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The Daily Tar Heel

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2011



university | page 7

FREEDOM WRITERS

Henry Jones and Tony Becerra, two of the students who inspired the 2007 film "Freedom Writers," shared their stories in the Sonja Haynes Stone Center Tuesday.



university | page 9

A CIVIL DISCUSSION

A three-part panel featuring UNC professors kicked off Tuesday. Panelists discussed the state of civil discourse, in which they said "yell television" is rampant.



multimedia | online

LAPTOP PROBLEMS?

Matt Howell, manager of walk-in services at ITS, explains in a video the best ways to deal with common problems that arise with ITS-issued laptops.

Happy birthday, Daily Tar Heel!

On this day in 1893, the Tar Heel was founded by the Athletic Association as a weekly four-page paper. Students paid a yearly fee of \$2.50. The newspaper would become daily in 1929.

this day in black history

FEB. 23, 1868 ...

Civil rights activist and pan-Africanist W. E. B. Du Bois is born in Massachusetts. He would help create the NAACP and fight for increased black political representation.

Today's weather



Safe to stare directly at the sun today
H 54, L 32

Thursday's weather



I don't know; just check weather.com
H 59, L 53

index

police log2
calendar2
nation and world5
crossword9
opinion10

Town fight in final stage



DTH/JAMIE EMMERMAN

Kerry Bigelow (left) and his ex-coworker Clyde Clark (right) attend a rally for workers rights after being fired last October.



DTH/MELISSA KEY

Chapel Hill Town Manager Roger Stancil is set to decide whether Kerry Bigelow will be able to return to work.

Looking from Kerry Bigelow and Clyde Clark's view

- ▶ Clyde Clark has worked for the town for more than 12 years.
- ▶ Kerry Bigelow began working for the town in 2007 with 18 years of experience as a solid waste worker in Burlington.
- ▶ Both Clark and Bigelow claim they were fired because of their involvement with the local chapter of the N.C. Public Service Workers Union, more commonly known as UE 150.
- ▶ Before being placed on paid administrative leave in September, Bigelow and Clark filed several grievances with the town regarding what they said were racially discriminatory actions.
- ▶ After they were originally denied unemployment benefits, Bigelow and Clark secured unemployment pay Feb. 7 after their attorney Al McSurely appealed the denial to the N.C. Employment Securities Commission.

BY SARAH GLEN
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

After almost four months of waiting, Kerry Bigelow could find out today if he can go back to work.

Bigelow and his ex-coworker Clyde Clark were fired from their positions in the Chapel Hill solid waste department at the end of October for what a town memorandum called insubordination, threatening or intimidating behavior and unsatisfactory job performance.

Believing they were fired as a retaliatory act for pushing for workers' rights, the two have enlisted the help of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the N.C. Public Service Workers Union to fight for their jobs.

Michelle Cotton Laws, president of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro branch of the NAACP, said she is pleased with the way the community has gotten involved with this kind of activism but always hopes others will participate.

"Our constitution requires that we fight for justice on every front," she said. "To us, this was simply what we were supposed to do. This is not a time for apathy."

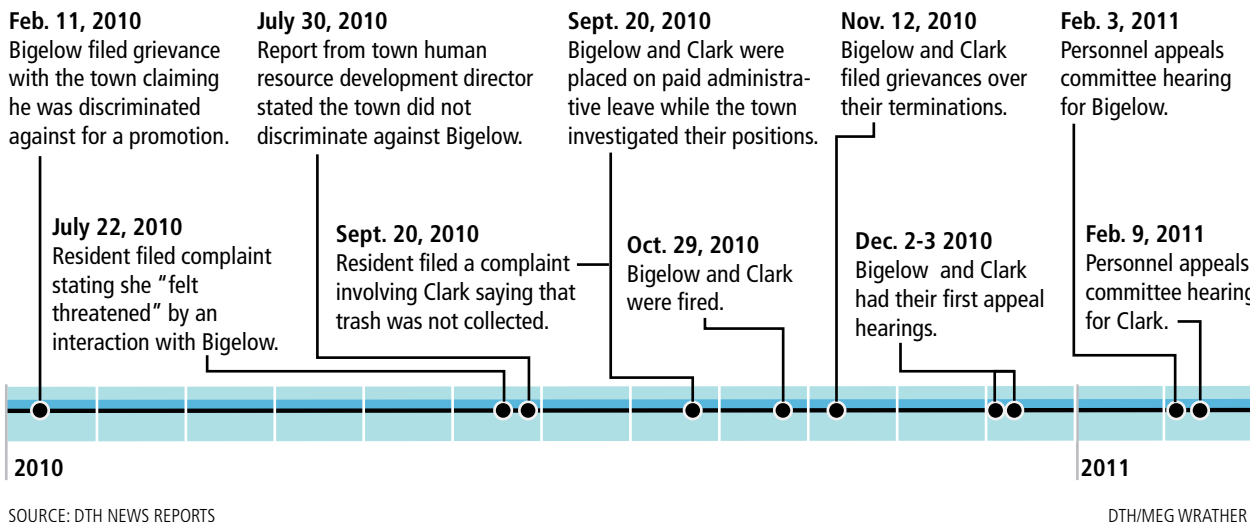
Clark said he is disappointed with the town he grew up in, which he feels has let

SEE BIGELOW, PAGE 4

Looking from Town Manager Roger Stancil's view

- ▶ After receiving a grievance from Bigelow Feb. 11, 2010, because he was passed over for a promotion because of his race, the town began investigating Bigelow's department.
- ▶ A July 30 position statement to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission from Chapel Hill Human Resource Development Director Valerie Meicher states that the town "categorically denies that it took any unlawful discriminatory action against (Bigelow) because of his race."
- ▶ Multiple residents have submitted complaints about interactions they have had with Bigelow and Clark while the men were working their collection routes.
- ▶ An investigation by Capital Associated Industries reported that Bigelow and Clark were "consistently insubordinate" and confrontational with residents.

Timeline of Bigelow and Clark's fight for reinstatement



Book offers food for thought

UNC, Duke select book on vegetarianism

BY KARI JOHNSON
STAFF WRITER

In 2009, it was "A Home on the Field." In 2010, it was "Picking Cotton."

And for the summer of 2011, UNC has turned once again to a non-fictional account of a life-changing journey.

This summer, incoming students will be asked to read and discuss "Eating Animals" by Jonathan Safran Foer, a book that goes beyond Foer's decision to become vegetarian by exploring the relationship between man and food.

A 21-member committee selected the book after narrowing a list of 393 suggestions to 24 nominations and then to six finalists.

UNC has held the program for 13 years but decided to partner with Duke University for the first time this year.

April Mann, director of New Student and Carolina Parent Programs, said the mutual selection will allow the author to visit both campuses easily and ultimately serve students better than before.

Both campus selection committees received nominations, compiled a shortened list and came together to compare them, Mann said.

Donna Lisker, Duke's associate dean of undergraduate education

and chairwoman of the Duke summer reading program committee, said the committee consulted faculty and students at both universities.

"The schools do work together all the time on everything except athletics," Lisker said.

Ryan Collins, president of the Residence Hall Association and a student on the committee, said the University was partial to non-fiction while Duke tended to choose literature.

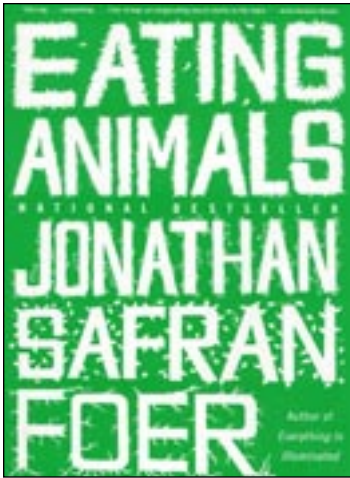
"One of the most interesting things was how different UNC and Duke's philosophies were on the summer reading program," Collins said.

Todd Adams, associate dean of students at Duke, said the universities also ran their discussion groups differently. At UNC, a faculty or staff member leads the discussion, while discussions at Duke are facilitated by current students.

But Adams said "Eating Animals" was a choice that suited both campuses' needs.

Jan Yopp, the UNC dean of summer school and chairwoman of UNC's selection committee, said the book will spark discussion.

"I think any student reading this book will look at the research that the author did and realize that that's what they should think about



DTH/PHOTOG NA

The University selected Jonathan Safran Foer's "Eating Animals" as 2011 summer reading selection.

doing for all the big decisions in their lives," Yopp said.

Collins said he thinks students will relate to the book's subject matter because it focuses on food.

"It's so different from any book we've chosen in recent years," he said.

Mann said it is too soon to tell whether the schools will collaborate again, but she thought the first joint initiative was a success.

"We are excited about the selection of this particular title," she said.

Contact the University Editor at university@dailytarheel.com.

County searches for mental health ally

Former planned merger rejected

BY CHELSEY DULANEY
STAFF WRITER

After rejecting a merger with the mental health management system in Alamance and Caswell counties, Orange County's provider is searching for other partners.

Judy Truitt, area director of the OPC Area Program that serves Orange, Person and Chatham Counties, said the program withdrew from negotiations with Alamance-Caswell Local Management Entity in December.

"The board felt that our goals were not in sync and that we were working for different outcomes," Truitt said. "At this point we are in several discussions, we are moving forward."

But the program, which manages publicly-funded mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse services is still looking for another mental health program to merge with.

A merger would consolidate services and save the state money.

Truitt said OPC is the fourth

"Did North Carolina handle it the best way they could? No, absolutely not."

DAVID CARTER, ALAMANCE-CASWELL

smallest local management entity in the state. She said the state is putting pressure on these smaller entities to merge to reduce the number in the state.

"The state is interested in continued mergers because it would be cost saving," Truitt said.

Alamance-Caswell, which dropped below the state's required service population of 200,000 after Rockingham County dissolved its membership, began to look for other organizations to join with to meet state requirements last year.

Alamance-Caswell officials have written a memorandum of agreement to merge with Piedmont Behavioral Healthcare after plans to combine with the Orange-Person health care management organization fell through, but

SEE MENTAL HEALTH, PAGE 4

State nurse demand growing as UNC cuts

If nursing cuts continue, likely to 'create a crisis'

BY ELISE YOUNG
SENIOR WRITER

The statewide demand for nurses is growing, but budget cuts are forcing UNC-system universities to limit opportunities for undergraduate nursing students.

Seven years ago, a state task force projected a potential nursing shortage, and the UNC-system Board of Governors responded by recommending doubling the number of students completing undergraduate nursing programs.

But now administrators must re-evaluate their goals.

"We may have to pause for a year or two in that progress," said Alan Mabe, senior vice president for academic affairs for the UNC system. "In this environment it's very difficult to try to hold any one kind of program from cuts."

For the 2009-2010 academic year, UNC-system nursing programs gave out 1,112 undergraduate degrees, a 34 percent increase from the 2004-2005 year.

But UNC-CH announced Feb. 14 that its School of Nursing will reduce enrollment by 25 percent for the upcoming year.

"Let's hope that this is not going to be a trend," said Ernest Grant, president of the N.C. Nurses Association. "If this is the beginning of a trend, it's going to create a crisis."

A growing need

The economic downturn forced many nurses who were near retirement age to continue working, said Kristen Swanson, dean of UNC-CH's School of Nursing. When they retire, they will create a large hole that must be filled, she said.

According to a 2011 report to the N.C. General Assembly, the number of state residents age 65 and older will grow by about 900,000 people between 2010 and 2030.

The state must produce more nurses and other health care practitioners to meet the new retirees' need, said Sen. James Forrester, R-Gaston, who served on the commission that produced the report on aging.

"That costs money to do that, but I don't know where we're going to find the money in our state or any other states," he said.

"Education and health care are the two biggies in our budget and they're going to take the biggest hits in the budget when we make the cuts," he said.

Inescapable cuts

Many UNC-system campuses are in the process of formulating plans to address budget cuts of up to 15 percent, Mabe said.

Some schools might choose to take larger cuts in some areas to protect their nursing programs instead of enacting across-the-board cuts like UNC-CH plans to do, he said.

UNC-CH's School of Nursing will not renew some faculty contracts that run out in July in