



POLICE ROUNDUP

Chapel Hill Man Arrested for Larceny

Chapel Hill police arrested Jorge Luis Escobar-Cabnera, 21, of 1513 E. Franklin St., Apt. 24, early Sunday morning and charged him with one felony count of larceny by employee, reports state.

Jane Cousins, Chapel Hill Police Department spokeswoman, said a manager reported at 12:01 a.m. that Escobar-Cabnera, an employee of an establishment in Eastgate Shopping Center, had taken an undisclosed amount of money from the cash register in the store.

Cousins said that the amount of money was in the hundreds of dollars but that police will not release the exact number to protect the business's safety.

Escobar-Cabnera was arrested and held in Orange County Jail on a \$3,000 secured bond. He appeared Monday in Orange County District Court in Hillsborough.

University

Friday, Feb. 21

■ Vandalism was reported at the Carolina Population Center shortly after 1 a.m., reports state.

An employee reported hearing noises coming from the roof of the building and seeing three men come off the roof. One subject was wearing a bright yellow nylon jacket with black stripes on the arms and chest, reports state.

University police stopped the subject at Cameron and Mallette streets and placed him into investigative detention, reports state. University police also noticed a state-owned vehicle in the Nash parking lot with its rear windows broken out on both sides. Damage appears to be strictly vandalism because the vehicle was not entered and no items were taken, reports state.

■ Incidents of vandalism were reported at Kerr Hall and the Tate-Turner-Kuralt Building, reports state.

Vandals removed a metal water valve cover from a sidewalk near Kerr and threw the cover through the window of an office, reports state. The act was vandalism because no one gained or attempted entry into the building, reports state.

At the Tate-Turner-Kuralt Building, vandals picked up a large rock and threw it through a window, reports state.

Thursday, Feb. 20

■ A laptop was reported stolen in the Undergraduate Library, reports state.

The victim reported that the incident happened sometime between Feb. 14 and Feb. 18. The computer was assigned to an employee who resigned Feb. 18, reports state.

The former employee had not been in the office since Feb. 13. Reports state that the computer was taken from the desk. The former employee was listed as a possible suspect.

City

Sunday, Feb. 23

■ UNC student Matthew Allan O'Neal, 22, of 18 Mafolie Court was arrested at 2:58 a.m. by Chapel Hill police and charged with one count of driving while intoxicated, reports state.

Reports state that O'Neal called 911 at 2:31 a.m. to report that he had been involved in an accident in a parking deck and that a passenger in the other vehicle had assaulted him. O'Neal followed the vehicle until an officer could arrive.

Reports state that when he was questioned about the assault by the reporting officer, he had an odor of alcohol about him. Reports state that he admitted that he had consumed a few drinks. A field sobriety test found his blood alcohol content to be .12, and once O'Neal was arrested, the Intoxilyzer 5000 result was .08, reports state.

O'Neal was released on a written promise to appear April 29 at Orange County District Court in Chapel Hill, reports state.

Saturday, Feb. 22

■ Chapel Hill police arrested Allen Junior Nickerson, 52, of 5100 Barbee Chapel Road and charged him with one count of driving while intoxicated and one count of possession of marijuana, reports state.

Nickerson was pulled over at 7:12 p.m. on N.C. 54 near Fayetteville Street. Reports state that a K-9 search of his vehicle found a small amount of marijuana. He was arrested, and his Intoxilyzer 5000 blood alcohol content was .12, reports state.

Nickerson was released to the custody of his wife to appear April 1 in Orange County District Court in Chapel Hill, reports state.

—Compiled by Staff Writers Billy Ball and Sumner James Phillips

Public May Fund Town Races

BY SHANNAN BOWEN
Staff Writer

The Chapel Hill Town Council on Monday voted 5-4 to study further the legal and economic impacts of a proposal submitted for voter-owned elections in Chapel Hill, a change that would allow mayoral and council candidates to use public funds for future campaigns.

Council members Bill Strom, Mark Kleinschmidt, Ed Harrison and Jim Ward opposed council member Pat Evans' motion to hand over the petition to the town manager and town attorney for additional research.

But the remaining four council members and Mayor Kevin Foy voted in support of receiving more information

before taking action on the petition.

At the council's request, the information will be gathered relatively quickly and could return in a couple of weeks for discussion by the public and the council.

Petitioner Dennis Markatos, a UNC alumnus who works with the advocacy group Common Cause, led a group of more than 30 voters, members of the community and campus groups in support of the council adopting the draft.

Markatos told the council that he sees some "red flags" in the form of higher election costs, which led him to draft the proposal.

"It's becoming more and more expensive to run for office in Chapel Hill," he said.

The draft, similar to an ordinance

adopted by the Cary Town Council in 2001, would allow candidates to use public money raised from tax dollars and donations to fund their campaigns instead of using private and special-interest funds.

Chris Heagarty, executive director of the N.C. Center for Voter Education, said public campaign financing allows average citizens to run for office despite a lack of personal wealth and connections.

"Many major cities like Los Angeles, Austin and New York have approved public financing to limit spending and encourage those who do not have personal funds to run for office," he said.

See ELECTIONS, Page 5



DTH/BETH FLOYD

Dennis Markatos speaks on a voter-owned elections program.

Legislators Ease Fears Of Council

Transportation, tax revenue discussed

BY ADAM CARDAIS
Staff Writer

The Chapel Hill Town Council presented its 2003 legislative agenda Monday to Orange County legislators, who assuaged several of the council members' concerns about upcoming budget deliberations.

A brief presentation by Chapel Hill Mayor Kevin Foy and the discussion that followed primarily focused on funding issues facing the county this year.

Sen. Ellie Kinnaird and Reps. Verla Insko and Joe Hackney, all Orange County Democrats, were on hand listening to and answering council members' questions on funding concerns.

Hackney alleviated council members' worries that the county might lose much of its tax-based funding as Gov. Mike Easley tries to balance the state budget.

Last year, Easley reallocated funds originally earmarked for local governments in order to help decrease the state's budget deficit. "I don't see any appetite in the (N.C.) General Assembly to get into your revenue base," Hackney said.

Kinnaird, speaking for the other chamber of the General Assembly, said the Senate has been concerned about taking tax revenues from local governments.

Foy said that while protecting revenue is a major concern, the council's three major legislative issues center elsewhere.

The council is focused on increasing funds for Triangle-area transportation infrastructure, bringing equitable Transportation Improvement Program funds to Orange County and moving above-ground power lines underground.

Foy said transportation in the Triangle will face a shortfall of billions of dollars during the next 15 years.

See BREAKFAST, Page 5

THE 'INSANITY' OF LAB! THEATRE



DTH/SHILPI PAUL

The cast of "The Insanity of Mary Girard" performs in the play Saturday night at Playmakers Theatre. Lab! Theatre's production of the eerie Lanie Robertson play focuses on the life and increasing mental decay of Girard. This feminist exploration is as strange as it is moving, forcing viewers to question the events on and off the stage. For the full story, visit www.dailytarheel.com.

Public Transit Focus of Council's Transportation Plan

Taxes, location of lines could prove divisive

BY NICK EBERLEIN
Staff Writer

Chapel Hill Town Council officials met Monday with the Orange County legislative delegation to discuss pertinent regional issues, including logistical concerns and possible funding options for the town's long-term public transportation plans.

The meeting briefly touched on a tumultuous issue that has been on the agendas of Triangle cities and towns since 1995.

Controversy has arisen about where to install future transportation lines, and a possible fuel tax increase that would be used to fund a future transit system might prove to be divisive in light of soaring gas prices.

In 2001, officials from Raleigh, Cary, Chapel Hill and Durham published a regional transportation strategy aimed at easing roadway congestion and improving the mobility of Triangle residents by 2025.

The four municipalities constitute the

federally mandated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the region.

Chapel Hill Mayor Kevin Foy told local legislators Monday morning that the town's three foremost legislative issues revolve around the transportation problem.

Council members during a public forum Jan. 29 reached a decision to push for expanding transit service rather than widening local roadways and roads that connect the Triangle.

Council member Jim Ward touted increased public transit service as an effective means to reduce sprawl and to improve land-use patterns.

"There's clear evidence that suggests increasing the passenger capacity of roadways by adding new lanes doesn't stop (congestion)," he said.

Various proposals include fixed-rail systems to connect Chapel Hill to Durham via U.S. 15-501 and Chapel Hill to Research Triangle Park along N.C. 54.

Chapel Hill also has made plans to possibly institute streetcar systems within town limits.

The proposed lines would run along east-west and north-south corridors and would include Carolina North, a satellite campus UNC plans to build on the Horace Williams tract, as a stop.

"These lines will create the spine against which all other services will branch out from," said David Bonk, transportation planner for Chapel Hill.

However, recent developments along both U.S. 15-501 and N.C. 54 have forced officials to re-evaluate plans.

The construction of Meadowmont neighborhood and The Streets at SouthPoint near N.C. 54 and the exodus

of businesses from South Square Mall on U.S. 15-501 have changed dramatically the dynamic of commuter patterns in the area.

"South Square was a primary destination when the (transportation) studies were done," Ward said. "What's happened in the last five years ... has had unknown repercussions on how well those corridors will now work."

In October, Henry Faison, owner of the South Square property, successfully petitioned the Durham City Council to relocate the proposed rail stop from his property to nearby Shannon Road. Chapel Hill voiced its opposition to this move.

Faison argued to the Durham council that a fixed-rail system running through South Square would affect parking and discourage retailers from leasing the property. Sam's Club and Target have shown interest in the area.

"They're building up a bunch of big-box retail," Bonk said. "That's going to hurt our plans."

Should a consensus finally be reached on when and where to establish transit lines throughout Chapel Hill and the

See REGIONAL TRANSIT, Page 5

"This meeting is to give the legislators a heads-up about what we're proposing."

DAVID BONK
Chapel Hill Transportation Planner

Construction Begins on Carolina Teaching Network Project



DTH/BETH FLOYD

Dean Madeleine Grumet (left), Chancellor James Moeser and Principal Valerie Reinhardt break ground for the new wing of Smith Middle School.

BY MARY MCGUIRT
Staff Writer

Five years ago, a desire to expand the collaboration between Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools and the UNC School of Education was expressed. Monday evening, a groundbreaking ceremony held at Smith Middle School finally marked the beginning of a process that plans to put this desire into action.

The ceremony celebrated the beginning of construction for Smith's new 7,200-square-foot wing, which will be home to the programs of the Carolina Teaching Network, a division of the education school.

Neil Pedersen, CHCCS superintendent, expressed relief that construction for the project finally is beginning.

"It's an exciting day, because we've really worked for almost five years for this to come to fruition," he said.

Pedersen added that partnerships are

not easy and require a lot of cooperation and that this is why this project has taken so long.

Madeleine Grumet, dean of the education school, said the project has been a culmination of the efforts of architects, lawyers, committee members, teachers, school board members and many others.

Grumet said the idea was initiated by the school board when board member Nicholas Didow was chairman.

She added that the late Chancellor Michael Hooker shared this desire and that Chancellor James Moeser has helped to see it through.

At the ceremony's opening, she expressed the goals that spurred the development of the collaboration.

With the building of the wing, "We hope to share resources and ideas and create the kind of conversations we've been having at some distance right next door," she said.

"We're making a wall that stands for

our interest in breaking down the wall that exists between our school and our community."

Valerie Foushee, chairwoman of the CHCCS Board of Education, also mentioned the importance of the coexistence between the University and the school system when she spoke at the ceremony.

"The partnership between UNC and Chapel Hill-Carrboro schools is a giant step forward in the collaborative relationship," she said.

Moeser said the completed wing will provide a win-win situation for everyone, including UNC.

The wing of Smith Middle will be used primarily for distance-learning programs.

It will have high-speed Web access and will allow for videoconferencing to take place between teachers, administrators, support services personnel and parents so that they can share their experiences.

See GROUNDBREAKING, Page 5