday or Friday and people with even-number addresses could water on Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday."

In addition, stage one restricts the use of water on sidewalks, driveways, cars and buildings. It also explains that no water will be served in restaurants except on request. Citizens who violate the regulations could be fined an as-yet undetermined amount.

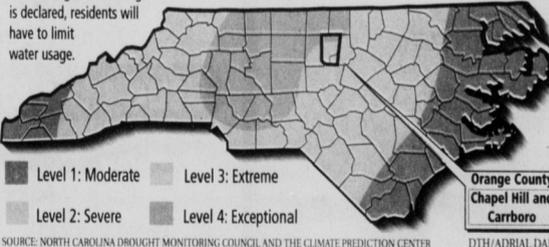
While stage one of the water conservation plan will limit residential water

See DROUGHT, Page 2

Drought Drapes North Carolina

OWASA officials are predicting that the county has only about 131 days of water left, and officials might decide to declare a stage one shortage. If a shortage is declared, residents will have to limit water usage.

North Carolina isn't the only Southern state experiencing a drought — from Virginia to Georgia, it's been a hot, dry summer. Hurricane season could turn the dry spell around, and historic data suggests that there should be some improvement, according to the Climate Prediction Center.



SOURCE: NORTH CAROLINA DROUGHT MONITORING COUNCIL AND THE CLIMATE PREDICTION CENTER

DTH/ADRIAL DALE

Tuition Increase in Fall Bills

UNC administrators might have to send out new bills in the fall if the General Assembly changes tuition.

By MEREDITH NICHOLSON
University Editor

UNC-Chapel Hill Students opened their mailboxes this week to find tuition bills that included increases of 8 percent for in-state students, 12 percent for out-of-state students and a \$300 campus-initiated hike.

But these increases have yet to be approved by the N.C. General Assembly.

Rob Nelson, UNC-system associate vice president for finance, said that under state law, the UNC-system Board of Governors is responsible for setting tuition.

Nelson said that because the legislature has not yet ruled on the BOG's tuition proposal, the tuition increases stand as is. "That's the board's recommendation, and it's being considered by the General Assembly," he said.

The budget approved by the state Senate included the tuition increases as approved by the BOG, but it is still unknown what changes, if any, the House will try to make to the plan.

Dennis Press, UNC-CH controller, said that tuition amounts are set by the BOG and the General Assembly but that the schedule for billing is set by each individual university. The bills are sent out at the same time each year and are based on the best information available at the time, he said.

Press said the University sends out bills for tuition as early as possible — even if the numbers are not yet finalized — because officials want to give students as much time as possible to pay or make arrangements to pay.

Students who do not pay are subject to cancellation so their seats can be offered to other students, he said.

Press said that the billing cycle is on a tight schedule and that it was important that the bills be sent without waiting for the final word from the legislature.

See TUITION, Page 2



DTH/KIMBERLEY CRAVEN

Alan Douglas Gates was arrested at 2723 Orange Chapel Clover Garden Church Road.

Orange County Man Confesses to Triple Homicide

The Associated Press

A man who had been ordered to stay away from his family confessed to killing his daughter, another woman and a 2-year-old boy, sheriff's officials said last week.

Alan Douglas Gates, 50, admitted Monday that he went to his former home to confront his estranged wife, Janet Clark Gates, because he was angry after seeing her with another man, Lt. Bobby Collins said Thursday.

Gates was arrested and charged with violating a restraining order. While being driven to the sheriff's office in Hillsborough, he

waived his right to remain silent and to have an attorney present, then confessed to the slayings, Collins said.

He was being held at Central Prison on three counts of first-degree murder in the shooting deaths of Valerie Michelle Gates, 24, Cordae Shimara Lee, 21, and Lee's 2-year-old son, Kendall Alexander Dianis.

Gates is accused of killing his daughter less than two months after he was accused of beating her in their home in southwestern Orange County.

"He said, 'My life is over. I can't spend my life in prison,'" Collins said. "He wanted us to

stop the car and let him escape so we could shoot him."

On July 1, Janet Gates, who secured a domestic violence restraining order against her husband June 11, called sheriff's deputies to escort her to the family home, said Orange County Sheriff Lindy Pendergrass. Her daughter had been receiving telephone messages from her father, so Janet Gates thought her husband might be at the residence, the sheriff said.

Deputies James Riley and Anthony Cecil escorted Janet Gates to her home, where they found Alan Gates lying on the bed in his bedroom, a revolver by his right side. The

deputies immediately arrested him, charging him with violating the restraining order, which prohibited him from visiting the residence.

As the deputies handcuffed Alan Gates, Pendergrass said, Janet Gates discovered the bodies in a pool of blood on a back bedroom floor, and shouted, "He killed them! He killed them all!"

Valerie Gates had been shot in the upper chest, while her friend, Lee, and Lee's son had bullet wounds to the back, Pendergrass said. Riley checked the victims' vital signs and

See GATES, Page 2

The business of the government is the business of the people.

John F. Kennedy