

Early polls: Incumbents on shaky ground

But most N.C. races 'safe' for regulars

BY ALLISON NICHOLS
ASSISTANT STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

In an anomaly this election year, polls indicate that incumbents might struggle to hold onto their seats in November's midterm elections, though the trend doesn't seem to extend to local legislative or congressional races.

High-profile incumbent losses, such as the defeat of Democratic Sen. Joe Lieberman in the Connecticut primary by challenger Ned Lamont, have caused a stir. And polls indicate that widespread voter dissatisfaction might affect

more than just a few incumbents.

A Washington Post-ABC News poll of 1,002 randomly selected adults found that six in 10 voters disapprove of Congress's performance. Fifty-three percent call themselves anti-incumbent, while 29 percent of those polled described themselves as inclined to re-elect their incumbents.

The percentage of voters who approve of their representative dropped seven percentage points in the last three months and is at the lowest level since 1994, the last time control of the House switched

parties. But speculation about how poll results from early August might affect actual voting in November is way too premature, said George Rabinowitz, a professor of political science at UNC.

But he said that if the election had been held last week, Republican incumbents would have struggled.

"Incumbents normally don't hardly struggle at all," he added.

Orange County representatives are not likely to face tough challenges in November. Orange County Reps. Verla Insko and Bill Faison, both Democrats, are running unopposed, and Rep. Joe

Hackney and Sen. Ellie Kinnaird likely will have little trouble retaining their seats.

Rabinowitz speculated that incumbents in North Carolina would be pretty safe in November.

OnPoint Polling and Research, however, released a poll Aug. 16 that found Republican incumbent Charles Taylor was trailing Democratic challenger Heath Shuler by five percentage points in North Carolina's 11th Congressional District.

OnPoint spokesman Justin Guillory said constituents in the typically conservative district are looking for change.

"Even though voters trusted Republicans more on national security, they still preferred the Democratic challenger to the Republican incumbent," he said.

"The polls ... indicate that the nation ... is tired of the direction Washington Republicans are sending us."

BILL FAISON, ORANGE COUNTY REPRESENTATIVE

Faison said a lot of people think that voter dissatisfaction with Republicans at the national level might induce Republicans to stay home in November, allowing Democrats to make gains.

"The polls I've seen indicate that the nation as a whole is tired of the direction the Washington Republicans are sending us," Faison said.

Global events, especially those that could affect national security, will affect how incumbents'

approval ratings change from now until November, Rabinowitz said. "If terrorism remains at the forefront, Republican incumbents will likely do better," he said.

Rabinowitz stressed that making an accurate prediction is too difficult so early in the year.

"If I had a nickel I didn't want to lose, I wouldn't bet on a dang thing right now."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

National and World News

Leader keeps nuclear plot

TEHRAN, Iran - Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said Monday that Tehran will continue to pursue nuclear technology, despite a U.N. Security Council deadline to suspend uranium enrichment by the end of the month or face the threat of economic and diplomatic sanctions.

Diplomats and U.N. officials said Iran has turned away U.N. inspectors wanting to examine its underground nuclear site in an apparent violation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Inmate halts Va. campus

BLACKSBURG, Va. - Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University shut down its campus on the first day of classes Monday and ordered everyone to remain inside as authorities searched for an escaped inmate suspected of killing a hospital guard and police officer and wounding another officer.

William Morva, 24, had been reported seen on the campus. "He was in custody, but they took him to the hospital," said Ellen Biltz, editor-in-chief of The

Collegiate Times, Virginia Tech's student paper. "That's when he overpowered the guards."

Another trial for Saddam

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Saddam Hussein shouted at prosecutors and refused to enter a plea Monday at the opening of his second trial by the Iraqi High Tribunal.

He faces charges of genocide and war crimes connected to his scorched-earth offensive against Kurds nearly two decades ago.

Verdicts for Saddam and seven co-defendants in the first trial for the murder of more than 148 Shiite Muslims is expected Oct. 16.

Jazz march mourns pets

NEW ORLEANS - They came to the "jazz funeral" memorial march with photographs of pets lost in Hurricane Katrina's floods or aftermath, or with just their memories.

About 100 people gathered on Esplanade Street for a 10-block walk to a memorial service at St. Anna's Episcopal Church.

The salvation march stepped off to a slow rendition of "Just a Closer Walk With Thee," and ended with "Just a Little While to Stay Here."

Egyptation trains derail

QALYOUNG, Egypt - A passenger train barreled into a northern Egypt railway station Monday and collided with a second train, killing at least 51 people and injuring more than 100.

Four cars derailed and overturned, forcing officials to close the lines.

Egypt has a history of serious train accidents, which are usually blamed on poorly maintained equipment.

Bush calls for peace force

WASHINGTON, D.C. - President Bush on Monday called for quick deployment of an international force to help uphold the fragile cease-fire in Lebanon.

At a White House news conference, Bush also conceded that the war in Iraq, with daily bombings and U.S. casualties now standing at more than 2,600 was "straining the psyche of our country."

Bush opened his news conference with a statement about humanitarian aid and an international peacekeeping force for southern Lebanon after 34 days of fighting.

N.C. senators take time to travel this summer

Burr visits China, Dole stays in-state

BY ELIZABETH DEORNELLAS
ASSISTANT STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

North Carolina's two national senators took a different approach to their summer breaks — one traveled to China, while the other spent time in the western N.C. countryside.

U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Dole, R-N.C., focused on the western areas of the state that had received rural-development grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The farm-based non-profit HarvestWorks Inc., located in Shelby, received one such grant to fund its work and care services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Dole wanted to tout the organization as an example of a passion of hers that has found success, said Bill Green, executive director of HarvestWorks.

"She is quite the advocate for the developmentally disabled," he said.

Dole was the first national sena-



U.S. Senator Richard Burr wanted to visit Asia to learn more about trade and the avian flu.



U.S. Senator Elizabeth Dole examined development grants given to western areas of the state.

tor to visit the organization. Keeping in touch with voters across the state is a priority for the senator, said Katie Norman, Dole's press secretary.

"She represents all 100 counties, and she tries to come down and visit with her constituents as much as possible," Norman said.

Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., also made time to meet with constituents during his break from Congress. He made a swing through the state, visiting non-profits, civic groups and local politicians.

But Burr did not confine his summer travel to the state of North Carolina. He was one of nine senators who went abroad to meet with the Chinese legislature.

"He wanted to see what was going on in China as far as trade issues, avian flu issues — there

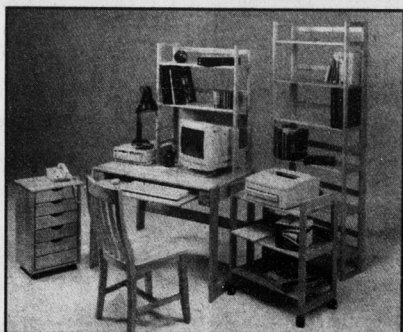
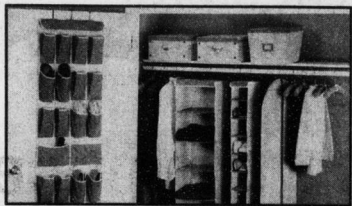
were a lot of issues he was interested in," said Laura Caudell, press secretary to Burr.

Back in North Carolina, Burr visited the Merck Vaccine Manufacturing Facility in Durham. Burr, who leads the Senate subcommittee on bioterrorism and public health preparedness, sought information from plant officials about how the facility could help expand vaccine production nationwide.

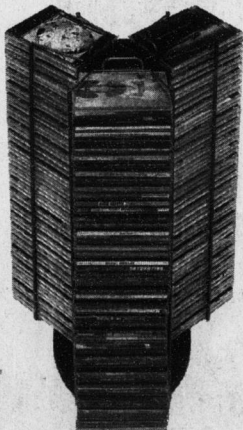
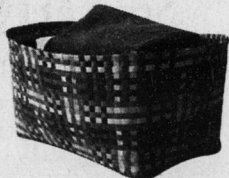
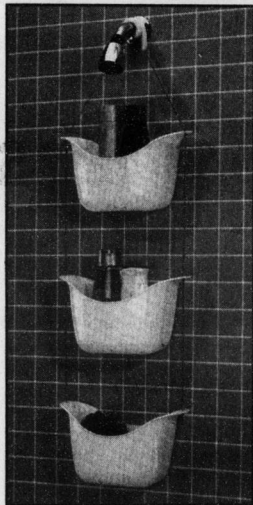
"He had a very distinct interest in learning about the Merck plant in Durham and its potential for expanding vaccine-manufacturing capabilities," said Patrick Witmer, director of public affairs for Merck's manufacturing division.

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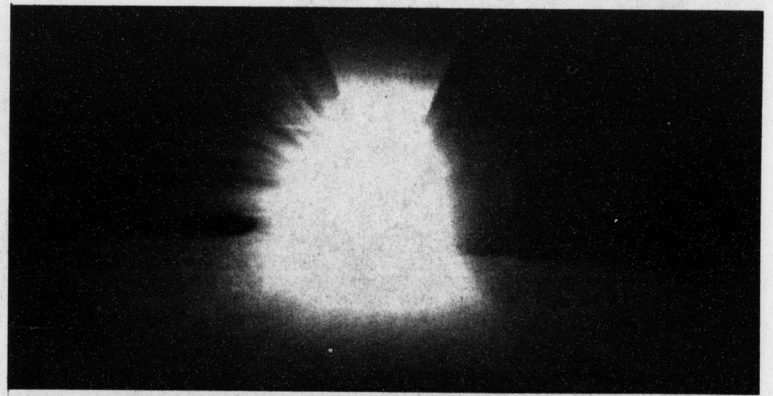
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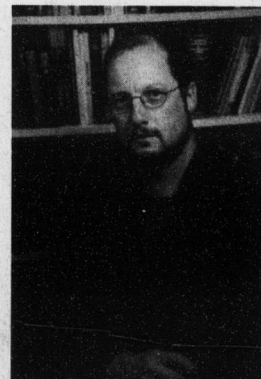
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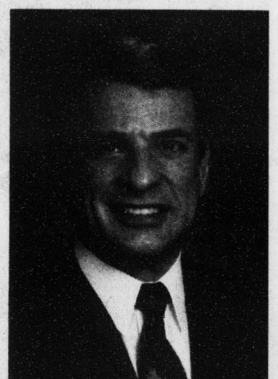


A DEBATE BETWEEN BART D. EHRLMAN AND WILLIAM LANE CRAIG



DR. BART D. EHRLMAN

Dr. Ehrman says, "No".



DR. WILLIAM LANE CRAIG

Dr. Craig says, "Yes"

VS.

What do YOU say?

Read the transcript of their exciting debate online at www.holycross.edu/departments/crec/website/resurrdebate.htm

What do YOU think?