

## CORRECTION

Due to an editing error, the Jan. 8 headline for the online story "Tax increase pads school budget, merger still on table" incorrectly states that the Orange County School Board still is considering the merger of Central and Hillsborough elementary schools. The board decided against the merger at a December meeting. The Daily Tar Heel apologizes for the error.

## CAMPUS BRIEFS

## Escalator in Lenoir closed on Tuesday for minor repair

The up escalator in Lenoir Dining Hall was shut off temporarily for repairs Tuesday.

"There was a problem with the hand rail, and they were concerned it might cause some safety problems," said Scott Myers, director of food and vending.

The escalator was closed in the morning, and Myers said the escalator was scheduled to be completed by Tuesday evening. By 7:30 p.m., the escalator was still closed.

## Kiplinger's names UNC best value for 7th straight year

Kiplinger's Personal Finance magazine ranked UNC as the best value in American public higher education for the seventh year in a row in its February issue.

UNC has claimed the honor since the magazine started publishing a ranking analysis in 1998.

Kiplinger evaluates 500 public colleges and universities to identify the top 100 schools, ranking them primarily on academic quality and affordability.

The next highest scoring N.C. university was N.C. State University, which came in 13th on the list.

## UNC receives grant to study rural child development

The FPG Child Development Institute and the UNC School of Education received a \$12.8 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to continue to study how rural life affects child development.

This study, known as the Family Life Project, started five years ago. It has studied the lives of families in the African-American South and Appalachia, two major geographical areas of rural child poverty.

The study follows about 1,300 children, and the next phase of the project will track their progress as they enter school.

## CITY BRIEFS

## Police ask for information on man wanted for eluding

The Chapel Hill Police Department identified one of the individuals wanted for eluding police during a high-speed chase that resulted in a car accident Jan. 4.

Mauricio Eugene Long walked out of UNC Hospitals while he was being treated for injuries.

Long, 24, is wanted on felony charges of fleeing to elude, speeding, fictitious registration, reckless driving, failing to yield for blue lights and siren, three counts of possession of stolen goods, two counts of larceny from a vehicle, possession of a firearm on town property and resisting arrest, according to Chapel Hill police.

Police asked those with information about Long's location to call police at 968-2760 or Crime Stoppers at 942-7515. Long is considered armed and dangerous and has a history of armed robbery and assault on a law enforcement officer.

## Durham finance director to take Chapel Hill position

Town Manager Roger Stancil hired Ken Pennoyer as Chapel Hill's new business management director. Pennoyer resigned his position from the city of Durham on Tuesday. He worked there as finance director since 2003.

"His experience with managing technology, as well as financial operations, makes him a perfect candidate for this newly defined position," Stancil stated in a press release.

The new position will be responsible for transitioning the finance department into one managing the budget, accounting, business analysis and information technology.

Pennoyer is expected to start work Feb. 4 with an annual salary of \$112,000.

## Chapel Hill will host mayors to discuss climate change

Mayors from throughout North Carolina will gather in Chapel Hill on Wednesday and Thursday to discuss transportation and climate change as part of the meeting of the NC Metropolitan Coalition.

"We are striving to become a model community for reducing greenhouse emissions and are actively pursuing sustainable initiatives," Chapel Hill Mayor Kevin Foy said.

-From staff and wire reports

## District thinks past merger

## May change school registration forms

BY SARA GREGORY  
CITY EDITOR

HILLSBOROUGH — With a merger of Central and Hillsborough elementary schools off the table, the Orange County Board of Education heard the district's new plans Monday.

The board decided against merging the two schools at its last meeting and chose instead to redirect Title I funds from Central and Eland Cheeks Elementary to a new prekindergarten program serving the whole district.

Initial proposals also include capping enrollment at Hillsborough elementary school to ensure economic diversity at the two schools.

Hillsborough Elementary has the district's lowest percent of stu-

dents eligible for free and reduced lunch at 14 percent. Central Elementary has the district's highest rate at about 70 percent.

Denise Morton, associate superintendent of curriculum and instruction, said that district staff are looking at how to implement the board's plan but that it will be difficult to know specifics until parents submit registration and intent forms detailing where they want their child to attend in the upcoming school year.

"We're gonna have to get that data in front of us," Morton said.

Morton said that information should be available by the end of March, which will allow the district to let parents know school assignments by the end of April.

The form could ask parents to

identify their income bracket and education levels.

Board member Al Hartkopf questioned how accurately parents' education levels predict family income.

"I know a lot of educated poor folk," he said.

Hartkopf also asked how the district expected to verify what parents report, and Morton said the district would have to trust parents to be truthful. Morton emphasized, though, that her report Monday reflects only discussion so far and that the district had not yet decided how to proceed.

The board asked for an update on the district's progress at its next meeting, Jan. 22.

Superintendent Patrick Rhodes said the district is serious about improving achievement for all students.

"We'll lay the groundwork for

significant improvement," he said.

Senior staff will conduct checks at Central Elementary in the coming months. The district also plans to look at putting programs in place to help struggling students and to provide professional development opportunities for teachers.

The board also discussed what it will take to start the prekindergarten program. Morton said staff are looking at existing facilities to find the best place for the program.

Finance Director Patricia Harris presented the board with the district's preliminary operating budget.

The Board of County Commissioners will look at the Orange County Schools and Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools preliminary budgets later this month.

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

## District gets Fs from NAACP

## Achievement gap highest concern

BY ELISABETH ARRIERO  
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City School district was handed a report card with Fs across the board at a meeting Monday.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance presented grades in 11 areas of concern, including eliminating the achievement gap between black and white students, eliminating the use of courts to discipline black students and recruiting black teachers.

Bishop Gene Hatley said grades were based on anecdotes from teachers and parents, both former and present, as well as statistics.

"We are here tonight to move from the discussion stage to measurable actions that lead to sincere improvements," he said.

The report card noted that 51 percent of black high school students achieved a passing score on the end-of-course test, compared to 95 percent of white students.

Superintendent Neil Pedersen and members of the school board attended the meeting, which was called by the NAACP and the IMA and held at St. Joseph CME Church on Rosemary Street, to represent the school district.

After Hatley's opening statement, Pedersen addressed the conclusions from the report card.

"I don't agree with all the grades that were given, but at the same time I acknowledge that we're not at the point where all our grades are As and Bs," Pedersen said.

Pedersen cited the dramatic drop in suspension rates as well and the increase in black parents involved in leadership roles in school as evidence that the district is working to close the achievement gap.

Pedersen also provided a packet of information to those in attendance. The packet included charts that showed EOG Reading and Mathematics Proficiency Scores since 1994, broken down by race. The charts show a steady decrease of the achievement gap between black and Hispanic students and Asian and white students.

After both sides had made their opening remarks, the floor was opened to community members to give their opinions on the achievement gap.

"The two words that need to come to the fore are institutional racism and white privilege," said Nancie McDermott, who has two children in the school district.

McDermott also said it is the community's responsibility to rid the system of this racism.

"We have a legal and moral responsibility to educate all of our children," McDermott said.

Michelle Laws, another resident who spoke at the meeting, said the achievement gap has as much to do with class as it does with race.

"If the students from the majority of your families were in the bot-

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## HISTORIC HOUSE CONDEMNED

## Residents aim to preserve building

BY SETH WRIGHT  
STAFF WRITER

A house that embodies the history of Chapel Hill is falling apart, and local preservationists are making an effort to save it.

Former UNC President Edward Kidder Graham's house, located at 115 Battle Lane, was condemned last week when trees fell over and tore off the back of the structure, making the building structurally unsound.

"I've watched it fall apart over the last five and a half or six years," said Paul Kapp, campus historic preservation manager.

"It's kind of going under a demolition by neglect."

Chapel Hill resident Sherman Richardson owns the Graham house. And although he attempted to restore it in previous years, hiring several contractors, he was unsuccessful, said Ernest Dollar, executive director of the Preservation Society of Chapel Hill.

Richardson, who bought the Graham house in the late 1990s, and his wife do not live at the house.

The Preservation Society has been working with Richardson to find someone who is interested in restoring the house, which is now for sale at an asking price of \$895,000.

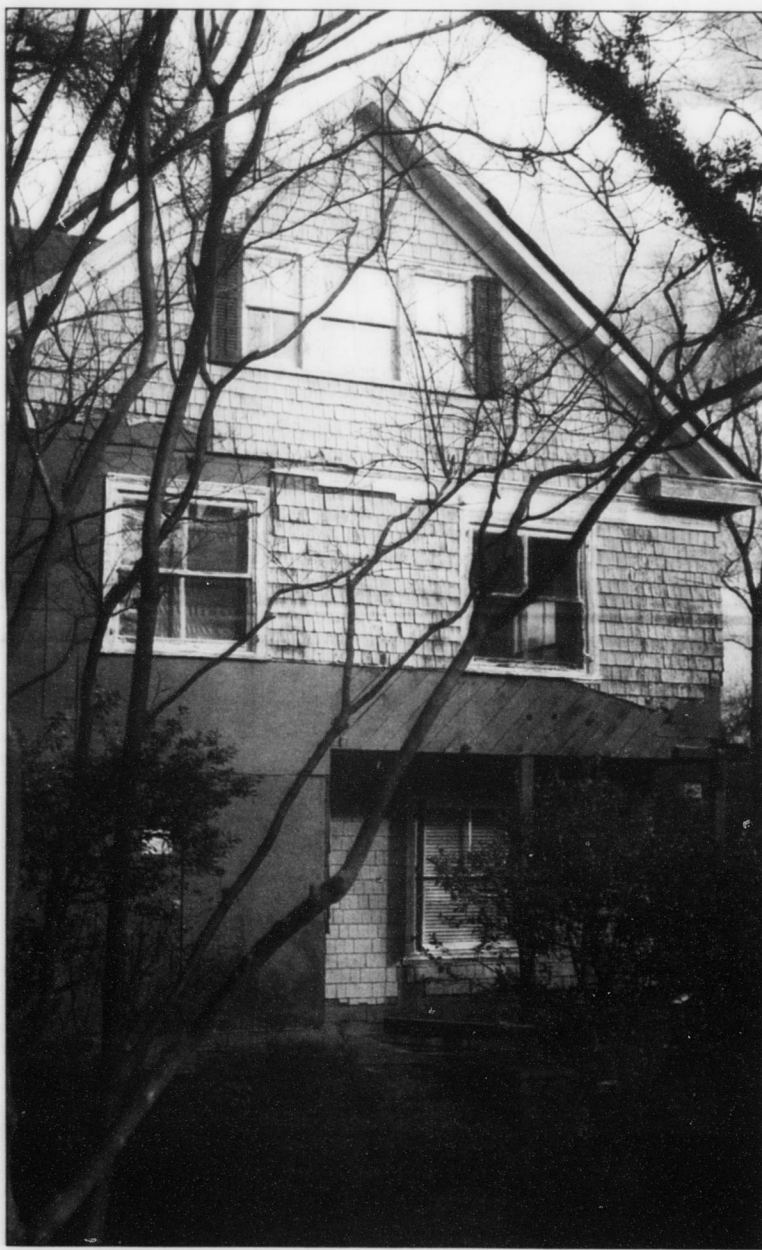
Edward Kidder Graham, the cousin of Frank Porter Graham, was president of UNC from 1913 to 1918.

Graham led the University through World War I, promoted equal rights for women and expanded the University's services throughout North Carolina.

"He is a significant figure in the University's history and a very well-respected leader," Kapp said.

Because of Graham's history and the house's architectural features, Edward Smith, who has bought and restored several of Chapel Hill's historical homes,

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The town of Chapel Hill recently condemned former UNC president Edward Kidder Graham's historic house at 115 Battle Lane. The current owner tried unsuccessfully to restore the house.

DTH/ELISE HARWOOD

## Kleinschmidt receives threats

## Supporters counter with donations

BY MAX ROSE  
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

When openly gay Chapel Hill Town Council member Mark Kleinschmidt posted a link to a neo-Nazi site on his blog, he didn't expect to hear back.

But in the weeks following, anti-gay activists posted thinly veiled threats on his blog.

"We're watching you, queer boy," a user identified as Bill White wrote.

When the Vanguard News Network posted his home address and phone number online, Kleinschmidt contacted Chapel Hill police as a precaution.

Kleinschmidt posted the link in response to a VNN post that listed contact information of openly gay and lesbian public officials and suggested "direct action" against them.

"I believe that we shouldn't allow the rhetoric that they use to just stay hidden from view and allow them to think that they are insulated from public scrutiny," he said.

VNN is the second-largest neo-Nazi forum in the country, said Mark Potok, director of the

Intelligence Project, a division of the Southern Poverty Law Center that tracks hate groups.

It is edited by Alex Linder of Kirksville, Mo.

Several attempts to contact Linder were unsuccessful.

Potok said the forum does not have a physical presence and has not attacked anyone. Kleinschmidt said no one from the group called or mailed him.

Orange County has shown a tendency to look past sexual orientation at election time.

Lydia Lavelle became the first openly lesbian public official in Carrboro when she was elected to the Carrboro Board of Aldermen last year. Lavelle's name was not included on the VNN list.

The lists are unlikely to be illegal, Potok said, but there is precedent allowing authorities to remove them to prevent violence.

Kleinschmidt said that people in Chapel Hill do not put much relevance on sexual orientation but that making people aware is important.

"We counter their speech with



Councilman Mark Kleinschmidt received threats from anti-gay activists on his blog.

our speech; we don't counter their speech with government crackdown," he said. "It's the only way that we'll ever be able to eliminate it."

The hate speech on his blog is now vastly outnumbered by statements of support.

Ruby Sinreich, chief blogger of orangepolitics.org, pledged to donate \$5 per comment to Equality NC, a gay rights group. After about \$200 was raised, Sinreich said the comments stopped.

"I tried to think about 'What would they least like to see happen?'" Sinreich said.

"If they wanted to suppress the voice of gay people, our response was that every time they commented, they were amplifying the voice of gay people."

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

## Faculty Council OKs priority registration

BY WHITNEY KISLING  
UNIVERSITY EDITOR

A new priority registration system will go into effect next semester, giving some students, particularly athletes, the chance to register before their classmates.

The Faculty Council approved the new system at its December meeting, despite a petition signed by about 650 students.

With the new system, groups of students can be recommended for early registration. They must be approved by a committee, which University Registrar Alice Poehls will lead.

"Nobody is automatic at this point," Poehls said. "Each request will be dealt with individually."

The students must meet certain standards, such as participation in a University-sponsored activity that requires specific scheduling.

Student varsity athletes fit best into the standards that will need to be met.

"They are the group that probably will be affected quite a bit, but there are other groups that we talked about, as well," Poehls said,

"Once you start giving some people a place in the line ahead of others, you create some issues."

STEVE REZNICK, PROFESSOR

noting other groups as students with disabilities.

The new system will begin to get off the ground within the next two weeks as Poehls assembles the committee of students and faculty members. The committee will be approved by the education policy committee.

Poehls said she also is in the process of creating the form that will need to be filled out to be considered.

Each class will set aside no more than 15 percent of its seats for priority registration. And Steve Reznick, professor of psychology and the chairman of the task force that cre-

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