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Clinton Tours State's Flood-Ravaged Areas

Residents See Livelihood Ripped Away by Waters

By CATE DOTY
Assistant State & National Editor

TARBORO — Piles of fallen trees line the residential length of Main Street, serving as neatly stacked reminders of Hurricane Floyd's winds and driving rains.

But further into the business district, a different sort of storm memory lingers — ebbing floodwaters littered with Tarboro's debris, a testament to some lives destroyed and others ended.

One of many flooded Nash and Edgecombe County towns, Tarboro has lost virtually all of its Main Street businesses to the waters that lap gently at them, as Edgecombe County sheriffs in row boats quietly peruse the road.

Oak trees seemingly sprout out of the water. Windows displaying office equipment and eyeglasses are streaked with eastern Carolina mud, as the occasion-

al trash can or piece of forgotten refuse bobs by.

The murky waters are slowly receding and backed off enough Monday that President Clinton, at a downtown crossroad, could address area residents, some of whom had lost everything.

But as the waters leave, they carry with them livelihoods, residents' homes and memories of a once-dry town.

"My great-great-grandfather was a slave in Princeville when he was released," said Linda Whitest, 49.

"My whole family has lived here most of our lives. And now everything's gone."

Whitest, a Princeville resident who works in nearby Tarboro, has not been home since Saturday. She is afraid of what she might find when she finally does return.

"They told us about two hours before the floods came that we needed to leave," Whitest said. "When I left, I was crossing a bridge, and I just thought, 'Please God, let me get across this

See FLOOD, Page 5



DTH/JOHN IKEDA

President Bill Clinton shakes hands with residents of Tarboro, a town in eastern North Carolina still struggling with rising river levels in the wake of Hurricane Floyd. Clinton has pledged federal disaster relief funds for North Carolinians in the midst of the worst flooding in state history.

Extended Coverage of Flood Damage
See Pages 4 and 5



DTH/JOHN IKEDA

Security members for President Clinton's visit to Tarboro sit in a boat on flooded North Church Street.

President Vows Federal Relief to Flood Victims

By CATE DOTY
Assistant State & National Editor

TARBORO — President Bill Clinton promised food stamps and millions of dollars in immediate job assistance to those stranded by Hurricane Floyd's devastating floodwaters, in his address to this waterlogged community Monday.

Flanked by Gov. Jim Hunt, N.C. congressmen, Cabinet members and the mayors of Princeville and Tarboro, Clinton vowed unrelenting federal sup-

port to flood victims, both emotionally and financially.

"We know we have a responsibility as members of the American family to help you get back on your feet again," Clinton said. "And we intend to do it."

Before his Main Street address, Clinton aerially toured the flooded areas with Hunt and U.S. Reps. David Price and Bob Etheridge. As he surveyed a swamped Main Street, Clinton expressed sympathy with the flood victims' plight.

"No matter how much television there is, it doesn't do it justice," Clinton said. "Because it can't show what it feels like inside for people to lose their business, for people to lose their home and have to take their kids to shelters."

Clinton praised the U.S. Coast Guard and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, whose combined efforts have saved more than one thousand lives already, he said.

Clinton said the Department of Agriculture would decide Monday on a

food stamps relief program for flood victims and a \$12 million comprehensive assistance program, which would address unemployment and housing.

"We will be here as long as it takes," Clinton encouraged the crowd. "We're going to stay with you."

Clinton said the Small Business Administration had made loans available to disaster victims, and more aid was in its planning stages.

See CLINTON, Page 5

Politics of the Local Governments Wage Rare Battle

By RUDY KLEYTEUBER
Staff Writer

Despite resolutions passed this summer asking for a moratorium on executions, Triangle lawmakers expect to have little influence on the scheduled lethal injection of a prisoner Friday.

Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Durham are among five municipalities nationwide that have passed the resolution, which was originally sponsored by a coalition called North Carolinians Against the Death Penalty, an organization based in Chapel Hill.

The resolution calls for a moratorium on executions until studies can be done to examine if the death penalty is unfairly practiced.

"I'm hoping that the resolution will spark a groundswell of support across the country for a moratorium on the death penalty, so that all of us can evaluate when it is used effectively and when it's not," said Carrboro Mayor Mike Nelson.

The mayors of the three localities said they did not expect the local resolutions to affect the upcoming execution of convicted murderer Harvey Lee Green at 2 a.m. Friday, and none of the municipalities planned to take a formal stance on the case.

Chapel Hill Town Council member Joyce Brown said the council's decision had little weight on the state level, but she still hoped

for a stay of execution.

"I think a stay would be in keeping with what we had passed, at least until a study commission could further examine the situation," she said.

Gretchen Engel, an attorney with the Center for Death Penalty Litigation who has represented Green since 1995, said the resolutions drew attention to his execution.

"I think it puts the issue in the public eye," Engel said. "Our society is very ambivalent about the death penalty. The fact that we kill people at two o'clock in the morning I think shows that we should probably feel some shame about it."

Death penalty opponents have met mixed responses in other parts of the state. In Aberdeen, the town council passed a resolution in August that supported the death penalty. "It was somewhat controversial, and the ramifications afterward were quite negative," Aberdeen Mayor Arthur Parker said. "I don't believe the support of

See MORATORIUM, Page 8

PENALTY

State Policy Likely to Endure

By ALICIA GADDY
Staff Writer

Despite growing opposition, most N.C. lawmakers agree that capital punishment is far from dying out.

Still, politicians say, the debate remains heated.

With the upcoming execution of Harvey Lee Green, who is scheduled to be the state's first black inmate to be executed since 1961, debate over the state's capital punishment laws has intensified.

Members of the N.C. General Assembly offer differing views on the death penalty.

Sen. Ellie Kinnaird, D-Orange, introduced a bill during the Senate's last session that would have imposed a statewide moratorium on the death penalty. "I think it's a moral question, and I hope everybody starts to consider it," she said.

She said she was concerned that juries in capital cases were often swayed by race or the defendant's ability to afford an expensive attorney.

Kinnaird's moratorium never made it out of the Senate. She said she anticipated bringing the issue up again.

"We are trying to keep the discussion alive and hope we can get the bill heard next year," Kinnaird said. Rep. Sam Ellis, R-Wake, said he did not

believe bias was a legislative problem, but rather a problem for the judicial system to solve. "I don't think it has as much to do with skin color as it does economic status," he said. Ellis said he was concerned that poor people often fell prey to a judicial system that punished them more severely than wealthier defendants.

Even in light of local governments weighing in on the death penalty issue, legislators said they saw no looming changes in the state's laws. "I think that the present political climate is strongly in support of the death penalty," said Sen. Brad Miller, D-Durham.

Recent moratoriums have been introduced in Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Durham in opposition to the death penalty, but most legislators said such measures would never impact statewide politics.

Ellis said the people who are enacting these moratoriums should run for state office, where he said the issue belonged. "The debate (over the death penalty) doesn't belong in city council chambers," he said.

Rep. Russell Capps, R-Wake, said he "regrettably" supported capital punishment and had to agree with Ellis. "I think we need to let the judicial system and the legislative body handle it," Capps said.

Rep. Joe Hackney, D-Orange, said he

See PENALTY, Page 8

Carolina, Speak Out!

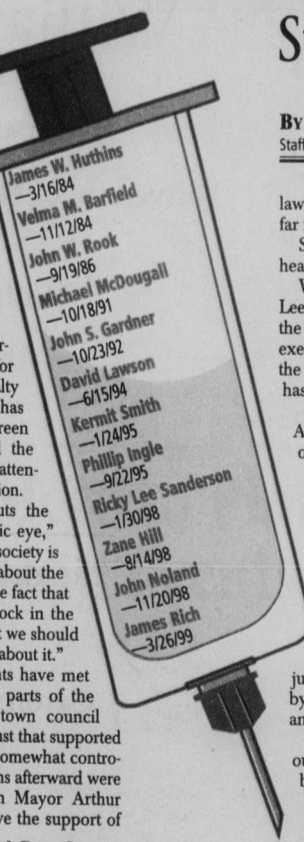


Do you support the death penalty? Go to www.unc.edu/dth to cast your vote.

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH



A weeklong series exploring the death penalty in N.C.



- James W. Hurlins —3/16/84
- Velma M. Barfield —11/12/84
- John W. Rook —9/19/86
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- David Lawson —6/15/94
- Kermit Smith —1/24/95
- Phillip Ingle —9/22/95
- Ricky Lee Sanderson —1/30/98
- Zane Hill —8/14/98
- John Noland —11/20/98
- James Rich —3/26/99

Success consists in the climb.

Ibid.

INSIDE Tuesday

Fan Frenzy

Students rushed to the Smith Center on Monday to grab all of the 4,000 remaining tickets for the Sept. 25 football matchup against Florida State University. See Page 7.

Drinking Debate

An N.C. country club owner is challenging a recent Supreme Court decision that would effectively ban the sale of liquor along Interstate 95 in dry counties. See Page 8.

Coping With Crisis

Though Hurricane Floyd caused little damage to Chapel Hill, the storm ravaged other parts of the state. The Daily Tar Heel wants to hear from any UNC students with family or friends in eastern North Carolina who are struggling to recoup after the storm. Contact Editor Rob Nelson at 962-4086 or at rmelson@email.unc.edu.

Exploring UNC

Applications for the Joanna Howell Fund, which honors the memory of a DTH editorial writer who died in the 1996 Phi Gamma Delta fraternity fire, will be available at the DTH front desk in Suite 104 of the Student Union and are due by Oct. 4. The fund provides \$250 for a student to write an in-depth article about an issue affecting the University community. The article will be published in the DTH.

Today's Weather

Rain;
High 60s.
Wednesday: Sunny;
Low 70s.