

Entrepreneur talks life, coffee

CEO speaks to UNC initiative class

BY ERICA RAFFERTY
STAFF WRITER

Michael Coles never attended college and had to relearn how to walk after a debilitating motorcycle accident.

The oven of the first Great American Cookie Company — a store that he co-founded — caught on fire because there were no oven mitts to take out the cookies.

But these obstacles did not stop Coles from becoming a successful entrepreneur and CEO of Caribou Coffee.

Coles spoke about his life and work Tuesday during a Carolina Entrepreneurial Initiative class.

Before the class lecture Coles visited Caribou Coffee on West Franklin Street to have a smaller discussion about the company's impact on both a personal and business level.

"We've had two people ... send me copies of books with a credit that we got because they wrote a lot of the book in Caribou's," Coles said.

Several years ago Coles took over

the 13-year-old company, which has stores in 14 states and 21 locations in North Carolina.

Coles said he wants his customers to have an emotional attachment to Caribou Coffee and for it to be a place where everyone is welcome.

"Seven marriages have been made in Caribou," he said. "Women in wedding dresses ... it's a riot."

After some one-on-one time with Coles, junior communication studies major Jordan Selleck — who is chairman of the College Republicans — said he understands how the CEO is so successful.

"I could see how he is very much involved with the Caribou product," Selleck said. "When you watch him walk around he was looking at all aspects of the shop."

The entrepreneurial initiative class is not a stranger to having famous guest speakers. This past

semester it also has had visits from this spring's UNC commencement speaker, Wendy Kopp, president and founder of Teach for America, and Allen Questrom, retired CEO of J.C. Penney Co. Inc.

And students are not the only ones who benefit from the guest lectures — Coles said he enjoyed talking with students.

"I love the opportunity to be able to talk to students from lower schools to doctoral programs," he said. "Students seem to ask more direct and more honest questions."

The entrepreneurship minor is for students who wish to complement their major with a class designed to teach how to create new ventures.

Because of its popularity, next fall the class will be open to 100 students instead of the current 50-person maximum enrollment, said Buck Goldstein, University entrepreneur-in-residence who also teaches the class.

"I could see how (Michael Coles) is very much involved with the Caribou project."

JORDAN SELLECK, CR CHAIRMAN

"Most of these kids aren't looking for jobs," he said. "They're looking for skills to create jobs."

The opportunity of hearing from engaging speakers and learning practical skills makes CEI a popular course, said junior political science major Julie Soforenko.

"This is the best minor ever," she said. "Practical information that you can apply to your endeavors, meeting incredible speakers — people to directly learn from who have done it."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

CURTAIN CALL



DTH/SHANE BROGAN

UNC Professor Luceil L. Friedman (right) speaks to audience members after Tuesday's performance of "Vad VaShen" at N.C. Hillel. An adaptation of a story by Aharon Megged, the play was put on by UNC's advanced Hebrew class. See dailytarheel.com for the full story.

Town to audit hygiene, safety

Business owners anticipate results

BY ANNE HILLMAN
STAFF WRITER

Downtown Chapel Hill is about to be audited.

Community members and business owners are invited to join the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership, the Chapel Hill police and public works departments in completing cleanliness and safety audits of the downtown area.

Downtown will be divided into three sections, and each section will undergo both a daytime and a nighttime audit. The audits will be conducted periodically throughout the day and night from today until Friday.

The audits are being conducted in response to concerns from local business owners and community members about the safety and cleanliness of the downtown area.

Antoine Puech, who owns buildings on West Franklin Street, said that some areas of downtown are an "unsafe habitat for lawbreakers, people doing drugs, dealing drugs, sleeping in bushes and basically soiling private property."

"We know we've got issues," said Lex Alexander, partnership member and owner of 3 Cups. "But we're having these audits to try to quantify what they are."

"The purpose of the audits is to look at the public and private property and look at areas that can use some type of improvement," said Liz Parham, executive director of the Downtown Partnership.

She said information from the audits will be used to develop new programs that will get to the roots of the issues that lead to unsafe and unclean conditions.

Local business owners are enthusiastic about their chance to highlight some of the problems in the area.

"This is a step in the right direction," said Robert Poitras, owner of Carolina Brewery. "We are giving attention to downtown in a logical, practical approach."

"I look forward to having a chance and a medium to express what we see every day," he said.

Tommy O'Connell, managing partner of 411 West, stressed that dealing with downtown's safety and cleanliness issues is important for maintaining Chapel Hill's unique character.

"The town is at least now realizing that it's affecting the vitality ... of the entire town," he said.

"If you don't have a strong downtown area in Chapel Hill, it loses a lot."

Police officers will be accompanying the auditing groups as well.

"It will be interesting to see exactly what we see ... what type of atmosphere, who we see," Lt. Kevin Gunter said.

The partnership requests that interested participants contact them before arriving for the audit to ensure that adequate staff and materials will be available.

More information about the audits can be found by contacting the partnership at 967-9440.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

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Sugar, We're Going Down - Fall Out Boy	141012
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