

President of Comair resigns under scrutiny

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CINCINNATI — The president of Delta subsidiary Comair Inc. resigned Monday, weeks after the failure of an overloaded computer system stranded hundreds of customers on Christmas.

An internal Delta memo said Randy Rademacher had stepped down to pursue other unspecified opportunities. Asked whether Rademacher was pressured to leave, Comair spokesman Nick Miller said: "It was his personal decision. We don't want to speculate on his reasons."

A telephone message seeking comment from Rademacher was not immediately returned Monday.

Rademacher was immediately replaced by Fred Buttrell, who has been serving as the head of Delta Airlines Inc.'s Delta Connection group, which works with the airline's regional carriers. Comair,

which is based at the Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky International Airport, is owned by Delta.

At least one analyst blamed Rademacher's departure on the Christmas fiasco that resulted in the cancellation of approximately 1,100 flights.

The company blamed numerous passenger scheduling changes because of an ice storm for overloading the computer system.

"It's pretty obvious what happened over the holiday was very serious," said Doug Abbey, a partner of The Velocity Group, an aviation consulting firm based in Washington, D.C. "That's what this is all about."

Comair, which operates in 119 cities, carries about 30,000 passengers daily in the United States, mostly east of the Mississippi River, and to Canada and the Bahamas.

Its Christmas meltdown came

during the same weekend that financially plagued US Airways Group experienced a similar fiasco because of labor issues and bad weather. But unlike US Airways and even Comair parent Delta, which has come close to filing for bankruptcy, Comair's balance sheet has received little attention.

Delta doesn't reveal how much profit Comair brings to the Delta system. But former Delta chief executive Leo Mullin said several years ago that collective revenue from Comair and other Delta Connection carriers that coordinate schedules with Delta was in the billions of dollars annually.

Rademacher had been Comair's president for five years and joined the airline in 1985. His tenure included guiding Comair through a three-month strike by its pilots that won them pay increases in a new contract.

RELIEF

FROM PAGE 3

just said, "Yes, we'll jump on board," said Beth Ward, hospital administrator at The Animal Hospital of Carrboro, which will be contributing to the American Red Cross.

A Southern Season, a Chapel Hill gourmet market, is earmarking 5 percent of all of Monday's sales for the American Red Cross.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

FORUM

FROM PAGE 3

of three UNC administrators in attendance, commiserated with the employees.

"I don't think you could get anyone to dispute that the salaries and benefits for clerical workers here are abysmal," he said. "It's the people who work here that make it what it is. But we don't have a wage structure to support them."

Shelton cited several compromising issues — such as budget cuts, donations directed to specific departments at UNC and state controls — as problems standing in the way of raising workers' salaries.

While the forum raised touchy issues, many said it was a step in

"I think we all have a responsibility to step in and help whenever we can, no matter what the cause," said Deborah Miller, the store's marketing and communications director.

For more information on Direct Relief International, visit its Web site at <http://www.directrelief.org/index.html>.

COFFEE

FROM PAGE 3

To compete with Driade and Open Eye, newly opened coffee shops are trying to find their own niche.

"We are not doing espresso drinks, so that immediately sets us apart," said Grant Meadows, an employee of 3 Cups, which opened in December in The Courtyard shopping center at 431 W. Franklin St.

There are certain key ingredients that go into making a successful coffee shop, Meadows said.

"For us, the focus is on freshness, quality and great service in a nice, comfortable environment."

Jack Sprat Café opened Jan. 5 in the former site of Strong's Coffee at 161 E. Franklin St.

Steve Dorozenski, owner of Jack Sprat, said that when he came to Chapel Hill, Caffé Driade was the only coffee shop that he liked.

"We use them as a benchmark for service and quality," he said. "I think they do it the best."

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

the right direction.

"Knowing they can sit down and talk to the provost about issues is important," said Tommy Griffin, chairman of the Employee Forum.

"They know they can speak up." Workers also stressed the need for students to support them in their drive for better benefits, noting that employees' integral roles in the community are often overlooked.

"We're a community that's all intertwined. If the students are the muscles, we're the bones," said Curtis Helfrich of Energy Services.

"Without each part, it doesn't work."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

SOLDIER

FROM PAGE 3

done (in Iraq)," said Barber, a UNC sophomore.

Barber agrees with Huda that perhaps many UNC students have a warped view of the war in Iraq. "The media is focused on showing the bad things. Rarely do they show the rebuilding," he said.

Before Huda was deployed, Javeir Johnson was already at a camp on the border between Kuwait and Iraq. The UNC junior joined

the military the day after Sept. 11, 2001. Johnson and his troop were positioned for war, but long before it was official, he said, they knew it was coming.

"We took Baghdad, and it was crazy," he said.

He was in the first unit to "take" a palace in Baghdad, and he stayed in the city for almost a month.

Returning to High Point in 2003, he found friends and family cautious not to upset him.

"It was kind of weird at first. I didn't want to hang out with peo-

ple who weren't soldiers," he said. Johnson formed a bond with his fellow soldiers, who became more like brothers to him.

Huda, Barber and Johnson predict they will need time to put their civilian lives back together again, but they are happy to be back with family and friends, who might need some time as well.

"They were just adjusting like I was adjusting," Johnson said.

Contact the Features Editor at features@unc.edu.

HEALTH CARE

FROM PAGE 3

"We want to have more emphasis on wellness and condition control and disease management so we don't spend all our money reacting in the most expensive ways," Winner said.

She said she expected a new plan to aid in employee retention and also to make the university system more competitive in recruiting faculty members on a national level.

The task force hopes to develop a viable plan to present to the UNC-system Board of Governors before final approval from the N.C.

General Assembly this spring.

In an October survey, 57.8 percent of system employees reported overall satisfaction with the plan.

But in several other categories, the health care plan ranked lower than the averages of 26 other employers in the survey database. These categories include satisfaction with the quality of care, services covered, employee contribution costs and out-of-pocket costs.

"The cost of dependent health care has continued to rise over the past couple years, and more and more employees can't afford it," Winner said. "Plus, there is underlying dissatisfaction with the lack

of choices."

The UNC system does not cover costs of dependents, so employees with family members must purchase additional plans. With just 26.1 percent of employees reporting satisfaction with out-of-pocket expenses, dependent coverage has become a central issue.

"What I see at this point is a situation in which we've got folks who aren't able to cover health insurance for their kids or spouse," said Judith Wegner, chairwoman of the faculty.

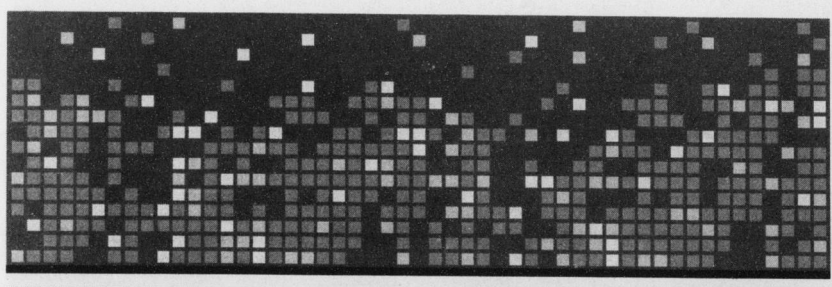
Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

GET INTO THE GAME AT GRANVILLE
APPLY TO BE A RESIDENT ASSISTANT

All prospective players are invited to pick up an application at the front desk of Granville Towers South. Applications are due at 6pm on Sunday, January 23, 2005 at the mandatory informational prospect meeting in the lower lobby of Granville Towers South. Interested players should contact Amy Hathorn at 370-4500 or ahathorn@granvilletowers.com for more information.

Granville TOWERS

EOE M/F/V/D



enjoy free **AND** legal digital music

wednesday 01.19
 11 AM • 2 PM
 carolina union: great hall



music distribution for on-campus residents

unc digital music program

Learn about the **UNC Digital Music Pilot Program**.

Find out how to **download music legally for free** for the entire semester.

Talk to representatives from **Napster, Rhapsody, Ruckus, and Cdigix**.

Check out the **music accessories** sold by the RAM shop.

Learn the **legal implications** of downloading music.

Sponsored by:
UNC Student Government
UNC Information Technology Services