

Teacher postpones plea on misdemeanor charges

Abuse allegations get mixed reactions

BY ARLEY WOLBER
STAFF WRITER

An award-winning former teacher of autistic children in Chapel Hill appeared for the first time in court Monday, facing five misdemeanor charges involving accusations of child abuse.

Kathleen Yasui-Der, 49, of 101 Fieldstone Court, chose not to enter a plea Monday, and instead signed a waiver allowing her to postpone entering her plea until she could meet with her new attorney.

She is scheduled to meet her new attorney Oct. 18. Yasui-Der was charged with two counts of assault on a handicapped person, two counts of contributing to the neglect of a minor and one count of child abuse.

She turned herself in to police Aug. 24 after five warrants for her arrest were issued.

The charges originate from incidents that police reports state occurred during the 2003-04 school year at Frank Porter Graham Elementary School.

Police reports state that one of the counts of assault on a handicapped person stemmed from an incident in which a student's finger was bent back.

The second charge of assault resulted from an incident in which a student was slapped on the head,

reports state.

Reports also state that Yasui-Der was charged with one count of child abuse in relation to the twisting of a student's arm March 12.

The students involved were a 9-year-old and a 12-year-old who are unrelated and former members of Yasui-Der's class, reports state.

It is unknown whether the complaints were submitted by a student, parent or administrator.

The school district initiated an investigation in response to the allegations.

Yasui-Der, who was accompanied Monday by close friend Alice Wertheimer, plans to plead not guilty to all charges, according to her current attorney, Tom Maher.

Maher said that the presentation of evidence attesting to Yasui-Der's dedication as a teacher would be a focal point of her defense and that at the end of the trial, "she should be cleared."

Indeed, members of the community have come out to support Yasui-Der and to attest to her dedication.

Laurie Ireland, a mother of one of Yasui-Der's former students, said she "can't imagine the charges are true."

Ireland, a personal friend of Yasui-Der, said she thinks nothing good will come of the situation, regardless of the result.

"In an area that's very difficult to



Kathleen Yasui-Der, a former teacher for autistic children, put off entering a plea Monday.

attract young teachers, this is certainly not going to help," she said. "There's a critical shortage of special (education) teachers."

Yasui-Der had taught at Frank Porter Graham Elementary School for the past 12 years. She resigned from her teaching position July 15 after she was suspended June 1.

Yasui-Der was the 2002-03 Teacher of the Year at Frank Porter Graham and was the recipient of one of the district's 2003 Dean Smith teaching awards.

"It's really a shame, because I've never seen a more dedicated teacher," said Ginny Berg, who was principal of the school from 1995 to 2001. "The real tragedy is for the autistic children."

The school has already hired a replacement to teach autistic children for the 2004-05 school year.

Wertheimer said she will continue to support Yasui-Der throughout the proceedings.

"This is tough for her," Wertheimer said. "She needs our strength."

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

Palahniuk details his 'Diary'

BY BECCA MOORE
ASSISTANT ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Throw out the name Chuck Palahniuk, and you'll probably get a response similar to this: "Chuck who? Oh, the author of 'Fight Club'?" Yeah, that guy must be insane.

Students will have a chance Wednesday to judge Palahniuk's sanity for themselves when the author stops on campus to promote the paperback release of his most recent novel, "Diary."

Palahniuk will sign books, talk with fans and read excerpts from "Diary" as well as from his upcoming book, "Haunted."

In an interview last Wednesday, Palahniuk said people develop a warped image of who he really is, based on his novels. "People really confuse what the writer says with the writer," he said.

The most important thing to consider when writing is that you're doing it for yourself and not for your audience, Palahniuk said.

"You can't really write honestly if you're thinking of anyone's reactions. ... It completely destroys the joy and creativity of writing if you're worried about how people are receiving your work."

"Diary" revolves around the life of Misty, an artist who leaves her

trailer park roots in search of a better life, only to find herself part of a horrific, cyclic conspiracy.

Palahniuk said he used Misty's reincarnation cycle and inability to break free of it as a reflection on our society today.

"It's a metaphor for why we have wars and the same things that we always bitch about," he said. "Why do we make the same mistakes, especially when we have all the signs?"

Palahniuk picked the characters' names for the novel from an Internet contest in which fans submitted options. "I wanted to thank them for reading," he said.

Along with offering fans the chance to contribute to his writing, Palahniuk often sends them small homemade gifts. He also mailed 27,000 books for soldiers stationed in Iraq.

"I'm really big on the do-it-yourself movement we're seeing now," he said. "More and more people are recognizing that it's satisfying to take the time to create things. It really shows a hope for the future, that people are becoming burnt out on quantity and are looking for quality in their experiences."

Palahniuk enjoys DVDs, but he hasn't owned a TV since 1991.

"I've never seen 'Seinfeld' or

IF YOU GO

Date: Wednesday, Sept. 22
Time: noon
Location: The Bull's Head Bookshop in UNC Student Stores
Info: www.chuckpalahniuk.net

'Friends.' I'm completely retarded to the culture. People talk about it, and I just sit in the corner."

He's not too keen on the Internet, either. "I'd much rather be out there talking to people because real contact is unfiltered and raw," he said.

Palahniuk also said he meets a lot of interesting people in his day-to-day life. "I have this scam — I offer people painkillers on flights. These very important, very well-dressed people take my Vicodin, and they start talking about these incredible, amazing things like bladder surgeries or picking up prostitutes in London."

He said it's important to have a sense of humor when you meet people.

"People just want to make you laugh, to entertain you. If you're laughing, it's proof that you're paying attention."

Contact the A&E Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

Quizno's to open on Franklin St.

BY KATIE LEWIS
STAFF WRITER

New and familiar businesses are finding homes on Franklin Street, and come January, students on the town's main thoroughfare will be able to enjoy another high-profile restaurant.

Dick Ren, area director for Quizno's Subs, confirmed Monday that the sandwich chain will open its third Chapel Hill location on Franklin Street.

Quizno's has been trying to get

a property on Franklin Street for three years, Ren said.

The business already has two local restaurants, but Ren said the location at 169 E. Franklin St. is a prime real-estate find.

"This is a great property, and the supply and demand on Franklin Street made it extremely difficult and competitive to attain it," Ren said.

Ren said all that is left is the signing of the lease.

"The lease will be signed by the end of the week, and we hope to

have the store open by the end of this year or early January at the latest," Ren said.

"We are pleased to see another empty storefront get filled and are looking forward to working with Quizno's to help ensure their success and the success of downtown," said Aaron Nelson, executive director of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce.

Salon 135, located at 135 E. Franklin St., plans to move across the street within the next week.

The salon has maintained its current location for 22 years, but repairs to its building are forcing the business to relocate.

The salon shared a common wall with Indian clothing store Anjana's, which was damaged by a fire in May. The entire building sustained damages from the fire and will be repaired as soon as the current businesses relocate.

Salon 135's new location at 128 E. Franklin St. is smaller but will offer adequate space for the salon's services, said Alan Corpus, the salon's manager.

Its new building is the former location of the Franklin Street Subway.

The salon is relocating at a time when a well-known salon is planning to arrive in the area.

Aveda will be opening a store, salon, spa and training institute on West Franklin Street where Michael Jordan's 23 restaurant sat vacant for more than 18 months.

But Corpus said he doesn't think Aveda will pose a threat to his salon.

Salon 135's tentative plans are to move while remaining open. The salon is not open Sundays, so it plans on relocating on a Sunday or Monday.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

THE Pita Pit PITAS SALADS
Chapel Hill VEGGIE OPTIONS
Fresh Thinking, Healthy Eating
919.933.4456 115 E. Franklin St. OPEN LATE

Fight Club author
Chuck PALAHNIUK
will read from
and sign his book
DIARY
A NOVEL
Wednesday,
September 22nd
at NOON in the
Bull's Head Bookshop
call 962-5060 for more info

CORRECTION

■ Due to inaccurate information provided by a source, the Sept. 20 article "School desires diverse group" stated that 97 percent of this year's freshman class either captained a varsity sport, founded an organization, led their student body or class, or led a student club. It should have stated that the number is 64 percent.

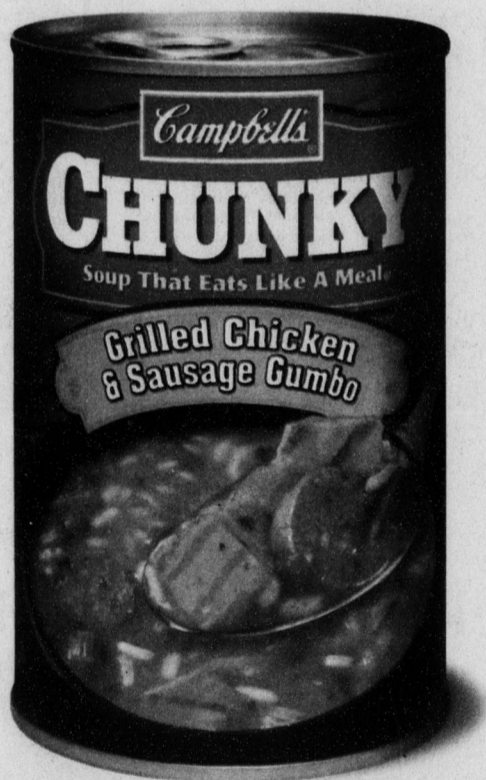
To report corrections, contact Managing Editor Chris Coletta at c.coletta@email.unc.edu.

The Daily Tar Heel

P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515
Michelle Jarboe, Editor, 962-4086
Advertising & Business, 962-1163
News, Features, Sports, 962-0245

One copy per person; additional copies may be purchased at The Daily Tar Heel for \$.25 each.
© 2004 DTH Publishing Corp.
All rights reserved

YOU DO OWN A SPOON, RIGHT?



IT FILLS YOU UP RIGHT.™

©2004 CSC

SO WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUR ORGANIZATION IS NO LONGER OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZED AT CAROLINA?

YOU LOSE your room and equipment reservations made through the Union. **YOU LOSE** your homepage on the University's web space. **YOU LOSE** your list serve and group email accounts. **YOU LOSE** your Union office space. **YOU LOSE** your SAFO account. **YOU LOSE. PERIOD.**

Don't delay! Application forms for '04-'05 Official University recognition of student co-curricular organizations are available from Room 2501 A of the Union. For continuous recognition, you must submit your Agreement at a meeting with Jon by Friday, September 24, 2004.

Questions? Concerns? Contact Jon at jon@email.unc.edu