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UNC Latino Program Pushes 'New Immigration'

Initiative makes no distinction between legal, illegal immigration

By KAREN WELSH
Contributing Editor

RALEIGH

For 10 years, a behind-the-scenes program, the Latino Initiative at UNC, has taken hundreds of key leaders, business owners, and policymakers from 38 counties in North Carolina on trips to Mexico in order to find ways to incorporate "new immigrant" populations into the fabric of the state's communities.

The program received almost \$750,000 of \$1.4 million, or 53 percent of its budget, from state appropriations in 2007 alone. Former Gov. Jim Hunt started the organization in 1998. Since then, it has helped the 300,000 to 400,000 illegal immigrants whom the Pew Hispanic Center estimates are living in North



Officials from Mecklenburg County regularly visit Mexico as part of the Latino Initiative's "Study in Mexico" program. (UNCC photo)

Carolina.

Once the key officials take the trips to Mexico, they are expected to return to North Carolina and make changes in their policies and procedures to benefit

the Latino population, said Melissa Edwards, the Latino Initiative Program manager.

"When they come back they are required to address and develop a commu-

nity plan," she said. "They are required to come back and put into place a plan on how they can work with this new population. How can they keep them there as workers, and then as thriving members of their community?"

The Latino Initiative Program is careful not to differentiate between legal and illegal immigrants residing in North Carolina. Instead, the program's administrators, who say they are "planning for change," cater to a movement deemed as the New Immigration.

"The center is part of the university system. We are educators, not lawyers or policymakers or law enforcement officials," Edwards said. "We do not advocate a certain position or tell people what they should think or how they should feel about immigration. We provide information and experiences to help North Carolinians reach their own conclusions and solutions about what needs to happen locally to strengthen

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Document Shows Watson Had Conflict Backing Parton Project

By DON CARRINGTON
Executive Editor

RALEIGH

Former state-funded economic developer Rick Watson was the business manager for Randy Parton's company at the same time he was recruiting Parton on behalf of North Carolina, according to documents obtained by *Carolina Journal*.

Watson was president and CEO of the state-funded Northeast Commission, a regional economic development organization that has its headquarters in

Edenton, when the Parton Theatre project was proposed. Records show Watson began working with Parton in August 2004 or before, in his capacity as an economic developer. Watson has acknowledged that he was responsible for the theater concept and for recruiting Parton to



Rick Watson

participate.

Roanoke Rapids borrowed \$21.5 million to build the Randy Parton Theatre and turned the theater over to Parton to operate. His show debuted in July, but attendance was low. Unhappy with Parton's management, the city severed all ties with Parton earlier this year. Now, the city is struggling to find the right acts and management to make enough revenue to repay the debt on the 1,500-seat theater.

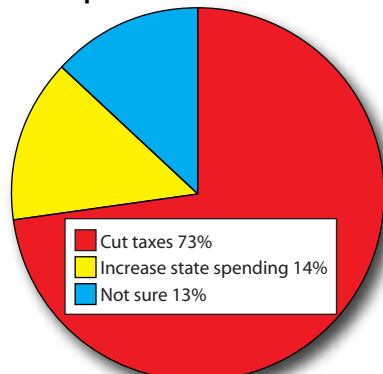
Parton's company, Moonlight Bandit Productions, prepared a busi-

ness plan for the theater. According to e-mail messages obtained from the Northeast Commission, the document was completed April 15, 2005. CJ was unable to determine what organizations or individuals received a copy of the document.

Under a section entitled "Experienced Management," the document explained Watson's role. "Rick Watson is a seasoned business owner and de-

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To help stimulate the economy, it is more important to:



Civitas Institute Poll, April 2008

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UNC Latino Program Pushes 'New Immigration'

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their communities. That's our sole mission."

"A lot of times people haven't had conversations with people who are actually living through this situation and what has become a reality in North Carolina," she said. "We are really dealing with issues head-on."

Ron Woodard, director of NC Listen, an advocacy group for immigration reform, said although he favors sensible legal immigration into the United States, any entity, including the Latino Initiative Program, that smoothes over the illegal-alien issue or helps the illegal population is breaking the laws of the United States.

"Oftentimes that is the intent from the Left, is to make it look like there are no consequences. But it does affect our working poor," he said. "They try and bring emotion into it to dodge the consequences. The bottom line is people are hurting in North Carolina because of illegal immigration. It's been bad for taxpayers and low-skilled, poorly educated workers."

Woodard said that the flood of illegal aliens, mostly from Mexico, has caused undue stress on legal N.C. residents, and that if the Latino Initiative Program wants to put a face on impoverished people the organization doesn't need to go across state lines, because there is plenty of poverty within the state that has only been heightened by the influx of undocumented workers.

The situation doesn't surprise William Gheen, president and spokesman of Americans For Legal Immigration in Raleigh. He said the problem started when Hunt was governor. Hunt brokered trade deals and trade agreements with Mexico during his time in office.

"With the Latino Initiative Program you are entering a territory of the Jim Hunt sphere, of some business leaders that have cut some deals," Gheen said. "But we don't know what they are, what these arrangements are because they were deals done behind closed doors, without direct accountability to voters. Jim Hunt brokered these deals and was acting like a ruling aristocracy."

Gheen said Hunt did not act alone,



A mariachi band entertains a group of Mecklenburg County officials who visited Mexico in April 2007 as part of the "Study in Mexico" program. (UNCC photo)

but had the help of corporate allies who have a vested interest in maintaining a cheap labor force within the state.

"The taxpayers have been hit by this invasion, but it has corporate sponsoring," he said. "It's a real laundry list of who's who."

Woodard said he thinks that many of these same companies have provided grants and other monies to help the Latino Initiative Program send local and state leaders into Mexico. "It's no surprise that large corporations support the program," he said. "They have

a hidden agenda and incentive to do this."

Meanwhile, Edwards said it's an "enlightened opportunity" for leaders to go and be thoughtful and think critically on the issues of immigration. "It's a time to learn and understand what the migrant experience is like on both sides of the border," she said. "It's a lot more complex issue. It's not a black-and-white issue. They are sharing a border with a thriving economy. We're the wealthiest country in the world and that's the allure. They

can earn more in one hour here as they do in one day back home."

The program seems to be working. According to a 2006 press release from Salisbury Mayor Susan Kluttz's press office, the trip achieved its objectives and was a success. "I am impressed with the insight of the leadership of law

enforcement in these cities and counties to recognize the value of providing additional staff development to their staffs in acquiring a better understanding of the Hispanic population," the mayor said. "As this particular population increases in our communities, better understanding will obviously improve how services are provided to our entire population, keeping everyone safer."

Frank Sharry, executive director of the National Immigration Forum, praised the Latino Initiative Program for its efforts in the 2007 UNC Center for Understanding's annual report:

"North Carolina has the chance to be about the only state in the country that deals with the very difficult and controversial issues around immigration and illegal immigration in a way that's productive, in a way that actually brings people together. Why? Because enough people have been to Mexico; enough people have been a part of the Latino Initiative."

In the same report, Owen J. Furueth, associate provost for Metropolitan Studies at UNC Charlotte, agreed:

"The human face on Latino immigration to North Carolina is now much clearer and informs my thinking and actions," he said. "You can look at the numbers and crunch a lot of hard data about who's coming from Mexico, but when you go there and look in people's eyes, the numbers almost lose their significance. Once those people-to-people relationships exist, it's hard not to be moved."

The Latino Initiative Program has been so successful that the Mexican government honored Center for International Understanding's Executive Director Millie Ravenel for the organization's accomplishments.

"In few words, the visionary and tireless work conducted by Millie Ravenel has cleared the path for thousands of Mexicans that have decided to under-

"You can look at the numbers and crunch a lot of hard data about who's coming from Mexico, but when you go there and look in people's eyes, the numbers almost lose their significance. Once those people-to-people relationships exist, it's hard not to be moved."

Owen J. Furueth
UNC Charlotte

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UNC Latino Program Pushes 'New Immigration' Approach

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take here the adventure of a new life," Consul Ortiz Rocha was reported as saying during a formal reception honoring Ravenel. "When our ancestors used the phrase 'Cualli Ohtli,' they referred to the good way, the honest way, the path that has to be followed by the heart in order to meet the individual and collective destiny."

Others see the Latino Initiative Program as the walk down a road to ruin. The price tag for empathy toward illegal aliens also has had a direct impact on legal immigrants. An editorial written by columnist Michael Kraft on Feb. 28 for the *Charlotte Conservative News* complained about Charlotte Police Chief Darrel Stephens, one of the participants in the Latino Initiative Program, for not aiding citizens in the wake of the overwhelming illegal-alien problem burdening the area.

"We pay you to try to enforce all laws, not to enforce ONLY laws that reflect your minority personal views," Kraft wrote to Stephens. "You are welcome to give all illegal immigrants a hug, just do it after you drop them off at INS like you are overpaid to do."

Kraft wondered how Stephens would react if his car or identity was stolen by illegal immigrants. "I bet the 'chief' would find the energy to do his job then," he said. "My legal Hispanic

"I became a spokesman because a lot of people don't want to talk about illegal immigration because they don't want to be called a racist. ... They say we are insensitive if we don't allow illegal immigration. That's not true."

Ron Woodard
Director of NC Listen

father-in-law had his ID stolen so an illegal immigrant could get cable in his apartment. [The illegal alien] even got the premium package with 'expanded-language' pack.

"So we have the address of the service which is the exact location of the identity thief and illegal immigrant criminal destroying the credit of a legal Hispanic immigrant. CMPD tells me they really don't send a car to the address in situations like this and I should just use the police report to fix his credit. Another quitter, another paid law enforcement officer doing exactly what his boss does to enforce laws...nothing."

Gheen warns of dire consequences if liberal organizations, including the Latino Initiative Program, are allowed to continue on their course of action. "The economic lights of this country are

scheduled to go out," he said. "We as a people have become powerless over our nation and we are in mortal danger."

Americans For Legal Immigration PAC and NC Listen are two of many organizations that have arisen to stop illegal aliens from coming into North Carolina.

"I became a spokesman because a lot of people don't want to talk about illegal immigration because they don't want to be called a racist," Woodard said. "The other side has learned they can revert to name calling and drum up emotion to quiet their opposition. They say we are insensitive if we don't allow illegal immigration. That's not true. We are for sensible legal immigration where people can be assimilated without any undue stresses. Our policies have credibility and make sense."

There are others who feel the same way and are beginning to make a concerted effort to stop providing a safe harbor for the influx of undocumented workers into their cities and state.

- Beaufort County commissioners Stan Deatherage and Hood Richardson are working to make sure their county is "not an attraction for illegal aliens" by removing pre-recorded Spanish language messages on the county phone systems, and proposing resolution to require that voter-registration forms be printed only in English.

- U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Dole, R-N.C., is providing additional funds to aid law enforcement agencies to "apprehend, identify and remove criminal illegal aliens."

- Winston-Salem Mayor Allen Joines recently reworded the language in all city contracts so that all private companies will understand they must uphold federal immigration laws and verify legal residential status for all construction workers.

- U.S. Rep. Heath Shuler, D-N.C., has introduced the Secure America Through Verification and Enforcement Act of 2007 to bring on an additional 8,000 Border Patrol agents. He said the legislation is intended to stop illegal immigration, which costs N.C. taxpayers more than a billion dollars a year for "incarceration, health care, and education for illegal immigrants." CJ

Document Shows Watson Had Conflict Backing Parton Theatre

Continued from Page 1

veloper with extensive contacts across North Carolina and other states. Rick is Business Manager for Moonlight Bandit Productions overseeing all business activities for The Randy Parton Theater," the document states.

The document did not address Watson's other role as a state-funded economic developer.

The commission terminated Watson's employment in 2006. Parton and Watson said they ended their business relationship in 2007.

Parton conducted a press conference Feb. 8 to explain his side of the theater's failure. Watson was on stage with Parton and frequently took the podium to answer questions. During the press conference and in a subsequent interview with WRAL-TV, Watson denied that he used his public office for private gain.

Roanoke Rapids fired Parton in December after city officials said he showed up intoxicated at a performance. The city hired a new management company but terminated the contract after a few months. One city councilman has resigned over issues associated with the project.

N.C. Board of Transportation



Rick Watson acknowledges guests from the stage at the groundbreaking for the Randy Parton Theatre in Roanoke Rapids in November 2005. (CJ file photo)

member Thomas Betts resigned after a news story indicated he used excessive pressure in seeking contributions from Parton and others for Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue's campaign for governor, in exchange for road money he steered toward the project. Perdue has criticized State Treasurer Richard Moore, also a candidate for governor, for his role in approving financing for the project.

Last month the city agreed to pay Parton \$750,000 to settle any claims he

might have over his dismissal.

The \$21.5 million financing plan required the approval of the Local Government Commission, chaired by Moore and staffed by employees from Moore's office.

A letter dated April 22, 2005, from LGC Debt Management Director Tim Romocki to Roanoke Rapids City Manager Rick Benton made reference to the company's business plan. "City and LGC need to receive copies which should

include some historical numbers on current and past numbers of Mr. Parton's Dollywood operations," he wrote.

Moore's spokeswoman, Sara Lang said last week that the LGC never received a copy of Parton's business plan. Lang did not explain why the LGC approved the project without seeing the plan.

A copy of the plan also accompanied a \$1 million grant application submitted to the N.C. Department of Commerce. The grant was for water and sewer line improvements in and around the theater. Earlier this year Commerce Assistant Secretary Kathy Neal said the document was a confidential "trade secret" that she could not release.

Department of Commerce Secretary Jim Fain was a board member of the Northeast Commission throughout the time that Watson was working on the Parton project. The governor, the speaker of the House, and the state Senate leadership appoint the other commission members.

Fain remains a member of the commission, but he said that he does not attend the meetings and that he should not even be on that particular commission. The commission receives about \$1.4 million in annual funding through the Commerce Department. CJ

Media Sue Easley Over His Administration's Handling of E-Mail

Carolina Journal,
nine other media
members join in suit

By MITCH KOKAI
Associate Editor

RALEIGH

Carolina Journal and nine other North Carolina news organizations filed a civil lawsuit against Gov. Mike Easley on April 14, claiming multiple and "systematic" violations of the N.C. Public Records Law.

The plaintiffs asked a judge to "enter a judgment declaring that policies and procedures promulgated and implemented on behalf of the defendant [Easley] and the actions taken by him as alleged ... violate the Public Records Law," according to the complaint filed in Wake County Superior Court.

Joining *CJ* in the complaint were *The News & Observer* of Raleigh, *The Charlotte Observer*, *The Fayetteville Observer*, The Associated Press, and the N.C. Press Association. Other plaintiffs were: Media General Operations, which publishes 10 N.C. newspapers, including the *Winston-Salem Journal*; Freedom Communications and Freedom Eastern North Carolina Communications, which together publish seven N.C. newspapers; *The Wilson Daily Times*; and Boney Publishers, which publishes *The Alamance News*.

"Our position is that the policies of the governor and of those who act at his direction or under his authority violate the Public Records Law as it relates to retention of documents — in this case, most frequently e-mail documents — but other documents as well," said Amanda Martin, one of the plaintiffs' lawyers.

The suit contends Easley and his staff violated the state's Public Records Law by: mandating that certain e-mail records be destroyed, destroying at least one written document, devising e-mail retention policies that deviated from the law, and failing to provide for preservation of public records.

The plaintiffs asked for a court order "permanently restraining and enjoining" the governor and his staff from pursuing illegal policies. They also requested that the court require compliance with the Public Records Law and order the governor's office "to take all measures available to them to retrieve any public records that they deleted, disposed of, lost, or failed to preserve in violation of the Public Records Law."

The suit also asked the court to compel Easley to make available all requested public records that have been withheld from the plaintiffs, and it asked the court to force Easley to foot the legal bill.

The first alleged violation stemmed from *The N&O's* recent investigations of



The suit also asked the court to compel Easley to make available all requested public records that have been withheld from the plaintiffs, and it asked the court to force Easley to foot the legal bill.

the state's funding, delivery, and oversight of mental health services. "In part this action arises out of the defendant's failure, refusal, or inability to provide access to e-mail messages and other public records that were known or believed to be in the defendant's custody," according to the complaint.

Failure to produce the records "was attributable in part to the systematic deletion, destruction, or concealment of e-mail messages sent from or received by the Governor's Office," the lawsuit alleges.

That allegation stems from an affidavit filed by Debbie Crane, who was fired March 4 as N.C. Department of Health and Human Services public affairs director.

"Based on Ms. Crane's affidavit and other information the plaintiffs are informed and believe that during the defendant's tenure as Governor, members of his staff regularly discouraged the persons responsible for communicating with the Governor's Office from sending e-mail messages to the office in order to avoid creating records that would be subject to disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Law, particularly if the subject matter of the communication was controversial," according to the suit.

"Members of the defendant's staff also instructed cabinet agency employees that if they did send e-mail messages to the Governor's Office such messages were to be deleted from their computers' 'Sent Mail' boxes immediately after they were sent, and that they should then go to their files for 'Trash' or 'Deleted Messages' and delete them again," the complaint says. "A purpose of this 'double delete' procedure was to remove the messages from the employees' personal computers so they would not be recorded and archived by the nightly 'back-up' of their computer files."

That e-mail deletion policy and procedure was "intended to be comprehensive" and was implemented "willfully and for the purpose of evading the Public Records Law and depriving the people of North Carolina of access to information and records in violation of the Public Records Law," according to the complaint.

The second alleged public records violation stems from a comment Easley

made to reporters last month. Easley said he had received a handwritten note or message from former Health and Human Services Secretary Carmen Hooker Odom. The governor told reporters the note addressed some of the issues of mental health oversight reporters had been pursuing.

When reporters asked to see the note, Easley is quoted as responding that he "chunked" it. "The defendant personally destroyed the communication in violation of the Public Records Law," according to the complaint. "On the basis of public statements by the defendant, plaintiffs are further informed and believe that he very likely has personally discarded or destroyed other public records in violation of the Public Records Law."

The third alleged violation focuses on an e-mail retention document from the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, which oversees public records issues for executive branch agencies. Guidelines within the document "fail to comply with the Public Records Law in several respects," according to the complaint.

"They provide State employees and officials who send and receive e-mail

with criteria that are inconsistent with the Public Records Law for determining whether a particular e-mail message is or is not 'made or received in connection with the transaction of public business' or is 'used to transact public business,'" the suit says.

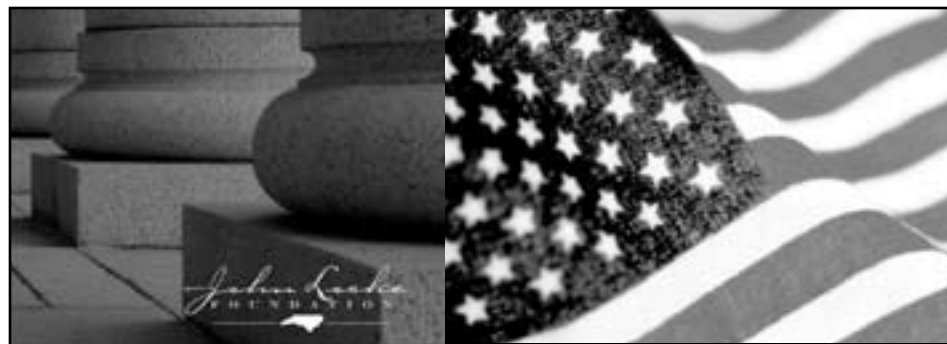
"They authorize individual e-mail users to delete or dispose of e-mail messages that are made or received in connection with the transaction of public business if they are of 'short-term value' or 'when they no longer have reference value to the sender or receiver of the message [emphasis in the original document]. Neither of these disposal criteria is authorized by the Public Records Law."

The Cultural Resources guidelines are also inconsistent with court rulings "holding that the law is to be interpreted expansively and liberally in order to maximize public access to government records," according to the suit.

The fourth alleged violation asserts that the governor and his cabinet agencies do not have "adequate" electronic data-processing systems for storage or retrieval of e-mail messages sent or received in connection with transaction of public business.

Article III, Section 4 of the state's governing document provides that "The Governor shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed." Because of each of the violations, the suit contends "the defendant has failed to carry out his duties" set out in the Constitution.

"The plaintiffs are basically seeking two things: a declaration that the policies, procedures, and actions of the governor and those who act at his direction or under his authority violated the Public Records Law and an injunction to stop further violations," Martin said. CJ



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National Economy to Loom Large In 2008 Session

By MITCH KOKAI
Associate Editor

RALEIGH

Lawmakers will be watching national economic news closely as they return to work this month on the state's \$20 billion budget.

"I think the big issue will be the economy," Senate Majority Leader Tony Rand, D-Cumberland, said. "We're extremely concerned about the national picture and what impact this will have on North Carolina. And so we'll try to get a pretty quick grip on that."

North Carolina's revenue forecast has been running slightly ahead of projections. The state collected about 1.25 percent more money, or a total of \$140 million, than expected through February. Budget analysts have warned that an economic downturn could cause the surplus to disappear.

"We still are facing some big risks in [2007-2008]," economist Barry Boardman of the General Assembly's Fiscal Research Division warned in a budget briefing earlier this year. "The headlines are clearly stating that the nation is facing an economic slowdown."

Slumping housing sales, the national subprime mortgage crunch, and "elevated" energy prices all could affect North Carolina's revenues, Boardman told lawmakers. Conservative budget projections should help. "We had a modest forecast going into the fiscal year," he said. "We took a very, very cautious approach with the most volatile sources of revenue."

North Carolina is "far more fortunate" than many other states, Rand said. "California's budget deficit is greater than North Carolina's budget," he said. "We're trying to be conservative, and we're trying to make sure we get the most value for our money."

Rand's Republican counterpart



The national and state economies are expected to dominate the 2008 North Carolina General Assembly session as lawmakers formulate a budget. (CJ file photo)

said a "significant carryover" from last year and the recent revenue numbers could help the state avoid major budget problems. "I don't think [Democrats] would be willing to engage in tax increases or the euphemism 'revenue enhancements' in an election year, but they might," said Senate Minority Leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham. "I would say that if the method that is selected to get more money to projects is a tax increase as opposed to spending what we've got where it needs to be spent, I think you're going to see some opposition to that."

One potential casualty of a slow economy is a potential bond package.

"Who knows what it will be? I hope it will, in truth, be the short session."

Sen. Tony Rand
Senate Majority Leader

Lawmakers left Raleigh last year without addressing a proposed statewide bond referendum for roads, schools, or other priority items. "We've talked about that, and we've looked at it, and we'll look

at that and see, but I don't know," Rand said. "Borrowing money right now is kind of a suspect operation, and I'm not sure we want to get into borrowing right now with our economy like it is."

Problems with the state's mental-health-care system are likely to draw lawmakers' attention. It's "probably a pretty good guarantee" the Assembly will take some action, Rand said. "We've got to really get serious," he said. "We haven't done well, and so we'll have to do something about that."

Berger uses stronger criticism. "I think everybody pretty much agrees that we have seen the state government — largely through administrative incompetence — turn North Carolina from a state that did a pretty good job of taking care of mental health issues into a state that wastes hundreds of millions of dollars and really does not do a good job at all."

Despite his assessment of the problems, Berger said he gives "all the credit in the world" to Dempsey Benton, who has overseen the state's mental health programs as state Health and Human Services secretary since September. Benton outlined in late March a series of reform measures that could cost up to \$70 million a year.

"I think there's been a total absence of a plan or a roadmap or some idea of what we could do to get this thing taken care of and fixed," Berger said. "I do think we're getting closer to that point. And if, in fact, we do have something,

I think you'll see broad support for doing that."

Recent rain has lessened the severity of North Carolina's drought, but lawmakers are likely to get proposals from Gov. Mike Easley to increase state involvement in drought management. "We've been through a tough time, but if we use this as an incentive and a good reason to really get serious about our natural resources, we'll be much better off," Rand said.

Berger disagreed. "I think we are in large part missing the bigger picture as far as the drought is concerned," he said. "I don't think the answer to ensuring an adequate and appropriate supply of water for our citizens is to impose additional regulation that gives a government power over everybody's life as to how many times you can flush a toilet, how many times you can turn a faucet on."

"Where we are not doing anything is on the supply itself," Berger said. "We need to find ways to plan for our supply to be adequate, because even if we effect conservation measures that save us 20 to 25 percent of the water we're using today, if we grow our population by 30 percent, we've still got a problem. So what we've got to do is we've got to look at the supply side of the equation. I don't think the governor has even touched on that."

Education remains "our most important issue," Rand said, and lawmakers might make some efforts this year to address recommendations from the 21st Century Transportation study group. But property rights advocates have some work to do, if they hope to get the Senate to endorse a House-approved ballot measure targeting eminent domain abuse.

"There have been no problems in North Carolina that I'm aware of," Rand said. "We're reluctant to change our constitution unless it's a compelling reason. And there have been no cases in North Carolina. We want to make sure that North Carolina's people are protected, but that we don't just pass some constitutional amendment simply because somebody proposed one."

Berger said he hopes colleagues from both parties will reject efforts by the state's community colleges to permit enrollment of illegal immigrants. "There's opposition to that from just about every corner except the bureaucracy, it seems," he said. "But I've been around long enough to know that the bureaucracy usually doesn't do something unless somebody's giving them the nod. We'll see, but that is certainly an issue that I think the people would want us to take care of."

The House and Senate will resume work May 13. Legislators will aim to finish their work by July. "It will certainly be called the short session," Rand said. "Who knows what it will be? I hope it will, in truth, be the short session." CJ

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By Roy Cordato
Vice President for Research
John Locke Foundation

"Cordato's book is a solid performance, demonstrating impressive mastery of both the Austrian and neoclassical literature."

Israel Kirzner
Cato Journal

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Efficiency and Externalities in an Open-Ended Universe



NC Delegation Watch**Lawmakers pursue less pork**

North Carolina's congressional delegation kept a tighter rein on pork barrel spending this year, according to a recent report by the government watchdog group Citizens Against Government Waste.

Although national spending on pork barrel projects, also called earmarks, was up in 2008, North Carolina improved its record over past years, ranking 39th with \$216 million in wasteful spending attributed to N.C. lawmakers.

The data is part of CAGW's 2008 "Congressional Pig Book," which catalogued 11,610 pork projects nationwide amounting to \$17.2 billion during fiscal 2008.

Among the N.C. delegation, the CAGW report singled out Democratic U.S. Rep. Heath Shuler and Republican U.S. Rep. Walter Jones for their earmark activity.

Shuler was responsible for securing nearly \$6 million in taxpayer funds for Great Smokey National Park, North Shore Road Settlement, while Jones cornered a \$147,000 earmark for completion of a museum in Hatteras dedicated to the numerous shipwrecks that have taken place off the North Carolina coast.

Jones is among four N.C. members of Congress who say they have sworn off earmarks for fiscal 2009, according to the Club for Growth. The others are Reps. Virginia Foxx, R-5th; Patrick McHenry, R-10th; and Republican Sen. Richard Burr.

Nationally, some of the top "oinker" awards went to Rep. Mike Thompson, D-Calif., for a \$211,509 earmark in olive fruit-fly research in Paris, France; Democratic Montana Sens. Max Baucus and Jon Tester for a \$148,950 earmark for the Montana Sheep Institute; and Rep. Virgil Goode, R-Va., for a \$98,000 earmark to develop a walking tour of Boydton, Va.

McIntyre, Shuler awarded

Two socially conservative advocacy organizations have awarded their "True Blue" designation to eight members of North Carolina's congressional delegation, including two Democrats.

U.S. Reps. Mike McIntyre, D-7th, and Heath Shuler, D-11th, earned a perfect 100 percent on a voting scorecard put out by the advocacy arms of the Family Research Council and Focus on the Family.

The groups evaluated lawmakers' records on issues such as protecting unborn human life and religious liberty. *CJ*

Report challenges assertion**Engineering Talent Shortage: Real or Hype?**

By KAREN McMAHAN

Contributing Editor

RALEIGH

For several years, researchers, employers, and educators have promoted the notion of a growing shortage of engineering, science, and technology talent in the United States.

A Gartner report in December 2007 warned of a "massive and devastating skills shortage" in the IT sector at a time when industry requires "hybrid professionals" who have a blend of technology and multidisciplinary knowledge, diverse experience, and business insight.

The National Academy of Engineering cited in its 2006 report, "Rising Above the Gathering Storm," that the United States is falling behind in the number of undergraduate engineers it produces compared to China and India. The report said China produces 12 times as many engineers annually as does the United States.

Executives of some of the world's largest technology firms have been actively lobbying Congress to increase or eliminate caps on H-1B visas to bring in more workers, primarily from China and India, while universities have been lobbying for funding so they can graduate more engineers.

PC World reported that Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates appeared before Congress on March 12, where he repeated his call to ease restrictions preventing immigrant workers from more easily becoming U.S. residents and to eliminate caps on green-card employment visas.

Gates also asked for a permanent tax credit for research and development and an increase in funding for government research. Gates warned that without the policies, "the center of progress will shift to other nations that are more committed to the pursuit of technical excellence."

Is it a myth?

Growing evidence suggests, however, that the engineering talent shortage might be a myth perpetuated to expand the supply of lower-cost foreign engineers who can replace higher-cost American engineers and to maintain high enrollment in engineering schools.

So important are the H-1B and L-1 guest worker programs to the offshore outsourcing industry that India's commerce minister recently referred to the H-1B as the "outsourcing visa" and "demanded that the United States

increase the cap," according to Dr. Ron Hira in an article in *HireStrategy* on Jan. 12. Hira criticized Congress for allowing loopholes that enable employers to displace a qualified U.S. worker from his or her job or U.S. worker who wants the job in favor of an H-1B worker.

Recent research in the January 2008 *Journal of Engineering Education* from the Pratt School of Engineering and the Center on Globalization, Governance, and Competitiveness at Duke University challenges the statistical validity of data widely used to support the notion of either a talent shortage or skill deficits.

Duke study

Vivek Wadhwa, who led the Duke research team, is a fellow with the Labor and Worklife Program at Harvard Law School and an executive in residence at the Pratt School of Engineering at Duke.

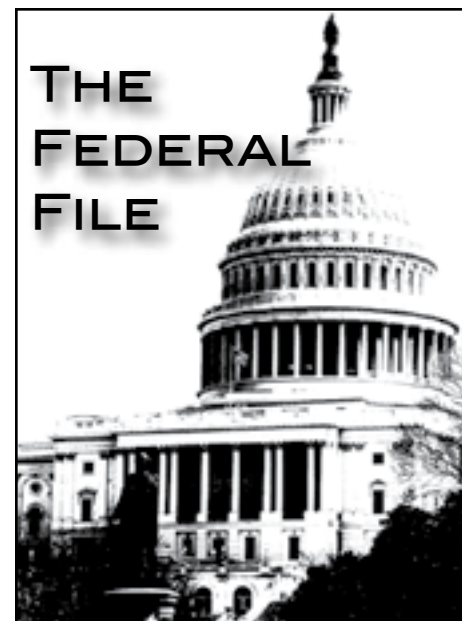
Wadhwa's executive leadership in the software development and technology industry before moving into academia provided a deeper understanding of market challenges specific to engineering and technology.

The debate centers around statistics on undergraduate engineers in the United States, China, and India that have been recycled in many articles and reports, Wadhwa said. The figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Academy of Engineering, and U.S. Department of Education report that the United States produced about 70,000 undergraduate engineers in 2004 compared to 600,000 in China and 350,000 in India.

A question of terms

Interpreting the numbers is problematic given the wide variability in definitions of "engineer" and questions about the accuracy of sources of statistics in the United States, China, and India. Computer science and IT degrees might or might not be affiliated with engineering programs, and developing nations, Wadhwa said, tend to "attach the term 'engineering' to many institutions and programs that had science- and technology-related but not necessarily pure engineering content."

In a speech to the City Club of Cleveland on Jan. 25, Wadhwa told attendees that the "the Chinese numbers are pure propaganda and could not be justified" and that public education in India is "horrible." But he said the private sector in India does a good job training engineers and developing the



workforce with the skills they need to compete in a global economy.

While research validates a rapid acceleration in the number of engineering and technology graduates in China and India versus the United States, there are big trade-offs in the quality and types of undergraduate and graduate engineers and their competitiveness in the global economy among the three countries.

The Duke researchers distinguished between dynamic engineers, those capable of abstract thinking and high-level problem solving, and transactional engineers, those with solid technical training but who lack the experience or expertise to apply this knowledge across domains and lead innovation.

Highly employable

Wadhwa cited a 2005 McKinsey survey of human resources professionals from 83 countries operating globally who were asked, "Of 100 graduates with the correct degree, how many could you employ if you had demand for all?" The respondents said that "80.7 percent of U.S. engineers were employable, while only 10 percent of Chinese engineers and 25 percent of Indian engineers were similarly employable."

"By every dimension," Wadhwa said participants in his study "told us that American engineers are better. They're more productive, better educated, and have relevant skills." Employers said that the new jobs in engineering and technology require master's and doctorate degrees, yet ironically, Wadhwa found that 44 percent of respondents said they would hire a candidate without a bachelor's degree in engineering.

Why then do 95 percent of employers in Wadhwa's study say they will continue to outsource and increase the amount of research and development they do overseas despite quality and productivity differences?

"The bottom line is because it's cheaper," said Wadhwa. *CJ*

Noonan: There's Never Been an Election Cycle Quite Like This

By CJ STAFF

RALEIGH

Peggy Noonan, columnist for *The Wall Street Journal* and former speechwriter for President Ronald Reagan, recently addressed a John Locke Foundation Headliner event in Raleigh. She also discussed the 2008 presidential campaign with Mitch Kokai for Carolina Journal Radio. (Go to <http://www.carolinajournal.com/cjradio/> to find a station near you or to learn about the weekly CJ Radio podcast.)

Kokai: You wrote recently that 2008 has produced the "most exciting and confounding election cycle" in your lifetime. What did you mean by that quote?

Noonan: It is true that nobody who covers politics or talks about politics, observes politics, or who has experienced politics in the past 30 or 40 years has seen an election cycle like this. Nothing that was supposed to happen is happening. On the Republican side, the race was all over the place, and the guy who was ahead in the polls for an entire year went nowhere. He didn't have a gaffe or a scandal. Rudy Giuliani just sort of started to disappear. Nobody knows why. Nobody knows exactly. Everybody is saying, "Oh, he had the wrong strategy." Well, maybe, but it was just so interesting to me and to others — his collapse, the rise of John McCain. John McCain was over in the autumn; he was the victor in the winter.

On the Democratic side, it was supposed to be an easy glide for Mrs. Clinton to the nomination. It has turned out not to be an easy glide. She is in the fight of her life, which it appears at the moment she will lose. If that is not exciting enough for you, then you don't really like politics. This is an exciting year. I don't mean it's the most satisfying. I mean it's simply the most exciting.

Kokai: Let's delve into both of those races. First, the Republicans. What do you think this campaign says about the current state of the Republican Party?

Noonan: I think the Republican Party is in some flux. It is working out each day what it stands for and what it believes. It has broken up into various factions. The old coalition that held together from the time of just before Reagan is gone. It has been sundered, I think, by the current administration. It is going to have to re-collect itself, and that is the sort of thing that takes time and effort. It will sort of have to, the coalition, I think, have to reconstitute itself with time.

Kokai: So what will this election mean for the future? Will it set a course

"I think the Republican Party is in some flux. It is working out each day what it stands for and what it believes. It has broken up into various factions. The old coalition that held together from the time of just before Reagan is gone. It has been sundered, I think, by the current administration. It is going to have to re-collect itself."

Peggy Noonan
The Wall Street Journal



for the future of the Republican Party?

Noonan: Well, all elections are important. You know, I have friends who every four years say, "Peggy, you don't understand. This is the most important election of our lifetime." Somehow, it's always the most important election of our lifetimes. In America, the federal government has a lot of power, so it matters who runs the federal government, so of course it's important.

Kokai: How about for the Democrats? After the 2006 election, a lot of people thought because Democrats had major gains in Congress the way was paved for Hillary Clinton to win the presidency. That storyline is not necessarily playing out as planned. What is this election saying about the Democrats?

Noonan: I think what this election is saying about the Democrats is that they are hungry. I think I am correctly observing that there is a rising tide of something. I never know what to call it — liberalism, left liberalism, progressivism. People are voting in Democratic primaries. Obama has become a man with support that almost looks like the size of a movement. There's a lot happening there. The Democrats came to play this year. They want to win this presidency.

So there's a lot of excitement on that side. You can see it on TV, if you put on the news. The news wants, essentially, to put on the story that they think will grab you most easily with its drama and its ability to interest you. They lead with the Democrats; that's where the excite-

ment is this year. Republicans, I think, are feeling a little discouraged, and they have to get themselves together. The Democrats think, in an odd way, they already are together. I mean, Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Obama are fighting it out toe-to-toe, but they don't really disagree on much. They're not a party looking for their meaning. They are sort of satisfied with whatever it is they are — left liberal, liberal-progressive, or whatever. The Republicans are not so.

Kokai: Republicans would probably be more excited about this election if they had another Reagan, but is that possible?

Noonan: I think the Reaganism thing has gotten to the point of silliness. There is a point when nostalgia can become crippling, and I think some people in the Republican Party have reached that point, with the encouragement of the mainstream media, which is always interested, in its way, in discouraging Republicans. So mainstream media loves to walk up to people and say, "I'm an interviewer. Is John McCain Reagan? Is Giuliani Reagan? Is your Uncle Moe Reagan?" Mr. Reagan has left us. It will soon be — it will be this coming January, 20 years since he walked out of the White House and circled it in a helicopter. And he and Nancy looked at the White House and then went over to the airport and took a plane back to California. Life moves on. Reagan was great. Greatness is something that bubbles up in America. There will be other Reagans, only their names will not be Reagan; it'll be Joe, Bob, and Sally, and that's fine.

Kokai: As a person who worked

with Reagan and remembers how things really worked, not just the nostalgia for that time, what should conservative leaders of today emulate?

Noonan: I don't think conservative leaders today should try consciously to emulate Reagan. Reagan was not trying consciously to emulate anybody. Jack Kennedy was trying to be the best Jack Kennedy. FDR was trying to be FDR. Be yourself. Did Reagan have particular qualities that we would desire in all of our leaders? Of course he did. He had a great personal equanimity. He had wisdom. He respected the views of the American people, which is something important, something I think we haven't seen in the past few years from the Bush White House. He had a deep respect for the views of the American people, and he knew how far he could push something that he wanted but they did not. You know, he knew where the boundaries were, where the barriers were. He knew how to persuade. He knew how to bring people along with him. But he didn't put the "bully" in the bully pulpit. You know, he was not much of a bully. But the biggest thing about him, of course, was that he had a very special kind of political courage. And it was the political courage of one who swims against the tide. That's an exhausting, daily, labor-filled thing.

Kokai: 2006 was obviously a big year for Democrats. Turnout numbers in this year's primaries and caucuses suggest more voters are interested in the Democratic race than the Republican race. Do you think American voters are still as receptive as they have been in recent years to basic conservative principles and ideas?

Noonan: I don't think the American people have heard basic conservative principles and ideas in a while, on the national level. Locally, they have that conversation. Locally, things are bubbling. There are many young conservative leaders coming up, and there's much happening. But, look, sometimes movements get tired or lose their way.

There were two generations of conservative leaders who went to Washington, and some of them tried to do big things, but many of them tried to simply self-perpetuate, and they took on the ways of Washington. They became big spenders, government control people, bullies, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. They have made the political philosophy that they sprang from appear to be somewhat discredited. Well, it's a big and vibrant thing. It can't be discredited by them. They are mere punks. But it's not looking so good at the moment, you know, and you've got to be frank about that. Can it come back? Of course it can. CJ

Crane Tells Her Story to Open Government Coalition

Editor's Note: In celebration of "Sunshine Week," Debbie Crane, former spokeswoman for the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, delivered the following speech March 15 at a North Carolina Open Government Coalition luncheon at Elon University. Crane was fired by Gov. Mike Easley on March 4 because she released public records to the media, in violation of a policy imposed by the governor. Crane gave Carolina Journal permission to publish the transcript of her speech:

I have to say, three weeks ago I wouldn't have imagined I would be here today. I figured I would be in my office in Raleigh, doing the people's business. But, as I guess y'all have heard — my situation has changed. Let me thank you personally for this opportunity to get out of my house. One of the things I loved about my job was daily contact with reporters, so I'm pleased to see so many of you here in the room. Today, I'm getting my reporter fix.

Also, I've got to admit it has been a little weird writing a speech for me. I've written lots of speeches over the past years, but I've not written a speech for me to deliver since high school. I've spent much of my time in government putting stuff down on paper in someone else's voice. Writing this speech has been kind of liberating, because I know what I want to say and how I want to say it. I don't have to keep saying to myself, "Would Dr. Bruton say this?" ... "Would Carmen say this?" ... "Would Dempsey say this?" This is me talking.

When I came to government almost 19 years ago, I went to work for a lovely man named Jim Shepherd. He was everything a reporter, or a citizen, would want in a public information officer. He believed that we were doing the public's business and the public, often working through a reporter, deserved every scrap of paper ... every idea belonged to the people. He was passionate about the subject. He gave me two pieces of advice the day I started work, which was, by the way, July 3rd 1989 — the first was just about everything you produce in government is public record, and the second was if Pat Stith comes calling, get scared, get very scared. The first was great advice. The second was true in its own way, but I have to tell you Pat is the person I would most like to be if I had my career to do over.

I had met Jim when I was a reporter, coming to him for help in doing stories about the environment. I thought that what he did sounded like the ideal job — helping reporters and the public get information. I had had my share of problems as a reporter with public records and open meetings.

I knew firsthand as a reporter that there were people like Jim in government, who worked daily to keep things public. But, there were also people who worked just as diligently to keep things



Debbie Crane, former spokeswoman for the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, was fired by Gov. Mike Easley after she released public records to the media.

private.

In one of my earlier incarnations, I was a radio reporter in Columbus County. The radio station I worked for didn't have the best of equipment. I used an old, balky recorder that dated from the late '70s. It had to "warm up" before it would record, so once you got it in record mode ... you would hit the pause button rather than turning it off if you had to stop recording. If you turned it off, then you had to go through the five minutes of warmup to get recording again. At any rate, I was covering a town meeting in Chadbourn, when the town board went into "executive session." I was the only reporter at the meeting. When I left the room, I hit the pause button

on my recorder rather than unplugging it from the wall and having to go through the whole warm-up cycle all over again when the meeting reconvened in open session. At any rate, after a 45-minute-or-so executive session, the town council reconvened. To my surprise, my recorder had been taken off pause. The first thing on the tape ... was something to the effect of "fixed her ... trying to record us" ... and then I had a recording of the town council doing nothing that required it to be in executive session. My first real experience in how sunshine doesn't always shine on government, but not by any means my last.

"[W]hen I became a part of government, I viewed my job as helping to illuminate what government does."

That's why when I became a part of government, I viewed my job as helping to illuminate what government does. Jim Shepherd used to say, "If government has done something good, then the people need to know about it ... and if government has done something bad, then the people still need to know about it so they can demand that it be fixed."

In 1989, desktop computers were relatively new to government. Some public information officers were still writing news releases on typewriters — a few iconoclasts still used old Royal manuals. Fax machines were still something relatively new. Most of them still used that old, curly paper.

For the most part, public records were all paper — filing cabinet after filing cabinet of paper. There were problems even then with public records. I remember when DENR first got into recycling in a major way ... someone had stored several cabinets worth of records in old copying paper boxes in a hallway while they waited for a more permanent location. Some eager recycler "chunked them," as our governor would say. Jim and I spent three days going through recycled paper to find those records. But, we did find them.

Even in those days, with the advent of desktop computers as the backbone of an office, we were having discussions

about what was a public record when it came to computing. What about drafts? Didn't the public have a right to know if documents changed dramatically from draft one to draft two to the final draft to the end product? Certainly things like grammatical changes weren't all that important for the public record. But, what about when the end result bore little or no resemblance to the first draft? Wasn't it important to know who was making what amounted to policy change by editing? Jim devised a standard that I have stuck with to the present — well I should say until March 4 — if the changes were purely style then you could overwrite the document. But, if the edits resulted in a real substantive change to the document, then each draft should be preserved.

As an aside on this point, I would urge you to make more public records requests around drafts. If you are doing a story about a controversial new policy — ask to see all the drafts that led to that policy.

In my years in state government, I rarely had anyone ask for those materials, but they can be telling. Equally telling, is if no drafts exist, especially with a controversial change in policy.

But, back to the point of this speech. Public records are public records no matter what their form. And, there need to be some substantive changes in policy and law to ensure that the public is getting a full accounting from the people it pays. One thing that I told reporters after the governor sacked me, is that while I served at the will of Mike Easley ... the citizens paid my salary. The taxpayers, the people of this state, therefore have the right to know what is going on in government. That's the whole point of public records laws and policies. And, those laws and policies must keep up with the times.

Here are some things that need to be addressed if the sun is indeed going to continue to shine on North Carolina government:

The first is actually a matter of dealing with conventional paper records. There needs to be a consistent policy across state government on copying charges. The policy must be based on something real, not just an arbitrary figure. And, there needs to be a minimum threshold that allows the average person to get some things for free. Right now, if you go to DOT, Cultural Resources, the governor's office, DHHS, you'll get different answers about how much per page you will be charged ... if you'll get anything for free ... and most agencies can't tell you how they arrived at the cost for copying. I'm proud to say that DHHS actually charges less than most other agencies — three-and-a-half cents per page — and does include a minimum threshold of up to \$2 where copies are

Continued as "Crane," on Page 9

Crane Tells Story of Her Firing By Gov. Mike Easley

Continued from Page 8

free. That's because the controller's office actually computed what copying paper and copying machine maintenance cost and used that to determine a real cost. And, someone with sense realized that it actually costs an agency more than \$2 to process a check for less than \$2. That means that the vast majority of public records requests, which usually amount to just a few pages of material, are actually provided free at DHHS.

There should be no exceptions to how much it costs to make a copy of a document, because a copy is a copy. Yet, at DHHS we have that problem. Another part of the general statutes allows a health-care provider to charge a patient or patient representative for making copies of a health-care record. So, when *The News and Observer* came to one of the DHHS hospitals, asking for copies of patient records, they were going to be charged according to this statute, which means that instead of paying three-and-a-half cents a page, they were going to be charged up to 75 cents a page. We agreed to ignore the law on that one, over our hospital's vociferous objection.

Secondly, there needs to be clear policy on e-mail as a public record. I understand the governor has called for a review of e-mail policy. I've probably dealt with public records for as long as anyone that will be on that review panel, so here's what I think needs to be done:

In [the March 14] *N&O*, Franklin Freeman, who will lead this effort for the governor, said this about the process: "What is the appropriate balance between the public's right to know and the practicality and cost of maintaining, gosh, the — I would assume — literally tens of thousands of e-mails sent each day in state government."

With few exceptions, most materials are public record. So rather than debating who deletes what and when, public officials should be required to maintain archives of their e-mails. Rather than cluttering up the state server and taking lots of time as Freeman suggests, these archives could be maintained on discs or pst files. Memory is cheap and convenient these days. This wouldn't require a huge amount of effort in terms of either financial cost or administrative practicality. It is simply a matter of building it into the process of doing daily business.

Public officials should understand that it isn't a matter of what Internet provider is being used to talk about public business. If it is public business, then it's public record whether it is sent on a Gmail, Roadrunner, Hotmail, or state e-mail account. Some officials believe that if they use a personal e-mail account, then they aren't creating public records. That's clearly breaking public records law, and it is happening now with little

consequence to the lawbreaker. Anyone using a personal e-mail account to do public business should be required to report that use and to properly archive public business produced in that fashion. With the advent of personal digital assistants like Blackberries, more and more business is being done electronically and on the fly. There needs to be a clear policy on maintaining backups of pda messages. There isn't one now.

There are other changes that need to be made in the area of electronic records:

One of the things *The News and Observer* discovered during its mental health series is that DHHS was overwriting fields in its databases, leaving an incomplete record of what had transpired. Let me explain. The database on companies that were being asked to pay back money to Medicaid on community ser-

services had a field for pay-back amount. But, it didn't have separate fields for negotiated pay-back amount. So, the company could receive a letter saying that they owed Medicaid \$50,000. Someone would type \$50,000 into the payback database. But, then the company would have an informal hearing on the issue with a DMA employee, who might lower that figure to \$35,000. So, the person maintaining the database would just overwrite the \$50,000 with \$35,000. And, that figure could be overwritten again and again throughout the process, leaving an incomplete flawed accounting for the expenditure of public dollars. Instead, there should be clear fields that show each stage of the process.

The public records laws around databases changed in the late 1990s, and they were good changes, requiring government to absorb the cost of removing nonpublic information like the names of Medicaid patients from public information like amounts spent on services for individual patients. But many of the Medicaid databases, and I suspect this is true across DHHS and state government, really did not keep up with these changes. The Medicaid fraud and abuse-tracking database, for instance, included a "comment" field. Because the person entering the material in the database didn't understand the law or deliberately chose to ignore the law, the comment section often contained nonpublic information like patient names and Social Security

numbers. To make that database public record, someone in my office had to go through thousands of comment entries to remove the nonpublic information — slowing down the time it took to get the information to the requesting party. That's ridiculous.

The same law required departments to have a database directory. But, it didn't make it clear who was to maintain the database directory. The directory fell through the cracks at DHHS. I'm sure it did at other departments as well. Someone needs to ensure that the database directory for each department is updated on an annual basis and published online so that anyone can request and receive a database.

Other public record changes that are necessary for open government:

Forms should be designed so that nonpublic information can be quickly re-

tracted from public information, and the people filling out those forms should be properly trained. The *N&O* had to wait for months on institutional patient death records from DHHS, because they so thoroughly commingled nonpublic and public information, requiring someone to carefully read each page of information and redact names and other identifying information. The *N&O* should have

gotten these materials in a more timely fashion. This could be accomplished by putting all identifying information at the top of a form, where it can easily be removed and ensuring that the person writing the narrative understands that the narrative must not include identifiers like the person's name.

Consistency and timeliness of response to public records requests. Each agency should have someone on whose desk the buck clearly stops when it comes to public records. The name and contact information for that person should be clearly published. A request shouldn't be allowed to languish as it goes from desk to desk — looking for a home. When a request is received, the requester should receive an immediate written response, either providing the information or explaining when the requester will receive the information and why it will take a given amount of time to provide that information. Having to explain, in print, why a response is going to take a while will ensure that requests that can be filled quickly are

filled quickly.

Holding those to account who break the state's public record laws. Right now it is really difficult for a small newspaper or radio station — or, heaven forbid, the average citizen — to have the ability to sue if a government agency doesn't provide public records. Even if the requester does bring a suit and is successful, they can still be on the hook for their own legal bills. There needs to be a bad actor's clause that guarantees a requester will recover legal costs when a government agency defies public record law.

Personnel information. Right now, you can come to a state agency and ask for the public information on a state employee, which will include only the most recent personnel action in the starkest of terms like "fired" and the most recent salary information rather than a complete salary history. That's not acceptable. It allows an agency to hide a whole lot of information that the public has a right to know. Take this example: Say employee X, for some reason, maybe not a good one, gets a 15 percent raise on June 25, then gets a legislative cost-of-living raise on July 1. The second that legislative cost-of-living raise goes into effect, there is no public record of that employee getting the 15 percent raise just days before. Similarly, if an employee is fired or promoted, the public has a right to know for what reason. Not every fired employee gets as much ink as I have. In fact, my case is one of the few examples where the current administration hasn't hidden behind the guise of "that's a personnel issue and we can't talk about it."

After my firing and the subsequent reporting on e-mails, I do hope that there will be changes in at least the way e-mail is handled within state government, but we don't need to have something go wrong or accusations made in order for public records laws to be changed to keep up with technology. The laws should be reviewed every two years by a panel of experts, including reporters, citizen advocates, technology gurus, lawyers, and government folks who should recommend appropriate changes in law and policy to ensure that it stays current.

Finally, on a truly personal note, I've done a lot of thinking in the past couple of weeks about what I could have done differently. I loved my job, and I miss it dearly. I really thought I did some good. I certainly regret losing the job, but I don't regret anything I did. When I first came to state government, I lived by the words of one of my favorite politicians — Thomas Jefferson — who said in 1774, "The whole art of government consists in the art of being honest." That's what we should all expect of government — honesty. And, I can truly say to you — I was always honest. CJ

"I do hope that there will be changes in at least the way e-mail is handled within state government, but we don't need to have something go wrong or accusations made in order for public records laws to be changed to keep up with technology."

JLF survey

Some Residents Fear Negative Effects of Greenway Projects

By CJ STAFF

RALEIGH

Neighbors of Raleigh's Neuse River Greenway are much more likely than other greenway users to object to the greenway's potential costs in increased crime, decreased privacy, and lower property values, according to a recent John Locke Foundation survey.

A new JLF Regional Brief summarizes the survey's findings. "It's not surprising that many people who live directly next to the Neuse River Greenway do not see it as an asset," said brief co-author Dr. Michael Sanera, JLF Research Director and Local Government Analyst. "The survey results confirm one of the central principles of economics: people take better care of their own property than they do of property owned in common. A publicly owned greenway is more susceptible to litter, crime, and degradation over time."

Raleigh is building the greenway along the bank of the Neuse River from Falls Lake Dam to the Johnston County line. The city owns the greenway, and city government manages it. "For a greenway, the key questions are, 'Who benefits? Who pays?'" Sanera asked. "Economic theory argues that those who live next to the greenway pay more in costs — such as litter, crime, and a lack of privacy — than they gain in benefits. On the other hand, greenway users who do not live next to the greenway receive more benefits than costs."

A useful greenway survey must distinguish between the responses of



Greenways, like this one in Durham, often run close to residents' backyards, causing privacy concerns and fears of lower property values, according to a JLF survey. (CJ photo)

neighbors who face greenway-related costs and the responses of greenway users who face few costs, Sanera said. "Unfortunately, most surveys make no such distinction," he said. "These surveys do not tell us anything about the costs and benefits associated with those who live next to a greenway."

That's why Sanera and JLF research interns Justin Coates and Katie Bethune worked on the recent Neuse River Greenway Survey. It focused exclusively on residents in the Bedford Falls and Falls River Community neighborhoods who own property directly adjacent to the greenway or an associated access path. JLF mailed anonymous questionnaires to 121 residents.

Sixty-one residents returned complete surveys, yielding a response rate of 50 percent.

"Most respondents thought the Neuse River Greenway would affect them in negative ways," Sanera said. "While almost all of them believe their neighborhoods are safe now, 61 percent believed the neighborhoods would be 'less safe' after the greenway was completed. A plurality of 40 percent to 35 percent believed the greenway would not be an asset to the community."

Neighbors also had strong opinions about the greenway's potential impact on taxes, Sanera said. "A large majority — 85 percent — would not want to pay for the greenway project with an increase in property taxes," he said. "Only 8 percent of respondents supported that option. By a two-to-one margin — 46 percent to 23 percent — respondents thought the greenway would decrease their property values."

Negative reaction was especially strong among neighbors of the access path, Sanera said. "This should not surprise us, since the 25-yard-wide access path offers the prospect of little to no vegetation to block greenway users' views of backyards and homes," he said. "Neighbors of the access path would face especially high costs."

Of 33 written comments submitted along with the survey, five favored the greenway, seven were neutral, and 21 were negative. "Some respondents raised serious safety concerns, while another key theme involved the invasion of homeowner privacy," Sanera said. "One comment indicated that the proposed greenway had prompted one family to move out of the neighborhood."

A city owned-and-operated greenway forces homeowners who live next to the greenway to pay higher costs in terms of lack of privacy and an increase in crime, litter, and noise than they would receive in benefits, Sanera said.

"The survey results also imply that greenway users who would not live next to the greenway would receive more in benefits than they would pay in costs," he said. "Such results could not happen if the greenway were to be constructed on private property. A private greenway operator would have to pay property owners for their land, and to recover those costs the operator would need to charge those who use the greenway," Sanera added. "A system based on property rights and the rule of law would produce a more equitable result." CJ

JLF Analyst: Major Error Calls Climate Change into Question

By CJ STAFF

RALEIGH

North Carolina legislators should question any claims of economic benefits from proposed climate change policies, now that the Appalachian State University Energy Center has admitted inflating earlier estimates by more than 900 percent, a policy analyst says.

"Six months ago, the ASU Energy Center trumpeted its claims that policies to cut carbon dioxide emissions in North Carolina would add more than 325,000 jobs and \$20 billion to the state's economy by 2020," said Dr. Roy Cordato, John Locke Foundation vice president for research and resident scholar. "Now the same ASU team has snuck out a new report that drops that estimate to 32,000 jobs and \$2.2 billion in gross state product."

"That's not just a rounding error," Cordato said. "That's a major mistake that should call into question the researchers' competence. No serious scholar would put out research that

makes a mistake that large."

Accurate estimates are important to North Carolina, since the policies studied would lead to higher taxes and fees, new restrictions, and price increases for consumers, Cordato said. "In fact, our own analysis from trained economists at the Beacon Hill Institute at Boston's Suffolk University shows that the policies would hurt — not help — the North Carolina economy."

The new ASU Energy Center report emerged at the April 22 meeting of the N.C. Legislative Commission on Global Climate Change. At the same meeting, a new analysis from trained Beacon Hill Institute economists warned that North Carolina would lose more than 33,000 jobs and face a \$4.5 billion hit to its Gross State Product by 2011, if lawmakers adopt just a fraction of the policies under consideration now to address climate change.

The policies studied also would cost the state more than \$502 million in investment, lower real disposable income by \$2.2 billion, and reduce state

and local revenue by more than \$184 million, according to Beacon Hill Institute researchers.

"When we're talking about potential harmful impacts of this magnitude, North Carolina cannot afford to rely on faulty estimates of economic benefits," Cordato said. "That's especially true if the proponents of climate change policies can't distinguish between 32,000 jobs and 325,000 jobs or between a \$2.2 billion impact and a \$20 billion impact."

The ASU Energy Center's errors might be linked to the fact that its report did not rely on the expertise of the university's economics department, Cordato said. "The ASU Energy Center calls its report an 'economic impact analysis,' but economists had nothing to do with it," he said. "A student in a public administration master's degree program and a colleague with an engineering degree assembled both the wildly inflated numbers in the original report and the revisions released last week."

"ASU economics professor John Whitehead has distanced himself and his

department from the report," Cordato said. "Whitehead wrote on his Web site that he's 'very skeptical' any positive benefits from climate change policies would cancel out the clear negative impacts."

North Carolina shouldn't bet its economic future on dubious claims from untrained nonexperts, Cordato said. "The costs of making a mistake would be too high," he said. "Given the mistakes the ASU Energy Center has already admitted, there's no reason to believe these climate change policies would create 32,000 jobs or 320 jobs or 32 jobs."

Legislators should also remember that North Carolina can take no step that would have any significant impact on the climate, Cordato said. "None of the policies under consideration would do anything to reduce global warming," he said. "Plus trained economists see far more costs than benefits. They see large-scale job losses and a major hit to the Gross State Product. North Carolina policymakers should listen to their warnings." CJ

Luddy Proposes School Options for Wake County

By DAVID N. BASS
Associate Editor

RALEIGH

Is the private sector the solution for Wake County's debacle over public school reassignment? One Wake County businessman thinks so, and he's getting help from community leaders and local elected officials to create an affordable private school alternative for families disillusioned with the government system.

Although Wake County is one of the fastest growing regions in the nation, private school enrollment has remained stagnant over the last three years. About 14,000 students attended Wake private schools during the 2006-2007 term, compared to 134,000 students enrolled in public schools this year.

Not every family can afford tuition payments, and those that can face fierce competition because of a backlog of applicants vying for openings at many area private schools.

Bob Luddy, a business owner who launched the award-winning charter school Franklin Academy in 1998, wants to change that. His goal is to create an affordable, efficient free-market option that offers families a way out.

"The long-term goal is to build 25 to 50 private schools as models of what education could be on a larger scale," Luddy said. "You can have one good private school, and everybody says, 'So what?' But if we had a larger number, then we could say this is a model that works in many communities."

The Thales Academy in north Raleigh is based on the model Luddy hopes will catch on across the county. New schools are to open in Apex and Wake Forest this summer. With annual tuition costs of \$5,000 and scholarships available for needy families, supporters envision the academies becoming a viable option for all Wake County parents.

The concept is gaining support from elected officials, such as Apex Mayor Keith Weatherly, who said the town is cooperating as much as possible to ensure that a Thales Academy will open there in September.

"Demand for private and charter school options is through the roof," Weatherly said. "The demand much exceeds the supply. This certainly is a much-needed product in Wake County."

Total construction costs for elemen-

tary schools in Wake County are \$161.33 per square foot, a rate higher than the average cost of elementary schools in comparable districts around the country, according to a report published in April 2007.

"It lacks economic calculations," Luddy said of spending on public schools. "If there is no economic calculation, there is no control of cost."

Construction costs for a Thales Academy in Apex are expected to be \$3.2 million for a two-story school, with only the first floor built out. The school will be situated on a three-acre parcel of land donated by the private firm Apex First Development. When fully completed, the school will be K-8 and hold 432 students.

Expenses are kept at a minimum, thanks to efficient construction and operating methods, according to Kent Misegades, a businessman and

chairman of the board of trustees for the Apex Thales Academy. Eliminating extras such as cafeterias, large athletic fields, buses, and large parking lots help to keep costs down, he said.

Another factor that distinguishes Thales Academy from traditional public schools is the teaching approach. Most students at the north Raleigh school perform at least one full grade above their counterparts in the public system, according to Suzanne Lambert, headmistress of the school.

Effective discipline policies, parental involvement, and smaller class size make a difference. "It gives us the opportunity to make sure we're meeting the needs of each individual student," she said.

For teaching, Thales Academy uses Direct Instruction, a method that relies on a structured learning environment and scripted lesson plans. This allows teachers to better evaluate whether students are mastering the material and to accelerate or decelerate the process depending on their needs, Lambert said.

"The Direct Instruction method is extremely effective," said J. J. McNamara, a resident of north Raleigh and parent of a second-grader at Thales Academy. "Our child is way ahead of where she would have been had she been elsewhere."

McNamara is one of many parents pleased with the Thales model. He and his wife came to Thales Academy because of uncertain reassignment schedules in public schools. CJ

"The long-term goal is to build 25 to 50 private schools as models of what education could be on a larger scale."

Bob Luddy
Wake County businessman

Commentary

Winning the Math Game

When it comes to teaching math, American public schools have implemented a botched formula. So says the newly released, much-anticipated report from the National Mathematics Advisory Panel. Citing a "broken" system of American mathematics instruction, the panel is urging "substantial and sustained changes" to math education in this country.

Our failure to teach math well is cause for serious concern. Technology has reshaped the world of commerce, ushering in an era of globalization and unprecedented competition for jobs. According to columnist Thomas Friedman's 2005 bestseller, *The World is Flat*, the "global competitive playing field" has been leveled. In a digitized, flatter world, math is more important than ever, writes Friedman: "More and more of what we design, what we write, what we buy, what we sell, and what we invent is built on a foundation of math."

Clearly, the stakes for American K-12 education could not be higher. But if test scores are a harbinger of what's to come, we are in for a rough economic ride ahead. The most recent Program for International Student Assessment math exam ranked U.S. 15-year-olds 24th among 30 industrialized nations. In North Carolina, widespread math competencies elude us: Only 41 percent of fourth-graders and 34 percent of eighth-graders were proficient in math on the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress.

What's the reason for sagging test scores and a broken system of math education? We're not teaching the basics. We're also, to put it starkly, a little bit lazy. To top it off, our math teachers often attend education schools where critical math content is drowned out in a sea of socially conscious course offerings.

Why concentrate on basics? According to the math panel, American math curriculum in the early grades is broad and shallow and fails to inculcate foundational math concepts. Elementary textbooks as long as 700 pages bombard kids with superfluous information. Instead, in the years before algebra, we should focus on "streamlining" curriculum, said panel Chairman Dr. Larry Faulkner

— more depth, less material.

In addition to revamping content, teachers and leaders should expect more effort from students. That means, the math panel said, counteracting public "resignation" that's "rooted in the idea that success in mathematics is largely

a matter of inherent talent, not effort." The truth is the spoils go to those who work the hardest, as many of our international competitors already know.

Working harder also means curbing an unproductive reliance on calculators in the elementary grades. In North Carolina, elementary students use calculators on about two-thirds of end-of-

grade math tests, beginning in third grade. This practice might inflate test scores, but it undoubtedly contributes to a deficit in mental math skills. Weaning young students off calculators will involve more practice and memorization. But kids' mastery of math facts will pay dividends later. Just ask math teachers. In fact, the math panel did, commissioning a national survey of public school Algebra I teachers. Not surprisingly, teachers wanted students who were more fluent in math basics and less dependent on calculators.

Teacher expertise with math content is also central to turning student performance around. Unfortunately, our nation's schools are generally more concerned with promoting a social agenda than they are with math instruction. According to a study of 71 top education schools by Jay Greene and Catherine Shock, published in *City Journal's* Winter 2008 issue, "the average ed school ... offers 82 percent more courses featuring social goals than featuring math."

That's a mistake. Our schools aren't social experiments, they're laboratories of learning. Education schools ought to train teachers with that in mind. K-12 students need rigorous mathematics content that's grounded in the basics, linked with high expectations for effort. Because even on a level playing field, hard work and know-how still win the game. CJ

Kristin Blair is a North Carolina Education Alliance Fellow.



Kristin Blair

On Campus

• To many students, Earth Day, on April 22, meant dire warnings about global warming, fairs that promote recycling (whether necessary or not), and “sustainability” events of one kind and another. Not to the Pope Center or the College Republicans at UNC-Chapel Hill, however. They fostered some healthy skepticism about the usual claims by sponsoring a screening of Martin Durkin’s documentary “The Great Global Warming Swindle.” This British documentary reveals that some prominent scientists don’t think that we’re headed for a climate Armageddon. The arguments it contains are an important part of the debate on the causes of climate change.

• Such skepticism was in the minority at UNC-Chapel Hill’s weeklong celebration of Earth Day, which included “Our Vanishing Night,” a warning about light pollution at the Morehead Planetarium; “The 11th Hour,” a feature-length documentary about the global environment narrated by actor Leonardo DiCaprio; and an environmental social justice panel sponsored by the Student Environmental Affairs Committee.

• The week of April 14-18 was “Conservative Week on the Brickyard” at N.C. State. Each day, NCSU College Republicans focused on one fundamental conservative idea while registering students, staff, and faculty to vote. On April 14, the group explained to passers-by that “Government is not the solution to our problems, Government is the problem!” Other topics included the American family, national defense, taxes, and the economy.

• Duke professor and Libertarian Party gubernatorial candidate Mike Munger spoke at UNC-Chapel Hill about ballot access in North Carolina on April 21. North Carolina’s ballot access laws are among the most severe in the country, he said, and explained the importance of ballot access to representation. “Well, you can’t be the governor without getting elected, now can you? And you can’t get elected without being on the ballot,” he said. UNC-CH Students for Ron Paul sponsored the event. CJ

Compiled by Jenna Ashley Robinson, campus outreach coordinator for the John W. Pope Center for Higher Education Policy.

*Students responding favorably***Great Books Curriculum Making a Comeback?**

By JANE S. SHAW
Contributing Editor

RALEIGH
In academia today, Shakespeare has given way to feminist theory, while Plato has been reduced to a paraphrase, and the *Aeneid* to a footnote. But a few scholars and teachers still love Great Books.

About 300 of the enthusiasts gathered at the annual meeting of the Association for Core Texts and Courses in April in Plymouth, Mass. They talked about such classics as Homer’s *Iliad*, Plato’s *Symposium*, and Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy* — and how to teach them to today’s students.



Plato

They ranged from graduate students and young assistant professors to experts such as keynote speaker Theodore de Bary, the Columbia University guru of Eastern classics who is approaching age 90. They represented community colleges, honors colleges, residential communities, core curriculum programs (especially at Catholic colleges), and even master’s programs.

By teaching the works of “dead white males,” the faculty members are resisting the trends engulfing the humanities today — even though they incorporate modern works and non-Western classics as well as the more traditional core texts.

What keeps them at the task is not just their love of literature but evidence that these books can grab the attention of today’s students — those earbud-wearing, intellectually indifferent teen-agers who are often academically unprepared for college. The following example from the meeting illustrates how.

Marcia Smith Marzec, an English professor at the University of St. Francis, a Catholic school in Joliet, Illinois, discussed changes in the “core curriculum” course that she and her colleagues teach to sophomores.

Initially, this class introduced “classic Western thought” through a series of excerpts from an anthology. Three weeks on Greek culture, for example, included selections from Homer, Aeschylus, Herodotus, and at least four others.

But students hated the course. Evaluations were “abysmal,” said Marzec; the class was “boring,” “confusing,” “disconnected,” and “too hard.”

So they redesigned it. They stopped reading excerpts and chose 10 complete texts, ranging in time from the Sumerian *Myth of Gilgamesh* to Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*.

They organized the works around the theme of the “good life.” Instead

of beginning the course with a classic, however, they asked the students to write informal essays on how they define happiness, after reading a short modern essay on the topic. Class discussion introduced the issues that would dominate the course — “happiness, joy, free will, evil, and suffering,” as Marzec summarized them.

The class, said Marzec, became a “phenomenal success.” Complaints dried up. The students read as much as or more than previously, but it was no longer too much or too hard. Their discussions related one work to another. The most popular book was the relatively obscure *Consolation of Philosophy* by Boethius. “I was on the wheel of fortune in my own life until we read Boethius and Chaucer,” wrote one student in an evaluation.

In other words, this redesigned course, relying on complete works, not snippets, and organized around a theme that connects with the interests of today’s teen-agers, became a hit.

Other speakers at the ACTC meeting had uplifting stories, too. A professor from Norfolk State, a historically black college in Virginia, said that Francis Bacon’s “four idols” helped her students think about the idols misdirecting their lives. An honors program at Kentucky State, another historically black school, not only teaches liberal arts through Great Books but teaches mathematics and science using Euclid’s *Elements* and Newton’s *Principia*.

Villanova’s honors program uses popular evening lecturers to inspire students to discuss the texts outside the classroom as well as within it. And at several schools, faculty members are in the process of starting or rejuvenating a Great Books program.

Great Books (to use the term made famous by scholars Robert Hutchins and Mortimer Adler) are not just old works. There is the possibility of new classics, too. One presentation focused on the “graphic novel” — what we used to call comics. “Fun Home” is a drawing-based autobiographical book by Alison Bechdel. Its drawings vary from the spare simplicity of traditional comics to the more subtle style of etchings, and the content is a story about suicide and its impact that also reveals the author’s intense personal involvement with literature.

Of course, studying core texts, a label presumably chosen to avoid the “dead white male” stigma attached to Great Books, does not necessarily mean honoring the Western origins of individualism, limited government, and freedom of conscience. In academia today, some faculty members want to undermine the heritage of the West, via Marx and Rousseau, rather than confirm it, via Adam Smith and David Hume.

A session at the conference on “Peering through a Veil to See Women” had papers that seemed to undermine the value of core texts. One compared Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park* to the Marquis de Sade’s *Philosophy of the Boudoir*. Austen was deemed to be more “revolutionary.” Another was a relentless attack on John Milton for disparaging female-ness in *Samson Agonistes*.

But the people at this conference, by and large, love classics and want their students to be in touch with them. Their experiences offer hope for those who are trying to involve disengaged students. CJ

Jane S. Shaw is president of the John W. Pope Center for Higher Education Policy.

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UNCW's Adams an Enthusiastic Defender of Free-Speech Rights

By AMANDA ELISE ANDERSON
and JESSICA KEARNS

Contributing Editors

RALEIGH

The Constitution does not give you a right to feel comfortable; it doesn't give you a right to have your inner child soothed at all times," UNCW professor and free-speech activist Mike Adams told UNC-CH students in April.

Speaking at the university April 10, Adams told conservatives to stop whining about the vast presence of liberal ideologies on campus. Instead, he said, they should facilitate debate that presents both sides of an issue. About 100 people attended the event, which was sponsored by the John W. Pope Center for Higher Education Policy and the College Republicans at UNC-Chapel Hill, Duke, and N.C. State.

Adams' humor and energy evoked laughter and applause throughout the speech. Forgoing the use of a podium, Adams paced back and forth across the stage using gestures to help re-enact his personal experiences. Adams spoke on the importance of free speech, the harsh realities of feminism, and the damaging impact of gun control laws.

Adams criticized the contradictions engendered by "hostile environment speech codes." He cited an extreme instance of a woman who falsely accused three men of rape and went unpunished — yet Adams himself was accused of violating the speech code for jokingly using Napoleon Dynamite's catch phrase "gosh, idiots." In Adams' mind, this inconsistent policy undermines the constitutional right to free speech that should be protected everywhere, including on college campuses.

"The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees that you will be offended with regularity," said Adams when referring to a "vibrator museum" displayed on a college campus to promote Sexual Awareness Week. The exhibit, designed to outline the historical evolution of sex toys, prompted Adams to write an article explaining the offensive nature of the event. Although he never said that the event should not have been allowed, he was sued for creating a "hostile sexual environment" by the mother of a student involved in the campus's feminist group.

Adams argued that the proliferation of women's centers on college campuses is unnecessary because, in most



Dr. Mike S. Adams, UNC-Wilmington criminal justice professor.

schools, women comprise more than 50 percent of the student population. Portraying a majority group as victims seems senseless, he said. His book *Feminists Say the Darndest Things* (Penguin Group, 2007) echoes this notion and cites other contradictory statements made by feminists.

Adams includes abortion as another issue in which university administrators fail to adequately represent both viewpoints. For example, he said, a Northern Kentucky University professor vandalized a pro-life exhibit with the help of her students.

Only after news coverage exposed her role was she fired. Adams also wonders why women's centers list only Planned Parenthood as a viable support option for pregnant students.

Adams, a former atheist who converted to Christianity, spent a substantial amount of time discussing his frustration with "unbelievable hostility towards Christianity" on college campuses. He shared an example of a UNC-Wilmington biology professor who, after failing to receive a pay raise, said, "I am just as stupid as those Christians who think Jesus is still coming back after 2,000 years." Adams said he thinks that religion is overly politicized on college campuses and that only anti-theist viewpoints are presented.

Adams said he thinks upholding the Second Amendment is just as vital to America as the First Amendment. He questioned the constitutionality and effectiveness of gun-free zones on college campuses, given the recent increase in school shootings. He argued that criminals might be less likely to target universities if students were allowed to carry guns and pointed out that homicide rates drop in areas that allow concealed-weapon permits. CJ

"The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees that you will be offended with regularity."

Dr. Mike S. Adams
UNC-Wilmington

Commentary

Engaging the Disengaged Student

College professors yearn for academically interested students — eager young minds that want to grasp new ideas and soak up information. But not many students are like that. Most come to college to get a degree, and have a good time while they do so.

Tim Clydesdale, a sociologist at the College of New Jersey and author of *The First Year Out* (University of Chicago Press, 2007), suggests that the problem lies not with the kids but with the expectations for them.

He's not saying that education should be "dumbed down." It's already dumbed down. He is talking about creating new expectations.

"These new expectations should not begin with what educators want students to learn, but rather should begin with helping students identify their interests. . . ." he writes.

The backdrop for Clydesdale's recommendation is a research project exploring teen-age culture. He spent a year getting to know 21 students at a large high school in a lower-middle-class suburb in New Jersey. He learned that most college-bound teen-agers, and about three-fourths of high school graduates who go to college, are not ready to do much thinking the first year out of high school.

As freshmen, most "are consumed with managing their daily life and, in particular, with navigating relationships and managing gratifications," Clydesdale says.

They put their minds in a "lockbox," he says. That isn't all they lock up. They also keep "religious, political, civic, socioeconomic, ethnic, and gender identities in a lockbox, too."

Clydesdale draws an intriguing connection between students' ability to become engaged students and their religious interests. The majority of students he interviewed were "semi-religious." At college, they put their faith on hold, just as they do their intellectual side.

In contrast, Clydesdale finds that seriously religious students feel freer to "reflect on their own lives and on their wider environment" than do most freshmen.

To illustrate (this example is not Clydesdale's): For most teen-agers, Aeschylus's play *The Eumenides* would be an assignment about which they would memorize

some facts and "meaning," perhaps taken from *Cliff Notes*. But religious students (attending a school that embraces their religion) might actually be open to exploring how this play addresses the administration of justice. They might even have contemplated issues of justice and retribution on their own.

Antireligious teen-agers might also be open to such a discussion. By challenging the Judeo-Christian underpinnings of American culture, they are already "engaged." As Clydesdale says, "Strong views on religion, be they positive or negative, appear to be connected with greater openness to intellectual or creative engagement."

But most students don't have such strong views. In essence, Clydesdale found that students in their freshman year have "narrowed perspectives." They are in a self-protective mode and "educators waste their breath if they attempt to challenge these [narrowed perspectives] during their first year out."

What can faculty do? They should help students become more aware of their own interests. Once they do so, students can begin to apply these interests to academic goals such as improving their "cognitive and communicative skills," relating their interests to "existing bodies of knowledge," and applying what they learn in "practical and creative ways."

In his own teaching, he stopped beginning the introductory sociology course with "macrohistorical theories of social order." He now starts with "sociological studies of interpersonal relationships" instead.

More broadly, he wants educators to "focus on what knowledge our graduates retain and what skills they actually use, and work backward to develop a student-centered curriculum that imparts knowledge worth retaining and skills worth developing."

These recommendations are both lofty and sketchy. But Clydesdale's message is that most freshmen are not ready to plunge into intellectual endeavors. We might not like it, but the process of education starts with recognizing reality. CJ

Jane S. Shaw is president of the John W. Pope Center for Higher Education Policy.



Jane Shaw

Bats in the Belltower

Armed, Responsible Students

On April 16, in an op-ed carried in *The News & Observer* of Raleigh and *The Charlotte Observer*, the president of Duke University and the chancellor of UNC-CH wrote about the need for action against gun violence.

President Richard H. Brodhead and Chancellor James Moeser built their argument upon the recent murders of Abhijit Mahato, a Duke graduate student, and Eve Carson, the student body president of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in light of the massacre at Virginia Tech in April 2007 and the killing of five people in February at Northern Illinois University.

"[W]e have learned to regard gun violence ... as a life-and-death issue that directly affects universities across North Carolina," they wrote. "We must act to prevent such tragedies from recurring."

And there is the rub. What actions can be taken?

Brodhead and Moeser begin by promoting the work by members of their faculties, who they say "would welcome opportunities to apply their expertise more actively on behalf of the people of North Carolina." They move to their first suggestion: reforming "deep systemic problems in our criminal justice system," whose deficiencies were tragically revealed through the murders of Mahato and Carson. Brodhead and Moeser urge "immediate action from state and local officials" to equip law enforcement agencies and courts with technology to share information about criminals.

They turn their attention to "keeping guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them," and stressing that they are not advocating the elimination of Second Amendment rights. While highlighting their recent efforts to improve emergency response, communication, and threat identification, they say that "there is only so much we can accomplish while guns remain so easily accessible."

They conclude with a call to "embrace common-sense laws about guns" and have "a reasoned and dispassionate conversation about gun violence." In their vision, university faculty would work together with state and local

officials to reform the criminal justice system, and everyone would work together to produce laws that would make it harder for people who shouldn't have guns — criminals, presumably — to get them.

In short, they see only government responses to the problem. While they acknowledge the Second Amendment, they fail to grasp its full importance; i.e., its contribution to potential solutions. It might be an old chestnut that when guns are outlawed, only the outlaws will have guns, but its wisdom cannot be denied by decrying it as either old or trite. The essence is that when, as is usually the case, a



Jon Sanders

criminal with a gun faces a law-abiding citizen, the presence of a gun in the hands of the would-be victim, or passers by, is a significant equalizer. It very well might turn the tide.

Such is the thinking that animates a national student group that formed after the Virginia Tech massacre, Students for Concealed Carry on Campus, whose media liaison, Jason Blatt, is a medical student at UNC-CH. The group recently conducted a silent protest nationwide in which students wore empty gun holsters to class in support of concealed-carry laws.

The answer to the obvious concern can be found on the group's Web site's frequently asked questions page (concealed-campus.org):

After [11 schools] allowing concealed carry on campus for a combined total of more than sixty semesters, none of [them] have seen a single resulting incident of gun violence, a single gun accident, or a single gun theft. Likewise, none of the forty "right-to-carry" states have seen an increased rate of gun violence since legalizing concealed carry. ... Numerous studies [have found] that concealed handgun license holders are five times less likely than non-license holders to be arrested for violent crimes.

A "reasoned and dispassionate" approach to the issue of gun violence would certainly not neglect the case for concealed-carry. CJ

Jon Sanders is a policy analyst and research editor of the John Locke Foundation.

Report: Community Colleges' Transition Programs Lacking

By JANE S. SHAW
Contributing Editor

RALEIGH
Achieving the much-vaunted "seamless" transition between North Carolina's community colleges and its universities might require more than superficial fixes. That is the impression given by a report prepared last year for the N.C. State University history department.

The reason behind the report was the fact that some students who had transferred from N.C. community colleges were "having trouble adjusting to the work load expected of them," the report says. Several N.C. State University history department faculty members asked graduate student Leslie Hawkins to research the issue. She conducted student interviews, communicated with community college faculty by e-mail, and collected academic materials used at the community colleges such as syllabi and exams.

Hawkins' findings are stark. Most transfer students she interviewed had "discovered that they were not academically prepared for the amount of reading or writing expected by NCSU," she wrote.

"The majority of their classes were lecture courses with little or no required reading," Hawkins said. "Some of the classes the students took did not require a paper at all." When essays were assigned, they were usually no longer than three to five pages.

The history majors had "limited, if any contact with primary documents before arriving at NCSU." Primary documents are original historical documents rather than commentaries. Hawkins noted that history classes in community colleges should use primary documents; even some high schools do, she noted.

Steven Hill, head of the humanities department at Wake Tech, said in an interview that his history staff was somewhat "taken aback" by the paper. At least some teachers are emphasizing primary sources, he said. Even in the required textbooks, primary sources are highlighted, he said.

Hill said that the N.C. State faculty should realize that the courses are survey courses, that these students have not declared a major, and that some students at that early stage simply aren't ready to write long research papers. He also pointed out that Wake Tech has a writing center to help students with grammar and the mechanics of writing papers. Wake Tech offers two semesters each of

U.S. history, Western Civilization, and World history.

Jonathan Ocko, head of the history department at N.C. State, emphasized that the report is "anecdotal" rather than definitive. It reflects efforts by history faculty, and not all faculty members agreed that a report was needed, to explore how to "work with the community colleges to help the students have a more immediately successful transition."

Tests were among the objects of criticism. They appear to be "more closely related to a college-prep level course in high school than to a test in a history course at a four-year institution," Hawkins wrote. "They feature matching,

"The majority of their classes were lecture courses with little or no required reading."

Leslie Hawkins
N.C. State grad student

true/false, multiple choice, short answer, and one-page essays."

Another problem, according to Hawkins, was the "nature of students often found in community college classes." One student

told her that the "lack of dedication" among students in her classes reduced her own motivation.

Out of 390 history majors at the time Hawkins began her report, 37 had transferred some history credits from a N.C. community college to N.C. State. Those students were the focus of the report. The largest number of students (14) came from Wake Technical; the other community colleges represented were Wilson, Technical, Nash, Davidson, James Sprunt, Tri-County, Gaston, Beaufort, Forsyth Technical, Alamance, Guilford, Coastal Carolina, Wayne, Cape Fear, Wilkes, and Surry.

After e-mailing all 37 students, Hawkins ultimately met with six. She also wrote to community college faculty and obtained class materials from history courses at five schools.

Although the students she interviewed laid most of the blame at the feet of the two-year colleges, they also expressed a need for more helpful advising at N.C. State.

In March, a meeting was held between history and community college faculty to further cooperation and facilitate students' transition. N.C. State might make some changes, but the deeper question is whether North Carolina's community colleges are holding expectations too low to enable their students to transfer to a four-year flagship university. CJ

Jane S. Shaw is president of the John W. Pope Center for Higher Education Policy.

Opinion

UNC Jumps into Another Summer-Reading Controversy

By JAY SCHALIN
Contributing Editor

Sometimes an idea comes along that is bad, really bad. It's bad enough to rip apart the ties that unite a nation. The conclusion of the book *Covering*, by Yale Law School professor and gay activist Kenji Yoshino, qualifies. The polarizing potential of his proposal was so glaring that the author was compelled to acknowledge that it might cause a modern-day "Tower of Babel."

Despite the dangers present in Yoshino's polemic and the juvenile rationale it is based upon (or perhaps because of them), UNC-Chapel Hill is promoting the book to all incoming freshmen as this year's choice for the Carolina Summer Reading Program.

It is not the first time the program has made an awful choice. The year after the terrorist attacks Sept. 11, 2001, the school selected *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations*. The book appeared to critics to whitewash Islam's violent image by eliminating many of the aggressive suras (chapters) used by radical Muslims to justify holy war and the religion's crueler aspects.

Yoshino defines "covering" as: "to tone down a disfavored identity to fit into the mainstream." He suggests that the pressure felt by people to conform, whether imposed on them by others or arising from their own psyches, is a form of discrimination as oppressive as real bigotry such as the refusal to hire somebody because of his or her race or gender. Yoshino concludes that this need to "cover" one's "authentic self" is psychologically damaging, and it can and should be ended with sweeping legal reforms.

What Yoshino is proposing are two major changes to the theory and practice of discrimination law. The first is to extend protection from discrimination on account of an individual's characteristics that are considered immutable, such as his or her race, gender, religion, and sexual preference, to include characteristics of chosen behavior. To cite one of Yoshino's examples, not only should businesses and government agencies

be subject to anti-discrimination laws in the hiring of homosexuals, but he wants overtly homosexual behavior, such as exaggerated effeminacy by gay men, to be protected on the job as well. Today, their behavior would not be protected, since they can readily choose to behave less feminine without contradicting the immutable fact that they are gay.

Yoshino wants all such "authentic" behavior to receive legal protection, even "flaunting," which is behavior that aggressively expresses one's adherence to a group other than the majority. And an individual's "authenticity" is to be self-defined. If an individual thinks that part of his authentic behavior is to express contempt for what he perceives to be historical wrongs performed against his self-selected group, he can do so. It is not hard to imagine the



negative impact this would have on the conduct of business and governmental affairs.

Yoshino's second legal recommendation is to switch the burden of proof of discrimination from the individual to the institution. He proposes a "new paradigm" of universal rights: a right to appearance, a right to language, a right to expressing ethnic identity, and so on. Instead of the current system, where an individual who claims to have suffered discrimination must sue the allegedly discriminating enterprise, Yoshino argues that the enterprise should have to prove that the behavior of the individual is injurious to the enterprise's conduct of business before infringing on that individual's "rights."

Adopting Yoshino's paradigm could have fearful implications for America's future existence. As we have shed more of the common culture that existed in past generations for multiculturalism, the workplace has remained one of our few unifying institutions, for it is there that we must get along and work for common goals. By conforming at work, we accentuate characteristics and behavior we share in common to focus on the task at hand.

Yoshino, however, wants us to accentuate our differences. This is folly — to emphasize differences is to drive a wedge between people and stoke old

wounds and grievances. It is certain to cause conflicts and rip us apart further. With the diminished ability to restrain anti-mainstream activity, there will be even more aggressive behavior pushing the envelope of the monoculture past its limits, until there is nothing binding us together. Our ordinary affairs, such as deciding where to build a new school or how to sell more cornflakes, will likely become enmeshed in a debilitating tangle of group politics, extraneous emotions, and affected personalities.

Such adherence to admittedly unworkable propositions is hardly the stuff of clear-eyed legal reasoning; rather, it resembles the emotional product of spoiled children and irrational zealots. Yoshino is sounding the grand battle cry of immaturity, equating a childish "you're not the boss of me" crusade against practical conformity with a fight for real freedom.

And that might be the appeal to many of the entering freshmen who will read the book at UNC's urging. It is unlikely that most of these 18-year-olds will be able to discern how illogical and potentially damaging Yoshino's argument is.

The people in charge of the reading program might fall back on the common defense of bad choices, suggesting that "Covering" was meant to be the starting point for a discussion of important issues. After all, the book will be discussed in seminars at the start of the fall semester. If so, wouldn't it be better to have a discussion about good ideas that have stood the test of time, rather than about terrible, trendy ones? CJ

Jay Schalin is a senior writer for the John W. Pope Center for Higher Education Policy.

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Teacher Education Fails the Test at UNC Schools

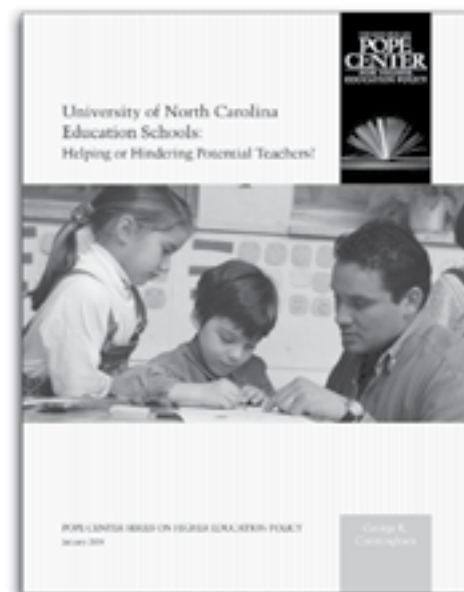
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University of North Carolina Education Schools: Helping or Hindering Potential Teachers?

George K. Cunningham

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Town and County

Wilmington tax increase

Wilmington taxpayers can expect a substantial property tax increase this year. City officials project that the city's property tax rate will rise by at least 13 percent, from 30 cents per \$100 of valuation to at least 34 cents per \$100 of valuation. New Hanover County also is likely to raise property taxes, the *Wilmington Star-News* reports.

"We don't have a fat and happy budget right now," said Councilwoman Laura Padgett.

Half of the projected increase is necessary to overcome an error New Hanover County officials made during last year's property revaluation.

The county included property owned by nonprofit organizations in its projections of the city and county's tax bases. Nonprofits don't pay property taxes, and the city's property tax collections came in \$3 million lower than projected.

Most of the rest of the tax increase will go to higher city employee salaries. Wilmington recently completed its first survey of public employee compensation in nearly a decade.

Horse farm doesn't sell

Attempts to sell a horse farm that Currituck County had bought from a private owner in 2006 have failed, after no one submitted the minimum bid sought by the county. The future of the property is unclear, the *Daily Advance* of Elizabeth City reports.

Currituck County originally bought the property for \$3.8 million from Bob DeGabrielles. The price was based upon an appraisal done by Asset Appraisal Services, which had been hired by DeGabrielles. The county, however, assessed the property as worth less than half that amount for property tax purposes. The idea was to use the 100-acre property as an equestrian facility. DeGabrielles subsequently gave \$600,000 back to the county as a gift.

Purchase of the farm became an issue in the 2006 county commission election. Democrats who opposed the deal captured a majority of the five-member board. The commission decided not to turn the property into an equestrian facility but rather to try to sell it for \$3.8 million.

Some commissioners want to continue operating the horse farm as an equestrian facility. Others have suggested a land swap with private developers for parkland. *CJ*

Smart Metering: Conservation or Intrusion?

By KAREN McMAHAN

Contributing Editor

RALEIGH
Lower utility bills, improved customer service, greater energy efficiency, less dependence on fossil fuels, preventing or forestalling global warming, and the need for fewer power plants are but a few of the benefits promised by smart metering technology, also known as advanced metering infrastructure.

But critics warn that smart grid technology provides utility companies with the opportunity for unprecedented real-time command and control over customers' energy consumption and, as a result, their lifestyles.

What is advanced metering?

The most advanced systems enable two-way communication between the utility company and homes or businesses and vice versa by means of radio frequency and sophisticated computer networks. The systems enable utility companies to collect, read, and transmit data remotely to and from smart devices.

According to Metering.com, a Web site for utility and customer management professionals, metering systems allow utility companies to perform real-time leak detection, monitor usage, detect tampering, eliminate the need for meter readers, and provide remote connects/disconnects. Such measures boost revenue and lower costs, industry executives and environmental groups say.

By installing special controllers that remotely shut on and off heat pumps, water heaters, appliances, and lights, utility companies can ease peak demand and prevent blackouts or brownouts.

In-home display devices allow customers to monitor their utility usage in real time and control their usage from anywhere by means of the Internet. A volunteer in a pilot implementation of this technology was featured in *Business Week* on Jan. 11. The volunteer said the technology allowed him and his wife to "reduce their energy use when prices went up." For example, "if they went to dry clothes, the dryer occasionally suggested they wait until prices declined." The volunteer and his wife said this experience so enlightened them that, after the pilot program concluded, they decided to switch to an old-fashioned clothesline to help save on energy costs.

Leading the research, development, and implementation of smart technologies and the push for environmental public policies have been Australia, the United Kingdom, China, and some Middle Eastern countries.

In a study prepared for the Australian Greenhouse Office in April 2000, Michelle Shipworth examined the link between consumers' attitudes about home energy use and their reported

home energy behaviors. People's environmental actions, Shipworth concluded, are influenced by more than their attitudes, noting that "government policies and regulations support or hinder different kinds of actions." Shipworth cited a number of studies, one from the United States, reporting that people will shift their consumption to off-peak periods when incentives are provided and they feel obligated to do so.

Shipworth suggested that consumer attitudes can be changed through successful media campaigns that "repeatedly expose the public to the message" and combine "regulation, information, education, and persuasion." Shipworth said that "effective persuasive appeals should not only activate attitudes but also argue that these attitudes call for environmentally responsible behaviors."

In 2007, California proposed legislation to grant utility companies the authority to control "unitary heating and air conditioning systems in new buildings," including new homes, by means of installing "programmable, communicating thermostats (PCTs)." The proposed standards say such measures would be taken only in the case of an emergency. Media reports show some Californians worry whether the definition of an emergency might change over time, making temporary restrictions permanent and voluntary ones mandatory.

A *USA Today* article in January reported that the new federal energy bill President Bush recently signed outlaws the use of incandescent light bulbs in the next four to 12 years. A spokesperson from the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy said the change will "save consumers \$40 billion in energy and other costs from 2012 to 2030, avoid construction of 14 coal-fired power plants, and cut global-warming emissions by at least 51 million tons of carbon annually," but no empirical evidence was provided to support the assertions.

Hidden costs

At a time when North Carolinians are grappling with water restrictions, infrastructure needs, and other problems brought on by increased growth, smart technology might appear to provide the solution.

An ABC affiliate in Australia recently interviewed the director of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation's Urban

Water Programme, Australia's largest scientific research organization and a proponent of global warming initiatives. In the interview, an official said one option to increase water efficiency is to install smart meters in households to record the time and cost of showers. The utility companies could introduce premiums for peak-time water usage and a discount for off-peak usage to change consumer habits.

Such solutions might be coming to North Carolina. Gov. Mike Easley recently joked about being able to take a shower in under 30 seconds, and Raleigh Mayor Charles Meeker has suggested that Raleigh citizens might get by on 25 gallons of water per day. In a December 2007 press

release, Easley calls for "conservation-based water billing," meaning a 50 percent surcharge.

Mike Hughes, a spokesman for Progress Energy Carolinas, said the company is evaluating the application of smart devices through a pilot program in North Carolina homes. Smart technology could enable them, for example, to "turn off air conditioners for brief periods on the hottest days to lower the energy load and these measures and others could delay the building of new energy plants," Hughes said.

Extolling the virtues

Manufacturers and distributors of this new technology are extolling the virtues of time-of-use and premium billing to their utility companies, a move that critics say could help utilities offset any expected loss in revenue caused by lower energy usage.

Various surcharges might also reduce the cost savings to residential and commercial customers. In July 2007, the Kentucky Public Service Commission approved a pilot program to provide time-based rates. To defray some of the equipment cost, Kentucky PG&E will use an existing surcharge to recover program costs on top of an additional \$5 monthly customer charge to program participants.

Similarly, a Congressional Research Service report in December 2007 cited requests from the Southern California Edison Company, the TXU Electric Delivery Company, and other public utility companies to recover the operation, maintenance, and capital expenditures costs associated with de-



Continued as "Smart," Page 17

Smart Metering Leads to Fears Of Encroachment on Privacy

Continued from Page 16

ploying smart grid technology. In each instance, the public utility commission granted the requests. The report says the federal government "will establish a program to reimburse 20 percent of the qualifying Smart Grid investments." That means taxpayer dollars.

Other costs arise from the creation of new government positions and commissions to examine and address environmental issues. Raleigh created an environmental advisory board in June 2006 whose seven members will serve two-year terms.

In a press release on the city's Web site, the board is to advise the City Council, among other things, on the "desirability of abiding with the provisions of the Kyoto protocols to reduce emission of greenhouse gases."

In January 2008, the Raleigh City Council also proposed creating a full-time environmental programs manager position at an annual salary of \$46,500.

Unintended consequences

Employing these advanced technologies may also have unintended consequences, as consumers are beginning to learn. Compact fluorescent bulbs (CFLs) are said to be safer than incandescent bulbs, last longer, save more than \$30 in electricity costs over their lifetime, and prevent greenhouse-gas emissions, according to the EPA.

Not only are few lamps and light fixtures designed for these CFLs, an additional cost for consumers, but, more important, CFLs pose environmental and health hazards. Each CFL contains 5 milligrams of mercury, a highly toxic heavy metal that the EPA warns can cause brain damage and learning disabilities.

The Energy Star Web site, a U.S. EPA and U.S. Department of Energy program, lists the steps for safe handling and disposal of a broken CFL. Consumers have to ventilate the room for 15 minutes and be careful not to use a vacuum cleaner or broom to clean up the fragments because cleanup spreads the mercury. Special disposal instructions are recommended for broken or used CFLs to prevent mercury contamination in the solid waste system.

The Metering.com Web site also urges caution in applying smart grid technologies, warning utilities of the danger of completely shutting off water

to a customer because "water is needed to sustain life."

"Utilities have a legal and moral responsibility to provide electricity 24 hours a day, seven days a week," Hughes said. Utility companies have to weigh the consequences of shutting off certain appliances or reducing the utility load to a customer who is on a medical monitoring system or is using assistive devices.

Smart meter pilot programs are under way in North Carolina. Hughes said that Progress Energy Carolinas is "in

the midst of a pilot program in 400 homes that will last for one year so they can evaluate the broader application of these smart devices." As reported in *The Charlotte Observer* on Jan. 16, Duke Energy is also piloting a similar program.

"North Carolina will be the seventh largest state

in the next two decades," Hughes said, "and we must come up with a balanced plan to provide the state's energy needs." Despite the energy efficiency of new homes, Hughes said that "homes today use 50 percent more energy because of lifestyles and larger homes, as compared to the 1970s." Progress Energy is using alternative and renewable sources of energy in conjunction with fossil fuels, but there are "pros and cons to every form of electric generation" and the company has to "pursue them aggressively and responsibly. There is no one solution," Hughes said.

Emotional vs. rational

Hughes said discussions on energy management "tend to be emotional instead of rational and intellectual, and there's a lack of long-term planning. Interest groups are always going to promote their views."

When asked whether Progress Energy has any discussions or lobbying efforts under way to advance a legislative solution, Hughes said he knows of no program or mandate to force citizens to use smart grid technology.

Ed Buchan, a water conservation specialist with the City of Raleigh Public Utilities Department, said the department is installing smart meters, but they only enable remote meter reading. He said he knows of no current plan or discussion among city leaders to use advanced metering infrastructure that could remotely shut off or restrict water flow to homes or businesses. CJ

"Utilities have a legal and moral responsibility to provide electricity 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

**Mike Hughes
Progress Energy Carolinas**

Commentary

Government Not the Solution

Simply put, socialism is bad. It relies on a belief in the collective and abandons individual rights. "Progressives" have become the modern socialists. Mainly because they don't like labels, they have to change theirs from time to time. They were socialists, then they were new liberals and now they're progressives. When that moniker is fully understood, they'll take on a new one. But why should this matter?

I think to understand it more fully is really to ask you, the reader, simple questions. They involve freedom and demand a perspective linking policy to freedom. As we address problems in our local communities, we should think about those problems in terms of solutions and whether those solutions promote or detract from individual freedoms. We should understand that the loss of such freedoms takes us further away from creative solutions.

The first question is whether you think most new ideas come from government or the free market? Think about that for a moment. Almost every new idea and advance in science was due to the free market, not government. We live longer, healthier, and more productive lives because we have freedom. New business ideas emanate from capitalism. We have cars that get 60 mpg, medicines that treat almost every major illness, wireless phones, interactive video games, and almost any choice of fruit at a local grocery store because the free market creates or provides it. New technologies emerge daily that might lead to cures for cancer and diabetes. This isn't due to abundances of governmental policies but creativity and investment in spite of them.

At the local level, communities face difficult choices daily, but rarely do they seek to understand the problem they attempt to solve. Several questions in this area are worthy of consideration. Would kids be better off with choices in public education? The simple answer is "yes," overwhelmingly so. Choice in education means more opportunity for success. Yet school boards never pass resolutions in support of charter schools, school vouchers, or other alterna-

tives. They seek instead to support millions in more capital spending on schools that routinely fail 30 percent of our children.

On the local tax issue, do we really think we're undertaxed? That seems like an overly simplistic question, but often we always seek new tax initiatives such as

land transfer taxes, business privilege taxes, or local-option sales taxes because counties need the money. They don't. All taxes are income taxes. Without income, you can't pay any taxes. The new spending is usually touted as being for the benefit of children. But a budget is

a large and cumbersome document with hundreds of expenditures. Instead of trimming nonessential government expenses or being more responsible, it's far easier simply to tell the public that new money is needed for schools. Saying "no" won't make anyone popular when it comes to nonprofits, nongovernmental or non-necessary expenditures, but it's the right thing to do unless you're a socialist.

Does your community honestly debate the difficult issue before it? In most cases, it doesn't. What makes democracy truly great is disagreement. When your city or county or economic development group gets along well, that's not a productive sign of progress, but a reason to be concerned. It leads to "group think," which leads to failure in a competitive world. Debate is healthy and necessary. It's what made our country the greatest on the planet.

Governments don't solve problems. If they did, we'd have educated kids, no crime, fantastic roads, world peace, and the utopia that socialists dream of. The truth is that we are all seeking to have the best just society we can have considering the flaws endemic to mankind. Such thinking stems from the power of individuals, not the collective "unity" that seems to be creeping into 30-second attention spans. CJ

Chad Adams is vice president for development for the John Locke Foundation, director of the Center for Local Innovation, and former vice chairman of the Lee County Board of Commissioners.



Chad Adams

Local Innovation Bulletin Board

For Americans, Cars Equal Freedom

With world crude-oil prices soaring above \$100 per barrel and cost at the gas pump approaching \$4 per gallon, all the ingredients would seem to be in place for dramatic changes in our daily commuting patterns, with millions of Americans shifting from private cars to public transit.

That's the way markets are supposed to work: Higher prices encourage consumers to seek less-costly alternatives, says John Semmens, a research fellow at the Independent Institute, in the *Dallas Morning News*.

Inflation-adjusted gasoline prices more than doubled during the 1995-2005 period. In theory, an increase of this magnitude should have driven many Americans to alternate modes of transportation. Instead, auto travel increased by 23 percent, twice as fast as the 11 percent population growth. As for the notion that rising fuel costs would inspire people to use public transportation, the data do not support this theory, either. While gasoline prices were doubling, public transportation ridership increased by only 7 percent.

Why are Americans continuing to forgo public transportation? There are several reasons, Semmens says.

Americans like the freedom to come and go as they please, on their own schedules. Americans also value their time. Public transportation is slow compared with auto travel. The typical trip takes twice as long as driving a car.

Many Americans, even those with limited budgets, are making a conscious choice: They're willing to pay extra for the convenience and time savings associated with autos because they can cut back elsewhere.

More murders unsolved

Witnesses to murders and other violent crimes refuse to cooperate in law enforcement investigations with such regularity that their silence is driving down the rate of solved murders throughout the country, *USA Today* reports. Even as violent crime plunged to historic lows during the past decade, authorities say, the murder clearance rate also dropped — from a high of 69 percent in 1998 to 60 percent in 2006, the last full year measured by the FBI. A case is cleared when there is an arrest, the suspect is charged and the case is referred for prosecution.

Criminals have successfully "marketed a climate of fear" in some places to silence potential witnesses,

FBI spokesman John Miller said.

In Minneapolis, investigators encounter reluctant witnesses in 30 percent of murder investigations and more than 50 percent of other violent crime inquiries, Police Chief Tim Dolan said.

In Washington, incidents of witness intimidation were up 45 percent last year, said Cynthia Wright, chief of the local U.S. attorney's Victim-Witness Assistance Unit.

In Boston, witnesses' fear of retaliation was directly related to low murder clearance rates, which stood near 38 percent in 2006, Police Commissioner Ed Davis said. To bolster cooperation, the department installed an anonymous text-messaging system last year. It strips off the identity of the senders, who provide initial leads in building criminal cases.

A push for private water

It is no accident that water supplies, which are dominated by government control, are dwindling because of a severe lack of investment and deteriorating infrastructure, says G. Tracy Mehan, an adjunct professor at George Mason University School of Law.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimated an investment "gap" over 20 years of more than \$220 billion for capital needs alone, assuming rates remained steady. A study by the General Accountability Office indicates that 29 percent of water and 41 percent of wastewater systems were not generating enough revenue from user rates and other local revenue sources to cover their full cost of service.

About one-third of water and wastewater utilities deferred maintenance because of insufficient funding, had 20 percent or more of their pipelines nearing the end of their useful life, and lacked the basic plan for managing their capital assets.

Consumers should raise the state cap on private activity bonds to encourage more public-private partnerships in the water sector, Mehan said. This would be a small blow on behalf of making more private equity available for drinking water and wastewater needs.

Mehan estimated that removing regulatory barriers to public-private partnerships would produce an additional \$1 billion to \$2 billion in water infrastructure investment annually at first, potentially increasing to \$5 billion to \$6 billion as the industry matures. CJ

From Cherokee to Currituck**Charlotte to License Landlords?**

By MICHAEL LOWREY

Associate Editor

CHARLOTTE

Charlotte-Mecklenburg police are proposing a new approach to fighting crime in rental properties: licensing landlords. The proposal has yet to get to Charlotte City Council, and new regulations, if any, are not expected to be adopted before the summer, *The Charlotte Observer* reports.

Under

the proposal, the details of which are still being worked out, landlords would have to register with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg

Police Department. The police could get in touch with landlords and request changes at rental units that have excessive crime rates. Landlords who don't comply could be fined or have their licenses revoked.

Research by the police department shows that crime is four times more likely in rental property than in owner-occupied single-family homes. The crime rate was actually higher in rental single-family homes than in apartment complexes.

The proposal is based upon landlord licensing ordinances in Houston and Minneapolis. The detail of the regulations vary. In Houston landlord licensing applies only to the owners of apartment complexes, while Minneapolis requires that landlords leasing out single-family homes also must be licensed.

Landlords oppose the proposal, arguing that it's the responsibility of police to arrest lawbreakers.

"Where are the ordinances that say parents have to control their kids?" asked Allon Thompson, president of the Charlotte Landlord Association.

Durham prepared food tax?

Durham officials, looking for a way to fund tourism-related economic development projects such as a proposed Minor League Baseball museum, are asking for legislative approval for an additional 1 percent levy on restaurant meals subject to a local referendum.

The General Assembly typically grants such taxing authority only if a county's entire delegation supports the tax. In Durham's case, at least two members of its delegation, Rep. Paul Luebke and Rep. Larry Hall, both Democrats, have expressed concerns about a prepared-food tax.

Luebke is against a general prepared-food tax for the county, which he finds regressive.

"I think a sales tax hurts disproportionately middle-class and low-income people," Luebke said to *The News & Observer* of Raleigh. Hall said he thinks the county has other, more pressing needs. Durham city and county officials hope to make the tax subject to a referendum.

Among the other options local officials had explored to get around the legislators' opposition was asking for an "expensive" prepared food tax, an additional 3 percent

levy that would apply only to restaurant meals over \$50. Officials, however, don't know how much money it would bring

in, although it was thought to be less than what a 1 percent tax on all restaurant meals would generate. Restaurant owners, who object to any additional tax, argued that the proposal was built upon a false presumption, that only the rich eat at high-end restaurants.

Marvin annexation dispute

The Union County town of Marvin recently faced an unusual controversy: Residents of Providence Glen subcommunity were upset that the municipality turned them down for annexation, despite having houses selling for \$300,000 to \$400,000 in the neighborhood. The town did eventually reconsider and relented, *The Charlotte Observer* writes.

Marvin is an upscale bedroom community not far from Charlotte. The average home value is just over a half-million dollars. Its median household income of \$97,497 was the fifth highest in the state in the 2000 census.

In February, Marvin considered annexing two neighborhoods, Weddington Chase and Providence Glen. The village council voted to annex Weddington Chase, where houses typically sell for \$600,000 to \$700,000, but not Providence Glen.

The minutes of the meeting include one councilman disparaging the lower-class residents Providence Glen.

"If we bring in \$400,000 homes, it will bring down property values ... You are introducing a different element."

The remark infuriated Providence Glen homeowners, who want to be taken into Marvin in part because they don't want to be annexed by Waxhaw. Tax rates are higher in Waxhaw than in Marvin.

"It is sad when government representatives are allowed to cherry pick who's worthy to be in and who's worthy to be out," said Lisa Tolido. Her husband Erik is vice president of Providence Glen homeowner's association. CJ



Charlotte's Sports Millions Not Producing Hoped-For Returns

By MICHAEL LOWREY
Associate Editor

In the last six years, Charlotte and other nearby local governments have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in sports and recreation-based economic development projects. Far from being a slam-dunk, the projects have badly underperformed versus expectations.

The most notable of the projects is Bobcat Arena, a city-financed building for the NBA's Charlotte Bobcats. The series of events leading to the construction of the arena dates back many years.

Charlotte's first NBA team was the Hornets, an expansion franchise that entered the league in 1988 in the then-state-of-the-art Charlotte Coliseum.

The team proved a success out of the box, selling out all but eight games its first season and all games for the eight seasons thereafter. Eventually, the luster wore off, in part fueled by animosity surrounding owner George Shinn's desire for a new city-financed arena having more luxury seating. Hornets' attendance sagged badly and the team threatened to move elsewhere.

Charlotte City Council eventually did agree to a new arena for the Hornets, subject to referendum. Despite being packaged with a number of other more-popular arts projects, voters rejected the proposed arena for the Hornets by a 57 percent to 43 percent ratio in the June 2001 vote. The Hornets moved after the 2001-2002 season to New Orleans.

Undeterred by losing the Hornets, Charlotte quickly entered into a deal with the NBA to land a new expansion franchise that would be called the Bobcats. At the center of the deal was the city building a \$265 million arena.

While building the arena did not per se involve property tax money, the city committed all of its motel-hotel tax receipts, which by law must be used for tourism related purposes, to the pay for the building.

As a result, all subsequent tourism-based economic development projects must be funded through additional taxes of some sort. So when the city landed the rights to house the N A S C A R Hall of Fame, it had to raise its hotel room tax to pay for its share of construction costs. To pay for a bundle of arts infrastructure projects, the car rental tax in Mecklenburg County was increased.

The Bobcats are privately owned and don't release financial results, but it has been clear since early in their existence that they have badly underperformed compared to their original projections.

The Bobcats figured the new building, with fewer seats but many closer to the action, could justify a steep price increase. The team overestimated demand for tickets and was forced to lower ticket prices its second and third year in the new building. Despite the lower ticket prices, the team ranks only 23rd in the 30-team league in attendance at an

average of just under 14,500 per game this season, drawing nearly 10,000 fans a game fewer than during the Hornets' heyday.

Two and a half years after opening, the new facility is still called Bobcats Arena. The Bobcats have been unable to sell the naming rights to the building, depriving the team of several million dollars a year in revenue.

Not helping matters is the team's on-court performance. Despite playing in a weak conference in which several teams with losing records will make the NBA playoffs, the Bobcats were never in serious playoff contention all season.

The Bobcats' current situation comes as sports franchises have had difficulties in other medium-sized markets. The National Hockey League's Nashville Predators renegotiated its lease agreement with the city of last year.

Whitewater wipeout

In 2003, Jeff Wise, a Charlotte-area businessman and whitewater rafting enthusiast, proposed the creation of an artificial rafting complex on the Catawba River on the border between Mecklenburg and Gaston counties.

The business case for a whitewater center could not, however, be made without public involvement. In order for the nonprofit that would operate the center to get the \$38 million in financing needed to build the facility, six local governments — Mecklenburg and Gaston counties, and the cities of Charlotte, Gastonia, Belmont, and Mount Holly — agreed to provide up to \$12 million over five years to cover operating losses.

In addition, the center was built upon Mecklenburg County parkland under a 40-year lease and includes pre-



Rafters at the U.S. National Whitewater Center (Whitewater Center photo)

existing public mountain-bike trails in its range of attractions.

The center's outdoor adventure center opened over budget, and late in August 2006, with the retail store and restaurant opening three months later. Access to the facility continues to be over side streets because the center's main access road has not been completed.

The center was unable to make quarterly interest payments due on July 31, 2007, Oct. 31, 2007, and Jan. 31, 2008. It has also informed lenders that it was unlikely to be able to make scheduled principle payments during its current fiscal year. Most local officials now expect that they will have to pay out the entire \$12 million committed to the center.

The city has also approved two other sports-based projects. It's pledged millions of dollars toward the NASCAR Hall of Fame. And the city and Mecklenburg County also just agreed to a complicated land-swap agreement that frees land for a minor-league baseball stadium in Uptown Charlotte.

The class AAA Charlotte Knights hope to move into the facility in 2009 from their current home just across the state line in Fort Mill, S.C. The transaction is subject to the team being able to arrange financing to build a 10,000-seat stadium on the land, which it will lease for \$1. CJ



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Citing not only Judge Dierker's own experience but dozens of other court cases, this insider's account explains what's at stake in the battle for the courts: the Constitution, the success of the war on terror, the freedom to worship God, the ability to keep our families safe, the institution of marriage, and much more. Available at www.randomhouse.com. CJ

Book review**Boys Adrift Serves as Warning for Parents of Boys**

• Leonard Sax: *Boys Adrift: The Five Factors Driving the Growing Epidemic of Unmotivated Boys and Underachieving Young Men*; Basic Books; 2007; 267 pp; \$25 hardcover

By DAVID N. BASS

Associate Editor

RALEIGH
What's the deal with young men these days? Lazy and unmotivated, they seem content to camp on the couch, play a video game, and let others foot the bill. Rather than graduate from college, enter a trade, or strike out on their own, male youths increasingly remain at home into their 20s and 30s under the financial protection of their parents.

It's a cultural phenomenon that Leonard Sax, physician and research psychologist, examines in *Boys Adrift: The Five Factors Driving the Growing Epidemic of Unmotivated Boys and Underachieving Young Men*.

We all know young men who reject slothfulness and work hard to make their way in the world, but the overall statistical trend is troubling. In 1949, 70 percent of undergraduate students at American universities were male, compared with 42 percent in 2006. Today, one-third of young men between the ages of 22 and 34 still live at home with their parents. The average teen-age boy devotes more than 13 hours a week to video games, while an increasing number of grown, able-bodied men are jobless and have no plans to find work.

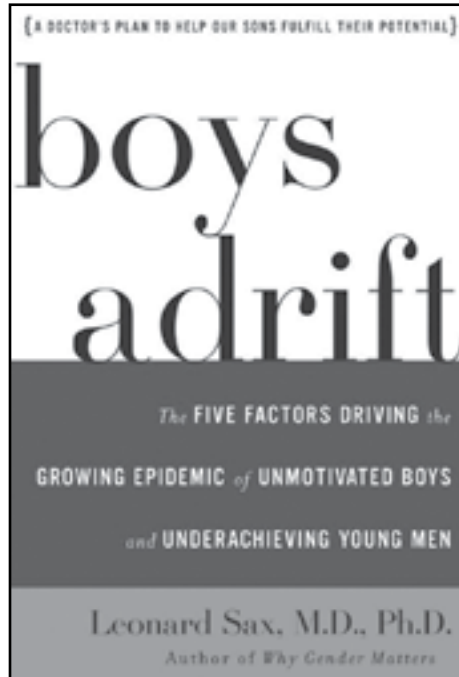
Boys Adrift names five factors contributing to this cultural trend: modern teaching methods, overuse of medications to treat ADHD, endocrine disruptors, video games, and the devaluation of masculinity in society. Attributing male laziness to a handful of causes might seem simplistic, but Sax gives convincing arguments to bolster his reasoning.

On education, for example, Sax argues that contemporary teaching methods harm boys by ignoring the real learning differences between genders.

"Trying to teach 5-year-old boys to learn to read and write may be just as inappropriate as it would be to try to teach 3-year-old girls to read and write," Sax says. "Timing is everything, in education as in many other fields."

Sax also discusses how medicating hyperactive boys can lead to consequences later in life, and how harmful elements in meat and plastic can have similarly negative effects on boys' development.

One of the more interesting chapters deals with the video game craze among today's youth—and even among the not so youthful. Sax writes that such electronic entertainment venues create a false digital world that, for boys and young men, can serve as a substitute for



"Trying to teach 5-year-old boys to learn to read and write may be just as inappropriate as it would be to try to teach 3-year-old girls to read and write. Timing is everything, in education as in many other fields."

Leonard Sax
Physician and Psychologist
Author of
Boys Adrift

the challenges of real life. The result is apathy toward the real world.

No wonder fewer kids play outside—better avenues exist in the virtual world. The trend becomes more troublesome when grown men would rather live vicariously through a game than get an education, job, wife, and kids. An even worse truth is that parents, wives, and girlfriends sometimes serve as catalysts for such behavior.

That brings out another of Sax's points: a greater percentage of young men are remaining at home with no plans to graduate from college or get a stable job. If they do leave home, they leech off the income of their wives or girlfriends. Sax points to research showing that an increasing number of able-bodied men are not looking for work. They're not unemployed and actively searching—they're unemployed and content to stay that way.

Sax suggests a variety of reasons for this. One is America's cultural crum-

ble during the last half-century. In days of yore, young men had to make their way in the world or face tangible consequences. Today, parents and girlfriends are more willing to bail out unmotivated men. Young women might complain about their bum boyfriends, but they continue to date and sometimes cohabit with them, funding or at least tolerating their irresponsibility.

That's had an impact on the new generation of young men, according to Sax. In the past, men were driven to succeed because they knew a woman preferred a financially stable husband who could support a wife and kids. A man's role was clearly understood as that of breadwinner. Now, with a greater percentage of women working outside the home and even out-earning their husbands, a man's place in the family economy is dubious.

This reality of role reversal has created confusion, while high rates of unwed births and fatherless households haven't helped the equation. Increasingly, no male role model is around to answer that fundamental question all boys face: What does it mean to be a man?

Sax gives a pretty good answer to that question: Manhood is about using your strength in the service of others. That ethic has "animated Western history for the past two millennia," he says. It's embodied in the words of Jesus Christ: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:13, KJV).

The trouble is, fewer men are around to teach or model that kind of behavior, a fact that isn't surprising. It's the logical outworking of a society that tolerates deadbeat dads, subsidizes single mothers, and downplays the importance of traditional marriage and family.

Sax presents solutions in the final chapter of the book, including tips for getting teens off the video games and ensuring they're around positive male role models, but parents will find the recommendations challenging in a society that bombards young people with conflicting ideas of what it means to be a man.

From the media to the public school classroom, nearly every corner of American culture promulgates a destructive view of masculinity. Overcoming that is no easy chore.

That's one of the weaknesses of the book. Parents, especially with older boys or teens, may find Sax's advice hard to follow since behavior patterns are already engrained. That doesn't mean change is impossible, but it's unarguably more difficult. *Boys Adrift* is a better warning for new parents or those with very young children. In the end, the book is a good diagnosis of the problem and a clarion call for change. CJ

Debunking the Cliché of N.C. Desertions During the Civil War

When the historical narrative is cliché, it is time to re-examine the past.

I have always heard and read that Unionism abounded in North Carolina and that Tar Heels deserted at a higher rate than did their compatriots from other states. Unionism existed, most notably, in the mountains and in several Piedmont counties. Tar Heels did leave their posts.

But the extent of each phenomenon has been exaggerated. Recently, I started questioning the prevalence of Unionism in Civil War-era North Carolina and the desertion rate among Tar Heel troops.

In late 1860 and early 1861, North Carolinians were divided over the practicality and necessity of secession, and most wanted to stay in the Union. North Carolina seceded, only after President Abe Lincoln called for troops April 15, 1861, to crush what he

considered a Southern rebellion. Tar Heel leaders considered Lincoln's call as unconstitutional. Gov. John Ellis replied, "You can get no troops from North Carolina!" On May 20, 1861, the 86th anniversary of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, secession convention delegates voted to join the Confederacy.

Western North Carolina, in particular, has been considered to be a bastion of Unionism. Terrell T. Green in *Mountain Myth: Unionism in North Carolina* (2006) refutes that.

After learning that no historian had counted the number of Confederate and Union soldiers from western North Carolina, Green chose to undertake the tedious task. During his five-year research, he counted 27,282 Confederate soldiers — more than a third of the mountain population — and 1,836 Union soldiers. In Henderson County alone, more men, 273, died fighting for the Confederacy than the number, 130, who joined the Union ranks.

Overall, North Carolina provided more troops for the Confederacy than any other state.

Soldiers and the public lose the will to fight, however. Editors and

generals criticized what was considered a high desertion rate among North Carolinians. One critic was Robert E. Lee: "The desertion of North Carolinians," he wrote, "... has grown to be a very serious matter." Scholars have believed that 428 officers and 23,964 enlisted men deserted.

Historian Richard Reid, however, finds a much lower number (see Richard Reid, "A Test Case of the 'Crying Evil': Desertion among North Carolina Troops during the Civil War," *North Carolina Historical Review* (July 1981). Surveying 2,732 officers, Reid finds that only 42, or 1.5 percent, deserted, and of them, six returned and 14 left after December 1864. Out of 4,395 enlisted soldiers (randomly selected — every seventh soldier on the roster), Reid found that the number of deserters has been overestimated: 10.9 percent for artillerymen, 11.8 percent for cavalrymen, and 12.3 percent for infantrymen. One-fifth of the desertions occurred from January to March 1865. Reid estimated the number of total deserters to be about 100 officers and 14,000 soldiers. Many of them returned to action.

When studying the desertion rate, one must differentiate deserting

and being AWOL. The latter does not indicate a lack of will to fight. Many soldiers left for a while yet returned to fight.

When soldiers were AWOL, the dates reveal that the absences were highest among those companies whose home counties were under or threatened by Union occupation or where civil control had collapsed. In his 1866 memoirs, Gen. Jubal Early sympathized with such men: "Some palliation was to be found for the conduct of many of those who did desert, in the fact that they did so to go to the aid of their families, who they knew were suffering for the necessities of life."

For decades the prevailing question has been "Why did the Confederacy lose?" The better question is "Why did the Confederacy last for so long?" Ask that question and historical facts are seen in a different way and new information is uncovered. Don't let history become cliché. CJ

Troy Kickler is director of the North Carolina History Project (www.northcarolinahistory.org)



Dr. Troy Kickler

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Short Takes on Culture

Nature Documentary Delivers

• "Planet Earth"
BBC Warner
Narrated by David Attenborough

When you hear that a nature documentary cost \$25 million to produce, you might wonder where the money went. Not so with this BBC series—every dollar is on the screen. In fact, this is the most visually stunning account of life on our little blue orb ever produced.

Conceived with HDTV in mind, the resulting four-disc Blue-ray presentation (HD DVD is also available) is jaw-dropping, especially the slow motion and superwide-angle shots of animals in motion.

Equally vital is the terse but gentle narration supplied by naturalist David Attenborough. He comes across as informative, but not preachy—always a risk in these sorts of things.

Earth's various habitats are presented in unique and memorable ways. For example, the 50-minute episode on the grasslands manages not to be just another look at the African savana. Attenborough starts us off with the importance of grass—the little, miraculous life-giving plant itself—and works all the way up to the top of the food chain.

Here is where parents have a tough call. The conflict between predators like lions and fearsome prey like elephants is not Disney-fied. The series might not be rated, but it is likely too intense in spots for preschoolers. Everyone else, however, will be greatly entertained.

—JEFF TAYLOR

• *Eat, Pray, Love*
By Elizabeth Gilbert
Viking, 2006

Elizabeth Gilbert's *Eat, Pray, Love* is the self-proclaimed story of an unconventional woman who develops an early midlife crisis. At the age of 31, Elizabeth realizes she has what every American woman should want—a husband, a successful writing career, and suburb house. But she simply finds that these things do not make her happy.

After a messy divorce, a devastating depression, and another failed relationship, Elizabeth packs her bags and begins a yearlong journey around the world. First she travels to Italy for four months where she practices the art of pleasure by eating authentic Italian pasta and learning the beautiful Italian language. Next she travels

to an Ashram in India to study the art of devotion and prayer. For four months, she embarks on a spiritual journey with the teachings of a native guru and the help of a man named Richard from Texas. During the last four months of her journey, Elizabeth travels to the Indonesian Island of Bali, where she practices the balance of pleasure and devotion and unexpectedly meets her match.

Perhaps my love of foreign travel, authentic foods, and the belief that spirituality is a lifelong journey makes me biased when I recommend this book. However, the sincere honesty of Elizabeth's feelings and experiences abroad is an intensely touching memoir of self-discovery not worth missing.

—JANA DUNKLEY

• "Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed"
Premise Media Corporation
Produced by Nathan Frankowski

With the surplus of liberal documentaries out there, it's nice to see one from the other side of the philosophical divide. "Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed" is a fascinating journey into the world of academia, science, and history. Starring actor and conservative activist Ben Stein of game-show fame, the film also has its share of humor.

The documentary is more a defense of academic freedom than an in-depth discussion of Intelligent Design Theory, which posits that certain life forms are better explained as the result of an intelligent cause rather than random chance. That hasn't stopped neo-Darwinists from flaming anyone associated with the production. Coincidentally, the irate response to the film tends to prove Stein's main point—the academic establishment is bent on hate bombing any scientist who concludes there is a first cause for life on Earth.

The question of how something came from nothing is Stein's most frequent inquiry throughout the documentary, with lackluster answers from atheists like Richard Dawkins and Michael Ruse. Sorry, but the theory that aliens seeded life on Earth, or life simply self-created on the backs of crystals, takes far more faith than concluding we are the product of a higher power.

See the documentary if you value academic freedom and the right to ask questions, especially questions that challenge the norm.

—DAVID BASS CJ

Book review

Authors Skewer Politicians' 'Bull'

• Thomas Cathcart & Daniel Klein:
Aristotle and an Aardvark Go To Washington: Understanding Political Doublespeak Through Philosophy and Jokes; Abrams Image; 191 pp; \$18.95

By MELISSA D. MITCHELL
Contributing Editor

RALEIGH

Are you weary of the presidential political season, or does the entire process fascinate you? Either way, *Aristotle and an Aardvark Go To Washington: Understanding Political Doublespeak Through Philosophy and Jokes* is a book that might appeal to you.

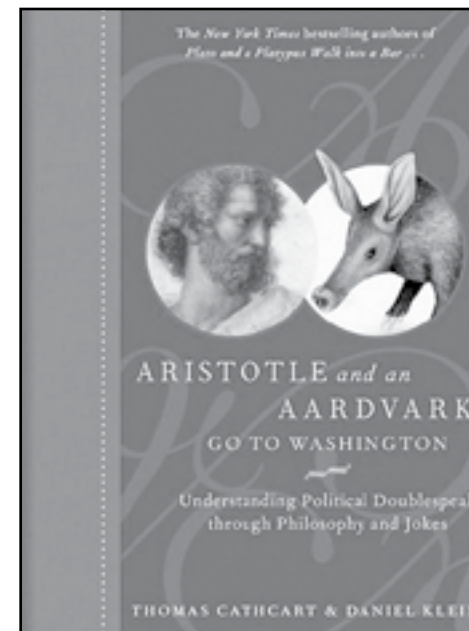
Dedicated to the memory of Will Rogers, who said, "There's no trick to being a humorist when you have the whole government working for you," authors Thomas Cathcart and Daniel Klein use the serious and difficult subject of Greek philosophy, slapstick jokes, and political cartoons to analyze what politicians and others who are involved in the process are saying.

Cathcart and Klein have been friends since their days as philosophy majors at Harvard, but they took different career paths. Cathcart worked with street gangs in Chicago and dropped in and out of various divinity schools, while Klein wrote jokes for comedians and designed stunts for "Candid Camera." Finally, they joined forces to write books based on the "Philogag School of Philosophy," which maintains that all philosophical concepts worth knowing are actually pretty funny.

Rather than chapters, the book is divided into six parts, each having unique main and subtitles that capture the authors' sense of humor. For example, part one is "The Tricky Talk Strategy: Misleading with Double Talk." They then add humorous section titles such as "Artful Equivocation," which is not precisely lying, but equivocating. They cite former President Bill Clinton as a master of equivocation ("It depends on what the meaning of the word 'is' is.") And there is my favorite in this section, "Weasel Words," named after the animal known for its ability to suck the contents out of an egg without breaking the shell. The authors point out that both Republicans and Democrats love weaseling, using terms such as "electronic intercepts" for wiretapping, "opportunity scholarships" for vouchers, and "freedom judges" rather than judicial activists.

Throughout the book the authors throw in Latin terms. The logical flimflam described by Aristotle as "with this, therefore because of this," is given as *Cum Hoc Ergo Propter Hoc*, simply, because Latin sounds better than Greek or English. Just when the reader is bogged down in the Latin language and Greek logic, the authors add a joke or political cartoon to lighten the moment, illustrate the point, or show the absurdity of what was said.

Although the writers say they



counted 72,383 political whoppers within the last 10 years, the majority of the whoppers cited are by President Bush, members of the Bush administration, conservative leaders, and conservative pundits. Certainly, the authors have cited some liberals and Democrats, but it is difficult to believe that conservatives and Republicans have uttered the majority of the 72,000-plus whoppers. There is a thread of political correctness throughout the book as evidenced by the swipe the authors take at Thomas Jefferson, asking how the wealthy, probably happy, TJ could understand the "pursuit of happiness." Also, calling him a slave owner, adulterer, and referring to him as a "Foundling Father."

But what does the book offer to those who are weary of the political process or who love the political process? What about the conservative? Although there appears to be a left-leaning bias, all of the aforementioned individuals will love being able to sit back and identify the types of doublespeak the authors identify. For the weary, they will be able to say that is the tricky double talk that I hate, or that politico or pundit just said absolutely nothing. For those who are fascinated by the process, they will love identifying the authors' concepts. They will sit back and enjoy every weasel word and equivocation from their favorite candidate or pundit, while disparaging those they dislike, and enjoy identifying the doublespeak type listed in the book.

The conservative will point out what a liberal just said was doublespeak. The author's jokes and political cartoons will delight all readers and will provide the weary with an added dose of humor. The book is a quick and easy read, even with all of the philosophical Greek logic. However, there is a word of warning concerning the book. Unfortunately, the authors sometimes use the term "bulls_ _" instead of "doublespeak," and a few of the jokes are a little off-color, but they are not in the realm of the dirty joke.

CJ

'Leatherheads' Offers Nostalgic Glimpse of Sports Past

• "Leatherheads"
Casey Silver Productions; 2008; starring George Clooney, Rene Zellweger, John Krasinski, and Stephen Root; directed by George Clooney

By **SAM A. HIEB**
Contributing Editor

REMEMBER the fanfare when George Clooney was in the Triad last year filming his movie "Leatherheads." I'm not a big Clooney fan, considering his liberal politics. I'm no prude, but I found his dig at lobbyist Jack Abramoff at the 2006 Golden Globe awards ("Who would name a kid 'Jack' with 'off' at the end? No wonder the guy's screwed up) distasteful and inappropriate. Clooney's constant mugging and sarcastic jokes during interviews also indicate an exaggerated sense of self-importance.

But when I learned Clooney and his crew were at nearby War Memorial Stadium in Greensboro for a shoot, curiosity got the best of me, so I drove to see what a location set was like. It was blocked off, but I was able to stand across the street and watch cast, crew, and extras mill about, giving me an idea of the painstaking process involved in setting up a shot. Finally, I caught a glimpse of Clooney, looking very Cary-Grant-like in a 1920s-style dark suit.

Clooney has established himself as a serious actor and director, and I respect him for traveling to North Carolina to make "Leatherheads" in an effort to hold down expenses and run a tight shooting schedule. Economic incentives offered up by both North Carolina and South Carolina didn't hurt, either. Much was made in the media about the fact that North Carolina was not thanked in the film's closing credits — the state's film incentives law doesn't require

it — although the Charlotte Regional Film Commission and the Triad Regional Film Commission were noted.

Based on a screenplay by Rick Reilly and Duncan Brantley that made the rounds in Hollywood for years, "Leatherheads" is part screwball comedy and part history lesson on the early days of professional football. The film opens with a contrast of the pro game with the college game, circa 1925. Stadiums are packed to watch a college star named Carter "The Bullet" Rutherford (John Krasinski) make long touchdown runs, while the pros, constantly short on cash and equipment, block and tackle in pastures with cud-chewing cows as spectators.

Eventually the money runs out for the handful of professional teams scattered throughout the Midwest, including the Duluth Bulldogs, whose star player is a grizzled veteran named Dodge Connelly (Clooney). After falling on hard times, Dodge gets wind of the crowds Bullet is packing in and persuades his old business associate C.C. Frazier (Jonathan Pryce) to guarantee Bullet \$5,000 per game to play for the Bulldogs. The plan works, and soon the Bulldogs are packing stadiums. The rest of the team shares the wealth, sporting



smart Prohibition-style wardrobes only weeks after toiling in the mines, fields, and factories.

But soon there's trouble, and it's wearing a red dress. Sports writer Lexie Littleton (Rene Zellweger) is digging into Bullet's status as a Great War hero for single-handedly capturing a whole platoon of "Jerrys." In order to get to the bottom of the story, she has to get closer to Bullet, so she (believability

be damned) establishes herself as the Bulldogs' beat writer next to good old Suds (Stephen Root), who pounds out cheerleading stories fueled by his ever-present flask of "laughing juice."

Dodge hears Lexie telling her editor that Bullet will eventually "cook his own goose" and senses something is up, forcing him to keep a close eye on Lexie, not a bad job considering the fact that he likes what he sees inside the red dress. He ends up sharing a rail car berth with Lexie, a scene that (as many other reviewers have picked up on) is reminiscent of the Clark Gable — Claudette Colbert classic "It Happened One Night." Clooney and Zellweger engage in much snappy, sexually tense, though clean, dialogue throughout the movie. Despite their initial dislike for each other, you just have the feeling they'll end

up riding off into the sunset together. Another screwball comedy tribute involves a chase where Dodge and Lexie don police uniforms to outwit a group of Keystone cops, also though the gag's punch line falls a bit flat.

Things get even more complicated when Lexie exposes the real story behind Bullet's heroism just as he jumps from the Bulldogs to Chicago's pro team. But C.C. pays Lexie's source to denounce the story, prompting Dodge to vindicate her before the climactic game on a rain-soaked field, which serves as the perfect stage for one final trick play before Dodge calls it a career.

Part of the fun for Triad residents watching "Leatherheads" is trying to pick out local landmarks. War Memorial Stadium served as the façade for "Chicago Field" (in a shot that lasted about 10 seconds), while game scenes were shot inside Charlotte's American Legion Memorial Stadium. Other identifiable landmarks include Winston-Salem's City Hall and Millennium Center (Clooney is clearly riding his vintage motorcycle on the streets of Winston-Salem in one scene), Statesville's Vance Hotel and the N.C. Transportation Museum's classic train depot.

"Leatherheads" is lighthearted fare, definitely not heavy or depressing. Clooney spares us much of the mugging in his other comedy roles, yet his sincere comedic effort doesn't inspire that many belly laughs. The football scenes weren't particularly action-packed or bone-jarring for a time when rules were practically nonexistent.

Nostalgia is the film's greatest asset, transporting viewers back to a different time when professional teams traveled by train, the football was the size of a watermelon, and the players wore, well, leather on their heads. *CJ*

BOOKS AUTHORED BY JLF STAFFERS



By John Hood
President of the
John Locke Foundation

Selling the Dream Why Advertising is Good Business

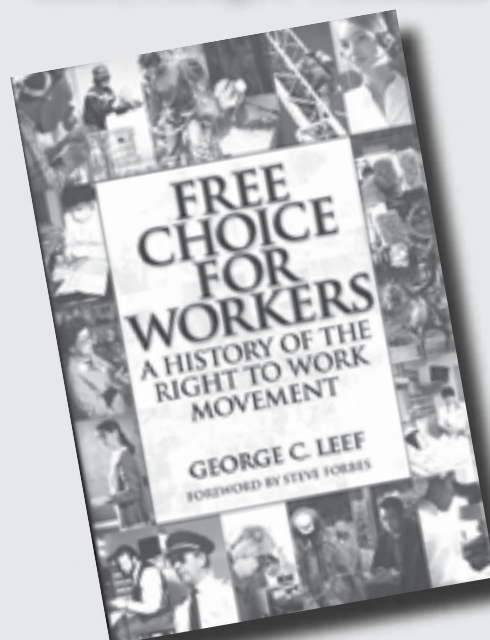


"[Selling the Dream] provides a fascinating look into the world of advertising and beyond ... Highly recommended."

Choice
April 2006

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Commentary

The Remarkable Potato

Some readers may have skipped the story about the International Year of the Potato published in the March 1 issue of *The Economist*, seeing it as fodder for a good chuckle, but not a food with worldwide impact, like corn has today.

I was engrossed in every word. When I was a kid, almost every day, my family ate potatoes smothered in homemade gravy. They were filling and easy to fix. And they were cheap, key to my working-class family's budget. We ate so many that we bought in bulk. I was a teen-ager before I realized not every family had a 50-pound bag of spuds in the garage.

I'll forever associate potatoes with childhood, but it was *The Economist* that taught this free-marketer to appreciate their worldwide economic importance. Turns out the staple that played a vital role in my family's diet and economic security has a history of providing stability and opportunity to millions.

So critical is the world's fourth-largest food crop that, in 2005, the United Nations passed a declaration "affirming the need to focus world attention on the role that the potato can play in providing food security and eradicating poverty in support of achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals." The International Year of the Potato is the result.

Because they're packed with nutrients, it's possible to subsist entirely on potatoes. My mom jokes that she knows this firsthand. So did millions of Irish in the mid-1800s. The History Place Web site notes that an acre's harvest in Ireland could feed a large family for a year. When the crop began to fail in 1845, catastrophe ensued. A million or more died from starvation and disease over several years.

Today, the potato is vital to the developing world. The IYP Web site assesses its impact on global food security and health this way: "Nutrient-rich potato (and sweet potato) can contribute to improved

diets thus reducing mortality rates caused by malnutrition. As well as improving food security, such action will inevitably improve the health of target populations, especially women and children."

When it comes to economic development and opportunity, potatoes are hard to beat. They're relatively easy and fast to produce — typically 90 to 120 days. Historically, the ease of production has given farmers the ability to pursue additional work and raise their standard of living. *The Economist* reports that citizens of England were able in the 19th century both to produce potato crops and to work in factories, helping propel that country's industrial revolution.

The United Nations believes the potato can also aid this century's impoverished farmers. Reports the IYP Web site: "In sub-Saharan

Africa and many parts of Asia, farms are still shrinking and may continue to do so for the next several generations. As farm size shrinks, many farm families are switching from

grains and legumes to root and tuber crops to meet subsistence and income goals." The site adds: "IYP can focus global attention on the need to alleviate poverty by increasing incomes and linking farmers to markets."

Today, more than 100 countries capitalize on the potato's nutritional, economic, and production attributes. China is the No. 1 producer, with 72 million tons in 2007, followed by the Russian Federation, India, and Ukraine. The United States, producing nearly 18 million tons, took fifth place.

In North Carolina, potatoes are grown in the coastal plain, and this month Elizabeth City will host the North Carolina Potato Festival. The May 17 event includes a potato-peeling contest, the Little Miss Tater Tot contest, and an intriguing anything-but-fries cook-off.

Too bad my mom isn't here to compete. CJ

Donna Martinez is an associate editor of Carolina Journal.



Donna
Martinez

Because they're packed with nutrients, it's possible to subsist entirely on potatoes. My mom jokes that she knows this firsthand.



Editorial

Easley Thwarts Public Access

We've heard a lot this primary season from politicians who want to serve the people.

Give them your vote, they say, and they'll help you. They're looking out for your interests. A vote for them gives a voice to the people.

What would you say if you cast a vote for one of those politicians, then watched as he took "systematic" steps to block you from learning what he's doing for you?

That's the situation all North Carolinians face today. Gov. Mike Easley and his staff have gone out of their way to block public access to records of state government business.

Access to public records is more than just a key element of good, open government. State law mandates access. Legislators who approved the N.C. Public Records Act knew that citizens outside government need to see how state government works.

Voters need the means to analyze the way government does business. Taxpayers need more than just campaign speeches and press releases.

E-mail messages to and from the people who write government press releases offer valuable insight about the way government responds to controversies. Easley's staff doesn't agree. "Members of his staff regularly discouraged the persons responsible for communicating with the Governor's Office from sending e-mail messages to the office in order to avoid creating records that would be subject to disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Law, particularly if the subject matter of the communication was controversial," according to a civil lawsuit filed in April against Easley.

Public records violations didn't end there. "Members of the defendant's staff also instructed cabinet agency employees that if they did send e-mail messages to the Governor's Office such

messages were to be deleted from their computers' 'Sent Mail' boxes immediately after they were sent, and that they should then go to their files for 'Trash' or 'Deleted Messages' and delete them again," according to the lawsuit.

Why was this procedure necessary?

The governor's press office wanted to ensure no pesky public record could crop up on computers of state workers doing the people's business.

Perhaps the governor could blame these mistakes on underlings. He could say, "I wanted to share these public records. My staff made mistakes."

That's fair enough, but it wouldn't explain an alleged public records violation involving the governor's own action.

Easley admitted to reporters this year that he had "chunked" a letter from former N.C. Health and Human Services Secretary Carmen Hooker Odom. This was no party invitation or personal note. Easley contends the letter included Hooker Odom's endorsement of Easley's statements about state mental health reform efforts.

Because Hooker Odom wrote about public business, the lawsuit contends the letter was a public record. "On the basis of public statements by the defendant, plaintiffs are further informed and believe that he very likely has personally discarded or destroyed other public records in violation of the Public Records Law."

The governor has responded to criticism of his e-mail policies by doing what most politicians do when faced with a problem they can't avoid: He set up a committee.

Such committees rarely produce much change in state government operations. Perhaps a judge considering the recent lawsuit will serve as the true voice of the people. CJ

Liberals and Tax Referenda

Will tax-fairness advocates work against coming local tax hikes?

Those who profess to care about fairness in taxation should take note of the leadership shown by two liberal Democrats who represent Durham in the North Carolina House: Larry Hall and Paul Luebke.

Local officials in Durham, one of North Carolina's most heavily taxed communities already, have long sought the authority to impose a new 1 percent prepared-foods tax to fund tourism-related construction projects such as a new museum and civic-center improvements. Hall and Luebke are against the idea on the grounds of fairness and sound budgeting.

Bouquets for Reps. Hall and Luebke. And brickbats for Durham County Commissioner Becky Heron, who whined that "we've got to find some big bucks somewhere if we're going to do what we'd like to do" and sniffed that "we're either going to be a viable community or we're going to be a little country hick town."

Given that one of the projects the tax would fund is a Minor League Baseball "fan experience" museum, Heron's choice of terms qualifies as an unforced error. More importantly, it illustrates a common theme in the rhetoric of politi-

cians who say they are for the little guy until a decision must be made, at which point they side with the rich and powerful who like to entertain themselves at someone else's expense.

Many self-described liberals and progressives talk a great game about how North Carolina's tax code is regressive and backward. But when it comes down to particular proposals to raise regressive taxes to fund new government spending, they grow noticeably silent or even endorse the taxes, anyway. Such behavior is commonplace in the General Assembly, where members proclaim their support for tax fairness one minute and then the next minute vote for tax hikes on cigarettes, alcohol, retail sales, hotel rooms, car rentals, telephone service, and other goods and services.

These are all regressive levies, to varying degrees, defined the way liberals usually define regressive: that the tax takes a smaller income share from the wealthy than it does from middle- or lower-income taxpayers.

The next round of local tax referenda in May mostly involve sales-tax hikes. Advocates of tax fairness and reform should be against all of those. Check and see if they are. CJ

Rational Energy Decisions

Huber, Mills advocate 'seven heresies' of energy thinking

If you want to understand some of the most challenging issues in debates about energy policy, read *The Bottomless Well* by Peter Huber and Mark Mills.

Much the book by Huber, a regulatory analyst, and Mills, a physicist, is devoted to articulating and advocating their "seven heresies":

1. The cost of energy as we use it has less and less to do with the cost of fuel. The equipment and techniques used to refine, process, and employ the fuel in performing work are now far more important than the cost of harvesting and shipping the fuel.

2. "Waste" is virtuous — by which they mean not that technology fails to improve over time, but instead that dumping waste energy is necessary to produce the highly ordered power we truly want.

3. The more efficient our technology, the more energy we consume. This is one of the key insights of energy economics — if governments mandate efficiency gains, the primary result won't be to conserve energy supplies but instead to heighten customer demand for power to consume.

4. The competitive advantage in manufacturing is now swinging decisively back toward the United States.

5. Human demand for energy is

insatiable. Lurking underneath many green policy recommendations is a desire for human deprivation — to travel less, consume less, strive less, settle for less.

6. The raw fuels are not running out. In the real world, companies that drill and sell oil have a huge incentive to pay attention to available reserves. As supplies get tight, consumers bid up the price and increase the incentive to explore new sources and produce more from existing sources.

7. America's relentless pursuit of high-grade energy does not add chaos to the global environment. It restores order.

Huber and Mills are hardly wedded to the status quo. They talk enthusiastically about a variety of emerging technologies to move automobiles with the electrical grid, generate power from nuclear fusion, install high-end solar cells on roofs and buildings, and convert emissions from coal-fired power plants into calcium bicarbonate.

But neither are they alarmists or charitable to those whose energy policies are little more than exhortations for Americans to shiver in the dark. That's not where we're headed, as long as Washington and the states make rational choices and disregard special-interest pleading. CJ

Commentary

Be Wary of Health-Care Myths

I'm warning you right off the bat: the following is a trick question.

If I gave you a list of 12 major industrialized countries and asked you where the highest share of medical bills was paid directly by patients rather than by third parties, would you say the United States? Or at least put the U.S. in the top tier?

Most people who consider themselves well-informed about health policy would pick America as a system with relatively high out-of-pocket spending. And they'd be wrong. According to a 2007 study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the U.S. ranks 9th out of 12 industrial countries in the share of total health spending financed out of pocket, at about 13 percent. That's slightly lower than in Canada, a dreamland for many government-monopoly advocates, where patients directly pay for nearly 15 percent of medical services. The share exceeds 20 percent in Italy, Portugal, and Spain, and reaches about one-third in Switzerland. Greece tops the list at 43 percent.

As North Carolina and the rest of the nation move into the thick of the 2008 political season, health care promises to be a popular topic. Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton are already debating which of their plans is the best pathway to universal coverage. In our state, gubernatorial candidates such as Beverly Perdue, Richard Moore, Fred Smith, and Pat McCrory have talked a lot about comprehensive reform and how to serve the uninsured population through policies ranging from expanding government health programs to reforming the tax code to promote personally owned health plans.

One good rule of thumb is to doubt those who proclaim that health-care issues have simple solutions or that there is some way for reformers to score a free lunch by spending a lot less, getting a lot more, and hurting no one in the process. Careful analysis and valid international assessments of national health systems confirm that tradeoffs are no less inevitable in health care than in other economic sectors. Governments that use taxes, regulations, and monopolies to restrain health spending end up limiting patient access to care and reducing

the real incomes of medical providers — the average French physician earns the equivalent of \$55,000 a year, for example, compared to \$146,000 for the average U.S. general practitioner and \$271,000 for the average U.S. specialist. If the goal is to slash doctors' incomes, at least be honest about it.

To start with, it's important to shed any preconceived notions about the American health-care system as a free market and European or Japanese health care as a government monopoly. The story is far more complicated — and interesting — than that. Obviously, given that the U.S. does not have government-run health

insurance for the able-bodied, non-poor adult population, the share of health care spending that flows through government in the U.S. is lower than in Britain, which has a system verging on true socialized medicine. But the U.S. proportion isn't zero. Nearly half of all American health spending is by governments — Medicare, Medicaid, and other programs. Canada's share is 70 percent. Most big European nations have shares between 70 percent and 80 percent.

Taking the share of government health care in the U.S. up by 20 points, to Canada's level, would be a big (and in my view unwelcome) change. But it wouldn't be quite as radical a change as some liberals and conservatives seem to think.

On the other side of the ledger, be wary of those who equate "universal coverage" with "universal care." Plenty of people residing in European countries where they are guaranteed, by law, to have "free" health care are less able to secure a doctor's appointment or receive a medical procedure than the average American is.

Before North Carolina or national politicians go plunging into a new round of "reform," they should study more carefully what other countries actually do, how their policies affect the quality and availability of medical services, and whether Americans would ever accept the constraints on liberty that European-style health insurance would necessarily bring. CJ

John Hood is president of the John Locke Foundation and publisher of *CarolinaJournal.com*.



John Hood

Editorial Briefs

Red tape rising

To hear Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama tell it, the Bush administration is in the pocket of corporate interests. However, a look at the recent Bush regulatory record makes one wonder why the party's candidates aren't holding it up as a model of Democratic governance, *The Wall Street Journal* says.

Last year Bush rule-making agencies imposed \$11 billion of net new economywide regulatory costs, mostly in the environmental area. The cost of new regulations has increased every year on Bush's watch, but last year was by far the highest.

The Small Business Administration calculates that the total cost in 2005 of complying with 145,000 pages of federal rules and procedures was \$1.1 trillion. This is the rough economic equivalent of imposing a second federal income tax on the economy.

George Mason University's Mercatus Center shows in a study, which will be released soon, that every measure of regulatory activity is up in recent years — agency staffing, budgets, pages of rule-making, and compliance costs. Those numbers contradict the stream of attacks against the administration for "weakening" federal consumer and environmental protections.

Excluding homeland security regulations, the budgets of Uncle Sam's 50 largest agencies, such as the Federal Communications Commission and the Consumer Product Safety Commission, are up almost one-third since 2001. There are about 200,000 full-time government employees writing and enforcing federal commandments.

Specialty hospitals improve care

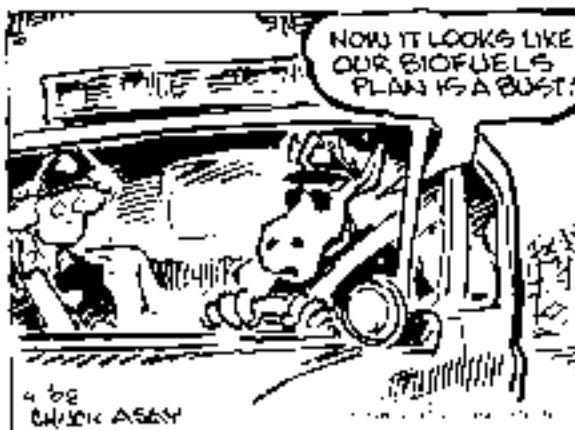
Hospitals are still the heart of the health-care industry, consuming a third of the \$2 trillion U.S. health-care bill. Some are very good. But many are not, brimming with infectious bacteria and viruses, systemic error, and negative hospitality. Because the hospital industry does all it can to thwart competition, many communities are stuck with the hospitals they have, *Forbes* magazine says.

The presidential candidates are grappling over the plight of the uninsured, yet you're five times more likely to die from visiting a hospital than from not having health insurance, according to the not-for-profit Committee to Reduce Infection Deaths.

One in 200 patients who spends a night or more in a hospital will die from medical error. One in 16 will contract an infection. Deaths from preventable hospital infections each year exceed 100,000, more than those from AIDS, breast cancer, and auto accidents combined.

Patients have a choice, but it's not widespread yet. It's called the specialty hospital, a center that focuses on the care of a particular body part such as the heart, spine, or joints, or on a specific disease such as cancer. There are 200 specialty hospitals in the United States (out of 6,000 hospitals overall), and they often deliver services better, more safely, and at lower cost.

A recent University of Iowa study of tens of thousands of Medicare patients found that complication rates (bleeding, infections, or death) are 40 percent lower for hip and knee surgeries at specialty hospitals than at big community hospitals. CJ



Is It Easy to Measure Economic Progress?

With talk of recession in the air, we're seeing more stories about whether households have really gotten ahead, economically speaking, in recent years. Some analysis shows the average household's wages and income have actually retreated this decade. Some say this has been the situation for longer than three decades.

Yet other readers of the economic data come to the exact opposite conclusion. After sifting and sorting the numbers, they argue the average household has never had it so good in terms of what they can earn and buy.

How can smart people come to such different conclusions? You would think it would be fairly easy to determine whether people have made economic progress. However, by the time you finish this article, you may decide it's not.

There's actually a simple answer to this puzzle. Households and families have been getting smaller over time. Couples are having fewer children, and more households are now composed of single adults or childless couples.

This means average incomes today have fewer people to cover in each household and in each family compared to in the past. So, income trends look much better when they are examined for households or families of the same size, or when income changes are expressed on a per-person basis.

Another issue is the measurement of income. Again, while this might be expected to be easy, it's not. The problem is there are many potential measures of income: income earned per hour (the wage rate), total income earned by hourly workers (wages), total income earned by non-hourly workers (salaries), and income earned plus the value of benefits (compensation).

Each one of these can have, and has had, different trends. In general, wage rates have had the slowest increases, while compensation has had the best increases. One reason is that benefits (especially health benefits) have been rising faster than have wages and salaries. So, when benefits are included, the income picture of households looks much better. Then there's the issue that challenges any

income comparison over time: how to adjust for changes in the purchasing power of the dollar, how to adjust for inflation. Since prices typically rise over time, we certainly don't want to compare dollar values in the past directly to dollar values today. Some conversion must be made to account for the fact that today's dollars buy less than yesterday's dollars.

That's not the problem. Economists know how to make these adjustments. The problem is that there are many, many measures of inflation, and different measures can give different answers as to whether households are getting ahead. Measures based on a "fixed market basket" of goods and services, meaning it is assumed people buy the same things this year as they did last year, tend to show the highest inflation rates and thus the poorest economic advancement for households.

In contrast, inflation measures that try to account for changes in what people buy show the lowest rates of inflation and better gains in "inflation-adjusted" incomes.

Finally, some economists think the focus on income changes is misdirected, that what matters most is what people can buy. Here the evidence shows the quantity of purchases made by households has been increasing, and the gains have actually been similar for households of different income levels.

So assessing the economic gains of households is easier said than done. At a minimum, you have to answer who is being measured, what kind of income is being measured, and what kind of inflation adjustment has been made. Also, you have to ask whether income is more important than spending, or is it the reverse. And if things aren't complicated enough, what about the intangibles that money can't measure? CJ

Michael
Walden

Dr. Michael L. Walden is a William Neal Reynolds distinguished professor at North Carolina State University.

Leadership Tips From Morris Emerging Leaders Program

All information is good information. Particularly if it's clear, and communication is a two-way street.

If there is a troll hiding under the bridge, I want to know about it before I attempt to cross; if there is a leprechaun, I likewise want to know. I'm abstracting from the view that I might deliberately put on blinders. So "good" is good in the sense of useful, not necessarily "welcome." All information is good information.

In the course of acting as the Director of Educational and Academic Programs at the John Locke Foundation, I have had the pleasure to direct our E.A. Morris Fellowship for Emerging Leaders program.

In this column, I'd like to share what I think are the most insightful points we have gleaned from just a few of our opening leadership discussions.

I'll also have some comments on why I think these are significant, especially from an information, or more precisely a clarity, perspective.

Exposition

By no means exhaustive, here are my picks for the best points to come out of our Fellowship sessions so far:

1. Three guiding insights, what author and leadership coach Marcus Buckingham calls "controlling insights," are critical to excellence in leadership, in management, and in sustained individual success. They identify the difference in focus between managing and leading, and argue that different strengths apply to each. Each offers a perspective that is specific to its own category, but universally true within it.

Thus, great leaders all "discover what is universal, and capitalize on it," while great managers "discover what is unique about each person, and capitalize on it." For sustained individual success, it is necessary to "discover what you don't like doing, and stop doing it."

Communication processes are paramount. Leaders must above all be clear, not just informative. This means that the vision, the strategic storyline, the quest, the mission statement, the group's motto or slogan, the organization's hero, or what the Fellowship is about — some "same truth we all care about" — is articulated and understood by everyone in the group.



Karen Palasek

2. Six questions about the issues that are most strongly linked to productivity and excellence:

Do I know what is expected of me in my organization?

Do I have the materials and equipment that I need to do my work right?

Do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?

In the last seven days, have I received recognition or praise for good work?

Does my supervisor, or someone in my organization, seem to care about me as a person?

Is there someone in my organization who encourages my development?

I see the above questions as appropriate for supervisor/ managers in a regular manager-employee exchange.

I would argue strongly that this is neither a paper-and-pencil exercise, nor a group discussion. In keeping with a build-on-your-strengths approach, it seems very clear that management is a set of strengths, not a job slot.

3. How's the organization doing? Does it know who it serves? Does it understand its core strength? Does it have a core score? Are there (what are the) actions it can take today?

The leadership and management literature is vast, and the above is just one model out of many, many models available to measure, within the organization, what is targeted, what is required, what is accomplished, and what is being done to advance toward the group's goals. The importance of measurement, even when difficult, persists. And if happiness and job performance are linked, as analysts contend, productivity and performance can never be at their best — moving effectively toward a better future.

4. The individual strengths assessment. There are lots of personal and professional assessment tools out there. The Clifton StrengthsFinder is just one, but if strengths are hard-wired and stable over time, it makes sense to discover that information and use it in the pursuit of excellence.

5. Culture is ultra-important. Here is how one blogger expressed it:

"...Edgar Schein noted a decade ago: cultures are largely created and modified by the actions of the organization's leaders.

And here we view leadership in its broadest sense as someone who people take notice of and follow their lead.

There are a relatively small set of things leaders do that affect culture:

- What leaders pay attention to, measure, and

control on a regular basis,

- How leaders react to critical incidents and organisational crises,

- How leaders allocate resources,
- Deliberate role modelling, teaching, and coaching,

- How leaders allocate rewards and status,
- How leaders recruit, select, promote, and excommunicate."

In any organization, everyone knows what the culture is.

Thematic dissonance

Here are some last thoughts about the issues mentioned above, and glitches that make the train run poorly.

If good leadership demands clarity, then poor leadership, or failed leadership, obfuscates. Leaders not only need to articulate a vision, they need to transform people's anxiety about the uncertain future into confidence in a better future. To generate buy-in, it is widely recognized that the vision must be presented and communicated as clearly as possible.

That brings me to performance-inhibiting practices — especially being unclear, whether intentional or not. When different people perceive identical messages differently, information is misinterpreted. It's hard to compensate for that fact, and things get muddy.

Also problematic is unnecessarily vague, needlessly withheld, and arbitrarily distributed information. If there is no strategic or confidentiality requirement to limit information about the group to the group, why distribute it selectively? "Is this limitation useful or necessary?" is a question that could be asked more often.

Resolution and finale

Information fosters either greater clarity or appropriate questions seeking clarity — both are good things. If we are interested in good leadership and good performance from groups in which we collaborate, taking steps to sharpen the picture of that better future through better leadership should definitely make a difference.

Putting the pieces of that process to work is a topic worth discussion as well as action. CJ

Dr. Karen Palasek is Director of Educational and Academic Programs for the John Locke Foundation.

Readers Respond to Easley E-mails, Annexation, Murphey

To the editor,

How nice of Gov. Easley to allow calls from the *Carolina Journal* to be returned by his staff! (sarcasm)

Victoria Lucking
Raleigh, N.C.

To the editor,

I very much enjoyed reading your articles on the "Shadow Government" in North Carolina (April 2008) and think it is high time to identify its members and

dissolve it since it was not elected by voters and obviously does not have the voters' interests at heart.



subsequent imposition of taxes without the approval of the citizens that were annexed.

Enough of this forced annexation.

It should be declared unconstitutional and it is nothing short of illegal seizure of property and

Our forefathers would have already staged a second revolution.

Larry J. Bolick
Gibsonville, N.C.

To the editor,

I enjoyed reading Dr. Kickler's article in April 2008 on the subject of "Internal Improvements" since both Archibald DeBow Murphey and John Motley Morehead were posthumously inducted into the North Carolina Transportation Hall of Fame (in 2004 and 2005

respectively).

Your readers can learn more at www.ncthf.org. One minor and forgivable correction is that the Town of Murphy in Cherokee County was named after Senator Murphey — there is no Murphy County in North Carolina.

David Robinson, CEO
N.C. Transportation Hall of Fame

Send letters to letters@johnlocke.org, or by mail to Letters, *Carolina Journal*, 200 W. Morgan St., Suite 200, Raleigh, N.C. 27601.

Easley Wows Italians With N.C.-Products Gift Packs (a CJ parody)

By TOPO GIGIO
Travel Writer

ROME
Gov. Mike Easley and the delegation that recently visited Italy to promote North Carolina didn't bother with a complicated advance schedule or dozens of appointments. Instead, they relied on their North Carolina gift packs to open influential doors.

Carolina Journal was surprised to find that there was no itinerary for the North Carolina delegation's trip. "They went over there with an open mind and no specific plans," said Easley spokesman Seth Effron. "The governor felt that many doors would be open solely based on the quality of the gift packs they were handing out."

Taking advantage of Easley's recent declaration that his staff should no longer refuse information requests from *Carolina Journal* and the John Locke Foundation, *CJ* made a request for a list of the contents of the influential gift packs.

Included in the taxpayer-bought swag were:

- A small jar of Mount Olive pickles.
- A dozen assorted Krispy Kreme donuts.

- A six-pack of Cheerwine soda bottled in Salisbury.

- A bottle of 2007 limited-edition Randy Parton Wine from a city-owned warehouse in Roanoke Rapids.

- A copy of Parton's business plan autographed by Parton, Roanoke Rapids Mayor Drewery Beale, State Treasurer Richard Moore, and Commerce Secretary Jim Fain.

"The business plan was a special touch," said Effron. "We figured that even if it didn't work for Parton, an Italian entertainer might be able to make a successful go of it. The governor wanted to get the plan out to the international community, and he has promised state funds will be available for the next qualified entertainer who wants to run the Roanoke



Gov. Mike Easley talks up North Carolina at a press conference in Pisa, Italy, on his recent trip. (CJ concocted photo)

Rapids Theater, no matter his or her nationality."

The group met with Italian travel and tourism officials, and Easley said he told them that current exchange rates, combined with North Carolina's diverse vacation destinations, make this the best time for international travelers to vacation in North Carolina.

Easley said the look on their faces showed how impressed they were with his offer. But a translator later con-

fided that the Italian tourism officials told him: "Does he think we're crazy? Why would we urge tourists in our country to leave here and spend their money in North Carolina?"

In spite of that reaction, Easley said he will still pursue a special subsidy for Italians visiting North Carolina. Under Easley's proposal, the Commerce

Department's Travel and Tourism Division will issue airfare reimbursements for any visitors to North Carolina from Italy during 2008.

Some time ago his office had created a coupon book that included discounts for such things as Parton performances at his theater in Roanoke Rapids and for round trips on the Currituck Ferry, but those books had to be left behind since circumstances had made them obsolete.

Easley said he will ask the legislature to approve the travel reimbursement as well as special incentives to attract Italian-owned businesses. The program will be called IJDIG, for Italian Job Development Investment Grant. The centerpiece of the program is a \$50,000-per-job annual state grant for any new job created by any existing or new Italian firm during 2008.

"It's strictly business, as your people in our country like to say," Easley told Italian business leaders.

Later he said he expects many business inquiries from Italian firms. "You could tell by their reaction to my remark that they were rarin' go to. Their security folks had to literally hold them back to keep them from rushing up to thank me." *CJ*

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