

**MENTOR GROUP SAYS GOODBYE TO ITS GRADS**

PAGE 6A



**YOUR BEST SHOT**

BY ELIZABETH WATKINS, PAGE 2A

# THE DURHAM NEWS

SERVING DURHAM

932-2000

## 99 bottles of beer

I've done a few neighborhood clean ups in my day. The weather must have known that Uplift East Durham was partnering up on April 17 to support Preservation Durham and Preservation NC's Project RED event. My friends and I were busy all morning yanking trash like tires, old mattresses, paper and random household goods out of 309 N. Driver St. I was thankful that the temperature wasn't making things unpleasant and smelly.

MY VIEW



AIDIL COLLINS

Other neighbors were manuring the yards and pulling aluminum siding off of 212 and 213 S. Driver St. There are several Flickr slideshows on the Preservation Durham Web site for anyone who wants to see how our day went.

But this cleanup confirmed something for me that I have suspected since the first time I donned a bright orange vest picking up trash along neighborhood roads. That suspicion is that containers of alcohol are the most commonly littered item we collect at clean ups. I refuse to use up column space naming the brands of the bottles that I've seen tossed into bushes, but I can't help but wonder how so many of these bottles end up outdoors.

I would imagine that normally when people purchase and consume alcohol they get it in the store and then take it home. However, these bottles of mostly beer are evidence of something else. Could it be that these folks are so eager to get the alcohol into their systems, that after walking to the store to buy the oversized can of beer or bottle of malt liquor, they chug it on their way home and don't even care where the container is disposed? Or are these drinkers attempting to drink this alcohol in secret to avoid the critique of family and friends? If you are trying to drink in secret, what does that say about how far gone your problem around drinking has gone?

I say the beer bottles are oversized because a serving size of beer is 12 oz. and these containers are all two to three and a half times that size. It's scary to think that people are arriving home with their blood alcohol concentration already past the legal limit for driving.

So you can see where my brain buzzed off to on this subject. That's what I've med-

SEE MY VIEW, PAGE 6A

## INSIDE ARTSWEEK



The Paperhand Puppet people will bring their fantastic creations to Duke Gardens on Sunday. **Page 5A**

### INDEX

Daybook .....	2A
Opinion .....	4A
Faith .....	6A
+ Classifieds .....	7A

# Tax hike would bolster schools

**Proposed budget also calls for merging services**

By JIM WISE  
STAFF WRITER

Durham Public Schools are in for a boost, according to County Manager Mike Ruffin's recommended county budget for 2010-11, but Durham County taxpayers are in for a hit.

Ruffin presented a \$461.1 million proposal to the Board of Commissioners Monday night. It includes a \$6.15 million increase in DPS' appropriation from the current fiscal year, which, Ruffin said, will save 111 of the 237 teaching positions the school system had planned to cut.

The budget also includes a 6 percent increase in the property-tax rate, from 70.81 cents per \$100 of valuation to 75.10 cents. It would raise the

annual tax on a \$200,000 home by \$85.80.

Commissioners adopted a tax-rate cap at 73.81 cents in their budgeting guidelines earlier this year, but Ruffin said the public outcry for school funding led him to go higher in his recommendation.

"None of the five [commissioners] may like it," Ruffin said, but at three public budget meetings this spring, Ruffin said, "the vast majority of

what we heard was about schools."

He further recommended eliminating the equivalent of 58.8 full-time equivalent positions on the county payroll. Thirteen of those jobs are currently filled, and Ruffin said the county is trying to place those employees elsewhere in local government.

The school-funding increase came as a surprise. Another surprise was Ruffin's call for merging city and

county law enforcement and fire services.

"The issue is sticky," he said, "but the times are extraordinary and extraordinary times demand extraordinary solutions."

City Councilman Howard Clement has been pressing for city-county merger since 2008, as a cost-cutting measure. Merger has been repeatedly suggested since the

SEE BUDGET, PAGE 2A

## HAVING A BLAST AT BIMBE



Stafford Berry Jr., associate artistic director of the Chuck Davis African American Dance Ensemble, leads a procession of elders into CCB Plaza to kick off the 41st annual Bimbe Festival Saturday.

MARK SCHULTZ - mark.schultz@nando.com

# Carson killer pleads guilty

By ANNE BLYTHE  
STAFF WRITER

**HILLSBOROUGH** – Demario James Atwater pleaded guilty Monday to murdering, kidnapping and robbing Eve Carson, the 2008 UNC student body president.

Atwater, 23, of Durham, entered his plea in an Orange County Superior Court courtroom as Carson's family watched quietly in the

front row.

Wade Smith, a Raleigh lawyer, read a statement from Carson's father Bob Carson, her mother Teresa Bethke and brother Andrew Carson.

"We won't be talking to the court about how our lives are diminished without Eve," Smith said. "The effects of her death are both obvious and personal. We choose not to confront Demario Atwater. The selfishness of taking another's life is incomprehensible."

Instead, Smith said, the family chooses to focus on Eve's courage.

The family said though "today's outcome is neither adequate nor good" it "honors Eve's love of life and all people."

District Attorney Jim Woodall said the medical examiner's autopsy report showed that Carson was shot five times, with the first four shots

SEE ATWATER, PAGE 2A

### ONLINE

For updates to this story see [www.newsobserver.com](http://www.newsobserver.com).

# DPS honors the straight A's club

By STANLEY B. CHAMBERS JR.  
STAFF WRITER

Alison Evarts didn't think she would make it this year.

The Advanced Placement classes almost got her.

"I've heard in the past some pretty horrific stories about people getting awful grades in some of the classes," said Evarts, a senior at Riverside High School. "I guess I just got lucky and I understood the material and was interested in it, and I think that's the most important thing."

Durham Public Schools held a luncheon Friday to honor 241 high school students for making straight A's this

year. Evarts, along with nine others, received an additional honor for achieving the feat all throughout high school.

Students at the luncheon mentioned some of the secrets of their success:

"It takes a lot of studying, and you really have to pay attention in class and hang around people who are good influences," said Sarah Foley, a Northern High School senior.

"You have to make sure you do your work," said Taurus Sneed, a junior at Southern High School. "You have to work on your projects, make sure you do good on all your tests. You have to

SEE CLUB, PAGE 2A



Alison Evarts, a senior at Riverside, earned straight A's.

STAN CHAMBERS - schamber@nando.com

# Bonobos: our peaceful primate cousin

By MARK SCHULTZ  
STAFF WRITER

Vanessa Woods is not a historian. She hadn't published a book in America before. And you can't exactly call it chick lit.

But she pulls off all three with "Bonobo Handshake," a page-turner that journeys into the deepest jungle to tell a story of war, a peaceful primate cousin of man, and love – between woman and man and woman and ape.

Bonobos are an extremely rare species found only in Congo, Africa. They are as closely related to us as chimpanzees. But where chimps (and man) can turn violent, raping and murdering their

own kind, bonobos defuse tension with sex, all kinds of sex.

The sex was all most people knew about bonobos – if they knew anything at all. Then this past winter Duke researchers published a study showing bonobos spontaneously sharing food with unrelated bonobos, a behavior not seen in unrelated adult chimps and which has to be taught to human children.

"Handshake" is the first mainstream book on bonobos in 13 years, says Woods, a native Australian who works with husband Brian Hare, assistant professor and director Duke University's Hominoid Psychology Research Group,

which studies the psychology of human and non-human apes.

Woods will read from "Bonobo Handshake: A Memoir of Love and Adventure in the Congo" at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Regulator Bookshop, 720 Ninth St. Ten percent of the book's profits will go to Lola Ya Bonobo, the sanctuary in Congo where she and Hare conduct their research.

*Why did you write this book?*

**Woods:** I wanted to talk about bonobos in a way that would be accessible to Americans. I had to include some of the personal stuff because

SEE BONOBO, PAGE 3A



Vanessa Woods uses a ball in a social tool experiment with a young bonobo in the Congo to see whether bonobos can play with objects like human children.

PHOTO BY BRIAN HARE

**BONOBO**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

that was what would draw people in. And then what happened was when I went to Congo I found out there was this war that killed millions of millions of people. It was the bloodiest war since World War II. I found I couldn't leave Congo out. That fact that bonobos, this most peaceful ape, was in the most war-torn country was really this poignant irony.

*You stumbled into your work with bonobos. You weren't a Jane Goodall acolyte.*

**Woods:** Of course I knew of Jane Goodall. And I started with chimpanzees. Then Brian's like 'Oh, we're going to study this really rare ape in Congo,' and I'm like what is that? I had never heard of it.

And of course Jane Goodall, she had this beautiful, mystical experience with David Greybeard, her first chimpanzee, who came and touched her hair. And my first experience was this small beautiful, male bonobo screaming his head off and wanting me to touch his penis. And that was not the same thing. I was looking at Brian the whole time saying, 'This is not what you promised to bring me to.'

I think people get really stuck on the sex with bonobos because sex is the way to maintain the peace in the group. It's not the most important thing about them at all.

*Is this a species that could be gone in 50 years?*

**Woods:** They are much more endangered than chimpanzees. So if Jane Goodall says chimpanzees have 50 years, bonobos have 10.

*There's a part of the book where you talk about coming across this story of a woman who is captured by soldiers and just this horrific... [she is brutally murdered].*

**Woods:** That was The Economist in 2005.

*Were you in Congo yet?*

**Woods:** No, we were just about to go.

*So you go anyway?*

**Woods:** I was white after I read it. But Brian was like, what are you going to do? Are you just going to hang out in the apartment for two months?

And I thought of my father [a Vietnam veteran]. And I thought the one reason I might go is to just to try to figure out what war does to a country



Duke University research scientist Vanessa Woods, 32, is an evolutionary anthropologist who for the past five years has been one of a handful of researchers studying bonobos, a chimpanzee-like primate.



Woods touches a bonobo with a thermometer in a 2006 study at Lola Ya Bonobo sanctuary to see how they react to strangers.

and its people. And if it did then I could understand why he became so damaged.

*I can read dogs. I've worked with dogs. I have a friend who can do that with horses. When you're with a primate, do you relate to that bonobo as something different from an animal.*

**Woods:** A dog's eyes are really expressive. But when you look into a bonobo's eyes it's like looking into the eyes of another person. Some of them have this white sclera; you know how we have this white around our eyes? Also, they can stand four or five feet tall. So it's not like looking

down at a dog or up at a horse.

And they have our hands, they have fingernails. They have very human lips. Sometimes I forget they're not people. Especially when they've done something incredibly human like. You'll be turning away and not paying attention and they'll grab your keys or they'll grab your sunglasses and put them on their head. They're 98 percent of our DNA, so there's not a lot that's different about them except they're covered in hair.

*What is the ongoing purpose of the work you're doing with them?*

**Woods:** It's trying to figure out

what makes us human.

*Do you interpret that action, such as the food-sharing experiment, or do you just observe and report it.*

**Woods:** This is a bonobo giving their food away. A chimp would never do that. No way. ... It means that we're seeing something, a kind of sharing behavior we didn't expect to find in an animal.

*And what does that mean about the definition of what makes us human*

**Woods:** It means it's constantly changing.

*It used to be we were human because we made tools ...*

**Woods:** There was tools, and chimpanzees use tools. And then it was language. But that bonobo Kanzi could type out 300 words on a keyboard and make sentences. It used to be this thing called altruism makes us human, but now bonobos do that. Anything you can think of, we seem to be finding them, on a smaller level. If you're looking for that one thing that makes us human, we haven't found it. Every time we think we've got it, it's ah, no, the chimpanzees do it, the bonobos do it.

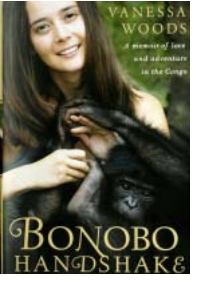
*So when people do know about bonobos it's always about the sex. The hippy primates.*

**Woods:** Yes yes, the make love, not war thing. But the thing is, people always ask me what it is that makes human intelligence. And that's what we started out to find: what makes human intelligence unique. But actually bonobos are the most intelligent because they've managed to live in a society that has virtually no violence.

When I wake up in the morning I know someone might kill me. In Dur-

**IF YOU GO**

Vanessa Woods will read from "Bonobo Handshake: A Memoir of Love and Adventure in the Congo" at 7 p.m. Thursday at the Regulator Bookshop, 720 Ninth St.



ham, at the medical center, a lady just got shot; there are like two dozen murders a year. Bad things happen to good people, and there is always a chance that one of my own species will kill me. When a chimpanzee wakes up in the morning, they also know there is a chance they might be tortured and killed by another chimpanzee.

When a bonobo wakes up in the morning they don't have to think about that. And seriously I would give up everything – the computers, the cars, the living in a nice house – if I could wake up in the morning and know that me and my children, when I finally have them, will not have to live in that kind of world.

That's why bonobos are important and that's why we need to study them., because we need to figure out what they're doing. ...We need to use our gigantic brains to find a mechanism just like they have, and we need to use it because there have been something like 26 days since World War II without war and right now there are seven conflicts going on that kill a thousand people a day all over the world. And bonobos, they just don't have that. I mean, so you tell me, who's smarter?.

*Jane Goodall has broadened her message to talk about habitat preservation, the bush meat trade [that kills apes for food]. How do people who do this work maintain optimism in the face of the wars, the bush meat trade, the human population encroaching into natural habitat?*

**Woods:** It's a good question. I think I really do this for the bonobos I know. ... The bonobos in that book are like my family. And so when would you give up trying to protect your family and your extended family? When do you stop? You just keep going.

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