

Two downtown restaurants close their doors; spaces remain unfilled as yet

Students returning from winter break will notice changes on their first trek to downtown Chapel Hill. The Rathskeller, at 157 1/2 E. Franklin St., has closed indefinitely, and Buffalo Wild Wings restaurant, formerly at 206 W. Franklin St., has closed permanently.

THE RATHSKELLER

A letter to the Rathskeller's patrons on its Web site said it closed "in a nonhostile agreement with the Department of Revenue."

The letter cited three main reasons for its indefinite closing: the "drastically changed" downtown business climate, a former manager who did not pay withholding taxes for eighteen months and the deteriorating building itself.

Signs on the Rathskeller's windows warn against trespassing and

invite those who want more information to visit www.carolinarat.com.

John Morris, the property manager of Rathskeller's building, said the business's property is scheduled to be auctioned Feb. 2.

Morris said that he had no indication that the current owner planned to reopen the restaurant but that he hoped someone else would.

Randy Kabrick, a shift leader at Firehouse Subs and a former employee of Rathskeller, said it's "pitiful" that the restaurant has closed.

"There's 60 years of history there," he said. "People that have been working there since the sixties lost their jobs."

BUFFALO WILD WINGS

Buffalo Wild Wings closed because of a change in the

corporation's business model, said Antoine Puech, president of Prestige Associates. The partnership owns the building that housed Buffalo Wild Wings.

"They're changing the emphasis of their restaurants and focusing more on family-oriented restaurants and away from student-oriented bars," Puech said.

While he could not say how long Buffalo Wild Wings had been planning to leave, Puech said he imagined the move had been a priority for several years.

Liz Parham, executive director of the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership, said it's typical for businesses to come and go downtown.

She said the town has already received four offers from other businesses for the Buffalo Wild Wings building.

"The fact that they're leaving

doesn't mean the demise of a downtown," she said.

While Parham said there is interest from a restaurant for the Buffalo Wild Wings building, the fact that there are 81 restaurants downtown means that the downtown partnership is looking to diversify.

But Puech noted that the development of the nearby Lot 5 will make parking an issue for any future tenant.

Students on Franklin Street on Tuesday said they would miss the restaurant.

Nicole Lynch, a UNC senior, was shocked to hear that Buffalo Wild Wings had closed.

"I love B-Dubs! Their wings are awesome," she said. "Where are we gonna watch Superbowl games?"

— Compiled by Anasa Hicks

One-woman show up next for PlayMakers

Performance uses three stories

ATTEND THE SHOW

Time: Various times, today to Jan. 13
Location: Elizabeth Price Kenan Theatre
Info: www.playmakersrep.org

BY ALYSSA GRIFFITH
STAFF WRITER

The Chapel Hill community will be served a triple dose of horror and humor in Lisa Kron's autobiographical show "2.5 Minute Ride," which opens today at the Elizabeth Price Kenan Theatre.

Kron, who wrote and performs in the one-woman show, weaves together three different stories in PlayMakers Repertory Company's first offering of 2008.

"2.5 Minute Ride" is PlayMakers' second installment in its new PRC² second-stage series. The performances all highlight unique and true-life stories.

"Our focus has been to create work that invites dialogue," said Joseph Haj, PlayMakers' producing artistic director.

"We want to present works that are challenging in form and in theme."

Every performance will be followed by an interactive discussion between the artist and audience members in an effort to personalize the experience for theatergoers.

And because of the smaller and more intimate size of the Kenan Theatre, those who attend a PRC² show might have a different kind of theater experience.

Aside from a stool, some blank slides and a laser pointer, Kron will perform onstage alone.

Haj said one of the goals of PRC² is to preserve a place where artists, performers and audience members can indulge in challenging pieces outside of the financial pressure of large-scale productions.

"2.5 Minute Ride" received an OBIE Award, an L.A. Drama-Logue Award, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle nominations and the GLAAD Media Award for best play on- or off-Broadway.

Kron's show, a story about her

own family, was selected for the series because of the performer's ability to bend form in order to reveal theme.

"Lisa crashes together Auschwitz and roller coaster rides in a search for connection and identity," Haj said.

The performance wraps itself around the links between two very separate journeys — a family trip to a theme park and a painful passage Kron makes to the Auschwitz concentration camp where Kron's grandparents lost their lives.

Through the dramatic and funny events that occur, Kron also explores the emotional evolution of her relationship with her father.

Using depictions of personal events, Kron's performance wrestles with global ideas and issues.

"The goal of autobiographical material should not be to tell stories about yourself but to explore something universal," Kron said.

Kron integrates audience members by allowing them to imagine their own family photos on the blank slides on stage.

Toward the end of "2.5 Minute Ride," Kron arrives at the third, seemingly disconnected tale of her performance as she recounts the emotional change of heart she experienced at her brother's wedding.

This is the final twist to her tale as all the elements of the previous two stories feed into the moment.

"Lisa Kron's personal story shares her compassion for humanity," Haj said.

"Her monologues emphasize the resilient human spirit."

Contact the Arts Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

Court hears Ky. lethal injection case

Decision could affect N.C. executions

BY ERIC JOHNSON
SENIOR WRITER

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments Monday in a case that has effectively put the death penalty on hold across the country.

The justices are considering a challenge to the method of lethal injection used in virtually every state that still administers the death penalty, including North Carolina.

Two Kentucky inmates are suing to stop their executions on grounds that the three-drug formula used in lethal injections has the potential to cause cruel and unusual suffering.

Until a ruling is delivered this spring, there is a de facto moratorium on executions in the United States.

"The lethal injection cocktail they're talking about in this case is the same cocktail of drugs we have in North Carolina," said Jeremy Collins, campaign coordinator for the North Carolina Coalition for a Moratorium. "We're on hold until we hear back from the Supreme Court."

Challenges to the three-drug method of lethal injection have been brought in federal courts for decades, but Monday marked the first time the Supreme Court has waded into the issue.

Death penalty opponents had hoped the Court might strike down the widely used procedure, which involves one drug to anesthetize the inmate, another to induce paralysis and a third to stop the heart.

But during Monday's hearing, several justices expressed skepticism that a better alternative exists.

Donald Verrilli, the lawyer for the condemned Kentucky inmates, tried to convince the Court that current lethal injection procedure lacks safeguards and has the potential to inflict excruciating pain if the drugs are not administered properly.

But several justices questioned whether a risk of improper procedure was enough to invalidate the method.

"Of course there is a risk of human error," Justice Stephen Breyer said. "But the question here is, can we say

that there is more of a risk than with other execution methods?"

Justice Antonin Scalia pointed out that executions are not required to be painless but simply to avoid "unnecessary and wanton" pain.

The case could be sent back to the Kentucky courts for a more thorough comparison between the three-drug method and other alternatives. That would have the effect of keeping death sentences nationwide on hold.

"It could take years," Scalia said, adding that he would prefer to avoid that outcome.

Regardless of what the Court decides about the legality of lethal injection, executions in North Carolina are unlikely to resume anytime soon.

"There are going to be a number of hurdles before that happens," said Richard Rosen, a UNC law professor who teaches a seminar on capital punishment.

Like many other states, North Carolina is dealing with a procedural impasse involving the participation of doctors in executions.

Regulations call for a licensed physician to be present during

A breakdown of Baze v. Rees

► The case was brought by two Kentucky death row inmates.

► It challenges the three-chemical combination that 36 states, including North Carolina, use to execute prisoners by lethal injection.

► It claims the procedure violates the "cruel and unusual punishment" clause of the Eighth Amendment.

► It does not challenge the constitutionality of the death penalty or lethal injection.

► Its outcome could affect how N.C. executions are handled.

a lethal injection, but the state Medical Board has called such participation an ethical violation.

The Court touched briefly on that issue Monday but is unlikely to offer any firm guidance in its ruling.

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Moesser steps in to fund literature festival

BY ABBY FARSON
STAFF WRITER

A \$200,000 grant from Chancellor James Moesser has rescued a celebrated literary festival that was set to end.

The biennial festival will be revived in 2009 and hosted at UNC. It originally was scheduled for this spring, but library officials at UNC said they would be incapable of hosting the festival because of budget constraints.

"It is a tremendous commitment, particularly financially," said Judith Panitch, director of library communications at UNC.

Because the festival, which rotates locations among UNC, Duke University, N.C. State University and N.C. Central University, is held every two years, schools essentially have to start from scratch each year, said Aaron Greenwald, Duke's 2006 festival director.

The festival cost Duke \$280,000

to host in 2006. So even with the chancellor's grant, some additional funding will need to be procured, Panitch said.

"With the other obligations that we have and the services that we are seeking to provide, we didn't feel like we could responsibly host it at the point it was first discussed," she said of the initial decision to cancel the festival.

But members of the Triangle community were not pleased with that decision.

"Since our initial statement that we weren't going to continue, we heard from a lot of members from the community that this is an important and enriching event," Panitch said.

Once Moesser became aware of the festival's discontinuation, he decided to allocate \$200,000 from private funds for the 2009 festival.

He wrote a letter to the president of Duke and the chancellors of N.C.

State and N.C. Central on Dec. 14, notifying them of his decision.

In the letter, Moesser described the event as "an outstanding showcase for the area's important literary heritage."

Duke's 2006 event, called the N.C. Festival of the Book, lasted four days, drew more than 10,000 people and hosted 80 authors, including Tom Wolfe, Barbara Kingsolver, Pat Conroy and Ann Patchett.

"We wanted a more open and popular festival for the wider community of the Triangle and beyond," said Deborah Jakubs, university librarian and vice provost for library affairs at Duke, who helped organize the 2006 festival.

UNC's 2009 festival now is in the early planning stages.

"The first job we're facing is

to find a festival director," said Michele Fletcher, director of library development at UNC. "We have not posted a job listing yet."

Library officials have not set a salary for the festival director, though they said they are confident the chancellor's grant will provide money to hire a director as well as one or two assistants, Fletcher said.

A committee of faculty, students and local writers will be established to help plan the festival and choose its theme, Panitch said.

"We are extremely grateful that the chancellor was responsive in this way," she said. "And we are committed to providing a great festival in 2009."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.



Carolina Sports Menu

THIS WEEK'S MENU

SWIMMING & DIVING
vs. Clemson (MW) & Rutgers (W)
SATURDAY, JAN. 12
AT 4:00 PM

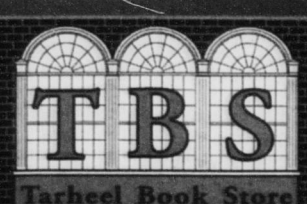
TRACK & FIELD
Joe Hilton Tar Heel Invitational
SATURDAY, JAN. 12
ALL DAY

WRESTLING
vs. Maryland
SUNDAY, JAN. 13
AT 1:00PM
&
vs. Belmont Abbey
SUNDAY, JAN. 13
AT 3:00 PM

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vs. Clemson (MW) & Rutgers (W)
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AT 4:00 PM

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WRESTLING
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SUNDAY, JAN. 13
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