

ROY

FROM PAGE 1

"Late Night" sets the tone that we're going to have lots of fun." The biggest change in the event is its move from Carmichael Auditorium to the larger capacity Smith Center, which holds about 21,000 people. McMillan cites an expected increase in turnout as the reason for the move. He estimates that between 15,000 and 17,000 people will attend the program. Also new to this year's event is sponsor EA Sports, which will be conducting a number of contests, including a free throw shooting contest, and giving away prizes.

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

TUITION

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mentation. That proposal was halted in January when the BOG announced a one year tuition-freeze for all UNC-system schools. Task force members decided to decrease their tuition proposal after Jim Phillips, chairman of the BOG's Budget and Finance Committee, drafted a set of guidelines last week advising schools to propose increases of no more than \$300 per year. Student Body President Matt Tepper, co-chairman of the task force, said it also is important to keep the tuition hike as low as possible for the sake of students. "We just recently approved an increase, one of the biggest recent-

ly," Tepper said. "Over \$100 for student fees."

Tepper said it is possible that multiple statewide tuition increases soon will occur. "It's likely that they could do a BOG increase — a statewide increase," he said. "There could also be a (N.C. General Assembly) increase."

Shelton said he was impressed with the three student representatives' strong defense against a high tuition increase.

"I think it was a good meeting. I think we wound up in a good position," he said. "Students should feel justifiably proud that the number was knocked down \$50 from last year."

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STATE FAIR

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Preserving tradition is the underlying purpose of the fair, but the event recently has had its share of trouble. A scandal involving questionable campaign contributions from fair operators led to the indictment and resignation of former N.C. Agriculture Commissioner Meg Scott Phipps.

Between an accidental death during last year's fair and the Phipps scandal, many close to the fair were left wondering if its image would be marred indefinitely.

But officials remain optimistic. Jennifer Nixon, public information officer for the state fair, said she believes that strong advance ticket sales for this year's festivities indicate that people are putting the strife behind them.

"(Phipps) was a very small part of (the fair)," Nixon said. "Hundreds of people put it together. The biggest thing was (Agriculture) Commissioner (Britt) Cobb voiding the old contract with Amusements of America and opening up the bid."

Amusements of America, a New Jersey-based midway vendor, was suspected of making illegal contributions to Phipps in return for this year's fair contract.

After Phipps left office, Strates Shows of Florida won the bid and will return to run the fair for the 54th time. "There is a sense that we need to clear the name of the state fair — just to say this is how it's supposed to be done," Nixon said.

Although the fair now offers concerts, rides and various art exhibitions, the event's main purpose continues to be providing information to the public about North Carolina's agriculture.

"We still have a pretty strong agricultural heritage," Nixon said.

She said it is important for "the city folks" to come out to the fair and understand where their food comes from, adding that she hopes the \$6 entrance fee will entice fairgoers. "It's cheaper than a movie," she said. It's the people's fair and we want everyone to come."

Famous for its funnel cakes, the fair prides itself on offering food very few other places provide, such as candy apples and elephant ears.

From playing oldies music to racing pigs, Nixon said, the fair has not changed much over the years. "There are things people come back year after year for."

Mount Airy-based Leonard Building & Truck Accessories has set up shop at the fair for 30 years. "People are more outgoing and forthcoming," said company spokesman Brian Lenox of fair attendees. "They are here to have a good time."

Other popular attractions include the Folk Festival, which features traditional clogging and square dancing, and the Village of Yesteryear, a craft exhibition.

The state fairground gates will be open from 8 a.m. to midnight. Exhibit halls are open from 9 a.m. to 9:45 p.m. and rides will operate from 10 a.m. to midnight.

Contact the State & National Editor at stnudesk@unc.edu.

VIOLENCE

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plagued with myths. "One of the biggest misconceptions is that it isn't a problem in Orange County," said Parker, who said his own ignorance of the issue prompted him to become involved. Melinda Manning, assistant dean of students, said relationship violence is a large problem for students, partly because stereotypes surrounding the issue suggest otherwise.

"The problem is that students have a stereotype (of who is affected by relationship violence)," Manning said. "That stereotype is not a student — particularly one at an elite university."

Manning said her office deals with at least one incident of relationship violence per month, and according to its Web site, 78 percent of college women have experienced some form of sexual aggression.

Among her reasons for helping victims of domestic violence is the experience of her college roommate, who found herself in an abusive marriage. Manning said her roommate was a strong, educated woman — the type of person least expected to be in such a relationship.

"It's a problem that affects anyone," she said.

Manning, who also volunteers at the center by caring for children of domestic violence sufferers, said an important goal for volunteers and domestic violence centers is raising awareness.

The center is the primary Orange County organization for doing so, said Judy Pliner, a Chapel Hill resident and center volunteer. "I've really been impressed with

this agency," Pliner said. She said the center began work about two years ago and now provides domestic violence sufferers with a 24-hour hotline, court advocacy and help finding shelters and obtaining protective orders, among other services.

To increase awareness and support, the center works with other community groups and schools.

One organization that is partnered with the center is the Carolina Women's Center, which serves University faculty, staff, students and alumni. Jane Trexler, an employee at the women's center, said it is co-sponsoring events with the Family Violence Prevention Center for Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

"The center does hugely important work," Trexler said. She said domestic violence is extremely common and often understated.

"I would assume many cases are unreported," Trexler said.

Matt Sullivan, a social worker in the Chapel Hill Police Department Crisis Unit, echoed the sentiment.

"Domestic violence occurs on a regular basis," Sullivan said. "The difficult part is that what's reported to law enforcement doesn't encompass all of what goes on."

He said the community is working together to improve the situation, and crisis unit employees in particular track domestic violence, both through perpetrators and victims. "Victims of domestic violence will oftentimes be victims in multiple relationships," Sullivan said.

Volunteers are working to make the voices of these sufferers heard. At the UNC School of Law, students participate in the Domestic Violence Advocacy Project, which

works to raise awareness and provide legal assistance to victims of domestic violence.

"Unfortunately, it's an issue that touches everyone in our community," said DVAP President Karen McGinley, a second-year law student also pursuing a master of public administration degree through the School of Government.

McGinley said third-year law students gain credit by participating in the DVAP and are trained to represent victims of domestic violence in protective order cases. The issue of domestic violence is especially important in law, and about 15 students went through training last year, McGinley said.

"(Domestic violence) really cuts across legal disciplines," McGinley said. "It comes up in both civil and criminal cases."

Volunteers said working against domestic violence has both challenges and benefits.

"The training itself is a huge time commitment," Parker said. "It's difficult to balance and prioritize."

Manning said the biggest challenge for her was to forget about the problems of each victim she talked to and move on. "It's really easy to internalize it."

But volunteers agree that the benefits of helping far outweigh the difficulties, and volunteering has become a part of their lives.

Parker said that despite his prior ignorance of the problem of domestic violence, his experience being a volunteer changed his outlook.

"You form a relationship with the clients," he said. "I'll spend the rest of my life working for this issue."

Contact the Features editor at features@unc.edu.

MERGER

FROM PAGE 1

opposition to the merger, saying that it will harm the unique character of Chapel Hill-Carrboro schools and lower property values.

Many at the hearing said the merger will not solve discrepancies between the two school systems.

"Why can't the county vote if they want to have higher taxes?" asked Vincent Wingate of Chapel Hill. "That's the democratic process and we're just throwing it out with the bath water."

Mary Copeland, wife of Orange County Board of Education mem-

ber Randy Copeland, was the first Hillsborough resident to speak out against the merger.

"(Orange County) cannot stand another tax. Money doesn't equal education," she said.

The evening progressed with the vast majority of those in attendance speaking against the merger.

Stacy Lee a parent and teacher with Orange County Schools spoke of the differences between the Hillsborough and Chapel Hill classrooms.

"I love this county from the Old Well to the Schley Field," she said.

"We have perpetuated the mindset of the village sharecropper

community.

"We need to unite this county by chiseling away prejudicial stereotypes."

Despite the staunch opinion of the speakers, some parents attended the merger hearing because they were still undecided.

"As each person talks I think, 'Hmm, that sounds good. I'd like some more answers,'" said Jennifer Pepin, an Efland resident with two children in Orange County Schools.

The next public hearing will be held Thursday.

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