# Day's parties contrast history N.C. economy expected to trail U.S.

While the green brews flow and students claiming to be Irish get kissed, it's time once again to reflect on the well celebrated, but often not-so-well understood, holiday that is St. Patrick's Day.

In the Catholic church, St. Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland as well as the saint of overcoming obstacles. To Irish-Americans, he's a

symbol of their Irish heritage. St. Patrick's Day in its American form is widely believed to date back to the first time Boston held a

back to the first time Boston held a St. Patrick's Day parade in 1737. In the Chapel Hill area, restau-rants and pubs are gearing up for the festivities. W.B. Yeats Irish Pub on Franklin Street is teaming up with Avalon for a night featuring six live bands and a DJ, coupled with Irish food and drinking. Rí Rá, an Irish pub in Raleigh,

also plans to serve traditional Irish fare and feature Irish dancers, bagpipers and other live music.

This American version of the celebration is relatively young, but

Day has been around much longer.

"In Ireland, it's a much quieter kind of thing," said Patrick O'Neill, a professor of English at UNC who moved to the United States from Ireland in 1005." ("Yes a leith of the Ireland in 1976. "You don't have to go around proclaiming you're Irish. It's more like Thanksgiving."

The man behind the shamrock

has less to do with Guinness than

students might think.

Born in the late fourth century as Maewyn Succat, the day's patron saint was baptized Patrick and lived in Britain until he was kidnapped and sold as a slave in

Ireland around age 16.
After being enslaved by the Irish and struggling to survive as a missionary among them, Patrick con-fessed that he didn't like them as a people. "That, to me, is one of the puzzles about Patrick," O'Neill said.

The only available records of Patrick's life are his confessions, which act as an incomplete autobiography, and a letter excommunicating a Scottish war chief for enslaving members of Patrick's

as a Catholic feast day, St. Patrick's congregation. Myth and reality Day has been around much longer. often are blurred because of a lack of concrete information.

Either way, stories of Patrick's feats, fact or fiction, endure even today. Stories survive about how Patrick received guidance from God to escape from slavery and eventu-ally return to Ireland to convert the

There also is the common legend in which Patrick drives the snake from Ireland - an impossible task, cause such serpents never inhabited the island.

Although he is seen as a hero, St. Patrick's confessions discuss belief that he never would have chosen to do his work were he not selected by God.

"In the 600s A.D., a group of churches in the northern part of Ireland decided to make Patrick the atron saint of Ireland," O'Neill said. "I think all scholars would agree that Patrick was just one of many missionaries in Ireland?

> Contact the Features Editor at features@unc.edu.

North Carolina's economy is expected to underperform in 2004 compared with the rest of the nation, according to a key eco-nomic forecast released Monday.

The state's output is expected to increase 2.2 percent during 2004, compared with an estimated 4 percent to 5 percent for the entire country, according to UNC-Charlotte's Carolina Economic

North Carolina is expected to add 31,500 jobs in 2004, one third of what would be expected histor-ically, said John Connaughton, professor of economics at UNC-C, who compiled the report.

"Things are a lot worse than they typically are at this stage in a recovery," he said. "Firms really haven't started hiring back yet."

He added that this lack of opportunities means college stu-dents will struggle to find jobs.

"While things are tough for grads coming out this year, they're not nearly as bad as last year. We're looking at the greatest job growth this year in services, retail, trade

Connaughton said he doesn't foresee strong employment growth in the state until national employment rates improve.

North Carolina's growth also underperformed compared with national rates in 2003. Last year, the gross state product improved an estimated 2.2 percent, while the gross domestic product rose 3.1

Only 10,000 jobs were created in the state in 2003, a meager increase of 0.3 percent.

Connaughton said the causes of North Carolina's struggles are the declines of the textile, apparel, tobacco and furniture industries. He added that this trend has been occurring for years and is not due to recent economic troubles.

Then the recession comes, and these industries get hurt even more. It is a double blow."

He said he sees 2005 as a turning point, when North Carolina's growth will start to reflect national rates as the backlog of jobs from declining industries goes away

Carol Conway, deputy director for the Southern Growth Policies Board, a think tank based in Research Triangle Park, blamed underinvestment in education for the state's problem. She specifically pointed to a lack of training that

can be applied to new jobs.

Conway added that North
Carolina's focus on its consumer economy and neglect of the global information economy is another key factor.

In a knowledge economy, a larger share of your sales activity is going to be global," she said. "We have tended to see exporting as a small item, and for that reason we haven't given it due attention.

Conway said the state's focus on improving education, particularly at community colleges, will have positive effects on the future.

She also recommended that universities emphasize international education to boost students' chances in the global economy. "That will improve job prospects."

> Contact the State ♂ National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

### **THE Daily Crossword**

### ACROSS

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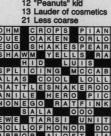
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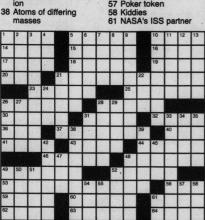
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