

NATIONAL BRIEFS
Bill would allow more scrutiny of medical verdicts

RALEIGH — A draft N.C. Senate bill to address doctors' concerns about rising medical malpractice insurance rates would not cap noneconomic damages but would allow a judge to scrutinize large verdicts further.

The Senate will consider the bill when it returns for a brief legislative session starting Sept. 15. The House will not return, meaning that any legislation cannot be passed into law but that the plan can be considered next year.

The bill, which could face significant changes before the Senate votes on it, does not include the \$250,000 cap on noneconomic damages — including pain and suffering and physical impairment — doctors had sought. It would, though, require a judge to review any awards of \$250,000 or more for their "reasonableness."

Man executed in Florida for anti-abortion murders

STARKE, Fla. — Paul Hill, a former minister who said he murdered an abortion doctor and his bodyguard to save the lives of unborn babies, was executed Wednesday by injection. He was the first person put to death in the United States for anti-abortion violence.

Hill, 49, was condemned for the July 29, 1994, shooting deaths of Dr. John Bayard Britton and his bodyguard, retired Air Force Lt. Col. James Herman Barrett, and the wounding of Barrett's wife outside the Ladies Center in Pensacola, Fla.

As he has since the slaying, Hill showed no remorse and urged abortion foes to use whatever means to protect the unborn.

Hill was pronounced dead at 6:08 p.m., Gov. Jeb Bush's office said.

Death penalty opponents and others had urged Bush to halt the execution, some of them warning Hill's death would make him a martyr and unleash more violence against abortion clinics. The governor said he would not be "bullied" into stopping the execution.

Suspect in worm attack says feds exaggerated case

A high school senior charged with modifying a version of the Internet worm that crippled computer networks nationwide said the government has exaggerated its case against him and disputed media coverage that portrayed him a computer-savvy loner.

Jeffrey Parson, 18, faces one count of intentionally causing damage to a protected computer. Conviction could bring a maximum 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Authorities say he admitted during an interview with FBI and Secret Service agents that he modified the original "Blaster" infection that made computers attack the Microsoft Web site last month. Prosecutors said Parson's worm affected at least 7,000 computers.

Court delays new media rules from taking effect

PHILADELPHIA — A federal appeals court Wednesday issued an emergency stay delaying new Federal Communications Commission media ownership rules that would allow a single company to own newspapers and broadcast outlets in the same city.

The 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said a coalition of media access groups called the Prometheus Radio Project would suffer irreparable harm if the new rules were allowed to go into effect as scheduled Thursday.

The new ownership rules, which the FCC approved on a party-line 3-2 vote, also would allow a single company to own TV stations reaching 45 percent of the nation's viewers.

Smaller broadcasters and network affiliates are concerned the new limit will allow the networks to gobble up more stations and limit local control of programming.

The House, over the objections of the Bush administration, voted overwhelmingly in July to block the FCC. The Senate is to take up the issue this month.

CALENDAR

Today

5:30 p.m. — The Carolina Center for Public Service will hold an information session for the new Public Service Scholars Program in Union 2A.

7 p.m. — The Carolina Economics Club will watch "Roger & Me," a documentary by Michael Moore, in 8 Gardner Hall, followed by an informal discussion and refreshments.

Compiled from staff and wire reports

Staff questions Moeser on wages, UNC's goals



Chancellor James Moeser said UNC has not neglected its employees.

BY NIKKI WERKING
 ASSISTANT UNIVERSITY EDITOR

University employees grilled Chancellor James Moeser on Wednesday on the state of employees' low wages and how UNC plans to address their needs.

At an Employee Forum meeting, employees questioned whether the University is doing enough to meet staff concerns. Mary Johnson, an Academic Affairs Library employee, said she worries that the University's human resources

largely are being ignored. She said the University is focused more on improvement projects such as the Master Plan, the campus' long-term blueprint for growth.

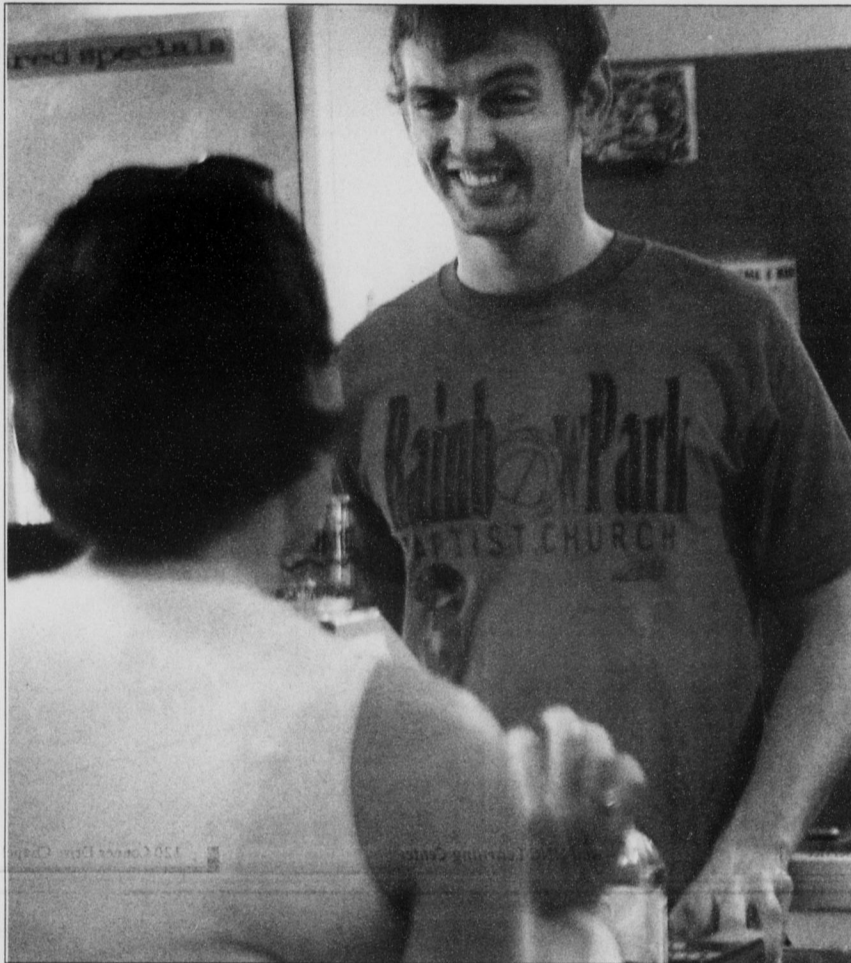
"To be honest, it seems we are building the Master Plan on a foundation that is about to crumble," Johnson said.

Moeser said he understands that with the increasing cost of health care, parking and living expenses, the disparity between the rich and the poor has been a

source of anxiety on campus. The issue has come to a head since this summer's freshman reading selection, Barbara Ehrenreich's "Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America," brought attention to the working class' financial struggles. Moeser denied that UNC has neglected the concerns of those who keep it running.

But members of the Employee Forum were concerned that many

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Seniors Bryan Harrelson and Emily Herbert catch up at Strong's Coffee on Wednesday afternoon. Strong's is one of the many shops and eateries on Franklin Street that give the street and the town their student-friendly reputation.

TRIANGLE HITS PEAK

Area voted No. 1 college destination in its population group

BY JENNY HUANG
 ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

Surely, local town and University officials can come together on this one.

According to a preliminary study released Wednesday by the Massachusetts-based consulting company Collegia Inc., the Triangle is the No. 1 college destination for its student-friendly metropolitan area.

Company officials said the study results suggest that a college's surrounding community is a key factor in students' selection processes.

"What makes (a college) stand out is its destination, where exactly the school is located," said Viola Morse, director of the consulting company, which advises cities on marketing themselves to college students.

In the study, Collegia researched 45 metropolitan areas and ranked them according to three categories: city, student and lifestyle.

The categories addressed factors such as a city's accessibility, salary-to-rent ratio, educational attainment, student diversity and performing arts venues.

Because the area consistently scored highly in each index, it topped the overall college destination rankings within its population group of 15 cities.

Morse said the study's findings also highlight the mutually beneficial relationships that can exist between a college and its surrounding town — a situation not

COLLEGE TOWNS

These rankings are based on three indexes: City (including criteria such as unemployment and health care), Student (including diversity and educational attainment), and Lifestyle (including restaurants and night life). All of these metropolitan areas have a population between 1 million and 2.6 million people and at least one nationally ranked university.

Ranking	Metropolitan Area	Population	Overall Score
1	Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill	1,187,941	2.79
2	Pittsburgh	2,358,695	1.84
3	Austin	1,249,763	1.78
4	Seattle	2,414,616	1.54
5	Nashville	1,231,311	0.87
6	New Orleans	1,337,726	0.57
7	Providence	1,188,613	0.11
8	Milwaukee	1,500,741	0.28
9	Columbus	1,540,157	-0.42
10	Denver	2,109,282	-0.45

SOURCE: COLLEGIA INC.

DTH/RENA CHERNITSKY

unlike the relationship between UNC and Chapel Hill. "The issue of students in college campuses used to be that of the college education," she said. "What is happening now is a growing understanding of the economic impact (of the college on its surrounding community)."

Morse said that the quality of town life serves as a marketing tool for the college and that the student population provides a revenue boost for the town.

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DTH/BETH FLOYD

Russ Baggett, a patron at the Rosemary Street bar Hell for three years, plays pool Wednesday night.

Fire sprinkler talks reignite controversy

BY SHANNAN BOWEN
 STAFF WRITER

Town officials said they expect to finish discussions at their Sept. 22 meeting about a controversy ignited by the Chapel Hill Town Council's proposal to install fire sprinklers in local bars.

The initial proposal, which required fire sprinkler installation in businesses that served alcohol and that had a capacity of 50 or more, originated after a February fire at the Station nightclub in Rhode Island killed about 100 people.

When members of the local business community expressed opposition last spring to the original proposal, the council deferred the issue to Chapel Hill Fire Chief Dan Jones for revision.

The final resolution sets a 200-person capacity threshold for ground-level businesses and 150-person capacity for businesses above or below ground.

This resolution would affect only three bars: Hell, the Treehouse and Bub O'Malley's. All are located in the same building on the corner of Rosemary and Henderson streets.

Although no one has expressed opposition to ensuring bar safety, the controversy about fire sprinklers has transformed into an economic matter — one that many bar patrons and owners have labeled a "conspiracy."

Hell owner Mark Dorosin, who also serves on the

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Honor Court playing catch-up with case load

BY EMILY STEEL
 ASSISTANT UNIVERSITY EDITOR

More than 60 students have seriously contemplated UNC's honor system as they settle back into their lives at the University.

Their cases are some of the 84 backlogged cases the Honor Court is waiting to hear.

In a new push to alleviate some of this anxiety, members of UNC's honor system are trying to hear cases within a month after a violation is reported to the court — a shorter time span than in previous years.

"This is Honor and Integrity Year," said Student Attorney General Jonathan Slain. "If there is any year that we can get rid of the backlog, this is it."

This year's Honor Court is continuing the trend established last year by hearing at least two cases every night, Monday through Thursday.

On Fridays, Slain said, the court also is holding more expedite hearings. These cases, in which the violator already has pleaded guilty, proceed quickly because the court only has to decide on the accused student's sanction.

Slain said the Honor Court does not have the resources to hold any more than the eight to 10 cases it already is processing each week. "We just don't have

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N.C. short on unemployment funds

BY LAURA YOUNGS
 ASSISTANT STRATEGIC & NATIONAL EDITOR

A struggling economy is forcing state officials to borrow for the third time this year from the federal government to pay laid-off North Carolinians.

To date, the state's unemployment trust fund — responsible for paying unemployment benefits — holds \$36.5 million.

But with the state paying upward of \$21 million per week to laid-off workers, the fund will be empty by Sept. 15, said Michele Walker, spokeswoman for the N.C. Employment Security Commission.

In July, the last month for which figures are available, about 136,000 recipients received \$103.6 million. The fund will see little money

until late October, when state employers will pay about \$110 million in quarterly unemployment insurance. The insurance is responsible for funding the trust.

In the meantime, the state will pay off the interest-free federal loan, due Sept. 30, using a reserve unemployment fund, Walker said. If the loan is not repaid in time, North Carolina will have to pay 6.5 percent in interest fees.

The reserve, created in the 1980s through a surcharge on unemployment insurance, stands at \$10 million and probably will be empty next year, Walker said. The surcharge will be reinstated in 2005 to replenish the depleted reserve.

North Carolina already has borrowed from the federal government twice, to cover benefits in April and

July. The loans total \$80.8 million.

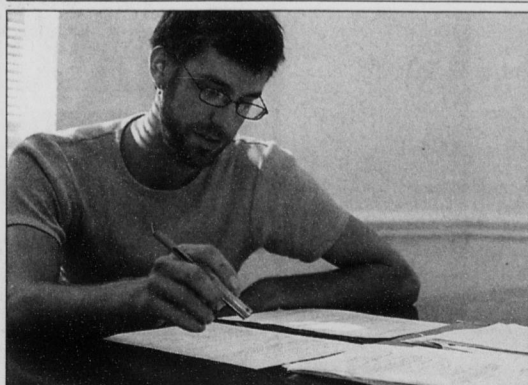
Three years ago, the state had more than \$1 billion in its primary trust, one of the highest figures in the nation and a sum officials thought was more than enough.

With funds so high, state legislators decided to give employers a 50 percent tax break. That break ended in August 2002 when the trust dipped below \$800 million.

"Who knew we would go through that kind of money?" Walker said. "As it turns out, a billion and a half was not enough."

Though the tax break probably hurt the fund to some degree, it was difficult to predict what would happen, said N.C. Sen. John Kerr, D-Wayne. "I don't think anyone

SEE UNEMPLOYMENT, PAGE 13



DTH/JOHN DUDLEY

UNC graduate Leif Forer, 24, of Carrboro fills out paperwork Wednesday morning at the Employment Security Commission office in Hillsborough. Forer had an appointment to follow up on his job search after being unemployed for five weeks. Before being unemployed, Forer worked as a temporary employee for UNC as a Web developer and office assistant. He was rehired Tuesday.