

THE NEWS & OBSERVER

RALEIGH,
NORTH CAROLINA

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1998

FINAL EDITION
50 CENTS

www.news-observer.com

Student's slaying sends shock waves through NCSU

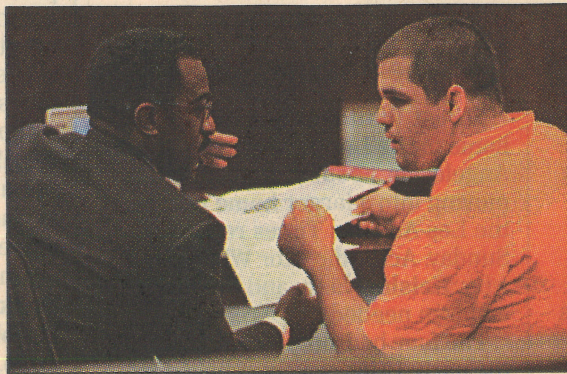
THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

- **More charges:** Police charge three NCSU gymnastics team members with alcohol violations for hosting a keg party in the neighborhood where the incident occurred.
- **In court:** NCSU wrestler Clyde Williams Blunt has his first court appearance on a charge of involuntary manslaughter.
- **The beating:** Investigators say victim Neil Vernon Davis Jr. was beaten in addition to being shot. They say he continued to be punched after suffering the gunshot wound.



INSIDE

- **'It's mind-boggling':** Those who knew Davis, left, when he was growing up in Fayetteville are shocked. ▶8A
- **Cautlon Tudor:** It's time for NCSU to make some tough decisions. ▶1C



Wrestler Clyde Williams Blunt, right, talks with a court official at his first appearance.

STAFF PHOTO BY KRISTIN PRELIPP

A seventh person is charged with breaking into the victim's home, and three NCSU gymnasts are charged with alcohol violations.

By TODD NELSON
STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH — The death of an N.C. State student attacked by a group of student-athletes continued to rock the university Monday as police filed alcohol charges against members of the gymnastics team who were hosts of a raucous keg party at the center of the case. Raleigh investigators sifted

though the details of what happened starting at 2:30 a.m. Sunday — when Neil Vernon Davis Jr. fired several rounds from a pistol at the party, which was across the street from his townhouse on Hunters Club Drive in West Raleigh.

One slug hit the front door of the house where the party was taking place, and a fragment struck an NCSU wrestler, slightly injuring him. The shooting prompted seven party-goers, including five athletes, to storm Davis' house, seeking what police called "street justice."

So confusing were the circumstances of Davis' death that the students accused of beating him continued to punch and kick him even

after his gun fired, having no idea that a bullet had ripped through his chest and mortally injured him, police said.

NCSU Chancellor Marye Ann Fox, students and administrators said Davis' death had left the campus devastated. Officials suspended the three football players and two wrestlers charged in the incident from participation in athletic events. A former wrestling team member who is still a student also was charged.

"Obviously we're all devastated any time we lose a student, and to lose a student under these circumstances, it's even worse," Fox said.

SEE SHOOTING, PAGE 8A

State rethinks charter report

Schools' fury gives state pause

By TIM SIMMONS
STAFF WRITER

Saying they simply don't know how many charter school teachers are unlicensed, state officials are backing away from a report that indicated a majority of the experimental schools violated state law last year.

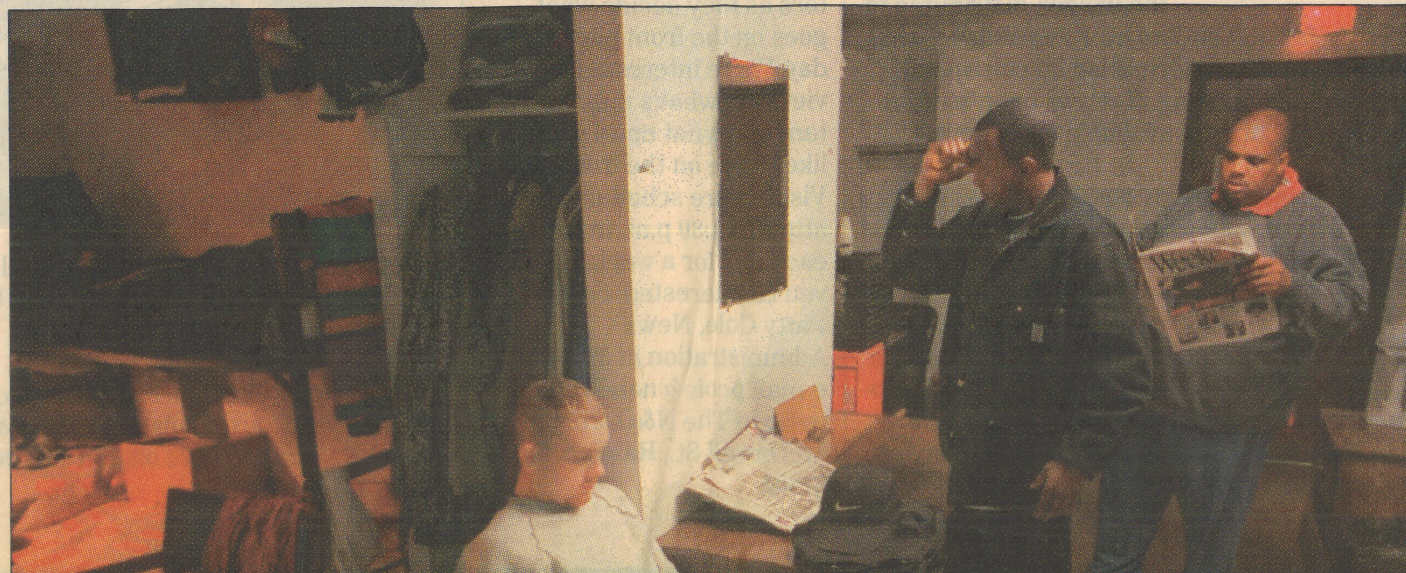
After an angry backlash from charter school supporters and his

THE SERIES

▶ **THE TRIANGLE** isn't alone in struggling with rapid growth. This final installment of a six-part series **BLUEPRINTS** examines a program for the homeless that has drawn national praise. Series summary, page 14A.

TODAY

- ▶ **HERE: A SCATTERSHOT APPROACH**
Programs for the homeless in the Triangle offer little help for drug and alcohol addicts.
- ▶ **THERE: A WELL-COORDINATED STRATEGY**
In Louisville, Ky., once-homeless people help the addicted homeless turn their lives around.



Stocks hit new height

Lower interest rates and news of big corporate mergers fuel a rally that brings the Dow back into record territory after a late-summer slump.

By BOB FERNANDEZ
KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS

Exuberance is back. The Dow Jones industrial average shot to an all-time high Monday, reversing in less than three months a 19 percent correction triggered this summer by a global economic slowdown.

Billion-dollar merger deals in several indus-

charter school supporters and his own questioning of state education officials, the chairman of the State Board of Education said Monday that he wished the report had never been released.

“I regret that the department put into writing information that is of questionable accuracy,” chairman Phil Kirk said. “It is inexcusable that such damaging information was put into a report without giving the charters a chance to respond.”

The study, which became public when it was mailed to Board of Education members two weeks ago, said that 49 percent of the 235 teachers working in charter schools were not licensed to teach.

State law requires that 75 percent of the teachers in each charter elementary school and 50 percent in each charter high school be licensed.

Based on that requirement, 23 of the 34 charter schools in operation last year were in violation of the law.

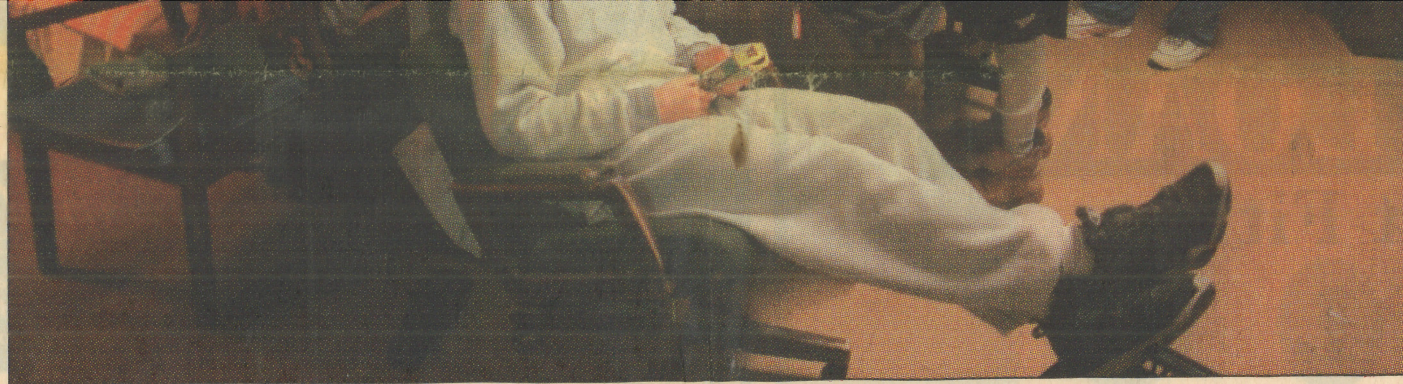
But a closer review of charter school records showed the study was flawed by poor record-keeping and bad communication between state officials and school operators.

Many charter school operators, for example, believed a teacher could hold a certificate from any state and meet the requirements of the North Carolina law, said Roger Gerber, president of the Association of North Carolina Charter Schools. In fact, any teacher without a North Carolina teaching license is considered unlicensed by the state.

Other schools did not keep personnel records that matched the format of more traditional schools, which have far more experience in dealing with state regulations. And the state relied on teacher certification files that are rarely up to date.

The result, Kirk said, is that the

SEE CHARTER, PAGE 4A



At The Healing Place, former addicts lead homeless addicts toward recovery. Kevin White reads the Alcoholics Anonymous 'Big Book' as Andre Shepard, center, and Gregory Willett hang out in the Phase 1 dormitory.

PHOTOS BY PATRICK McDONOGH FOR THE NEWS & OBSERVER

Kicking a homeless habit

By CHRISTINA NIFONG
STAFF WRITER

LOUISVILLE, Ky.

FOUR YEARS AGO, Charlotte Smyzer seemed to have it all: an apartment, friends, a good job as a nurse.

Then, slowly, she succumbed to the choking grip of crack. At her worst, she was spending \$900 every two weeks to feed her habit. Her only acquaintances were other addicts. She was rapidly falling behind on her rent.

“I felt like the next step was prostitution,” says Smyzer, 48. “I knew I needed help.”

Had Smyzer lived in the Triangle when she hit bottom 11 months ago, she probably would have been referred to a county-run, two-week detox program. If unlucky, she might have been placed on a waiting list, allowing her addiction to strengthen or her resolve to fade.

Either way, she would not have been given the chance she got in Louisville. There, she was sent to a five-year-old program that has compiled impressive results and is attracting notice from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,



April Allen, left, gets a hug after being scolded by her group. Anne Fajardo, a staff member, is next in line.

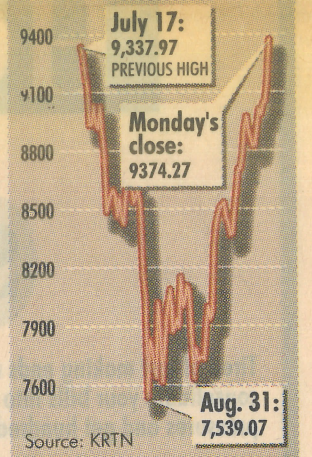
medical associations nationwide and big-name foundations. It has even caught the attention of a dedicated group in Raleigh whose mission is to duplicate the program in the Triangle.

The program is called The Healing Place. It's a shelter that employs former homeless people as role models — and it is breaking new ground in treating and reforming the addicted homeless.

SEE HOMELESS, PAGE 14A

tries, a herd-like rush by mutual-fund portfolio managers to inject money into the stock markets and low interest rates are fueling the November stock market run, economists and Wall Street analysts said Monday.

The Dow, the most widely followed barometer of stock price movements, jumped 214.72 points to close at 9,374.27.



The Dow Jones average set its previous record July 17, closing at 9,337.97. In between these two highs, however, the Dow took investors on a frightening ride by falling to 7,539 by Aug. 31 as fears about a global economic slowdown took root.

Since then, many analysts have come to believe that the worst is over as Asia, except for Japan, has stabilized, and political will has emerged in Latin America to avoid an eco-

SEE MARKET, PAGE 4A

Kids and mice: Do they click?

Triangle preschoolers enter debate over computer use

By RUTH SHEEHAN
STAFF WRITER

Rozina Judkins wields her mouse with a precision born of practice. At age 4, changing a multicolored wiggly worm with deft clicks, she is proof of the first maxim about computers for preschoolers: Kids love them.

The second: Their parents love them. Sales of programming for children ages 5 and younger doubled in the past year, making it the fastest-growing segment of the software market.

The only question is: Do computers actually help the youngest children learn?

One day, Rozina and her classmates may help provide the answer. On Monday, IBM and United Way announced they are donating snazzy, interactive “Young Explorer” computers to 50 nonprofit day-care centers in the United States and Canada, including Durham’s Scarborough Nursery School, which Rozina attends, and four others in the Triangle. In exchange for the computers, programs, teacher’s manuals and training, the

Health — Page 10A

SEE TECH, PAGE 4A

McDougal acquitted: Susan McDougal, right, is acquitted of embezzling from conductor Zubin Mehta and his wife — in a case she said was trumped up to pressure her to testify against President Clinton.

Nation — Page 7A



West side story: Empire Properties, which paved the way for Jillian’s Billiard Cafe in downtown Raleigh, buys more property.

Business — Page 1D



TODAY



TOMORROW

Today: Increasing sunshine. High 70, low 38.

Wednesday: Partly sunny, cooler. High 66, low 46.

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Test for ADD: Researchers say a new test using a special brain scan can identify children who have attention deficit disorder.

HOMELESS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

"The Healing Place will demonstrate to a lot of people things they would not believe," says Maria Spaulding, director of Wake County Human Services and one of 18 public officials, social service workers, business people and doctors who traveled to Louisville in June to see the program.

"People do not believe the kind of change that The Healing Place is achieving is even possible," Spaulding says.



HOMELESSNESS IS NOT NEW to the Triangle, but it is growing — and the way local officials have handled it has often been controversial.

In Chapel Hill, for example, complaints about street people prompted the Town Council in September to approve fining and jailing aggressive panhandlers. In Durham, dozens of working poor with no other homes were evicted from a downtown motel after its owner refused to comply with county health codes.

And in Raleigh, after months of debate over what to do with the growing number of men congregating in Moore and Nash squares, the City Council voted in October to ban sleeping in the downtown parks. The city also expanded the hours of its temporary shelter but has not offered up plans for a long-promised permanent shelter. The inaction sparked a protest on Sunday.

"The problem is getting to such a scale that you can't help but see it," says Rich Lee, head of the Durham-based Council to End Homelessness. "It's becoming very visible here. That's why you're getting some of these reactions."

The Triangle's struggle over homelessness reminds Marlene Gordon of Louisville's landscape in 1983. That was the year a man froze to death on the streets and the city's attitude toward the homeless began to change. "We just decided we didn't want to be a city like that, a place that would let someone die on the streets," says Gordon, director of The Coalition for the Homeless, a non-profit corporation that coordinates services for the homeless in the Louisville area.



Homeless people of all ages and backgrounds battle drug and alcohol addiction at The Healing Place. They must follow strict guidelines, and the success rate is high.

PHOTOS BY PATRICK McDONOGH FOR THE NEWS & OBSERVER

recovery program based on Alcoholics Anonymous. Each service works with the others to entice the addicted to sober up and remind the recovering of where they could be again if they slip up.

The Healing Place theory goes like this: You make homeless people, especially addicted ones, care about their lives by showing them others who've been through what



How the Triangle compares

	Raleigh-Durham MSA	Louisville, KY-IN MSA
Population (1997)	1,050,054	993,369
Percent below poverty level	11.2%	15%
People per square mile	300	479
Unemployment rate (1997)	2.3%	3.5%
Emergency shelter beds for individuals		

who now lives in one of The Healing Place's apartments. "It taught me I had to sacrifice a little to get to where I am now." Miller works full time on building and grounds maintenance for Louisville's Metropolitan Sewer District, a job with good pay and benefits.



RALEIGH COULD HAVE A VERSION OF

Out of that tragedy, a new level of dedication and coordination emerged. "No one can do it all, and everybody knows that," Gordon says. "But here, city and county government are always at the table and if they're supportive, then things are going to happen."

In Louisville, a network of day shelters provides homeless services and keeps men and women safe. As a result, few homeless people gather in parks or in Louisville's renovated downtown.

Another model program ensures that homeless students do not miss a day of school even if their immunizations or paperwork are out of date. The coalition also sponsors such activities as Girl Scout troops for homeless children. This summer the coalition held a weekend of camping in the woods for homeless mothers and their children.

It's not that Louisville, a city of about 270,000 spread along the shores of the Ohio River, has more resources than the Triangle. By some measures, it has fewer. Louisville's unemployment rate, for one, is more than a point higher than the Triangle's.

But Louisville's service providers have learned to do more with less by cooperating. The school program, for instance, requires county officials, school officials and homeless service-providers to work together.

Another example is the city's system of day shelters. The first one opened in 1984. When it became overcrowded, Louisville's homeless providers opened two more — something that might not have happened without a coordinated look at what the city's homeless people needed.



BUT THE PROGRAM that attracts the most attention in Louisville is The Healing Place.

What makes it so unusual is its combination of shelter beds, a non-medical detox center and a 12-step

they're going through and have emerged on the other side.

"The men teach classes to their peers," says Jay Davidson, director at The Healing Place. "Three months ago, these guys were all sitting under a bridge drinking together. Those in the class know how bad a drinker their teacher used to be. So they see this man and they say, 'If he can do it, maybe I can.'"

The cost is modest. In similar but separate programs for men and women, The Healing Place provides beds, meals and addiction services for an average cost of \$25 per person per day.

The focus on addiction is what makes The Healing Place so attractive to leaders in Raleigh. Nationwide studies show that as many as 60 percent of homeless people suffer from addiction. But few shelters — none in the Triangle — will accept people under the influence of drugs or alcohol. They are simply too hard to control in crowded shelters. So the addicted stay outside. If they become aggressive, police haul them to the emergency room.

A Wake County Human Services report shows the results of policies like these: Two individuals, both homeless, accounted for 19 percent of all Wake County ambulance rides in 1997. They alone cost the county \$276,260 that year.

If the Triangle had a nonmedical detox center — a few rows of beds, and someone to watch them, where people on the street who are drunk or high could come to dry out — virtually all those trips could have been avoided, Wake County officials say.



THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN THROUGH The Healing Place say the program is effective because of its many layers of perks and punishment.

"Other programs ... place no responsibility on the participants," says Lynn Hettinger, a Healing Place participant. "This demands a lot of its residents."



Emergency shelter beds for individuals	Demand	Supply	448	361
Emergency shelter beds for families	Demand	Supply	302	1,659
Drug and alcohol treatment slots	Demand	Supply	1,351	1193
			92	257

Sources: U.S. Census, HUD Continuum of Care

W. VONDRACEK / The News & Observer

Hettinger was a nurse in Louisville before she slipped back into her addiction to prescription drugs last year, having been clean for eight. She had nowhere to turn, she says: Her husband kicked her out of the house, and the rest of her family also had tired of dealing with her addiction.

People enter The Healing Place either through the detox center or through the standard homeless shelter, where roughly 80 men check in at 4 p.m., have dinner, shower and spend the night in a bed. The women's shelter, opened in 1995, has beds for eight. These participants have made no commitment to recovery.

"You can do that 365 days a year and since you're not going to do

any more, I'm not going to do any more for you," Davidson says. "But I'm willing to give you more if you're willing to make changes."

Those willing to do more promise at first only to attend classes and evening AA or Narcotics Anonymous meetings in exchange for a reserved bed for a week. Often a week of connecting with those who've been sober longer is all it takes to prod a resident on further, Davidson says.

Once a resident makes a commitment to recovery, he or she is guaranteed a bed and dresser and pledges in return to work through each step of the addiction program.

Those who violate the pledge to remain drug-free, attend classes

and participate in assigned chores are punished. They are chastised by others in the program and required to write essays examining why they violated the code. They also risk having some of their earned rewards taken away.

After several months, once a resident has reached the program's Step 10 (continuing to take a personal inventory and promptly admitting wrongs), new privileges emerge: job training, job seeking and housing in new, dormlike apartments. Many who complete the program are given housing and a stipend to stay on and teach.

The Healing Place is not without critics, however. Other Louisville homeless shelter leaders say the program succeeds in part because it targets only one segment of the homeless population.

And at times, The Healing Place does seem more like a free substance-abuse clinic than a homeless shelter. Many of its residents came to the center because they knew of its treatment program, not because they were homeless. In fact, The Healing Place uses a very liberal definition of homelessness: someone whose name is not on a lease or mortgage. One woman even said she gave up her home to qualify for the program.

But the program's track record is impressive: Of the 635 men and women who have completed the program, 64 percent have remained sober for more than one year after leaving. "This program teaches you a lot about life," says Larry Miller,

RThe Healing Place in operation within a year, according to Fred Barber, senior vice president at Capitol Broadcasting and one of the three main organizers pushing to bring the program to the Triangle.

The three — Barber, Wake County Human Services director Spaulding and Wake County Human Services Board Member Barbara Goodman — have been meeting with City Council members, downtown business leaders and neighborhood groups since June.

"This program gets people sober immediately, and it gets them on the road to becoming taxpaying members of society," Barber says. "We think Raleigh needs this."

The program would be run as a nonprofit, so neither city nor county officials would need to adopt it. (In Louisville, 75 percent of the operating costs have been contributed by doctors.)

But many hurdles lie ahead for the shelter, such as finding a place to put it. That's a battle the organizers expect to be long and difficult, considering the bitter fight waged a year ago when the Wake County commissioners chose a site for a permanent emergency shelter. Raleigh's City Council voted it down after business operators and homeowners near the proposed site complained.

The organizers stress that The Healing Place would not take the place of one or more permanent emergency shelters in Wake County; they consider that a separate issue. But they are braced for a real struggle over the location.

"We've been trying to do things a certain way for a long time, and they're not working," Goodman says. "So why don't we think out of the box a little bit, try something different, something that's exciting and has this concrete success rate built into it? We just don't want this to become politicized."

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In Phase 1, Al Hansbrough, right, a 'graduate' of the program, counsels Dean Stone, a recovering addict.

SERIES SUMMARY

▶ **SUNDAY, OCT. 25:** Virginia's car-pool lanes have helped keep commuters moving near the nation's capital.

▶ **TUESDAY, OCT. 27:** Threatened by sprawl, a suburb of Atlanta creates a town center from scratch.

▶ **TUESDAY, NOV 3:** How Charlotte uses homeowners to "take back" one of its drug-infested districts.

▶ **TUESDAY, NOV 10:** Maryland county saves farmland with a program that trades development rights.

▶ **TUESDAY, NOV. 17:** Orlando, Fla., revives its downtown by nurturing neighborhoods.

▶ **TODAY:** Louisville, Ky., uses a 12-step program to help the homeless turn their lives around.

▶ **ON THE WEB:** You can find the Blueprints stories and a readers' forum at <http://www.news-observer.com/tri/blueprints/>
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