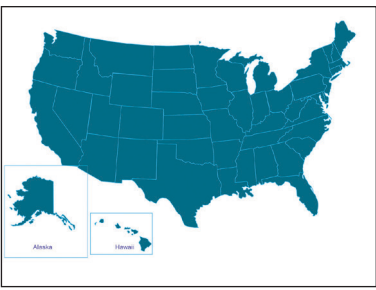




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Briefs

March 13, 2019 Volume 80, Issue No. 3

Alaina Malcolm Crowned Miss UNCP 2019

By **Brian Pridgen**
Reporter

Alaina Malcolm was crowned Miss UNCP 2019 on Feb. 28 at the Givens Performing Arts Center. The UNCP Pageant had finalists from third runner-up, to second runner-up, first runner-up and Miss UNCP. The third runner-up will receive a \$250 scholarship, the second runner-up will receive a \$500 scholarship, the first runner-up will receive a \$750 scholarship and the title of Miss UNCP will receive a \$2,000 scholarship. Contestants who don’t make the finalist will receive a \$200 scholarship each. The pageant consists of eight contestants, all students who have different skill sets. The contestants are; Kayla-Vera McBride, a freshman with a biology major, Destiney Chavis, a sophomore with a criminal justice major, Amanda Smith, a sophomore who’s in the nursing program, Omega Cogdell, a freshman with a psychology major, Lyasia Hazzard, a freshman who is undeclared, LaRuth Anderson, a junior with an elementary education major, Anna Campbell, a freshman with a biology degree with a concentration in biomedical and Alaina Malcolm, a senior with a sociology major. Masters of Ceremony Adrian Hammonds and mistress of ceremonies Angela Revels announced the winner of the Miss UNCP Pageant. Special performances were from Robert Williams and Joshua Oxendine.

“This show was something that if you missed it you would never experience it again,” Revels said. The first contestant who performed was McBride who showcased her vocal skills with a song, her platform was on dating violence. Then Chavis, with her platform on saving our service members, performed a monologue. After Chavis came Smith who played a song on the marimba. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the marimba is one of many African names for the xylophone, and, because African instruments bearing this name frequently have a tuned calabash resonator for each wooden bar, some ethnomusicologists use the name marimba to distinguish gourd-resonated from other xylophones. Smith’s platform was about body diversity and to say “no” to body shaming. Cogdell, with her platform on mentoring foster youth, performed a contemporary dance. Hazzard performed through spoken word with a platform on skinning shaming. Campbell did a vocal piece and her platform was to



Malcolm being crowned by 2018 winner Tayley Strickland PN Photo/Micheál DeMers

bring awareness to those with Down Syndrome. Anderson, with her platform on suicide not being a solution, showcased her dancing abilities with a smile. Finally, Malcolm performed a tap-dancing routine which went along with her ‘tapping for kids’ platform. “I’m proud of every contestant and if it was an option every contestant would’ve went home with the crown,” Hammonds said.

The winners of the 2019 were announced as following; Anderson was awarded Miss Congeniality and the Kelsey Cummings spirit award, Chavis was awarded the community award, third runner-up was Campbell, second runner-up was McBride and first runner-up Cogdell. With silence from the audience, it was announced that Malcolm will be Miss UNCP 2019 with the \$2,000 scholarship. The contestants were crowned and rewarded

with the scholarship money and flowers. Community Civic and Engagement holds one award for the contestant who turns in the most donations. The pageant is held annually by the Division of student affairs, with Cynthia Oxendine as the executive director, Teresa Bryant, co-executive director, and Zavery McDougald who directed and choreographed the pageant.



PN Photo/Micheál DeMers

SGA Proposes New Transportation Ideas

By **Mason Miller**
Editor-In-Chief

Last year, the Student Government Association passed a proposal that was intended to evaluate UNCP’s parking issues and how students engage in transportation around campus. The ‘Alternative Campus Transportation Act’ called for numerous changes to the ways students traveled around campus and to the local community. Additionally, the transportation act also funded the purchase for an additional 14 bikes for the bike share program. The proposal suggested that UNCP’s administration expand the shared bike rack program to off campus housing as well as on campus housing. Currently the bike rental program is limited to the University Center as students can rent bikes from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. SGA created this proposal “with the intention of increasing the availability of alternative transportation for students.” While SGA cannot implement policy changes affecting the campus itself, they can pass proposals recommending courses of action to other administrative bodies around UNCP. According to senators, SGA received student complaints related to parking more frequently than any other issue the campus is facing currently. SGA continues to promote new ways for students to travel to campus and into the local community. Furhter proposed solutions included assigned parking spots for students with residential parking passes, and community service as payment for parking ticket fines. Last month, a faux UNCP page on twitter called ‘UNCP Confessions’ allegedly posted by a student called for banning freshmen from having cars on campus.



The Pine Needle
The University of North Carolina
at Pembroke

Founded in 1947

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Kraft Charged with Solicitation of Prostitution

By Joshua Reed
Sports Editor

While sports can unify and bring people together, there are many problems and injustices.

New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft is currently facing two misdemeanor counts of solicitation of prostitution stemming from an ongoing investigation into a sex trafficking ring in Florida.

Authorities claimed that they have video evidence of Kraft making two visits to the Orchids of Asia Day Spa in Jupiter, Florida where Kraft has a home.

Authorities report that two separate occasions before and following the Patriots AFC Championship with the Kansas City Chiefs.

If convicted, he could face up to one year in jail, subject to a \$5,000 fine, required to partake in 100 hours of community service and mandated to attend human trafficking dangers class.

He and his representatives have categorically denied that he engaged in any illegal activities. He has pleaded not guilty.

The well-known “rub and tug” establishment is believed to have ties to an international human trafficking and prostitution organization. According to USA Today, some of the women at the spa, as well as five other affiliated proper-



Robert Kraft at the “Heavenly Bodies: Fashion & Catholic Imagination Costume Institute Gala in New York City. AP Photo/ John Palmer

ties in the state of Florida, are sex slaves from China.

Regardless of the outcome of the Kraft’s case, the spotlight that has been placed upon human sex trafficking in the United States cannot just fade into obscurity once a jury reaches a verdict or the presiding judge come to a decision.

For More Information on Pine Needle

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Upcoming Concerts Around **Pembroke**

Mumford & Sons
PNC Arena
Raleigh, NC
March 17th

Hozier
Ovens Auditorium
Charlotte, NC
March 17th

The Millennium Tour
Greensboro Coliseum
Complex
Greensboro, NC
March 17th

Meek Mill
The Ritz
Raleigh, NC
March 23th

Travis Scott
Spectrum Center
Charlotte, NC
March 24th

Earl Sweatshirt
The Underground
Charlotte, NC
March 25th

From Greek Life to the New Movement

By Antwon Johnson
Local News Editor

In honor of black history month, the Black History Club hosted an event, the New Negro Movement, with guest speaker Dr. David Matthew Walton on Feb. 20 at the James B. Chavis University Center.

The event’s theme was ‘intelligence, education, scholarship, transforming and from the stereotype’.

Walton is also a member of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity and wants fellow members to do more than just cross.

He touched on the topic of leadership and the history of fraternity and sorority membership.

“You’re not a leader just because you pledge, the leading comes afterwards because you’re getting trained to lead,” he said.

He spoke on representing organizations by using social media accounts as an example.

“I go on twitter or other social media and see people with their organizations

talking reckless, seeing them call each other explicit names, but they got a diamond in their bios,” he said.

For people who have just entered into their respective organizations, Walton emphasized the topic of service. He said that many people who join the organizations say they want to do service but when it’s time to do service they don’t show up or some forget to put ‘scholarship’ before anything.

“Like dawg what’s really going on, don’t make excuses,” Walton said.

He also talked about the leaders of the organizations and the new members who have join recently to take them and make them well rounded.

“Take those unrefined people and shape them into a well-rounded human beings,” he said.

The message for the discussion was to ‘not allow ourselves to fall back into the ways [narrative] our ancestors tried so hard to prevent.



Dr. David Matthew Walton speaks with fraternity and sorority members on the importance of the new NPHC movement. Submitted Photo

Will Harris and Friends Brings the Gospel to Moore

By Octavia Johnson
Campus Life Editor

Will Harris and Friends performed at Moore Hall Auditorium on Feb. 22 at 7 p.m., after an invite from Dr. Robert Canida, director of the Office for Diversity and Inclusion (ODI).

Harris is a native from Oxford, Miss. and a renowned musician and singer. He came to Fayetteville, N.C. as a minister and put together a group of local singers. He recorded his CDs and DVDs called *Everything to God in Prayer* and *A Songwriters Journal* with the group of people, now referred to as the “Friends.” Harris also has other albums like *Dream Again* and *He Knows My Name*, with his singles “Never Forget It” and “Yes Lord.”

“I’ve met Will Harris eight years ago when he had his first album called ‘Dream Again’. I was asked to arrange a gospel concert and I said sure, so this is sort of a prelude to the one we’re going to do in April,” Canida said.

The performance opened with Phi Mu Alpha Fraternity singing “Let Your Light Shine on Me” and “Swing



Will Harris on stage with the “Friends” performing various gospel songs. File Photo PN/ Octavia Johnson

Down Sweet Chariot”. Chosen Generation, UNCP’s gospel choir, covered the song “Safe in His Arms” by Vickie Winans.

Paul Anderson, a member of Phi Mu Alpha, contributed with a song called “Keep Your Hand on the Plow” by Mahalia Jackson until the special guest’s final preparations. Canida came on stage to introduce Will Harris and Friends.

Will Harris and Friends opened with the song “Draw Me Close.” Then, they covered the song “Lift Every Voice and Sing” by James Weldon Johnson.

“I was a freshman in college and my English Professor asked me ‘what is your major going to be?’” Harris said. “I was excited about it, so I said, ‘I’m going to be a music major’ and she had one question for me, ‘who wrote lift every voice and sing?’”

Will Harris and Friends sang two songs from the album *A Song Writer’s Journal*; “I Have Plans for You”, a song based off the scripture Jeremiah 21:11, and “Miracle Work”. During a short break, Harris discussed with the audience the importance of never giv-

ing up no matter how long it takes.

“Listen Pembroke, I have a strong passion for college students and for the young people,” he said. “It took me seven years to a bachelor’s degree but guess what, I’m working on a doctorate right now.”

They sang “Dream Again,” a song inspired for college students wanting to achieve their dreams from *Dream Again*. Harris discussed how there’s nothing too hard for God and how he ended up being in full-time ministry when his original goal was to be an edu-

cator. They then performed “I Will Make It” from *A Song Writer’s Journal*.

“Young people continue to dream, don’t let anyone shoot your dreams down,” Harris said.

Harris led the singers into multiple song selections from inspired and influential artists. Songs like “Angels” and “Total Praise” by Richard Smallwood and “In the Sanctuary” and “For Every Mountain” by Kurt Carr.

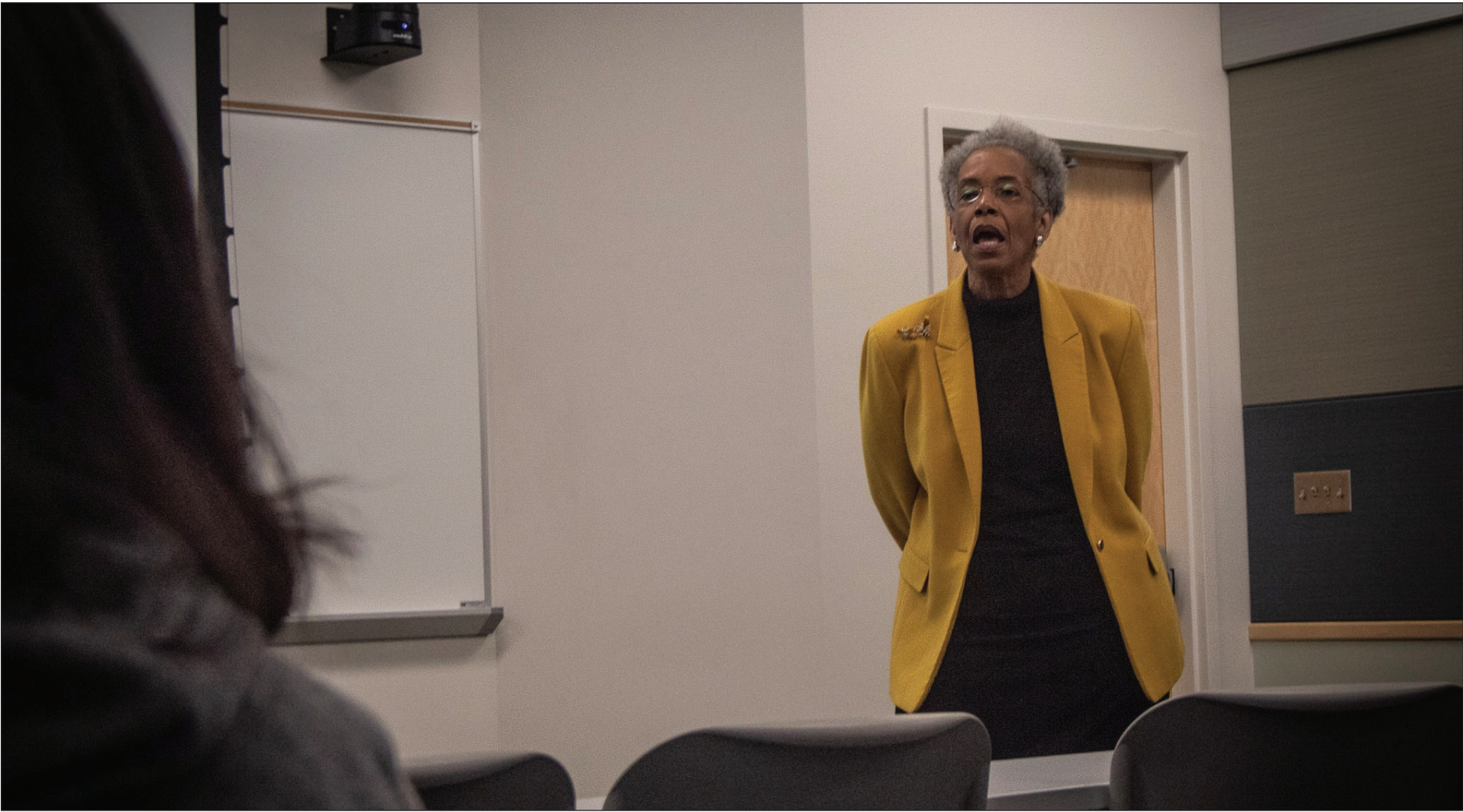
Harris and Friends ended the night with a saying from his hometown, telling the audience it was a “plum pleasing pleasure” to be with them. Ending the showcase with their final selection, “God Bless You Forever.”

Canida returned to the stage to thank everyone for coming out and said that Harris and Friends did the performance at no charge, so the audience can support them by buying their music.

Harris’ albums are available on Spotify, iTunes and Google play.

There will be a concert on April 28 called “Gospel Extravaganza” in Moore Hall Auditorium.

Former LSU Professor Discusses use of Metacognition



Dr. Sandra Y. Guire talks with audience about using bumble bee logic for motivation. Photo PN/ Micheál DeMers

By Daniel Arrington
Staff Writer

The Journey to Excellence seminar was held in the David E. Weinstein Health Science Building on Feb. 25.

The seminar was led by Sandra Y. Guire, a retired professor at Louisiana State University and author.

According to the LSU webpage, she has won numerous awards of achievement, including a recent one in 2017, the “American Chemical Society Award for Encouraging Disadvantaged Students to Pursue Careers in the Chemical Sciences.”

In the past, she received the Clark Distinguished Teaching Award when she was at Cornell University, the presidential award in 2007 for Excellence in Science, Mathematics and Engineering Mentoring, the

2014 Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers and the 2015 American Association for the Advancement of Science Lifetime Mentor Award.

She opened the seminar with a story about bumble bees and how they should not be able to fly.

She discusses how the bumble bee relates to the people who may assume that you may not be successful or be able to climb up the academic ladder.

“The letter grade itself doesn’t tell you how you mastered the material,” Guire said.

She also talks about different strategies that students can use to be successful in their studies. For example, she uses the term

metacognition, the awareness and understanding of a thought process, and how we should think about the task that we need to do and the information that we don’t understand.

“It’s your ability to be consciously aware that you’re a problem solver,” Guire said.

She discusses effective homework strategies to improve grades. Strategies such as studying the material, work example problems, check to see if your problems are correct and start the problem early.

She opens the floor to students with two questions. The first question was “What’s the difference between studying and learning?” and the second question was “Which scenario would be harder for you: making an A on the exam, or teach the class materials

that are going to be on the test?”

She then ends the session by discussing the ABC’s of Academic Commitment, which are Attitude, Behavior and Commitment.

“Whenever you see a bumble bee let it remind you that if anybody tells you that you are not built to do something that you know you can do when you put your mind to it, tell them to check their assumptions,” Guire said as she closed the seminar with her bumble bee comparison.

Guire interests are to improve students learning by using the metacognitive learning strategies.

She has delivered keynote addresses and workshops pertaining to the same teachings that she shares with others in over 400 different institutions, in 46 states and 10 countries.

Guire also has a book out called “Teach Students How to Learn: Strategies You Can Incorporate Into Any Course to Improve Student Metacognition, Study Skills and Motivation. She even has a student version of the book, “Teach Yourself How to Learn: Strategies You Can Use to Ace Any Course at Any Level.”

Her motivation is to improve the college teaching methods by reforming “pre-college.”

She also wants to increase the number of underrepresented minority and women students who want to pursue a career in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Guire uses the bumble bee logic for future students to understand effective motivation of moving up the academic ladder.

Tony Bartelme Reveals a Surgeon’s Life in Tanzania

By Octavia Johnson
Campus Life Editor

Pulitzer finalist of the “Post and Courier” Tony Bartelme spoke about his book, “A Surgeon in the Village: An American Doctor Teaches Brain Surgery in African” in Dial.

Bartelme was invited by the English Department to talk about his nonfiction story of the shortage of doctors, especially surgeons, in Africa. The book was derived from his 5-month experiences being in Tanzania.

Bartelme describes how his book relates to what he learned from surgeons. The brain has 80 billion brain cells that communicate with each other which creates a “potential neural pathways” is created by thoughts. Then when it’s activated the architecture of the brain begins to change and the “pipelines” that connect the brain cells starts to grow thicker and communication starts to flow in more quickly.

“My underlying theme throughout this book is the transformational and healing power of teaching,” he said. “It’s really teachers that awaken the things growing inside of us.”

In this four-part series, Bartelme’s talks about his editor describing a

case where a doctor was using a saw to perform brain surgery on a person. Bartelme was instructed to go to Tanzania where he meets Dr. Dilan Ellegala, a neurosurgeon who escapes his career to stay in Africa for six months.

Throughout the world, there are about five billion people who lack access to safe and affordable surgery. These are also people who can’t get to a hospital in time because they don’t have transportation.

More often, if they do get to a hospital, there aren’t enough doctors to properly treat everyone.

“So, what happens when five billion people lack access to affordable surgery?” Bartelme said. “17 million people die every year, to put that into context, that’s more people who die every year from AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, diabetes and bronchitis.”

According to Bartelme, Ellegala was a man who spoke highly of others but never talked about himself. He taught a man named Emmanuel Mayegga, now a clinical officer, the basics of brain surgery for about six months.

“He did something transformic, Dilan taught Mayegga how to teach others,” Bartelme said. “The country went from having



Tony Bartelme, right, signs book for student Tyra Click, left, downstairs in the Dial Humanities Building. PN Photo/ Antwon Johnson

three surgeons to six.”

Before, Ellegala noticed that there was injustice within the Haydom Lutheran Hospital, built originally by Norwegians, because the foreign doctors and medical students would teach the Tanzanians to doubt themselves. Ellegala took the first step in not tolerating the injustice by teaching Mayegga and then making sure that Tanzanians were front and center when the teachings were going on.

As part of his teachings, Ellegala showed the Tanzanians that using what you have to make a differ-

ence without depending on someone else will help others. Instead of waiting for medical tools from the U.S., Tanzanians would make their own tools from what they had.

In the video shown of Ellegala speaking about making the tools, he said to see his partners be able to do this in a remote part of the world with equipment that’s available locally, it makes you realize that anything is possible and that you can do it.

In his book, Bartelme brought cultural experiences from a village in Tanzania like the term “ohayoda”

Textbooks Costs are Problem for Students

By Tyana Morris
Asst. Photo Editor

The cost of a college education is soaring. While tuition, housing, and university fees hold the most weight, another contributor to the high price of obtaining an education is textbooks.

The average student spends as much as \$1,200 a year on textbooks and supplies alone; an 812 percent increase from the previous generation, according to the U.S. Public Interest Research Group. A single textbook can cost as much as \$250.

There are a number of reasons why college textbooks are so expensive. ATTN:, a news outlet that caters to millennials, found that prices rise due to the constant release of new editions while the textbook market consists of only five publishers. Despite a 2008 report that shows these constant revisions are unnecessary, those publishers are able to drive up prices without fear of competitors.

According to the National Association of College Stores, 22 cents of every dollar spent on a textbook goes to the campus bookstore. That covers personnel costs, operation and income. One cent goes to shipping, while 77 cents go to publishers. At the same time, the author only receives 12 cents of the dollar.

In an attempt to ease the financial burden of expensive textbooks, Sena-

tors Durbin and Franken, Congressmen Miller and Hinojosa and the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition have introduced the Affordable College Textbooks Act. The bill supports the development of open textbooks, which are just like traditional textbooks but they are released under an open license. This would make books free to access online, free to download and cost only \$20 for a hard copy, ultimately saving students billions of dollars without risking the quality of the book itself.

“This bill would take a tremendous step toward expanding the benefits to students and faculty alike,” said Nicole Allen, the director of Open Education at SPARC. “And in the meantime, there are many ways that institutions and states can begin leveraging the power of open educational resources today.”

Until the bill passes, cost effective options still remain.

Consider renting textbooks at the bookstore or even purchasing e-books instead of a hard copy. Websites such as Amazon and Chegg hold textbooks for a fraction of the retail price. Many students choose to sell their books to their peers rather than sell them back to the bookstore. Copies of textbooks are also available on file in the campus library.

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AP Photo/ Mulugeta Ayene

Boeing 737 Max 8s Under Scrutiny After Ethiopia Crash

By ELIAS MESERET and YIDNEK KIRUBEL

HEJERE, Ethiopia (AP) — Airlines in Ethiopia, China, Indonesia and elsewhere grounded the Boeing 737 Max 8 jetliner Monday after the second devastating crash of one of the planes in five months. But Boeing said it had no reason to pull the popular aircraft from the skies.

As the East African country mourned the 157 victims of the Ethiopian Airlines plane that went down in clear weather shortly after takeoff Sunday, investigators found the jetliner’s two flight recorders at the crash site outside the capital of Addis Ababa.

An airline official, however, said one of the recorders was partially damaged and “we will see what we can retrieve from it.” The official spoke on condition of anonymity for lack of authorization to speak to the media.

Ethiopian authorities are leading the investigation into the crash, assisted by the U.S., Kenya and others. The crash was similar

to that of a Lion Air jet of the same model in Indonesian seas last year, killing 189 people. The crash was likely to renew questions about the 737 Max 8, the newest version of Boeing’s single-aisle airliner, which was first introduced in 1967 and has become the world’s most common passenger jet.

Safety experts cautioned against drawing too many comparisons between the two crashes until more is known. Besides the groundings by airlines in Ethiopia, China and Indonesia, Caribbean carrier Cayman Airways, Comair in South Africa and Royal Air Maroc in Morocco temporarily grounded their Max 8s.

Ethiopian Airlines decided to ground its remaining four 737 Max 8s until further notice as “an extra safety precaution,” spokesman Asrat Begashaw said. The carrier had been using five of the planes and awaiting delivery of 25 more.

But Chicago-based Boeing said it did not intend to issue any new recommendations about the aircraft to its customers. It plans to send a technical team to the crash

site to help investigators and issued a statement saying it was “deeply saddened to learn of the passing of the passengers and crew” on the jetliner.

Among the airlines still using the plane are Southwest, American and Air Canada.

In Washington, Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao said passenger safety was the first priority for the administration.

“I want travelers to be assured and that we are taking this seriously and monitoring latest developments,” she said.

It’s unusual for authorities to take the step of grounding planes, and it’s up to each country to set standards on which planes can fly and how those planes are maintained, said Todd Curtis, an aviation safety analyst who directs the Airsafe.com Foundation.

“If there is a suspicion ... that there’s not only something inherently wrong with 737 Max 8 aircraft, but there are no procedures in place to cure the problem, then yes, they should either ground the plane, or there

are several levels of things they could do,” Curtis said.

People from 35 countries died in the crash six minutes after takeoff from Ethiopia’s capital for Nairobi. Ethiopian Airlines said the senior pilot issued a distress call and was told to return but all contact was lost shortly afterward. The plane plowed into the ground at Hejere near Bishoftu, scattering debris.

“I heard this big noise,” resident Tsegaye Reta told the AP. “The villagers said that it was a plane crash, and we rushed to the site. There was a huge smoke that we couldn’t even see the plane. The parts of the plane were falling apart.”

Kenya lost 32 people, more than any country. Relatives of 25 of the victims had been contacted, Transport Minister James Macharia said, and taking care of their welfare was of utmost importance.

“Some of them, as you know, they are very distressed,” he said. “They are in shock like we are. They are grieving.”

In Addis Ababa, members of an association of

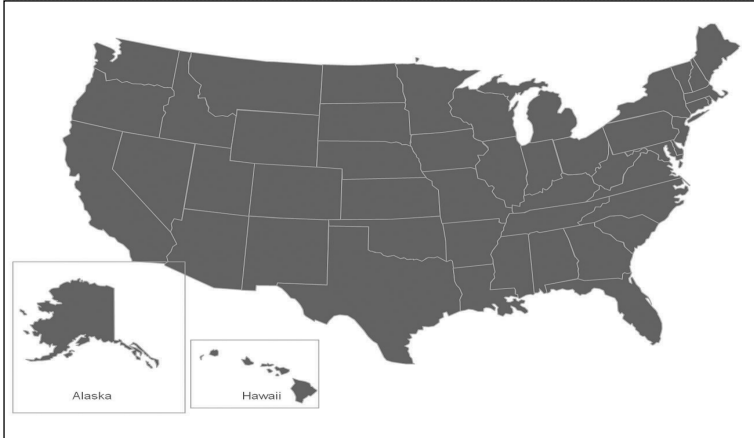
Ethiopian airline pilots wept uncontrollably for their dead colleagues. Framed photos of seven crew members sat in chairs at the front of a crowded room.

The flight’s main pilot, Yared Getachew, issued a distress call shortly after takeoff and was told to return, but all contact was lost.

Canada, Ethiopia, the U.S., China, Italy, France, Britain, Egypt, Germany, India and Slovakia all lost four or more citizens.

At least 21 staff members from the United Nations were killed in the crash, said U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, who led a moment of silence at a meeting where he said “a global tragedy has hit close to home.”

Both Addis Ababa and Nairobi are major hubs for humanitarian workers, and some had been on their way to a large U.N. environmental conference set to begin Monday in Nairobi. The U.N. flag at the event flew at half-staff.



News Briefs

- President Trump proposed his new budget to Congress consisting of \$4.75 trillion on Monday. The budget is the largest to be introduced in history and includes an extra \$8.6 billion to be allocated for construction of the border wall. Military spending would increase by 5%, funding for healthcare would be cut by \$1.9 trillion and Social Security costs could be cut down by as much as \$26 billion.
- According to NBC news, the justice department has issued a subpoena in the ongoing investigation in North Carolina’s 9th Congressional district race. The subpoena demands “all documents related to the investigation of election irregularities affecting counties within the 9th Congressional District.
- Ten more women will be added into the National Women’s Hall of Fame in 2019. According to the Associated Press, Civil rights activist Angela Davis; Native American lawyer Sarah Deer; retired Air Force fighter pilot Nicole Malachowski; the late suffragist and cartoonist Rose O’Neill; New York Congresswoman Louise Slaughter, who died last year; composer Laurie Spiegel, and AIDS researcher Flossie Wong-Staal,” will join the other 276 women in the Hall of Fame.
- According to the Associated Press, a confederate statue was removed from an old courthouse in Winston-Salem. Mayor Allen Joines has decided to relocate the statue to the Salem Cemetery.

R. Kelly: ‘We’re going to straighten all this stuff out’

By DON BABWIN and TERESA CRAWFORD

CHICAGO (AP) — R. Kelly walked out of a Chicago jail on Saturday after someone who officials say did not want to be publicly identified paid \$161,633 that the R&B singer owed in back child support.

Kelly, who was ordered taken into custody on Wednesday by a judge after Kelly said he didn’t have the entire amount he owed, briefly spoke with reporters, telling them: “I promise you, we’re going to straighten all this stuff out.” He said that was all he could say, a stark contrast to a nationally televised broadcast that aired earlier in the week in which he cried and ranted about being “assassinated” by allegations of sexual abuse that led to criminal charges last month.

Cara Smith, the chief policy officer for the Cook County sheriff’s office, which runs the jail, said a person who wished to remain anonymous handed a check on Saturday morning to the county clerk’s

office for the full amount of Kelly’s back child support. A bond slip where people putting up money to secure an inmate’s release write their names and relationship to the inmate was left blank, Smith said.

Kelly’s attorney, Steve Greenberg, said he could not discuss the child support payment because of a judge’s gag order in that case.

As is done with other high-profile inmates, Kelly, 52, was held in a solo cell under round-the-clock observation.

It was his second trip to jail in a matter of weeks and the second time a person has stepped up with money to get Kelly out of jail.

Last month, after he was charged with 10 counts of aggravated sexual abuse pertaining to three girls and a woman, he was taken to the same jail. Kelly, whose attorney said at the time that the singer’s finances were in disarray, then spent a weekend in jail before a 47-year-old suburban Chicago business owner posted his \$100,000 bail.

His attorney and publicist told a similar story this week before and after the hearing in which the judge ordered Kelly into custody, with the publicist telling reporters that Kelly was prepared to pay \$50,000 to \$60,000 on Wednesday but was not able to pay the entire amount.

Kelly has denied any wrongdoing and has pleaded not guilty to the sexual abuse charges. He has also very publicly proclaimed his innocence, telling Gayle King in an interview that aired Wednesday on “CBS This Morning” that all his accusers were lying about him. He also talked about his finances, saying that people had stolen money from his bank accounts, though he offered no details.

Greenberg told reporters on Saturday that Kelly’s attorneys “haven’t seen one piece of evidence.” “When we get those things, we’re going to fight this case like we fight any other case, in the courtroom, based on the evidence,” he said.

SPORTS



SECTION
B

The Pine Needle



Senior James Murray-Boyles shared a nice moment with his close family and friends as he was the lone senior on the team honored on “Senior Day.” PN Photo/Trevon Knight

Braves Take Care of Business for Murray-Boyles on Senior Day

By Joshua Reed
Sports Editor

The UNCP men’s basketball team sent their lone senior, James Murray-Boyles out in style in his last regular season home game. The Braves had one of their best shooting performances of the season in their 122-96 victory over the Lakers of Clayton State University on Feb.23.

“I thought our energy was really good,” said head coach Ben Miller. “Even going back before the [USC] Aiken game, our guys were focused, and their sense of urgency went to a different level. If we keep building on that, we can have some fun here down the stretch.”

The team and athletic department honored Murray-Boyles prior to the

game with a framed jersey with his number 30 on it. Some of his close friends and family, sporting t-shirts with his image on the front, joined him in midcourt celebration.

“It felt good. My mom was trying to surprise me but I kind of already knew they were coming. My dad kind of gave me a heads up but it was good because a lot of my family have never seen me play before ever,” said Murray Boyles.

The Braves shot over 57 percent on the day and were especially lethal from the field in the first half, where they shot better than 61 percent. They got the lead in the first minute of the game and would not trail the rest of the way as they cruised to a nearly 30-point victory in their last home contest of the

regular season. While he didn’t lead the team in scoring on the day, Murray-Boyles was the only Brave to register a double-double as his 11 rebounds led the team and his 16 points put him fourth in scoring. It was the fifth double-double of his career and he also logged a pair of assists and a steal. “I’ve just had a lot of respect for how he’s matured and grown on and off the court. Academically, he’s come a long way, he’s become a great leader not just for our team [but] on campus and it shows in how he interacts with people and the respect that he has from his teammates, staff and really everybody,” said Miller.

Softball Gets Back on Track in Double-Header Sweep of William Peace

By Summer Williamson
Asst. Sports Editor

Braves softball hosted a doubleheader against William Peace at UNCP Softball Field on Feb. 26 sweeping the Pacers 2-0. The games were the first of the season for the Pacers due to inclement weather. The wins broke a four-game losing streak for the Black and Gold.

Game 1:

Right-handed junior, Malerie Leviner, opened the first game of the doubleheader pitching for the Braves shutting the Pacers out all six innings. The bottom of the first inning concluded with UNCP scoring three runs. Junior Rendi Wetherington made it to base on an error, advanced to third when sophomore Mary Sells hit a single, and scored off of a bunt by junior Alex Watkins. Sells scored on a groundout by freshman Cameron Davis.

“Malerie pitched from behind a lot today and

we really try to push her boundaries on how well can you deal with the failure and what’s going on and I think she did a good job of recovering cause you could really see it in the fifth inning,” said head coach Brittany Bennett.

No runs were scored by either team after the first inning until the sixth and final inning when Braves’ Cam Davis opened the door for hits with a homerun to right center field. Sophomores Tatum Brummitt and Cara Davis along with senior Carleigh Brooks all reached base following Davis’s homer.

UNCP scored runs from the next three out of four trips to the plate, appealing the mercy rule, and notching a win for the Braves 8-0.

Game 2:

Junior Jordan Hall started pitching for the Braves in the second game against William Peace. The Pacers gained a two run lead in the top of the first inning off of

three singles. UNCP freshman Cam Davis opened the bottom of the inning with a homerun to right center field scoring Brummitt and Sells. Freshman Lauren Hilbourn scored sophomore Jordan Adcox after hitting a single to second base. Cara Davis scored the final run of the inning putting the Braves in the lead 5-2.

The fifth inning capped the scoring for both teams. William Peace’s Emily Puckett made base from getting hit by a pitch and eventually scored from a pop fly to right field. Adcox finalized the score for the Braves by getting walked to first, stealing second, and scoring on an error made by the Pacers. The Braves clinched the second win of the night 6-3.

“I just think in general we’re keeping the score down now and it’s really beneficial for our team because it helps when we’re struggling offensively,” Coach Bennett said.

Baseball Snap Six-Game Skid with 5-1 Win Over Wingate Bulldogs



Juniors Zach Ghelfi and Seth Hartings scored on a fielding error and RBI single. PN Photo/Trevon Knight

By Joshua Reed
Sports Editor

The UNCP baseball team ended their six-game losing streak and got their record back to .500 when they defeated the Wingate University Bulldogs at Sammy Cox Field on Feb.27. The team tasted victory for the first time in nearly two weeks thanks to a collective effort from their pitching staff coupled

The Bulldogs were held scoreless through the first seven innings of the game until they got their only run in the top of the eighth with the bases loaded.

“We got a good team. We’re not used to losing here, I’m definitely not used to losing, our kids aren’t used to losing. We’re practicing really freaking hard every single day and we’re going to continue to practice really hard and



Senior Hank Simpson was one of five pitchers that helped the Braves to a 5-1 victory. PN Photo/Trevon Knight

with two multi-run innings. “We knew we were going to bullpen the whole day out...It was good to see them go out there and throw strikes and get ahead of guys and play somewhat defense out there,” said Head Coach Paul O’Neil.

After both teams blanked each other in the first inning the Braves would hop on the board first in the second inning thanks to an RBI single from Zach Ghelfi that brought Jarratt Mobley back to home plate for the first run of the game.

A single up the middle from Kavon Perkins along with a fielding error gave the Braves a 3-0 advantage.

The Black and Gold would tack on two more runs to their total in the sixth inning when both Mobley and Perkins hit home runs in the inning to bring themselves back to home plate.

we’re going to put a good product out there,” said O’Neil.

Even though the Braves still sit in the cellar of the conference standings, coach O’Neil believes that this win could be the first of many as the team seeks ways to play more complete games consistently as the season goes on.

“All phases have got to get better. Whether it’s pitching, hitting, defense, base running, coaching, it doesn’t matter. We got to get better at everything that we’re doing if we want to win within the league,” said O’Neil.

Joshua Reed: Are the Celtics Better Off Without Kyrie Irving?



The Boston Celtics are 9-2 this season when Kyrie is Irving is not in the line due to injury and some believe that the team actually plays better in his absence. AP Photo

Kyrie Irving is widely recognized as one of the best and arguably the most exciting player to watch in the NBA, but are the Boston Celtics actually a better team without him? With LeBron James now

in Los Angeles after his migration to the Western Conference, many experts believed that the East would be the Celtics to win after they made it to the Eastern Conference Finals the last two years without the assistance of star players like Ir-

ving and Gordan Hayward, who suffered a gruesome ankle injury at the beginning of last season. They were up 3-2 in the finals series with the Cavs until Lebron and his herculean efforts carried Cleveland to comeback and

ultimately advance to the NBA finals, and there some who believe if the team had a healthy Irving that it would have been enough to close it out and would have faced the Warriors in the next round of the playoffs. However, with team currently struggling to keep pace with the first place Milwaukee Bucks and second place Toronto Raptors, they sit a game behind the Indiana Pacers for third place and are tied with the Philadelphia 76ers for fourth place those same folks are questioning if Boston is better off without their most prominent player. The Celtics are 9-2 this season when Irving hasn't suited up and a pair of those wins came against playoff caliber competition. It is believed that the team's success without him is a reflection of him not being a got fit with Head Coach Brad Stevens' system and not his talent or ability to contribute. Kyrie has struggled to stay on the court consistently as a result of injuries during his tenure with the Celtics. Another knock on him is that when he is in the game that the offense

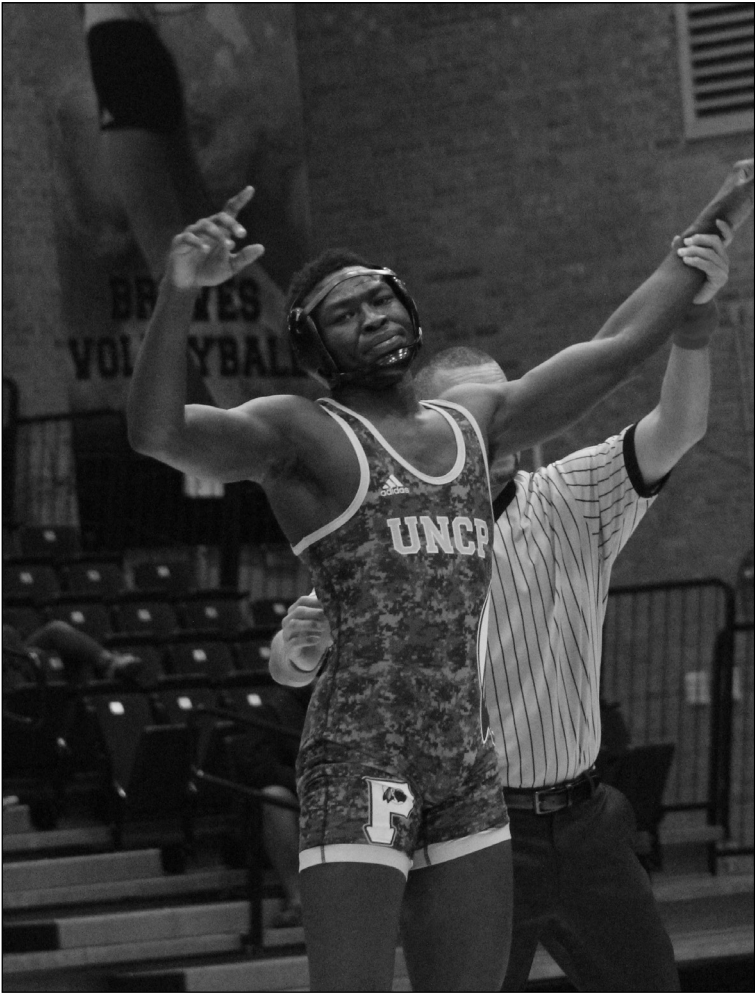
runs and flows through him, where the primary goal is to get the ball to their best player so that he can do his thing. Although, when he is out of the line up it allows the other players on the team to flourish, develop and play better defensively. Their young nucleus of forwards Jayson Tatum and Jaylen Brown as well as point guard Marcus Smart, all of which are first top 10 picks taken in the last five years, have shown great signs of promise in Irving's absence over the past season and a half. With the summer rapidly approaching and free agency right on the horizon, many believe that Irving will depart Boston for the not so green pastures of New York, near where he grew up in West Orange, NJ and play for the Nicks. They are going to have a ton of cap space and are reportedly prepared to compensate him handsomely if he decides to come home to the New York/New Jersey area and lead the franchise in a new post-Porzingis era.

Braves Have a Record Eight Wrestlers Punch Their Ticket at Regionals

By Joshua Reed
Sports Editor

The UNCP wrestling team had a record tying performance at the NCAA Super Regional Tournament in Hartsville, S.C. on Feb.22 at the DeLoach Center. The Braves had a program record eight wrestlers punch their

ticket to the NCAA Division II National Championship tournament that will take place in Cleveland, OH next month. Senior Rodney Shepard advanced to the semi-final round at the NCAA Dvision II National Championships. Shepard was the only member of the wrestling team to advance to the semi-finals. The performance marked the sixth time in the last eight years that a UNCP wrestler has advanced to a national title. It also marked the highest national finish for Shepard who wrapped up his collegiate career with a 50-19 record.

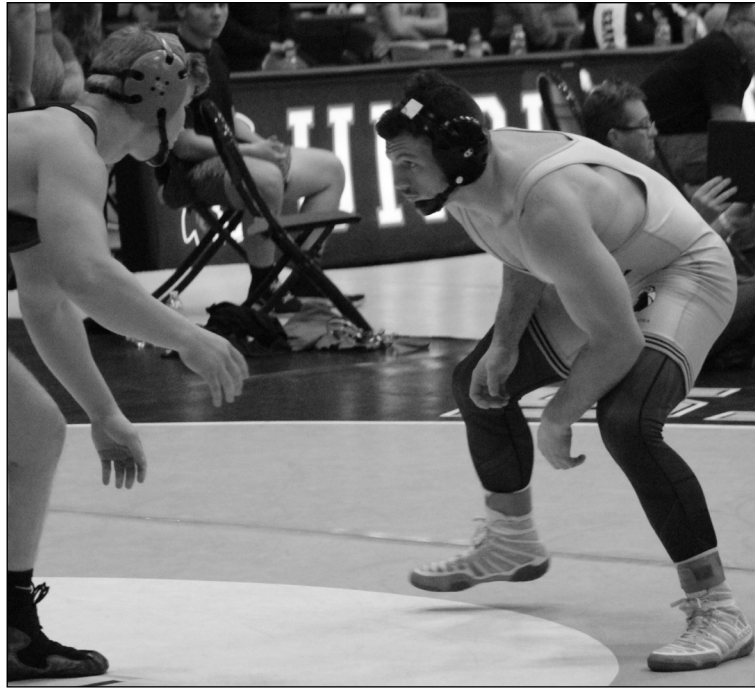


Senior Faris Teia captured his first trip to the Division II National Tournament by battling back to qualify in Super Regional Tournament. PN Photo/Trevon Knight

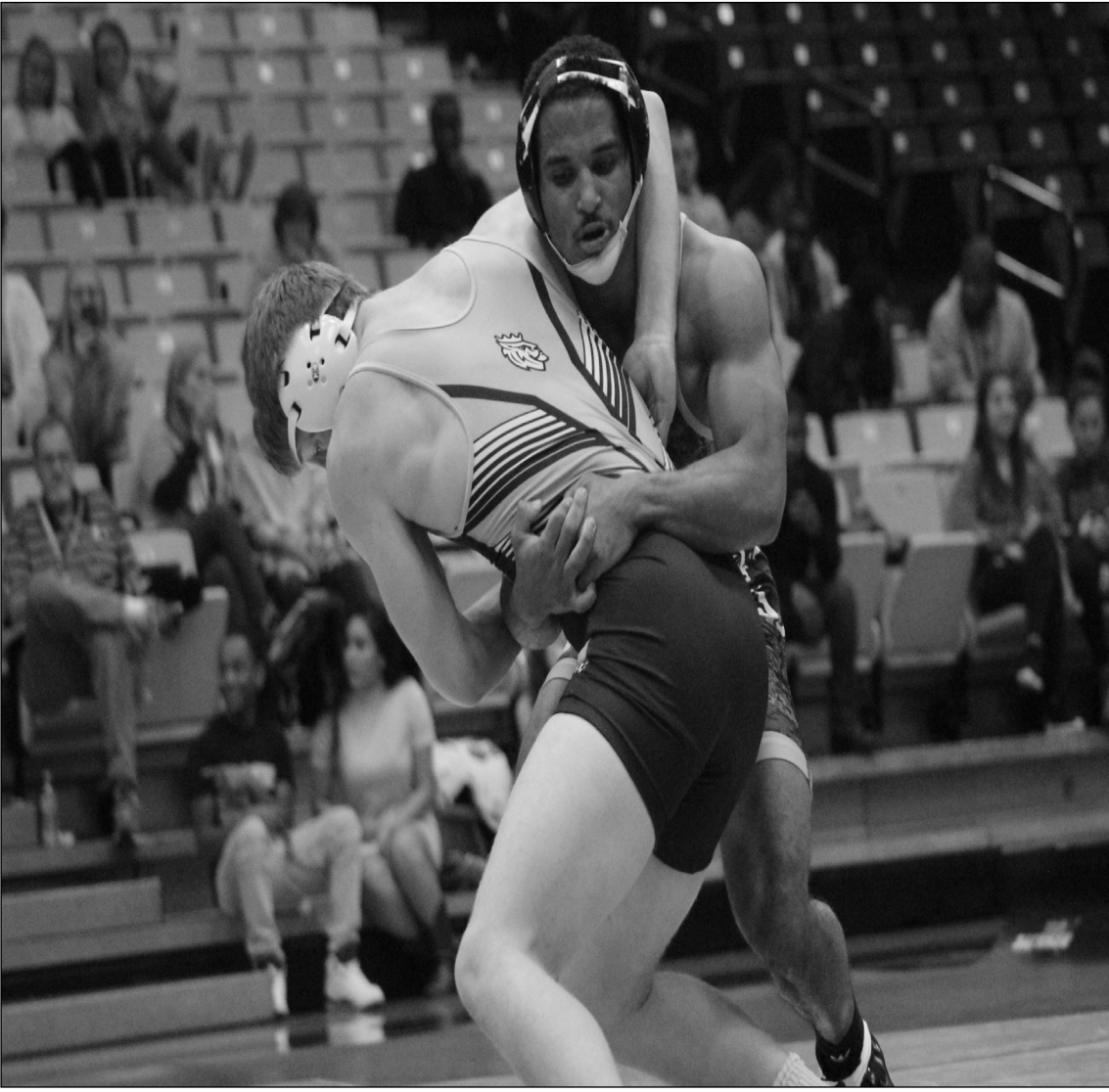
CONGRATS
ON THE
SEASON TO
THE BRAVES
WRESTLING
TEAM!



Sophomore All-American secured a trip to the national championship tournament and a regional title. PN Photo/ Trevon Knight



Redshirt junior Brandon Sloop qualified for the Division II National Tournament by even though he lost a close match in his title bout at regionals. PN Photo/Trevon Knight



Senior Rodney Shepard punched his ticket to the Division II National Championship Tournament with his second place finish at regionals. PN Photo/Trevon Knight

Micah Kinsey Has Gone from a Spark Off the Bench to a Starter

By Joshua Reed
Sports Editor

Over the course of his first three years with the program, junior Micah Kinsey has provided the UNCP men’s basketball team with a tremendous spark off bench when he comes into the game. His knack for making clutch plays for the Braves when it seems they need some sort of lift or boost to get going or back on track has made him an invaluable piece to the team’s success over the years.

For the majority of this season he had been an integral member of the Braves’ second unit on a deep and loaded roster. When that unit comes into the game off the bench it is not just to give the starters a breath or keep them out of foul trouble, they often check in when the team needs a boost when things just aren’t clicking with the initial unit.

Kinsey had been the most utilized spark plug from the Black and Gold’s second team, many of which would start at other programs, as he led all players off the bench in minutes prior to being elevated to the starting line up down the final stretch of the season.

According to Head Coach Ben Miller, Kinsey has never been one to complain about coming into the



Junior Micah Kinsey has gone from an instrumental piece of the Braves’ second unit and a spark off the bench this season to a full time starter going forward. PN Photo/Trevon Knight

game off the bench because of his “team first” mentality, he is willing to assume whatever role that is needed to help his team succeed and win games.

He’s basically played starter type minutes. We do have a very deep team but Micah has really become a great leader for our team as an upperclassmen now, setting the tone for our defense,” said Miller.

Even though he hasn’t started the whole season and is ninth in scoring de-

spite being fifth in minutes, he leads the team in assists, steals and three-pointer percentage. Although his tenacious efforts on both offense and defense does not always show up on the score board and aren’t as glamorous stats in the eyes of some like points and rebounds are, they are vital to the team’s success.

“I think he’s one of the best defenders in the league and in the region. People don’t want to bring the ball up against him, the way he

can guard the ball and be disruptive there but he’s also one of the best passers we’ve had here in terms of assist to turnover ratio,” said Miller.

His propensity for taking the ball away from opponents and distributing the ball to his teammates has led to several buckets off of fast breaks as well as some of the most exciting scoring plays and vicious dunks by other members of the team.

“He’s a capable scorer, but he just wants to get

everyone involved, very unselfish, loves to pass the ball and create for others and defensively he’s just a menace out there for opponents,” said Miller.

As the Braves head into the Peach Belt Conference tournament and beyond they will rely on the player who was once a spark off the bench to now provide the jolt that will get them going from the jump.

Freshman Slugger Tremendous for Braves Softball

By Joshua Reed
Sports Editor

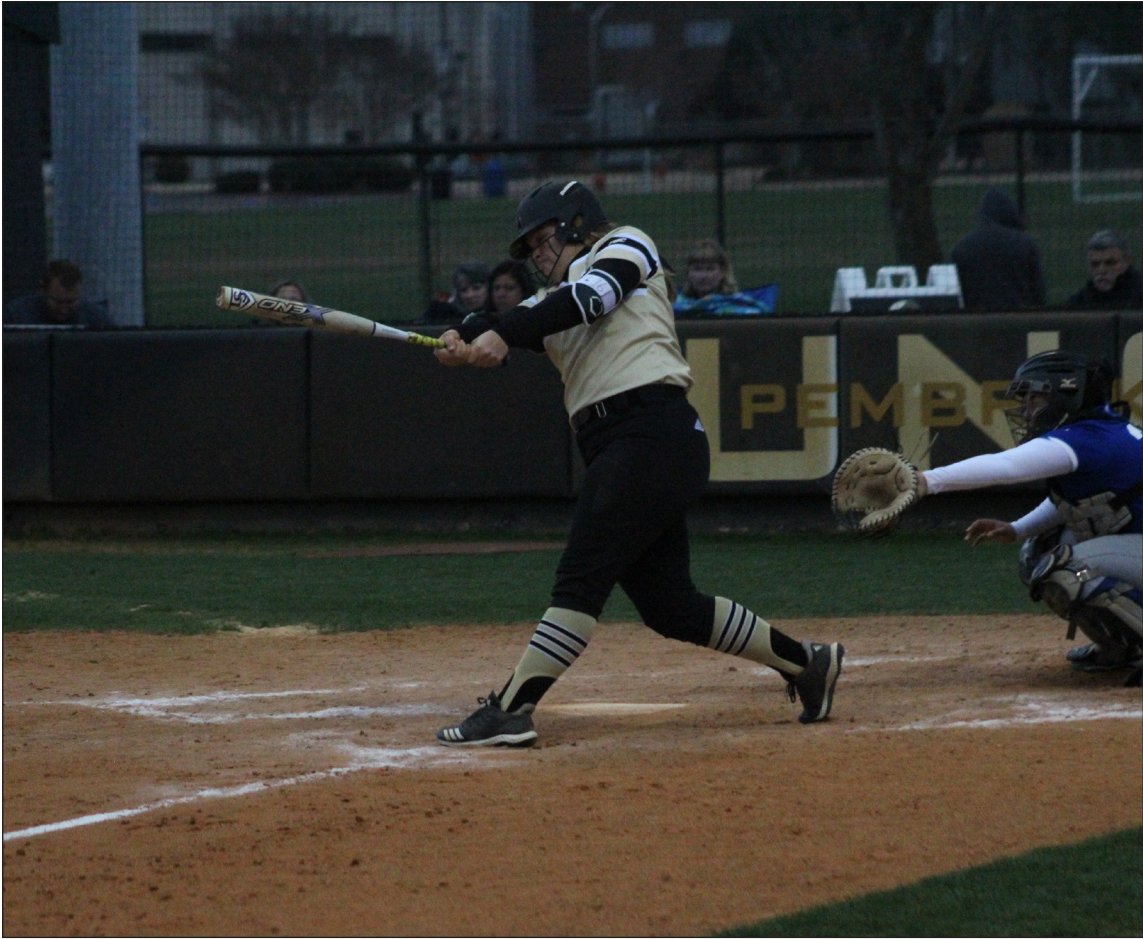
Through the early part of the season, first-year infielder Cameron Davis has been an absolute force at bat for the UNCP softball team. She currently holds the team lead in hits with 16 of 23 at-bats for a .696 batting average, which leads the team by a wide margin, yet she is eighth in opportunities at bat.

She also leads the team in doubles, RBI’s, (runners batted in), total bases, is second on the team in runs, and is the only Brave to record more than one home run in the season. Her slugging percentage, which measures the batting productivity of a hitter, of 1.304 is by far the highest mark on the team.

Davis capitalizes on the majority of chances she gets to step on the plate and put herself or her teammates in scoring position as well as bringing them back to home plate for a score. Her OPS on-base plus slugging percentage, statistic calculated by the sum of a player’s on-base percentage and slugging average, of 2.054 is nearly double that of the next closet player.

The Winterville, N.C. native has been one of the Braves most consistent and productive contributors during her freshman season with her strong swing and keen sense of when to attack the ball on desirable pitches.

“I just think in the box, she’s still got that mentality sometimes where its ‘Oh I’m struggling and I don’t



Freshman Cameron Davis has been sensational at bat for the Braves her first season. PN photo/Trevon Knight



Davis is following in the footsteps of her older sister Morgan who played for UNCP from 2013 to 2016. PN photo/Trevon Knight

feel good about my at bats’, but she recovers really nicely and I think she’s going to be a really big force in the Peach Belt (Conference),” Head Coach Brittney Bennett

She is the younger sister of former Braves’ all-conference infielder Morgan Davis, who suited up for the Black and Gold from 2013-16. She has been around the program since she was in junior high watching her sister play at the collegiate level.

“I’m glad she’s on our team. I’ve watched Cam since she was 12 years old because her sister played for us,” said Bennett.

Coach Bennett reminisced on back to when she would come out to

support her sister and the Braves, play cup ball and yell, scream and cheer on the team. As the years went by they began to gauge her interest in joining the team.

Bennett isn’t the only one that foresees greatness in Davis’ future. If she continues her stellar play it will create her own legacy and a place for herself in both team and conference history.

Dwayne Haskins Could Change the Stereotypes of Black Quarterbacks

By Joshua Reed
Sports Editor

Last year’s NFL draft featured five first round quarterbacks, that included a former Heisman winning passer with the first overall pick in Baker Mayfield to the Cleveland Browns. The last pick of the round in Lamar Jackson to the Baltimore Ravens with the 32nd overall selection.

This year’s quarterback crop is not as deep and nowhere near as front loaded as last year’s class but there are at least two players at that position that are pretty much locks to be selected into the first round in this year’s upcoming draft in Ohio State’s Dwayne Haskins and Oklahoma’s Kyler Murray.

Both were one-year starters at their respective universities and were Heisman finalists before Murray ultimately won the award. However, with Murray’s interest being torn between professional baseball or continuing to play football at the next level, Haskins is being mocked and is being projected to be the first quarterback that will be selected come April by draft experts.

Haskins is not only viewed as a probable top-10 pick in the first round, but he is also believed to be the best pure passer of all of the quarterbacks in this year’s draft class.

In his last season at the helm for the Buckeyes, he threw for 50 touchdowns to just eight interceptions, passed for nearly 5,000 yards and



Ohio State Buckeyes quarterback Dwayne Haskins is bucking the stereotypes associated with African-Americans that play the position as he is widely viewed as the best pocket passer in this year’s upcoming NFL draft. Haskins threw 50 touchdowns and just eight interceptions, and passed for nearly 5,000 yards last year for the Buckeyes. AP Photo

completed 70 percent of his passes in 14 games.

His play progressed as the season went on as he operated a pro-style offense from almost exclusively from the pocket as a passer. He only accumulated 108 rushing yards on 79 attempts and just four touchdowns compared to Murray’s 1,001 yards and 12 touchdowns on 140 attempts last year at Oklahoma.

Although Murray is the

more gifted and polarizing athlete, the former Buckeye is bucking the trend that the only African American quarterbacks that get selected in the top 10 of the draft are better athletes than pocket passers. While Haskins does possess some mobility, he has the opportunity to prove that a black quarterback can be a passer first and runner if necessary.

Many draft pundits are predicting that he will go to

the New York Giants with the sixth overall pick, barring any trades of other quarterback needy teams that might want to trade up to select him before the Giants get on the clock. If taken by New York, he will be the successor to long time signal caller and two-time Superbowl champion Eli Manning will be paired with two of the NFL’s brightest young stars and former Offensive Rookie of the Year

recipients in running back Saquon Barkley and receiver Odell Beckham Jr.

If they manage to get Haskins and stir up their shaky offensive line, the Giants would be able to field one the leagues next great offenses under Head Coach Pat Shurmur and viewed as serious contenders in the NFC but any team that selects him will get a potential prolific passer first and a runner second.

Antonio Brown Has Been His Own Worst Enemy this Offseason

By Joshua Reed
Sports Editor

Pittsburgh Steelers All-Pro wide receiver Antonio Brown has been living in the headlines so far this offseason for all the wrong reasons that are not necessarily related to football. It’s not a secret that tension between Brown, quarterback Ben Roethlisberger, Head Coach Mike Tomlin and the front office has been steadily brewing for months dating back to the team’s drama filled 2018 season.

The wideout that is arguably the most dominant in the game has been perhaps the most demonstrative factor on not just the deterioration of his own reputation around the league as well as in the eye of the public for what can be perceived as a “Me first mentality.”

He’s taken to social media on several occasions to fire back via Twitter at critics, analyst and former teammates for calling his character and maturity into question in interviews with several media outlets.

He recently posted a farewell to the city of Pittsburgh and Steelers fans everywhere, thanking them for supporting him through the first nine years of his career, but saying that it is essentially time for new beginnings. In the post he had a highlight reel of some of his best plays from last season with song “Do what I want” by rapper Lil Uzi Vert playing in the background.

For those of you not familiar with the hit song here’s a small excerpt from the lyrics. “Now I do what I want, now I do what I

want x6. Everybody know I’m better, yeah. Yeah I’m better, yeah. It don’t matter, ay, pocket fatter, aye. Nowadays I’m on my haters they got sadder, aye. That’s money longer. Different song but. Different producer”

The underlying message from this song reinforces the selfish narrative that has been associated with Brown this offseason as he has called out his coaches, his quarterback, the front office and publicly requested a trade from the organization that drafted him.

He even took to social media to ask football fans where they think he should land as if he were an unrestricted free agent.

He’s was recently involved in a domestic dispute and cited for going an excess of 100 mph at 9:30 a.m. in a 45 mph zone. With the heightened sense that the league shows in regards to domestic violence after year’s of botched handlings of discipline with players involved, an investigation has been launched.

Brown sat down with Steelers owner Art Rooney II at his Florida home last month so that the two could clear the air and possibly come to a resolution on how to rectify the fractured relationship between Brown and several members of the organization.

Following their meeting Brown took to social media once again to post a nine-minute-long Instagram live video in which he sounded off on the conversation he had with Rooney and delivered a clear message that any possible suitors for his services must meet his monetary and situa-



Newly traded Oakland Raiders’ receiver Antonio Brown has been living in the headlines this offseason publicly requesting a trade and voicing his grievances. AP Photo



Brown was traded to the Oakland Raiders after he and Owner Art Rooney II agreed that its time to part ways. AP Photo

tional demands. He stated throughout the video that he would not play under a contract that didn’t feature any guaranteed money and that he would no longer play himself in service of any NFL franchise.

Brown may have gotten his wish in getting traded out of Pittsburgh and got his new deal with more guaranteed money, but he now finds himself as the only star player on an Oakland team that is in an obvious

rebuild. In a top-heavy AFC West division, the Raiders likely won’t be competitive until they finally move to Las Vegas and Brown will be likely be past his prime.

SPORTS

FEATURE SPOTLIGHT

Jordoun Cloud Waited Until the Last Second to Make it Rain



Junior Jordoun Cloud scored his first bucket of the season in dramatic fashion when he pulled up from behind the arc in the final seconds of the Braves’ 122-96 win in their final home game of the year. PN Photo/Trevon Knight

By Joshua Reed
Sports Editor

On a night where the men’s basketball team was celebrating their lone senior in forward James Murray-Boyles on Senior Day, and had four players register double digit scoring performances, it was a player that rarely comes off the bench that stole the show

in the final seconds of the game in the Braves’ regular season finale on their home court at Lumbee Guaranty Bank Court on Feb.23. Reserve junior forward Jordoun Cloud made the last bucket of the game in the team’s 122-96 victory over conference rival Clayton State marking his first points of the entire season. “The first few opportu-

nities I had didn’t follow through, but I just stayed with it and finally got me one,” said Cloud. It brought his journey from an intramural star in the school’s rec league, who hadn’t played basketball for a scholastically sanctioned team since his sophomore year of high school to a member of a Black and Gold squad bound for the

playoffs. It only took 26 games, even though he only touched the court in five and mere six minutes of game action to this point in the season for the man commonly referred to around campus by friends, teachers and teammates as just Cloud, to record his first points of the season. “It’s a huge moment. With me being a walk on and not playing much in high school, it’s big to have a few college points under your skin and it was great to see the fans and my teammates pride for me,” said Cloud. Cloud has only seen action in the waning minutes of blowouts so far this year. “I feel like I’m the person that just brings the energy on the bench. I feel like the energy bring helps us win games. Even though I’m not helping on the court, I feel like I’m still helping the team by staying vocal and just being energized,” said Cloud. Coming in into the final home game of the season he was 0-5 on his attempts

from the field, including an empty 0-2 clip from three-point range and he had managed to get four total rebounds. In previous games, it seemed as if everyone in attendance was on their feet and cheering him on every time he got on to the court and touched the ball. Every time he would pull up for a shot or attempt to everyone would take in a huge breath before a disappointing exhale went the shot wouldn’t fall. However, this time turned out differently. When his shot fell and hit nothing but net, the entire gymnasium erupted with cheers and applause so loud that the buzzer signifying the end of the game was nearly drowned out. Cloud is well known on the campus of UNCP by students and faculty alike and was bombarded with hugs and high fives as he returned to the sidelines. The stands emptied as his fellow classmates and cohorts stormed the court to offer him their long anticipated congratulations.



Dallas Mavericks first year guard/small forward Luka Doncic was drafted third overall by the Atlanta Hawks before being traded to the Mavericks for Trae Young. He has averaged 20.7 points, 7.2 rebounds and 5.6 assists so far this season. AP Photo

Toni Harris First Female Football Player Scholarship

By Ky’Aire Goode
Managing Editor

Free safety Toni Harris of Detroit, Michigan made history on February 26 by becoming the first female football player to sign a letter of intent as a position player. Harris signed to play football at Central Methodist University in Missouri after playing the last two seasons at East Los Angeles College in California. Other women have made attempts to break into the football world as well, with varying degrees of success. Sam Gordon is the most prominent name among female football players.

Gordon appeared in the NFL’s 100th Season commercial during the Super Bowl alongside NFL stars such as Todd Gurley and Peyton Manning. Gordon has been a standout player since 2012 when she was just nine years old and has proven her talent playing against both boys and girls. Questions remain about Gordon’s commitment to football going forward at age 16 however. Defensive back Shelby Osborne of Kentucky signed to play college football in 2014, but she was not a scholarship player and isn’t widely considered to break out.

Kicker Becca Longo signed with Division II Adams State (Colorado) in April 2018 but has never attempted a kick in a college football game so far. Harris marks the latest woman to step into the national spotlight football brings. She is on record saying her ultimate goal is to play in the NFL for the Seattle Seahawks. Media outlets such as ESPN and NFL.com have all been quick to jump on the story of Harris’ success. The young defensive back could quickly find herself as a national inspiration for young women if she succeeds.

Luka Doncic is Still Front Runner for NBA Rookie of the Year

By Joshua Reed
Sports Editor

At the spry age of jus 20 years old the Dallas Mavericks first year guard/small forward has been arguably the best and definitely the brightest young star in the NBA this season. Since being drafted with the third overall pick by the Atlanta Hawks then traded to Dallas, the European star born in Slovenia has been silencing his critics and proving all his doubters wrong. He nearly joined elite company when he came up just short of making the All-Star team and would’ve became just the 46th rookie in league history to receive such a rare distinction and would have been the first to do so since Clippers forward Blake Griffin did so as a member of Clippers in 2011.

Doncic has averaged 20.7 points, 7.2 rebounds and 5.6 assists this season as he has been an integral piece of a Mavericks team that is still jockeying for playoff contention amidst some steep competition in a loaded Western Conference. The reason that many believe he is running away with the award for top rookie is because he not only has provided some of the best highlight reel moments and plays of the season so far, his consistently stellar play has directly translated to wins for his team. He has played his best and had his biggest performance outputs of the season in the team’s biggest wins

unlike his fellow candidates that are up for the award such as first overall Dean-dre Ayton of the Phoenix Suns, Marvin Bagley III of the Sacramento Kings and Trae Young of the Atlanta Hawks, who Luka was traded for shortly after being drafted. Bagley has come on strong as of late while Ayton is averaging a double-double and Young has been a nice boost for the Hawks, but neither are impacting their team’s overall success in the win/loss columns like Doncic. The official announcement won’t come until later this summer so the Luka has some more time distance himself and cement his status as the best rookie in the league.