

Asheville man faces graffiti vandalism charges

ASHEVILLE — A city man was charged with vandalism-related offenses late Tuesday after police say he painted graffiti on businesses and city property along Tunnel Road.

David Lee Rocha Miller, 25, was charged with four counts of injury to real property and possession of drug paraphernalia, Asheville police Lt. Wally Welch said.



David Lee Rocha Miller

Witnesses called police shortly after 10 p.m. after noticing the suspect in the 100 block of Tunnel Road. Officer Christopher Byers located Miller at Waffle House at 171 Tunnel Road with wet paint still on his hands, Welch said.

Officers determined that three businesses — Waffle House, Mountaineer Inn and a Shell gas station — had been painted, along with city power boxes and traffic signals.

Miller was held at the Buncombe County Detention Facility under a \$5,000 bond.

YMCA theft suspect faces more charges

ASHEVILLE — A Candler woman police accused in a series of thefts at a local YMCA faces 11 more charges.

Asheley Lachea Conard, 23, of Knot Head Drive, was charged Wednesday with five counts of breaking and entering, five counts of misdemeanor larceny and breaking or entering a motor vehicle. Her bond for these charges was set at \$17,000.

High-profile board contest ends

ASHEVILLE — A high-profile contest over three open spots on a commission that could shape the look of the city for decades has ended.

The City Council appointed rural community planner Kristy Carter, downtown developer Jeremy Goldstein and architect Jane Mathews to the Planning and Zoning Commission on Tuesday night.

Nine residents applied, including neighborhood activists, real estate agents and smart-growth advocates. The council recently expanded the power of the seven-member commission, giving the body final say over projects downtown up to 175,000 square feet and in the rest of the city up to 100,000 square feet.

Prior to that, the council or a committee made up of city staff gave final approval for projects, depending on their size. That included developer Stewart Coleman's controversial condominium project in front of City Hall, over which staff had the final say.

ON THE WEB

What's hot in high school sports? Citizen-Times preps reporter Andrew Pearson updates his blog multiple times a day. Visit CITIZEN-TIMES.com/blogs and click on "High School Sports Huddle."

LOTTERIES

Sat. Powerball
2-17-23-28-47 PB 36 (2)

NORTH CAROLINA
nc-educationlottery.org

Wed. Day Pick 3 3-4-3
Tue. Eve. Pick 3 2-9-5
Wed. Day Pick 4 7-3-7-1
Tue. Eve. Pick 4 0-3-5-5
Tue. Cash 5
2-14-20-27-29

SOUTH CAROLINA
sceducationlottery.com

Wed. Day Pick 3 8-6-5
Wed. Eve. Pick 3 8-4-8
Wed. Day Pick 4 9-4-3
Wed. Eve. Pick 4 9-1-7-9
Wed. Palmetto Cash 5
12-18-25-31-37

TENNESSEE
www.tnlottery.com

Wed. Day Cash 3 7-6-1
Wed. Eve. Cash 3 0-5-6
Wed. Day Cash 4 6-2-6-1
Wed. Eve. Cash 4 2-5-8-5
Mon. Pick 5 4-21-27-31-35

FLORIDA
flalottery.com

Sat. Lotto
23-33-40-44-46-52
MEGA MILLIONS
megamillions.com
Tue. 11-21-44-48-49 (23)
Sat. Win For Life
21-25-2628-34-42 (13)

Numbers for lotto games and Powerball are listed in numerical order. Details at CITIZEN-TIMES.com/lottery

AAA: WNC roads dangerous

Trooper cites 'statistical anomaly'

By Romando Dixon
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BREVARD — The latest Automobile Association of America traffic safety survey suggests Western North Carolina roads are among the state's most dangerous.

Transylvania County in 2009 recorded the greatest concentration of traffic fatalities related to automobile crashes, according to

AAA Carolinas' annual Dangerous County analysis. The report also said Graham County had the highest percentage of crashes and injuries from motorcycles.

The rankings are determined by dividing the number of certain types of crashes per county by number of vehicle miles traveled.

First Sgt. Kevin Bray of the N.C. Highway Patrol feels it might be a bit unfair to say Tran-

AAA RANKINGS

Deadliest counties in the state for motorists in 2009.

- » Transylvania
- » Graham
- » Alleghany
- » Gates
- » Hyde

Source: AAA Carolinas.

sylvania County is a particularly deadly place to drive or ride.

Bray, who's responsible for the day-to-day Highway Patrol operations in Polk, Henderson and Transylvania counties, says

it's a statistical anomaly. He said Transylvania County averages about three or four traffic fatalities a year, but in 2009 it had 13. Bray said six of the deaths happened as a result of one accident when a truck collided with a vehicle head on. Six people were killed.

"If it has turned into such a dangerous place to drive, why do I only have one (fatal wreck) to date?" this year, Bray said, adding there were only three traffic-

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A beautiful biking adventure



Keith Marks, left, and Mark Riordan make their way to Craggy Gardens along the Blue Ridge Parkway while visiting the Asheville area from Harrisburg, Pa. JOHN FLETCHER/JFLETCHER@CITIZEN-TIMES.COM

A closure, an opening and a move for city restaurants

By Jason Sandford
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ASHEVILLE — The restaurant scene continues to ebb and flow, with a downtown closing, a North Asheville opening and a West Asheville move. Here's a quick look:

Pho Fusion to close

Pho Fusion, Asheville's first restaurant specializing in the Vietnamese noodle soup known as pho, is closing Friday. Chef Tru Phan said Tuesday that his location in the Downtown Market on South French Broad Avenue wasn't getting enough visitors and that he needed more help running the operation.

"I feel bad because I tried to show people good food," he said. "But it's a tough time and the location is difficult." Phan opened in November 2010 in the long brick building that once housed Industries for the Blind and stands across the street from the offices of the local United Way chapter.

The restaurant joined an Amazing Savings grocery store, a coffee shop and about 80 consignment sellers, a group of shops known collectively as the Downtown Market.

But the building's owners announced in June that the building was in foreclosure.

Most of the vendors



Plant, a vegan restaurant, opened on Merrimon Avenue, one of the newest eateries on the scene. Chef Jason Sellers was busy this week with whipping up a tomato and wine sauce. BILL SANDERS/WVSANDERS@CITIZEN-TIMES.COM

moved out, while the restaurant, market and coffee shop continued with month-to-month leases.

Phan said he hopes he can find a new location in which to open.

Nona Mia on the move

Yolie Affatato, co-owner of Nona Mia Italian Kitchen on Patton Avenue, wants folks to know her restaurant is open, though it will be closed briefly for a move.

Affatato said an advertising notice about the move actually has people thinking the restaurant,

known for its delicious Italian offerings and tasty, puffy pizzas, is closing.

"Tell everyone we're open," said Affatato, who added that business has dropped off after word spread about the move. She owns the restaurant with her chef husband, Peter.

Here are the details: Nona Mia will be open from now until Sept. 3, when the move will begin to 1050 Haywood Road, the location of the couple's sister restaurant, Pizzeria Ritrovo. The pizzeria will be open until Saturday, when it will close so its kitchen

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'Impromptu memorial' marks 9/11 anniversary

A point of light. A shadow cast. A memory shared.

The ephemeral elements are fleeting. But for Asheville's Martha Skinner, they're perfect elements for a moving memorial marking the upcoming 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Skinner's sweeping vision for the remembrance starts with a small, laser-cut business card she calls a "project card." The words "dispersed memorial" — the name of her project — are spelled out in the form of tiny dots cut from the card. Dozens of other dots pierce the card in random fashion. Skinner, who lives in Asheville and teaches architecture at Clemson University, lived in New York for more than 10 years but wasn't there when the World Trade Center towers fell.

The idea is to spark a person-to-person exchange about Sept. 11 and its impact by handing a card to someone. Skinner then encourages anyone receiving a card to take a meaningful, composed photo of the card held to light and post it on her website, www.dispersed-memorial.net.

There, the photos can be geo-tagged. A bigger picture then starts to emerge, says Skinner, who is in the process of sending out packs of 10 cards to individuals around the country to spread the idea.

"My hope is there is a conversation about the



Jason Sandford
ASHVEGAS



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Virginia names Duke official as its new provost

By Zinie Chen Simpson
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RICHMOND, Va. — The University of Virginia has named Duke University's vice provost for academic affairs its new executive vice president and provost.

UVA President Teresa Sullivan announced John D. Simon's hiring Wednesday as the Charlottesville university's chief academic officer, effective Sept. 1. He succeeds Arthur Garson Jr., who left in May.

As provost, Simon, 54, is responsible for directing the academic administration of U.Va.'s 11 schools, the library, the art museum, three residential colleges, public service activities, numerous university centers, foreign study pro-

grams and the advancement of teaching and research, the university said in a release. Other top duties include appointing and evaluating academic deans and managing the university's academic budget, including helping efforts to enact a new financial model for the university.

Simon has overseen Duke's strategic planning and campus-wide academic initiatives for the last six years. Before serving as vice provost, he led the university's chemistry department for five years. "He has been successful in leading important, visible and complex initiatives (in) a period of tremendous growth in research and advances in quality at Duke," Sullivan said of him.

Review of state buildings finds little quake damage

By Gary D. Robertson
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH — Only a few minor problems have been discovered within North Carolina state government buildings and other structures that may be attributed to tremors caused by Tuesday's earthquake felt along the East Coast, state officials said Wednesday.

Only three state structures in the Raleigh area have reported damage — minor cracks inside two buildings and possible damage to a previously closed pedestrian walkway connecting a parking deck and a building, said Jill Lucas, state Department of Administration spokeswoman. Building inspectors later deter-

mined the building cracks were cosmetic, she said.

Officials at state buildings in other parts of North Carolina were asked to let the department know of problems by today.

"We have not heard any reports of structural damage elsewhere," Lucas said.

Gov. Beverly Perdue announced the review of government buildings on Wednesday, after Tuesday's earthquake.

The 5.8 magnitude quake's epicenter was northwest of Richmond, Va.

Shaking could be felt in North Carolina from the mountains to the coast. Workers in other states also were examining office and government

buildings for hidden damage from the quake.

"We think that's a very good safety precaution to take," Perdue told reporters during a briefing on Hurricane Irene.

The Department of Transportation said there were no signs of damage with the aging Bonner Bridge in Dare County, the only road connecting Hatteras Island and the mainland. The bridge is a key evacuation route as Irene approaches.

Bridge inspectors found no visual problems with the span after the earthquake, department spokeswoman Nicole Meister said. Inspectors are part of the work crew performing repairs to the bridge so it can operate without vehicle weight re-

strictions, she said.

Last month, the department awarded a contract to build a replacement bridge that's expected to be open by spring 2015.

The current bridge, originally built in 1962 and which has exceeded its expected lifespan, will be demolished by the following year.

DOT crews also were looking for any earthquake-related damage as they performed normal duties at other bridge work sites, Meister said.

Lucas said the Jenkins House and the Cooper building, home of the state's vital records office, were in the Raleigh government buildings that reported wall cracks possibly caused by the earthquake.



Asheville resident Martha Skinner is using distributed laser-cut cards and photos to create a tribute to victims of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, as its 10-year anniversary approaches. SPECIAL TO THE CITIZEN-TIMES

9/11: Group participation

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events of Sept. 11, and then there's a beautifully composed image that marks that moment of remembrance," Skinner said.

"In that process, a kind of impromptu, dispersed memorial started to happen."

Skinner envisions future phases of the project, which include creating a database of the people affected by the terrorist attacks. She also hopes to one day have some of the collected images made into glass plaques that can go up around New York. The glass panels would include a delicate line drawing of the Manhattan skyline as it looked with the towers still standing. Skinner first had the idea shortly after the terrorist attacks and even

submitted it to the official competition for the construction of an official memorial.

"The idea has the quality of a memorial that you can stumble upon, a place where you can stop and reflect and honor a life anywhere in the routine of your daily life," said Skinner, whose projects often involve the collective participation of people.

Skinner's happy to spread her idea one card at a time, all to catch a fleeting shaft of light, a passing reflection.

It's what life is all about, after all.

This is the opinion of Jason Sandford. Contact him at 232-5851 or jsandford@citizen-times.com. Find Ashvegas updates online at CITIZEN-TIMES.com/ashvegas and the full blog at www.ashvegas.com.



A surfer rides a wave at the Outer Banks before the anticipated arrival of Hurricane Irene on Saturday. Mandatory evacuations will be decided by county officials. Currituck County has asked tourists to leave. REZA MARVASHTI/AP

Coastal evacuations begin

Tourists leaving Outer Banks ahead of Irene

The Associated Press

RALEIGH — Officials in North Carolina's coastal Dare County say tens of thousands of tourists must leave as Hurricane Irene approaches with wind speeds expected to exceed 100 mph.

The county issued the order Wednesday night, saying evacuations would begin at 8 a.m. today. Dare officials will meet again today to determine if residents need to evacuate.

Dare emergency management spokeswoman Sharon Sullivan said as many as 150,000 tourists may be leaving the county, which is home to some of the exposed Outer Banks.

About 35,000 residents live in the county year round.

She said schools, which were expected to start today, will be closed because of the volume of traffic expected.

Currituck County officials also announced Wednesday that its schools would be closed for the same reason.

Officials in Currituck County have asked tourists to leave.

Currituck County contains the northern Outer Banks. Authorities say vacationers need to leave by Friday and residents who stay for the storm should have a three-day supply of water and food because emergency officials may not be able to immediately reach them.

Also, the Air Force in North Carolina is getting ready to move dozens of



Jeremy Pickett boards the windows of a shopping store in Cape Hatteras in preparation for Hurricane Irene. Evacuations began Wednesday on Ocracoke Island. JOSE LUIS MAGANA/AP

fighter jets and tankers out of harm's way.

Staff Sgt. Heather Stanton at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base outside Goldsboro says forecasts are prompting officials to plan to move the

installation's F-15 fighter jets and KC-135 tankers to another site.

Stanton says the 5,000 military personnel at the installation are preparing for potential high winds, flooding and tornadoes.

ROADS: Curves cited

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related deaths in 2010.

Transylvania County logged a fatality rate of 5.5 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 2009, compared to the statewide fatality rate of 1.3 deaths per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

The county had 0.2 percent of all state crashes, while only accounting for 0.2 percent of vehicle miles traveled. The report also revealed 0.2 percent of the state's crashes causing injuries (247) and 0.9 percent (13) of the state's 1,344 traffic fatalities occurred in Transylvania County.

Buncombe County recorded 4,583 crashes in 2009, according to the AAA report. It ranked 66th, with 100 being the safest county. In 1996, a AAA study said Buncombe County was the safest county for motorists in the state.

State traffic deaths in 2009 dropped 7 percent from the previous year, the second time North Carolina had fewer than 1,500 traffic deaths since 1998. This was attributed to more law enforcement on crash-prone roads by local and state law enforcement officers, as well as traffic safety campaigns like Click it or Ticket and Booze it and Lose It.

The AAA report focuses on the dangers of rural roads.

"Rural roads are the killing grounds for North Carolina traffic," said Tom Crosby, vice president of communications for AAA.

AAA has done its dangerous county analysis since 1995 and is one of several ways to look at traffic crash data. Crosby said the list should remind motorists about safe and defensive driving, especially in counties with above average traffic crashes, injuries and deaths.

"The shoulders are not well-marked and occasionally they are deep," Crosby said. "And you have a lot of curves. Hopefully we can get legislation to pay some attention to some of the needs of these roads."

Graham County made three different AAA top-five lists, including a rank of second behind Transylvania for best chance of being killed in a wreck.

Graham County had the highest percentage of crashes and injuries from motorcycles for the second year in a row, according to the study.

Graham and Swain counties are home to the curves of "The Dragon," a destination for thrill-seeking motorcyclists. In fact, the AAA list for the

AAA RANKINGS

Safest counties for motorists

- » Currituck
- » Polk
- » Haywood
- » Dare
- » Cherokee

Source: AAA Carolinas

AAA RANKINGS

Most dangerous counties for collisions involving tractor trailers:

- » Polk
- » Haywood
- » Madison
- » McDowell
- » Gates

Source: AAA Carolinas

AAA RANKINGS

Most dangerous counties in the state for motorcycle accidents:

- » Graham
- » Swain
- » Clay
- » Macon
- » Jackson

Source: AAA Carolinas

top 5 dangerous counties for motorcycles as far as best chance of being in a collision consisted of all WNC counties. Graham topped the list, followed by Swain, Clay, Macon and Jackson counties.

Troopers urge drivers to slow down on secondary roads, whether on motorcycle or any other vehicle.

"The biggest thing right now is to obey speed limits," Trooper Gene Williamson said.

Maker of anti-DWI device sues DMV

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH — A Morrisville maker of electronic devices intended to thwart drunken drivers filed a federal lawsuit Wednesday against the top official at the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles.

In its suit, Monitech Inc. says DMV Commissioner Mike Robertson broke state bidding rules by withholding the renewal of its state contract.

Since 1989 the company has been the state's sole provider of ignition interlocks, which test the breath of convicted drunken drivers for alcohol before they can start their vehicles.

The devices are often mandated for people convicted of DWI to keep their driving privileges.

Monitech owner Jerry Mobleby declined to comment on the suit Wednesday.

A DMV spokeswoman said Robertson was not available for comment.

CITY: Vegan Plant opens

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can be built out, Affatato said.

"From Sept. 3 through 12, there won't be Nona or Ritrovo," Affatato said, though she said her catering business will continue. "On Sept. 13, we'll open at Ritrovo with two restaurants married. It will be Nona Mia at Ritrovo," she said.

The two restaurants, with different menus, will operate under one roof. The new hours will be 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday; 11 a.m.-10 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays; and 9 a.m.-3 p.m. for Sunday brunch.

"We wanted to consolidate expenses. The Ritrovo location is a larger facility. We'll have 50 parking spaces that belong to us, and we'll be able to maintain our quality," Affatato said. "Nona's just outgrown itself," she said.

Plant sprouts

Plant, a vegan restaurant operated by former Laughing Seed chef Jason Sellers and partners Alan Berger and Leslie Armstrong, opened Aug. 16 at 165 Merrimon Ave. The newly purple building replaced the Beans and Ber-

ries shop, which closed earlier this year.

"We've had an overwhelmingly great response" from both people living in nearby neighborhoods to out-of-town visitors, Sellers said.

With 70 seats at the restaurant, which includes an outside patio and small counter, the restaurant is intimate, a feel that Sellers said is exactly what he'd been aiming for.

"The vibe in the dining room is just amazing. We're so open that people can talk to us while we're making their food," Sellers said, "so people are really connected to the food."

The emphasis on the vegan dishes is seasonality and a relatively small menu, "which means we can control our quality and means the staff is really connected to it," Sellers said. Popular eats early on have included a smoked Portobello steak and a chocolate peanut butter pie with house-made banana-walnut ice cream, he said.

"We're really just getting a chance to be happy" after a lot of hard work, Sellers said. "We're stoked."

For more about the restaurant, check out plantisfood.com.