

CITY BRIEFS

Officials: Stephens St. blaze caused \$60K in damages

A fire that ignited a residence at 107 Stephens St. late Sunday night caused about \$60,000 in damages, Chapel Hill fire officials said.

Capt. John Parker, the assistant fire marshal for the Chapel Hill Fire Department, said the fire started near or on a sofa that was sitting on the back porch of the house.

The entire rear portion of the house collapsed. The heat and smoke gutted its interior, causing the most damage to the kitchen and the hallway, Parker said. Some of the rafters in the attic of the house were burnt, but firefighters were able to control the flames before the damage spread.

Parker said fire officials still are investigating the cause of the fire, which might have been arson.

Because the house has been vacant since 1999, Parker said, there was no electricity that could have started the fire.

Homeless people have been seen staying near the vacant house, Parker said, but because the windows and doors had been boarded, there were no victims inside.

Parker said the owner of the house, Billy G. Batten of Sanford, plans to repair damages and remodel the home. Batten did not have insurance on the home, Parker said.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

Officer cleared of framing charges over fake drugs

DALLAS — A former narcotics officer was cleared Tuesday of charges that he helped frame innocent Mexican immigrants who were sent to jail after being found with what turned out to be fake drugs.

Jurors deliberated five hours beginning Monday afternoon before reaching the verdict in favor of former Senior Cpl. Mark De La Paz, who was the arresting officer in many of the disputed cases. In all, more than 80 cases were dismissed after tests revealed that the purported drugs actually were gypsum powder or other legal substances.

Prosecutors had alleged that De La Paz, 36, lied in arrest warrants about seeing drug transactions take place between four innocent immigrants and confidential informants. He also was charged with lying to a prosecutor and an FBI agent about seeing the transactions.

The informants were former drug dealers who have pleaded guilty to civil rights violations and who are cooperating with prosecutors. They were paid \$1,000 per kilogram in busts they set up, the defense said.

Toy chain recalls sidewalk chalk with high lead levels

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Toys "R" Us is recalling 50,000 packages of sidewalk chalk because the chalk contains lead at levels high enough to poison young children.

No accidents or illnesses related to the chalk have been reported, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission said Tuesday.

The chalk comes in a clear plastic backpack-style carrying case and is labeled "Chalk to Go ... Totally Me! ... 24 pieces, sidewalk chalk in different colors, fun chalk shapes." The package also says "Conforms to ASTM-D4236."

Each package contains solid or multicolored chalk in red, blue, green, yellow and purple. The chalk comes in several shapes: butterfly, spider, ice cream cone, bottle, cylinder and triangular stick.

The chalk was manufactured in Hong Kong by the Agglo Corp. and sold at Toys "R" Us stores nationwide from March to November for about \$4.99 per package. Toys "R" Us is based in Wayne, N.J.

WORLD BRIEFS

Columbian militia fighters lay down arms in ceremony

MEDELLIN, Colombia — Hundreds of right-wing militia fighters surrendered their guns Tuesday in a ceremony heralded by the government as a step toward peace but denounced by critics as a show that lets killers, kidnapers and drug peddlers off the hook.

Gathered inside Medellin's convention center, the 855 members of the Cacique Nutibara bloc sang the national anthem, then laid their rifles, ammunition belts and camouflage shirts in piles on the floor.

Government peace commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo called the disarmament a significant move toward finally ending Colombia's four-decade war.

Compiled from staff and wire reports.

RHA confident in smoking proposal

But initiative garners mixed reviews

BY MEGAN SEROW
STAFF WRITER

Officials with the Residence Hall Association said they are confident that because a majority of surveyed students were in favor of prohibiting smoking in residence halls, the organization's new proposal to do just that will be approved by January.

RHA came up with the plan this summer and then conducted a survey of all on-campus students to assess their thoughts on the issue, said RHA President Kristin Conte.

About 33 percent of the students

surveyed responded. Of those 2,377 students, 88 percent said they were nonsmokers and 10 percent classified themselves as smokers.

Even though 88 percent of respondents were nonsmokers, officials said, they don't think the survey is skewed.

They said that surveys were distributed so that students had the option to respond and that they are satisfied with the 33 percent response rate.

The Department of Housing and Residential Education will review RHA's proposal and make a deci-

sion in January before the housing recontracting process begins.

Christopher Payne, director of the housing department, said the department will discuss the issue with the Housing Advisory Board and the Student Safety Task Force. The department also invites feedback from anyone else interested in the matter.

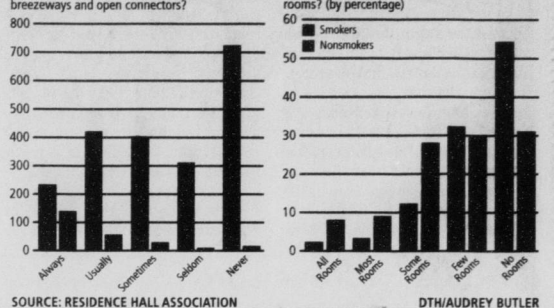
The proposed policy includes not only rooms but also breezeways, open connectors and balconies.

Some students said they agree with the initiative. "I live in a hall-style dorm with no ventilation," said smoker Stacey McCorkle, a

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SHOULD SMOKING BE ALLOWED IN RESIDENCE HALLS?

Of the 33 percent of on-campus students who responded to the Residence Hall Association survey, most nonsmokers said smoking should not be allowed in rooms or open spaces.



THANKSGIVING



Carolina Inn employee Wayne Holland poses with the stuffed turkey that sits in the lobby of Carolina CrossRoads Restaurant and Bar.

A SOUTHERN SEASON

Locals look forward to holiday traditions

BY AMI SHAH
STAFF WRITER

As the aroma of turkey and collar greens begins to fill the air at local restaurants, UNC-Chapel Hill students' mouths are watering in anticipation of Thanksgiving.

For many in the area, a traditional Thanksgiving celebration includes elements of their Southern heritage.

Evoking the holiday spirit, a stuffed turkey lined with autumn leaves stands in the lobby of Carolina CrossRoads Restaurant and Bar in the Carolina Inn.

For Thursday's feast, the restaurant will be filled with pumpkins and squash garnishing the buffet to give the restaurant "a flair, a homey feeling," said assistant manager Harry Tatoian III.

The menu will feature specialties such as leg of lamb and filet of beef as well as turkey, the traditional Thanksgiving staple. The restaurant also will temper the meal with a Southern touch by adding sweet potatoes and collar greens to the buffet.

"(Southern foods) will be included for the sake of being in the South and to give (customers) a taste of Southern cuisine," Tatoian said.

Mama Dip's Kitchen will be closed Thursday, but families still can order their "traditional, country, Southern Thanksgiving meal to go," said Anita Council, Mama Dip's daughter.

The restaurant will offer full take-out holiday meals, complete with turkey, dressing and pecan pies. Typical of Mama Dip's Southern flavor, collar

greens, candied yams and string beans will be included.

Council said it's important to add a Southern touch to Thanksgiving "because that's what Mama Dip's is all about" and because it helps "keep Southern tradition alive in Thanksgiving."

Ashley Vandewart, a junior journalism major from Asheville, has had roots in North Carolina since her grandparents arrived here from Germany.

Vandewart's family embraces the South by having sweet tea and also by inviting a different family friend to dinner every year in an act of Southern hospitality. "My family thinks it's important to share Thanksgiving with friends," Vandewart said.

Journalism Professor Deb Aikat plans to spend his Thanksgiving relaxing at home in Carrboro.

"My wife is a vegetarian, so we're going to cook a pumpkin," Aikat said.

For other vegetarians who won't partake of a traditional Thanksgiving meal, the Triangle Vegetarian Society will be offering a vegan alternative in Durham at Cafe Parizade. The feast will boast a variety of Mediterranean dishes as well as some traditional vegetarian Thanksgiving side dishes such as gravy, mashed potatoes and stuffing.

With the semester winding down, Bridgette Lin, a junior communication studies major, said she is excited to return home to Columbus, Ga., for the

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Officials prepare as travelers take to roads, airways

BY PATRICIA LAPADULA
STAFF WRITER

UNC students will be traveling to all parts of the country during the next couple of days as the Thanksgiving holiday begins.

In light of the heavy traffic on highways and in airports, officials are trying to ensure safe commuting conditions for travelers during the holiday weekend.

Thanksgiving is the heaviest travel season of the year, said Sgt. Everett Clendenin, a spokesman for the N.C. Highway Patrol.

AAA is expecting 1.06 million North Carolinians to travel more than 50 miles by automobile this weekend. "We want to encourage travelers to allow enough time to reach their destinations," Clendenin said. "And do not speed."

The Highway Patrol will join the "Booze It & Lose It" campaign to secure the roadways for the thousands expected to hit the road during the break.

The campaign will have checkpoints throughout the state, looking for inebriated drivers.

While people tend to associate the holidays with drinking, Clendenin said, officers do not expect to see a significant increase in intoxicated drivers.

The N.C. Department of Transportation also will ensure that local roads are ready physically for the considerable increase in travelers.

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Former marshal bleeds blue

Professor praised for his dedication

BY INDIA AUTRY
STAFF WRITER

Ron Hyatt spoke before the 2000 Summer Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, authored a book and fought for legislation regarding physical education.

But it was his work as the UNC faculty marshal that recently prompted faculty to pass a resolution of appreciation for his years of service.

Hyatt, a UNC alumnus, a senior professor in the Department of Exercise and Sport Science and a faculty member since 1966, resigned from his post in September due to health troubles.

Appointed in 1992 by then-Chancellor Paul Hardin, Hyatt has

led faculty and guests to their seats during Commencement ceremonies and University Day ceremonies for 10 years.

Hyatt's departmental colleagues said he has a visible love for the University.

"He's a native of a little town in South Carolina, but I can guarantee you he's about as strong a Carolina fan as you'll ever find," said Professor Ed Shields, who has known Hyatt for more than 35 years and praised him for his comedic nature.

"You cut him, and he'll bleed Carolina blue."

Professor Anthony Hackney remembered the moment he found out Hyatt held the marshal position.

"I thought, 'What a wonderful person to lead in the faculty, someone who is totally in love with the University,'" he said.

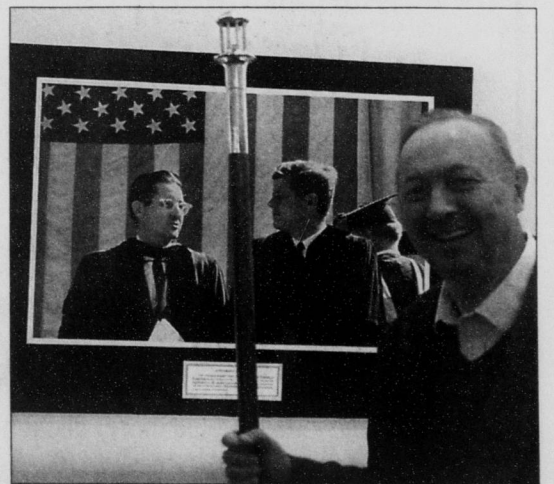
"You couldn't divine and pick a better person to be faculty marshal."

Known across the country, Hyatt has participated actively in many avenues of exercise and sport science ever since he received a master's degree from UNC in 1959.

Since then, he has received accolades from 11 state and national professional organizations for his work.

In addition to his accomplishments, Hyatt's flexibility also made him a good choice for the position.

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Faculty recently passed a resolution of appreciation for UNC professor and alumnus Ron Hyatt for his years of service as the faculty marshal.

APS suffers more charges

Contract breaches added to lawsuit

BY LAURA HIRST
STAFF WRITER

Elliot Cramer and Judith Reitman amended their lawsuit against the Animal Protection Society of Orange County on Friday, expanding their allegations to a breach of fiduciary duty by APS' officers and board of directors.

The new complaint states that APS endangered its contract with the Orange County Board of Commissioners and that the board of directors mismanaged the county's animal shelter.

Pat Beyle, president of the board of directors, denied the allegations.

"We certainly are not mismanaging APS or the shelter," she said.

"Obviously, I think that we're running it the best way we can right now."

The amended lawsuit refers to a report on the shelter's operations given to commissioners in August by the Humane Society of the United States.

Cramer and Reitman originally filed the lawsuit in February after the APS board revoked voting rights for its members. Cramer was running for a position on the board at the time.

"From our point of view, that was the most important part of our lawsuit," Cramer said. "How undemocratic can you be?"

The APS articles of incorporation originally stated, "Each member shall be entitled to one vote at any meeting of the corporation."

Ron Merritt, attorney for APS, has said the change in the bylaws was legal. He declined to comment Tuesday because of the pending litigation.

Barry Nakell, attorney for Cramer and Reitman, said APS requested that the discovery period be extended until March 1 and added that the only actions APS has taken so far in the discovery period have been depositions of Cramer and Reitman.

Cramer said he opposes an extension. "We are thinking they have simply delayed giving us our information."

APS also has asked to postpone the trial date from January to April, according to Nakell.

APS, Beyle and former APS Executive Director Laura Walters have filed a countersuit against

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