

# THE DAILY CLIPS

December 23-28, 2005

News, commentary, and opinion  
compiled by the East Carolina University News Bureau from:

The Greenville Daily Reflector  
The Raleigh News & Observer  
The New York Times  
The Wall Street Journal  
USA Today  
The Charlotte Observer  
The Fayetteville Observer  
The Greensboro News & Record  
Newsweek  
U.S. News & World Report  
Business Week  
Time

**East Carolina University News Bureau**

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Saturday, December 24, 2005

# ECU hoped to hire Baird for consultation

■ The plans were revealed in a series of e-mails and a statement from ECU Director of Athletics Terry Holland.

The Daily Reflector

East Carolina University hoped to hire Hal Baird, athletic assistant to the university president at Auburn, in October to oversee the baseball program in an administrative role, but contractual restrictions prevented it, ECU Director of Athletics Terry Holland said Friday as part of a response to a Freedom of Information request.

In a series of e-mails and a summary statement from Holland, it was stated that the school had hoped to hire Baird to consult on the Pirates' baseball program for three months. But Baird's current contract obligations with Auburn kept him from working with another university.

The Freedom of Information request was filed by the News and Observer



HOLLAND

of Raleigh on Oct. 11. The e-mails were released Friday at 4 p.m.

The information released by the university shed no further light on why former ECU baseball coach Randy Mazey was released, however.

At least four of the e-mails, which were sent between Oct. 1 and Oct. 10, were completely blacked out by the university attorney's office in an effort to redact personnel information and other information related to student confidentiality issues.

Mazey was suspended with pay on Oct. 10 and his resignation was announced on Dec. 8. Billy Godwin, who was

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# PLANS

## Continued From C1

named the university's acting baseball coach when Mazey was suspended, officially was named the school's head coach on Oct. 28

"It was my hope that, if coach Baird was available, we would hire him to oversee the program from an administrative standpoint and provide stability during this critical time," Holland said in a statement. "By the time we learned that coach Baird was not available to help us in this capacity, we had been so impressed with coach Godwin's leadership and

calming influence as well as his genuine love for our players and East Carolina baseball, that we decided we would not seek anyone else to fill the role originally imagined for Coach Baird."

Baird compiled a 145-66-1 record in five seasons as ECU head coach from 1980-84.

The 13 pages of e-mails did reveal that the decision to remove Mazey had been made at least a week before the coach and Holland met on Oct. 10 to discuss Mazey's status with the program.

In an e-mail from Holland to Senior Associate Athletics Director Nick Floyd and Ballard dated Oct. 3, Holland

states, "I am appointing Billy Godwin as the 'acting' head coach, a position he will occupy until the end of the upcoming season. At that time, after careful evaluation, a permanent head coach will be named."

In his statement on Friday, Holland said that entering the first weekend in October "it became apparent to me that the next meeting I would have with coach Randy Mazey would likely have an unfortunate conclusion.

"At that time, I began a conversation with the chancellor both asking his advice and making sure that he was informed of my likely course of action."

Published: Dec 24, 2005 12:30 AM  
Modified: Dec 24, 2005 04:16 AM

## **ECU releases Mazey messages**

### **E-mails reveal little regarding October departure of Pirates baseball coach**

#### **The Associated Press**

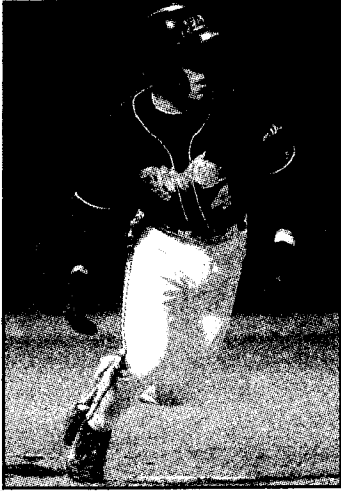
East Carolina on Friday released several e-mails regarding the departure of baseball coach Randy Mazey, who was suspended with pay in October and ultimately replaced as coach.

The school released the e-mails in response to a Freedom of Information request from The News & Observer. The e-mails were sent to The Associated Press and 10 other local media outlets that cover the Conference USA program, school spokesman Tom McClellan said.

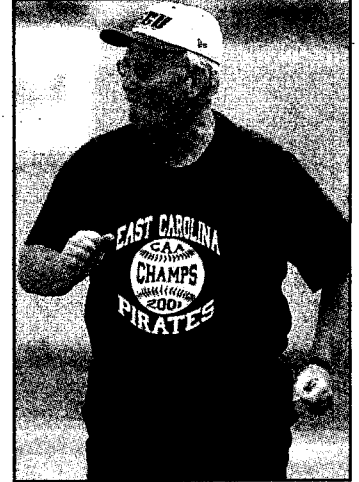
The e-mails involved Mazey, athletics director Terry Holland and chancellor Steve Ballard. They offered no insight into why the school suspended Mazey for unspecified reasons. Assistant coach Billy Godwin was promoted to interim coach. He ultimately earned the job permanently. Mazey officially resigned earlier this month.

The school blacked out much of the content of the e-mails, citing confidentiality regarding personnel information. Holland had said the school would conduct a national search for Mazey's replacement before saying he was impressed with Godwin's leadership of the program since becoming the interim coach on Oct. 10.

In a statement Friday, Holland said the program had hoped to bring in Hal Baird -- former Auburn and East Carolina baseball coach -- as a consultant to the program while Godwin was the interim coach. But Baird's contract as an athletics administrator at Auburn prevented that, and the school chose to make Godwin its permanent coach, Holland said.



# Pirate Prosperity



## ECU baseball will feature a couple familiar faces

By Nick Zulovich  
The Daily Reflector

The timing of changes made by East Carolina to its baseball coaching leadership did not necessarily leave Billy Godwin with a host of candidates to fill out his staff. However, the individuals who expressed interest left Godwin with an easy decision.

George Whitfield, members of several North Carolina Halls of Fame, and Clayton McCullough, one of ECU's best-ever catchers, will serve as assistant coaches to Godwin for the coming season.

Also, Ryan Riley, who served as an assistant coach last season under Randy Mazey, will be reassigned into the newly created director of baseball operations.

"We really feel like with our repositioning, we've really solidified our staff," Godwin said. "We've taken this situation and made it as solid as it could be.

"There's a lot of coaching staffs that would die to have the kind of staff we have now at East Carolina. Our kids are real fortunate."

### Whitfield returns

George Whitfield rejoins the ECU staff after having served for a total of five years with Keith LeClair. The final season LeClair was head coach — 2002 — the

Pirates won an emotionally charged championship, the Conference USA Tournament crown at Grainger Stadium in Kinston.

"I don't know if I've ever enjoyed anything more in all of my life, the five years I worked with coach LeClair," said Whitfield, who was in a volunteer capacity at that time. "The memories, and the love I have for that guy and his family, it was worth every day I went out there and every trip I made just to be around him.

"I miss coach LeClair a lot."

Whitfield is in both the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame and the North Carolina Athletic Directors Association Hall of Fame. He also has a close relationship with Godwin, a bond that the current ECU head coach said was starting to be built while the two competed against each other in American Legion baseball. It began to blossom when Whitfield was one of the first individuals to congratulate Godwin when he replaced Russ Frazier at Louisburg College.

"Baseball is funny," Godwin said. "Baseball coaches have a very tight fraternity. It's amazing."

Godwin and Whitfield can tighten that fraternity even more now.

"To me, it was a no-brainer," Godwin

said. "If you get the opportunity to put a Hall of Fame coach in the dugout, that's a real good move."

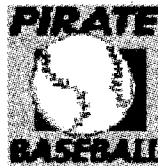
Whitfield continues to operate his annual baseball clinic, which will reach 34 years running with the next installment on Jan. 14. During the last couple of years, after spending some time as South Central High School's first athletic director, Whitfield spent a significant time with family, especially his grandchildren. Whitfield also did some philanthropic work, including the organization of a fund-raiser for the American Red Cross in which he solicited donations of sports memorabilia that generated more than \$50,000 in revenue through an auction.

"When people find out you've got some time, they'll rope you into all kind of situations," Whitfield said with a chuckle.

Now Whitfield's been roped into being a Pirate again, a situation he said he is greatly anticipating.

Godwin isn't the only member of the coaching staff who is glad Whitfield is back in the fold.

"Coach Whit was amazing," McCullough said. "All three years I played here, he was such an integral part. That guy's got more life and more fire inside of him than anybody I know. And not just to baseball but to



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# PIRATES

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life in general. These kids don't know how lucky they are to have Coach Whit with us in the spring because I know how much he's meant to me and everybody else who's ever played for him. He's been around the game of baseball for a long time. He's had a chance to help a lot of people. He has so much to offer than just baseball. He's such a good person."

## McCullough is back

Clayton McCullough admits he probably couldn't be an accountant or some other professional that resides in an office setting. Coaching baseball would be his only career of choice.

"I wanted to stay in baseball. I don't know anything else," McCullough said. I couldn't ever sit behind a desk and work a regular job. My playing days, I knew they were going to come to an end at some point. I'm excited to be back at ECU, back at the school where you played."

McCullough spent four seasons as a catcher in the Cleveland Indians minor league system. While reaching the major leagues never came to fruition for him, however, he is not bitter whatsoever.

"The kind of the situation I was in, I wasn't an everyday guy playing all of the time," McCullough said. "I was kind of bouncing around from level to level. I wasn't getting a whole lot of chances to play, which was frustrating. But that was my role. Cleveland gave me a tremendous opportunity to play past college, and I owe them a lot. I learned a bunch with my time with them."

After earning what he calls his "Baseball 101 degree," after spending four years in professional baseball, McCullough will polish off his East Carolina degree while serving as a first-base coach and catching instructor with the Pirates. McCullough admits some of the

scenery is different since the majestic Clark-LeClair Stadium stands in the same place where the meager Harrington Field once did. But whether it's with the Pirates or Cleveland, McCullough says it's still baseball.

"The game of baseball is the same," McCullough said. "It sounds corny, but it is from Little League to the big leagues. Guys are just better at it. They fine tune their abilities. They're so much more relaxed and trust themselves so much more. They just have so much experience, and they don't panic. It was amazing to see how they go about their business day to day."

McCullough will be hoping to help the Pirates reach the same level of success they did while he was a player. ECU won at least 43 games in each of the seasons McCullough was the Pirates' primary catcher. The Pirates claimed Colonial Athletic Association and C-USA titles and advanced to the NCAA Super Regional round in 2001.

Billy Godwin said he remembers instructing McCullough as a 10-year-old player during a summer camp at Campbell. McCullough said now being called, "Coach McCullough," will take some getting used to.

"I'm not really sure that's sunk in yet," McCullough said. "I guess it will sound a little different. It will make me seem a little older than I really am."

"I hope I can help in a lot of different ways. With me not being far removed from being a player, I can understand what they're going through and relate to them. I think that can be an advantage."

## Riley's role

Ryan Riley already spearheaded East Carolina's summer baseball camps. Now, he'll be making sure the program's travel arrangements are all completed as well as a host of other organizational responsibilities as the director of baseball operations.

"If you look at all of the top programs in the country, they

all have a director of baseball operations," Godwin said. "We're just fortunate that our administration supports that and see the need to have that position at East Carolina."

After playing at Clemson and for four years in the Tampa Bay Devil Rays minor league systems, Riley came to ECU as an assistant coach, primarily working with the team's infielders.

## Arrival of Jan. 18

The Pirates officially commence practice on Jan. 18, a date Godwin says he knows, "very, very well." Godwin can check that item off of his to-do list now that his staff is completely in order.

"I think people from eastern North Carolina can appreciate this, that (baseball coaches) are kind of like farmers at this time of the year," Godwin said. "We get everything in, all of our equipment and make sure we've got everything we need so when it's time to plow the field we can go to work in January. That's kind of what we're doing right now."

The Pirates will have a total of 24 days between the opening of spring practice and the season opener. ECU will start of string of 15 consecutive games at Clark-LeClair on Feb. 10 against Maryland.

*Nick Zulovich can be reached at (252) 329-9593 or [nzulovich@coxnc.com](mailto:nzulovich@coxnc.com).*

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**SECTION:** SPORTS; Pg. C12; None

**LENGTH:** 383 words

**HEADLINE:** East Carolina e-mails reveal little about **Mazey** departure

**BYLINE:** By Staff and Wire Reports

**BODY:**

East Carolina released several e-mails regarding the departure of baseball coach Randy **Mazey**, who was suspended with pay and ultimately replaced as coach in October.

The school released the e-mails in response to a Freedom of Information request from The News & Observer of Raleigh. The e-mails were sent to The Associated Press and 10 other media outlets that cover the Conference USA program, school spokesman Tom McClellan said.

The e-mails involved **Mazey**, athletics director Terry **Holland** and chancellor Steve Ballard. They offered no insight into why the school suspended **Mazey** for unspecified reasons.

**Mazey** officially resigned earlier this month.

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**Holland** had said the school would conduct a national search for **Mazey's** replacement before saying he was impressed with interim coach Billy Godwin's leadership of the program since becoming the interim coach Oct. 10.

In a statement Friday, **Holland** said the program had hoped to bring in Hal Baird - former Auburn and East Carolina baseball coach - as a consultant to the program while Godwin was the interim coach. But Baird's contract as an athletics administrator at Auburn prevented that and the school chose to make Godwin its permanent coach.

# Fort Bragg education center offers classes on base, during deployment

The Daily Reflector

The next time Alberto Morrison deploys for Iraq, his business courses from East Carolina University will go with him.

Based in Fort Bragg, Morrison is working toward a bachelor's degree in business administration through ECU's distance education — a program that was recently named one of 10 schools authorized to contract with the Fayetteville Army base.

"Most bases overseas have Internet access readily available," said Morrison, 32, who has already been deployed to Iraq twice. "Going online for an hour or two a week is doable for almost any unit regardless of tempo."

ECU began organizing

## ECU NOTES

coursework for military personnel and dependents at Fort Bragg in August. These ECU students do not occupy classrooms as part of distance education and often they are their own guidance counselors. Teronda McNeil-Hueitt and Mark Bergman are coordinators for ECU's Division of Continuing Studies at the Fort Bragg office, which is housed in one of Bragg's Korean War-era barracks. Employed by the university, McNeil-Hueitt and Bergman both have Army backgrounds and serve as liaisons between the university and the soldiers.

Morrison, a chief warrant officer serving as a weapons



ECU CHANCELLOR STEVE BALLARD, left, speaks with Maj. Gen. Virgil L. Packett II, deputy commanding general at Fort Bragg, during a visit to the post. Ballard toured ECU's distance education center.

Contributed photo

and electronics tech, said ECU's new on-base pocket helps provide stability to the program and academic support.

"The ECU office at Bragg

went completely out of their way to start me off," he said. "In fact, they assisted with getting my books, spent time with me on Blackboard and

proctored my final exam. I will say that having them as permanent proctors will facilitate this process for students."

Earlier this month Chancellor Steve Ballard and other ECU officials toured the Fort Bragg facilities to see how distance education students communicate with the university.

"When the troops go, all of our resources go with them," said Clayton Sessoms, director of the division of continuing studies at ECU. "Even when the defenders of our country are deployed, our distance education programs go with them."

East Carolina's enrollment in distance education has outpaced sister institutions in the University of North Carolina system in past years. According to the U.S. News and World Report's 2005 E-learning guide,

ECU is the 12th largest online university in the country.

When the UNC system increased its distance education allocation by \$14 million in 2004, ECU received \$11 million for its 4,000 distance education students. The university currently enrolls more than 4,200 distance education students in 700 course sections.

Col. Al Aycock acknowledged that ECU's experience in distance education is one of the reasons the base chose ECU.

"ECU was chosen because of the national leadership in distance education," he said.

As of the fall 2005 semester, ECU has 172 students enrolled who are coded as "military" for tuition purposes. In addition, 425 students are receiving

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veterans' benefits. Registration is still underway for the Spring 2006 semester.

"Fort Bragg houses North Carolina's largest concentration of military neighbors," said Steve Duncan, director of military programs at ECU. "More than 70 percent of the base's military population is deployed and distance education is one of the major ways these service members can continue their educational pursuits."

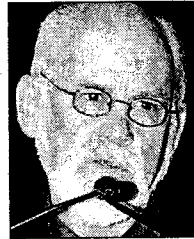
Sessoms said military enrollments will most likely change as a result of new program.

"We anticipate that we will gain several hundred more soldiers over the next two or three years as a result of our efforts on Fort Bragg," he said.

## NYC art center honors Ebendorf

ECU artist Robert Ebendorf was recently honored for

leadership and achievement in American art by New York City's prestigious 92nd Street Y Art Center.



**EBENDORF**

was one of four artists honored at the Dec. 5 Anniversary Gala for the center, which has a long history of cultural and creative programming.

"I am humbled to receive this honor," said Ebendorf, who holds the Carol Grotnes Belk Distinguished Professorship of Art at ECU. "The 92nd Street Y Arts Center is truly a creative oasis and a widely acknowledged success story for community arts teaching."

Founded in 1874 as the Young Men's Hebrew Association, the 92nd Street Y Art Center now serves as a lecture hall, a performance space, a school, a health center and a community organization for all populations around the world. Charlotte V. Brown of the Gallery of Art and

Design at N.C. State University introduced Ebendorf and presented the award for significant contributions to American art.

"Robert Ebendorf has reshaped our understanding of adornment; his jewelry has transformed the field. Bob's success as a teacher has widened the opportunities for makers and audiences alike and his influence can be found everywhere jewelry and metal work are made."

In 2004 a 40-year retrospective of Ebendorf's work toured the country with a final destination at the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery in Washington D.C. Also in 2004, he was inducted into the Metalsmith Hall of Fame.

"Because of (his) respected body of work and dedication to and passion for art, (Ebendorf) exemplifies the 92nd Street Y Art Center's ongoing commitment to artistic excellence," wrote Robert Gilson, director of the center's School of the Arts.

*ECU Notes is compiled from releases issued by university news bureaus, colleges, schools and departments.*

## Luck of the Draw raises money for Health Education Foundation

### The Daily Reflector

More than 160 people gathered for the third annual Luck of the Draw reverse raffle Nov. 17 at East Carolina University's Murphy Center.

The event, sponsored by First Citizens Bank, raised more than \$6,500 for the Pitt County Health Education Foundation. The money will be used to support grants improving child and family health in Pitt County.

Guests, seated 10 to a table, cheered on their tablemates in hopes of winning the \$5,500 table prize. When the last ticket was drawn, it was determined that "The Mighty Munchkins," a table of pediatricians, were the winners. **Dr. Steve Prevatte** was the grand-prize winner, who won \$1,000.

Each of the five final tables won a comedy prize package from Café Caribe.

"The raffle is a great event for

the foundation," said Executive Director **Nancy Ball**. "The money raised will fund grant proposals that can really make a difference in the health of children and families in our county.

"Everyone always has a great time and enjoys a night out for a good cause."

The Pitt County Health Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the health of families and children in Pitt County. The foundation was established, and continues to receive support from, the Pitt County Medical Society.

Each year, the organization awards grants to local agencies providing health care or education in the county. In 2005, more than \$70,000 was awarded.

Other events sponsored by foundation include Guess Who's Coming to Dinner and the Med-Law Classic basketball game. For more information, call 758-8833.

# Hanukkah keeps the faith

■ The holiday is relatively minor in Judaism, but it helps locals relate to Jews elsewhere and gives them cause for celebration during one of Christianity's holiest times.

**By Paul Dunn**  
The Daily Reflector

About 10 hours after her Christian neighbors opened their presents Christmas morning, 8-year-old Michal Shlapentokh-Rothman finally tore into one of hers.



The sun had fallen, menorah candle flames danced, and vestiges of prayer hung over the kitchen where Michal sat patiently with her family.

It was 6 p.m., Sunday.

Sundown had ushered in the first night of Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights, and this moment was for Michal what Christmas morning is for other kids.

Michal and her family —

mom Alexandra Shlapentokh, dad Philip Rothman, and brother Yakov Shlapentokh-Rothman, celebrated the Jewish gift-giving holiday Sunday evening — to Jews a relatively minor event in the Jewish panoply of holidays. Hanukkah this year fell on Christmas day — one of Christianity's most holy days — for the first time since 1959, and for only the fourth time in the past 100 years.

Because none of them had ever celebrated Christmas, the coincidence held little significance for the Greenville family.

"Hanukkah is really just one part of the Jewish religion," said Yakov, a

17-year-old Rose High School student. "It's nice to relate to other Jews around the world by lighting candles and opening gifts, but it's really mainly significant because it occurs around Christmas and some view it as multiculturalism."

Hanukkah is celebrated over eight days starting on the 25th day of Kislev on the Hebrew calendar. The holiday commemorates the rededication of the holy temple in Jerusalem after the Jews' 165 B.C. victory over the Hellenist Syrians.

The Jewish fighters, known as Maccabees, celebrated their victory by lighting a menorah

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# GIFT

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— a candle stand with nine branches — with just enough oil to keep it lit for one day. Instead, the oil lasted eight days.

Sunday night, Michal helped her dad light the first Hanukkah menorah candles. With the two candles burning behind them, father and daughter led the family in three melodic prayers. With that finished, it was time for presents.

It took the pixie-faced Michal all of 10 seconds to demolish the wrapping on the first gift.

Inside was exactly what she'd hoped for — a chocolate-brown adult comforter for her bed.

Really.

"Michal is moving from Spongebob to a regular, adult comforter," said her mom Alexandra Shlapentokh, an East Carolina University professor of mathematics. "No more kid's stuff for her."

The next package contained matching-colored sheets.

The best present, though, came last ...

"Oooh, look what I got!" she sang after ripping apart the tiny wrapped gift.

"Do you know what it is?" asked her dad, an ECU associate professor of economics.

"No," she replied.

"It's an MP3 player," he told her.

"Whoa. This is awesome!" Michal said. "Thank you so much. This is the best Hanukkah gift ever. My dream comes true."

Yakov, meanwhile, sat at the kitchen table serenely holding his first night's present — a book about Bob Dylan. He clearly wasn't as excited as his sister, but was obviously enjoying the moment.

"I try to think I'm above the presents and not make that the most important thing of the holiday," he said. "But I still like getting them."

For Yakov and his family, other Jewish holidays are far more significant.

Yom Kippur, or "Day of Atonement," is generally regarded as the most important Jewish holiday. It's a day set aside to "afflict the soul," to

# Public Forum

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## ECU didn't deserve dart

I am appalled by the recent decision of The Daily Reflector to give a Dart to the East Carolina University tuition increase. How can a newspaper that claims to be a source of researched news miss the mark so badly? Do you believe that faculty members are hugely overpaid?

Most of the faculty of ECU (particularly those in the humanities) are paid far less than someone with their level of education deserves. As a chemistry professor, I make between \$30,000-\$40,000 per year less than I would make in an industrial position. I (like many of my colleagues) chose this job because I love to teach and enjoy helping our students become valuable and educated members of society. Try comparing our salaries with those at comparable

institutions (ECU does so to ensure competitiveness) before simply slamming a painful decision made by the administration.

Do you think we don't understand the impact? I paid my tuition with loans, academic and need-based scholarships, and part-time jobs. I had no phone, TV, car or a personal computer while in college. I graduated in 1989; I paid off (early) my last loan in 2002.

Do you believe we waste money? My department worries about the cost of dry-erase markers and paper. My

colleagues and I spend months of our time every year writing grants to pay for equipment and stipends for our students so that they are better prepared and educated. My students are now in elite graduate and medical programs due in part to our efforts; I consider this a fantastic investment in the future of our region.

Next time, before taking such a uninformed position, make sure you consider all sides of the question.

**ANDREW MOREHEAD**  
*Greenville*

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## THE PEOPLE'S FORUM

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### Hard times for doctors

Dr. Charles F. Willson's comments in a Dec. 14 Point of View article accurately put forth many of the issues facing physician groups in this state. Physician payments from Medicare will decrease by 4.4 percent in January and will decrease 26 percent by 2011.

Nearly all of the physician groups in the Triangle would be considered small businesses, but they compete against much larger, better funded, tax-exempt and heavily endowed organizations. Insurance companies are able to raise their rates to cover costs. Hospitals have been effective at protecting their monopolies through state Certificate of Need policies, yet the federal government will give them a 3.5 percent increase in Medicare payments.

Physician groups are essentially captive to Medicare rates, and payments have fallen 1.25 percent since 1998. Often commercial insurance payments are tied to Medicare rates, so they have fallen in parallel. Thus medical groups have no way to offset higher liability insurance costs, increases in office rents, higher nursing and staff salaries and more expensive supplies.

Physicians are retiring early or reducing the number of Medicare patients they see. Many of the best new doctors avoid North Carolina in favor of states with less restrictive Certificate of Need laws that let them provide more outpatient services.

In the 20-plus years I have had the privilege to work for physicians they have always stepped up to the plate and made their services available to those in need. Now, North Carolina physicians need two kinds of relief: spare them from proposed and future cuts in Medicare reimbursement, and repeal the burdensome Certificate of Need laws.

**Karl F. Stein**  
Executive Director  
Raleigh Orthopaedic Clinic  
*Raleigh*

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# Public Forum

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## Community should better support Pirates

In response to the many differing opinions on ECU's decision to drop men's soccer, I offer this: This community doesn't deserve a winning ECU program.

How many of you who are sorry that ECU did this provided any financial scholarship assistance to the Pirate Club? I was very disappointed with this decision.

I was also disappointed in the lack of local support at the men's basketball game on Dec. 6 when less than half of the coliseum was filled. Could this be the next sport to go?

And where were the ECU students at the men's game? Am I to believe they were all in their

rooms studying? They don't deserve a winner either if they don't go.

People in this area need to realize that without this great university, Greenville would be a small, insignificant, middle-of-nowhere town. No medical school, no big-time sports, teachers, culture, etc.

Meanwhile, local merchants thrive off this university and its alumni without supporting it either by presence or financially.

ECU students offer a tremendous service to this community. They should receive the same.

From this point on, I will ask of businesses I support if they support ECU.

No one is saying you should become a Pirate fan; just embrace the local economic engine. Show up at a game, even if you pull for a team in the Triangle.

If you are a fan, stop the excuses and join the Pirate club — it's a matter of scholarships. The great student-athletes will go where the financial and physical support is.

To those soccer players and their families, I am truly sorry. To the community, you get what you pay for. To my stockbroker, better join the Pirate Club.

**D. SCOTT McANDREW**  
*Grimesland*

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# An education sparks a passion for nursing

■ Going back to school was tough for Carole Russell. But she says it will give her the ability to provide for herself and her son while offering care to people who need it most.

By Jennifer White  
The Daily Reflector

Carole Russell went to nursing school at age 41 so she could provide for her teenage son. In the process, she discovered her passion for health care.

The single mother from Greenville graduated this fall as president of her class at the East Carolina University School of Nursing. Upon completion of state exams at the end of January, she has a job waiting for her in the Pediatric Intensive Care unit at Pitt County Memorial Hospital.

Russell originally decided to pursue a nursing degree for practical reasons, she said. With starting pay at about \$20 an hour, she could earn enough money to comfortably support her son, and she wouldn't have to worry about job

See *NURSING*, A7

## NURSING

Continued From A1

security.

"That was my whole thought process ... And once I got into the program, I discovered it's what I love, and I wish I'd done it 20 years ago.

"I wasn't one of those people that had been playing nurse since I was 6 and knew that's what I wanted to do. It's really funny, because once I got into it, it was just such a fit for me."

Russell got her first degree in environmental design. Since then, she worked eight years as a credentialist at the hospital and for two years at the ECU School of Business. But she said finances were always tight.

"We were living paycheck to paycheck," Russell said.

Life didn't immediately turn around after she returned to school. She had to quit her job at the business school so she could study full time. She relied on loans, scholarships, and help from friends and family to

support herself and son, Zach, now 13.

Her studies took time away from Zach, she said. During two years of nursing school, she spent 25 hours a week in class and 16 hours a week working with patients.

She also studied three to four hours every night and all day on weekends.

The future nurse relied on her parents to take Zach to school when she had to be at the hospital at 6:15 a.m. They also helped care for him on weekends when she had to study.

"He lost some of my attention," Russell said. "But I think that was a positive thing for him, too, because it helped him to become more self assertive and helped him mature and grow up and learn to do some things on his own that he probably should have been doing anyway."

The nursing program's workload at times made Russell question if she had made the right decision.

"It's very intensive, and it's

very stressful and it's more reading than is almost humanly possible," she said. "The first shock of nursing school was the first semester books were \$700. Our second shock was learning that we had to read them all. You really have to learn to budget your time."

Working with patients, however, helped keep her going, she said. She completed a work-study program in the hospital's pediatric intensive care unit last summer and is working as a nursing assistant in the unit now.

"It was a really tough summer, a lot of mortalities up there and a lot of really bad stuff, and that's what I was worried about as a mom — whether or not I could handle that," she said.

"That's why I did the externship program, and regardless of the outcome, you feel good at the end of the day about the care that you've provided to the child and to the family. Sometimes in a really bad situation is when you can be of the most use. You just have to think of it

like that."

The holiday season was a struggle financially, but since she went back to school, Christmas for her has been a time to reflect.

"I'm more grateful for the opportunities that we have in this country," she said. "I'm just thankful to be here, somewhere that I can still be at home, still go to school and not drastically interrupt my child's life. It's just all at my back door, and we're so fortunate to have that."

Russell said she is most thankful of the life she'll now be able to provide for Zach.

"On the one income, nurses will never be rich, but it's more than paying the bills," she said. "I didn't want him to start life off paying his own way through school and not having a car. I don't want him to be a brat, but I want to give him the things other kids have and give him a secure lifestyle."

Jennifer White can be contacted at [jewwhite@coxnc.com](mailto:jewwhite@coxnc.com) and 329-9571.



THE WORD FROM | GREENVILLE

# Historic span reborn in heart of community

BY JERRY ALLEGOOD  
STAFF WRITER

**GREENVILLE** - During the 75 years the Greenville Bridge spanned the Tar River, thousands of cars rumbled over it, trucks slammed into it, daredevil military pilots flew under it and a few suicidal people jumped off it.

Now the bridge with distinctive angular trusses rests quietly over a small creek on Greenville's Town Common. The bridge was moved off the river three years ago and reopened last June as a pedestrian crossing in the park near the river.

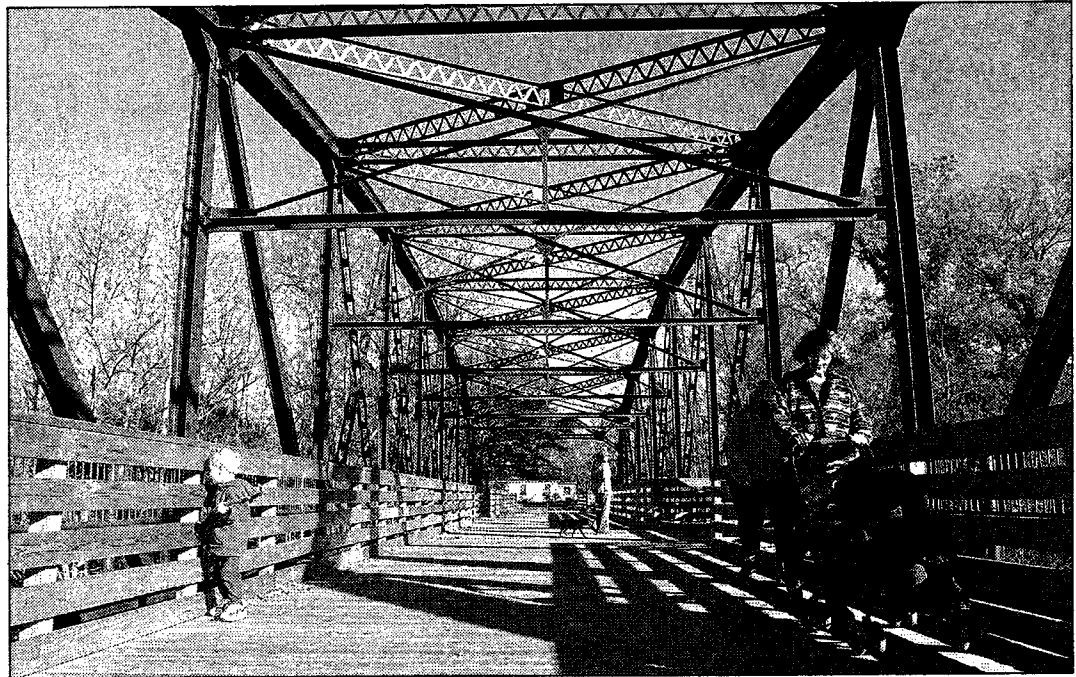
Because of its size and intricate trusswork, the bridge might look out of place to newcomers. But many Greenville residents see the park as a fitting place for a historic structure that spans generations.

"It's an important Greenville landmark," said Candace Pearce, chairwoman of the Greenville Historic Preservation Commission. "It's one of the characteristic designs of Greenville."

Other bridges in Eastern North Carolina were longer and taller, but the 200-foot span was for many years the only crossing over the Tar River for Greenville and Pitt County. Farmers and travelers on the north side of the county had easy access to stores and the courthouse in Greenville.

Built in 1927, the bridge was a Parker Truss design characterized by sweeping arches connected to supporting steel beams.

The Greene Street structure became more than a roadway in



Nancy Thigpen pushes grandson Sabriel Holcom across the Green Street bridge Wednesday. She is joined by her daughter Jennifer Holcom and her grandson Josiah.

STAFF PHOTO BY CHRIS SEWARD

1929 when the Womans Auxiliary of the American Legion in Pitt County designated the bridge as memorial to those who served in World War I.

Still, the bridge was earmarked for demolition in 1993 when the state Department of Transportation announced plans to build a replacement. Local preservationists mounted a campaign to save the bridge from a scrap pile.

"It's really bad manners to de-

stroy a war memorial," Pearce said.

But some people questioned the expenditure of city funds to save an old bridge, especially after flooding by Hurricane Floyd in 1999 destroyed homes and businesses along the river. Pearce countered that the city's heritage is something permanent that everyone can enjoy.

The total cost of the \$1.3 million project included cutting the bridge

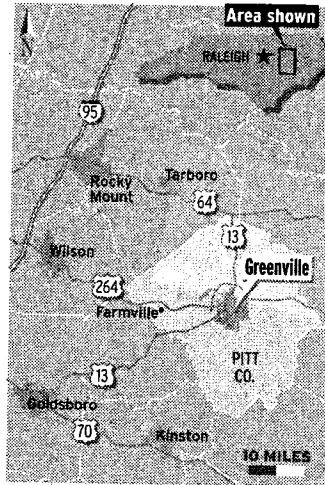
into three pieces, moving it a few hundred feet and reassembling it.

Pearce said it is one of few identifying structures in Greenville not associated with East Carolina University. It has become a popular spot for photos, she said, and will become a backdrop for photos at reunions and other gatherings.

"It's beautiful," she said. "It's a walking place and it's a great place for future memorials."

Even on a cold winter day re-

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cently, a few people strolled under the trusswork.

"We love to walk across it," said Nancy Thigpen, who was getting some exercise recently with her daughter and two grandsons.

Courtney Rothwell of Greenville said she initially thought the city was building another road when she saw the bridge being reassembled. She was keeping tabs on Cameron, 6, and Madison, 9, Faulconer, whom she baby-sits, as they scrambled over the benches and tossed rocks into the creek below.

"We need some more rocks," said Cameron as she peered through the rail.

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# Pills can kill more than simple pain

*Acetaminophen overdose  
leading cause of liver failure*

BY LAURAN NEERGAARD  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Think popping extra pain pills can't hurt? Think again: Accidental poisonings from the nation's most popular pain reliever seem to be rising, making acetaminophen the leading cause of acute liver failure.

Use it correctly and acetaminophen, best known by the Tylenol brand, lives up to its reputation as one of the safest painkillers. It's taken by about 100 million people a year, and liver damage occurs in only a small fraction of users.



But it's damage that can kill or require a liver transplant, damage that frustrated liver specialists insist should be avoidable.

The problem comes when people don't follow dosing instructions — or unwittingly take too much, not realizing acetaminophen is in hundreds of products, from the over-the-counter remedies

SEE PILLS, PAGE 10A

## **WHAT ARE WE TAKING?**

Acetaminophen is the nation's most popular pain reliever, taken by about 100 million people a year. Liver damage occurs in only a very few users.

Acetaminophen bottles currently recommend that adults take no more than 4,000 milligrams a day, or eight extra-strength pills. Just a doubling of the maximum daily dose can be enough to kill, warns Dr. Anne Larson of the University of Washington Medical Center.

## **HOW WE TAKE TOO MUCH**

The problem comes when people don't follow dosing instructions — or unwittingly take too much, not realizing acetaminophen is in hundreds of products, from the over-the-counter remedies Theraflu and Excedrin to the prescription narcotics Vicodin and Percocet.

For example, taking Tylenol Cold & Flu Severe for the flu's aches and stuffiness — 1,000 mg of acetaminophen, every six hours. A headache still nags so between doses you pop some Excedrin — 500 mg more of acetaminophen. Switch to Nyquil Cold/Flu at bedtime, another 1,000 mg.

## **THE RESEARCH**

Over six years, researchers tracked 662 consecutive patients in acute liver failure who were treated at 22 transplant centers.

Almost half were acetaminophen-related. More remarkable was the steady increase: Acetaminophen was to blame for 28 percent of the liver poisonings in 1998, but caused 51 percent of cases in 2003.

While most patients survived, 74 died and 23 others had to receive a transplant.

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# PILLS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Theraflu and Excedrin to the prescription narcotics Vicodin and Percocet.

An added danger arises when taking the drug while using alcohol. The combination can cause liver damage even at the recommended dosage.

The argument that acetaminophen is the safest pain reliever has overridden the idea that people cannot take any amount they want, said Dr. William Lee of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, who laments that people pop acetaminophen pills like they are M&Ms.

Acetaminophen bottles recommend that adults take no more than 4,000 milligrams a day, or eight extra-strength pills.

Just a doubling of the maximum daily dose can be enough to kill, warns Dr. Anne Larson of the University of Washington Medical Center.

Yet, "if two is good, 10 is better in some patients' minds," she says with a sigh.

## FDA dilemma

The Food and Drug Administration has long wrestled with the liver risk, warning two years ago that more than 56,000 emergency-room visits a year are due to acetaminophen overdoses and that 100 people die annually from unintentionally taking too much.

A study published this month by Larson and Lee has agency officials weighing whether to revisit the issue.

Over six years, researchers tracked 662 consecutive patients in acute liver failure who were treated at 22 transplant centers. (Acute liver failure is the most severe type, developing over days, unlike chronic liver failure that can linger for years because of alcohol abuse or viral hepatitis.)

Almost half were acetaminophen-related. More remarkable was the steady increase: Acetaminophen was to blame for 28 percent of the liver poisonings in 1998, but caused 51 percent of cases in 2003.

That makes acetaminophen the most common cause of acute liver failure, the researchers report in the journal *Hepatology*.

While most patients pulled through with intensive care, 74 died, and 23 received a transplant.

About 44 percent of the cases were suicide attempts.

## Not hard to overdose

But more, 48 percent, were unintentional overdoses, which "isn't hard to do," Larson says.

Say you take Tylenol Cold & Flu Severe for the flu's aches and stuffiness — 1,000 mg of acetaminophen, every six hours. A headache still nags, so between doses you pop some Excedrin — 500 mg more of acetaminophen. Switch to Nyquil Cold/Flu at bedtime, another 1,000 mg.

Maybe you already use arthritis-strength acetaminophen for sore joints — average dose 1,300 mg.

Depending on how often they're taken, the total acetaminophen can add up fast.

That's the nonprescription realm. Surprisingly, 63 percent of unintentional overdoses involved narcotics like Vicodin and Percocet that contain from 325 mg to 750 mg of acetaminophen inside each pill.

Some were chronic pain sufferers taking more and more narcotics as their bodies adjusted to the powerful painkillers, not knowing they were getting ever-higher acetaminophen at the same

time. Or they added over-the-counter products for other complaints.

Just this month, Larson treated an 18-year-old whose liver crashed after using Vicodin for three or four days for car-crash injuries. "She was just taking too much because her pain was bothering her."

Led by Tylenol manufacturer McNeil Consumer & Specialty Pharmaceuticals, most over-the-counter products now voluntarily list acetaminophen on front labels.

McNeil also runs ads about the risk, saying "if you're not going to read the label, then don't buy our products," says spokeswoman Kathy Fallon.

## Warnings vary

But how strongly labels warn varies by product. A rule to standardize warnings, urged by FDA's scientific advisers in 2002, still is working its way through the agency.

While FDA runs a consumer education campaign about the liver risk, nonprescription drugs chief Dr. Charles Ganley says the new study suggests the agency might need to further target narcotic-acetaminophen combinations.

Lee wants to copy Britain, which saw a 30 percent drop in severe liver poisonings after restricting how much acetaminophen could be bought at once.

That's unlikely. Meanwhile, the advice is simple: Read drug labels and add up all your acetaminophen, avoiding more than 4,000 mg a day. For extra safety, Lee advises no more than 2,000 to 3,000 mg for more vulnerable people, who regularly use alcohol or have hepatitis.

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## Public Forum

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### Police should focus on high-crime areas

I am very annoyed by the large number of police officers who are assigned to traffic duty in our fair city. They position themselves strategically (by hiding) along suburban thoroughfares to catch dreaded speeders, inspection sticker violators or that particularly high risk offender, those who do not buckle their seatbelts.

As I drive past these apprehended law-breakers, am I expected to breathe a sigh of

relief and sleep soundly knowing that our community is a safer place? While this obvious revenue-garnering exercise is going on, people are being shot in broad daylight, others are being robbed at dusk and residents in the university community are not safe walking the streets at night.

I fully realize the immense task the police have, but I think it is a matter of priorities. Police need to be deployed in

high-risk, high-crime areas — not on East Tenth Street on Sunday mornings to prey on church-goers on their way to Sunday services.

Help us to understand why the garnering of fines for traffic violators is more important than the physical safety of the citizens of the city of Greenville?

**JOHN CORE**  
*Greenville*

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