



Researcher studies waterway's impact on economy

Thousands of boaters, fishermen and watercraft enthusiasts use the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway every year. While residents and state officials know this brings business and wealth to the region, no one knows exactly what that means to the state's economy, especially as federal budget cuts have reduced routine maintenance of the channel, possibly limiting access.

In the first phase of his research, associate economics professor Chris Dumas surveyed recreational boaters' spending habits and responses to changes in the waterway. He found that in Brunswick County alone, they bring in \$1,151 per trip and spend an average of \$479 on fuel, food, lodging and other supplies per vessel. Respondents also indicated that if the ICW became shallower, they would become reluctant to use it.

Dumas, along with fellow researchers Edward Graham, Jim Herstine and William Hall, hope to determine the impact of the waterway on commercial boaters as well as on local property values and marine-related businesses.

Psychology professors create scale to measure racial bias

UNCW professors James Johnson and Len Lecci have conducted the first empirically measured study of how anti-white bias among blacks influences racial perceptions and interactions. The psychology professors' findings were published in the February edition of *Personality and Individual Differences*.

Their research compared the perceptions of two sample groups, graduates of predominantly black universities and members of the general black community, using a scale that measured their responses to ambiguously racist scenarios, their stated willingness to confront racists and whether they would engage in blatant anti-white discrimination. The researchers found that those who attended a university tended to have higher instances of anti-white bias.

Johnson has previously studied the relationship between anti-white bias and African-Americans' response to health care. The pair intends to continue the research to determine how these anti-white biases affect the mental and physical well-being of those who hold them. They also are seeking funding to study the effects of anti-white bias on the relationship between the government and the victims of Hurricane Katrina.



Undersea explorers map coral to save it

UNCW researchers aboard the NASA support ship *Liberty Star* spent nine days in October using high tech methods to examine a coral bed older than modern civilization. Using sonar, a remote-controlled submarine and the 170-foot vessel, Andrew Shepard, director of the NOAA Undersea Research Center at UNCW, and a team of researchers explored the Oculina coral reef bed, located off the coast of Florida near Cape Canaveral.

Adding a half inch a year, the fragile coral at Oculina can grow to heights of 60 to 100 feet. Coral systems in the region date back thousands of years, and the larger coral have lifespans of 100 to 200 years. Because of its slow lifecycle, coral can take decades or centuries to recover from damage. In 1984, the government limited fishing on the reef in order to limit ecological damage.

Through comparisons over time, scientists will be able to assess progress in the Oculina reef for restoring coral cover and replenishing fish stocks. Expedition dispatches can be viewed at www.at-sea.org.



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