

UNC System Weathers Winter Woes

Eleven UNC-System schools closed Tuesday, following the first night of significant snowfall around the state.

By **KIMBERLY GRABNER**
Staff Writer

Snowballs flew, cafeteria trays became make-shift sleds, snowmen were born and streakers came out in full force on UNC campuses after chancellors across the state canceled classes for record-breaking snowfall. Eleven UNC-system schools closed Tuesday after a major storm left treacherous conditions. Seven remained closed Wednesday. UNC-Chapel Hill, N.C. State and N.C. Central Universities were the only schools that did not open Thursday. UNC-Wilmington and East Carolina University opened on a two-hour delay. N.C. Central University remained closed Friday, while UNC-CH and State planned to open on a delay. UNC General Administration remained in contact with the system

schools throughout the storm recovery, but each school decided independently whether or not to hold classes, said Jeff Davies, vice president of finance. "The chancellors have the best knowledge to make that decision," he said.

Peter Harden, a N.C. State senior from Charlotte, said some N.C. State students braved the frozen roads Tuesday in four-wheel drive vehicles with sleds riding behind on inflatable tubes. Two local convenience stores on Hillsborough Street in Raleigh ran out of beer shortly after 9 p.m. Tuesday, leaving lines of students without alcoholic beverages to keep them warm as temperatures dropped, Harden said. He said even the smallest hills became coveted sites for sleds, as students searched for floor mats, cafeteria trays and calendars to use as sleds. "(Tuesday) was pretty wild all day,"

he said. Students at other system schools also used the unexpected day off as an excuse to play in the snow. Sam Nixon, information specialist for UNC-Charlotte, said about 2 to 4 inches of snow fell on the campus. Nixon said the school decided to close after officials determined Monday evening that it would be too difficult for students and staff to reach campus Tuesday.

UNC-C reopened Wednesday on a normal schedule. But while clean-up crews were at work Tuesday, UNC-C students found various ways to celebrate the snow day. Three females and five males streaked from an apartment Monday night, said Ken Hall, a UNC-C sophomore from Maine. He said the frigid students returned after being pelted with snowballs. Although the snow caught some schools off guard, Appalachian State

University did not cancel or delay classes at all, as the campus did not receive any measurable accumulations.

In preparations for possible snow, flyers went up around campus last week, warning students that judicial action would be taken if they were caught throwing snowballs, said Christie James, an ASU junior from Charlotte. But Barbara Day, ASU dean of students, said she was unaware of the flyers and that the school's code did not outlaw snowball throwing. ASU officials are monitoring a snowstorm expected to hit over the weekend. Jane Nicholson, ASU university news director, said that although forecasts indicated the storm would not hit Boone, the school would continue to keep a close watch on the storm's progress. Despite the problems the snow caused, students across the state took advantage of the weather, said Karen Storms, a UNC-W junior from Bunn. "I think everyone just enjoyed a day off."

The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

"The chancellors have the best knowledge to make that decision."

JEFF DAVIES
BOG Vice President of Finance

Massive Storm Catches Forecasters Off Guard

Several unusual traits of the storm system that hit North Carolina earlier this week made it difficult to predict.

By **LANI HARAC**
Staff Writer

The nor'easter that barreled through the Carolinas on Monday night, leaving record-breaking snow accumulations across the Triangle before continuing up the East Coast, caught many forecasters off guard.

Despite recent advancements in snow prediction techniques and equipment, meteorologists said the storm's uncertain nature was its only certainty. At 8 p.m. Monday, the National Weather Service was still predicting only 1 to 3 inches of snow for the Chapel Hill area. The storm dropped 16 inches on Chapel Hill and 24 inches in Raleigh.

This week's nor'easter was unusually strong, said assistant geography Professor Chip Konrad, an expert on large weather systems. Predicting nor'easters generally involves a lot of guesswork, he said. A number of different factors come together to produce them - factors that are themselves difficult to predict.

"This was a particularly fascinating weather system, and no one else predicted it - the models didn't predict it," he said. "They didn't expect it to strengthen like it did." Meteorologists use complex weather models to predict the track and severity of a developing winter storm. But geography Professor P.J. Robinson, who teaches a climatology class, said the storm was predicted accurately.

"They actually predicted it early. They said it would start late afternoon, but it started a few hours later," he said.

National Weather Service spokesman Bob Chartuk said weather-system computer models predicted nine out of 10 weather systems "on the nose." But this one developed closer to land, developed quickly and moved more slowly than the weather service expected. Weather-system models have gotten faster and more accurate, Konrad said. He said it was strange that the models did not predict this system. "How they blew the forecast (was) in the amount of precipitation expected," he said.

Robinson said he disagreed. "Very few models that I am aware of can predict how much snow (will accumulate) with any degree of accuracy," he said. Storms like the nor'easter that hit Monday develop when warm, moist air from the South encounters cold air, Chartuk said. The colder the air, the more likely that snow will fall.

The weather in general, including last week's snow, contributed to large accumulations by keeping the air colder, he added. The surface temperature of the ocean also

has been relatively warmer than usual for this time of year, which meant more precipitation was likely. Konrad said meteorologists had a large amount of data to work with in predicting weather systems, often making forecasts more difficult. "Considering all the different variables that come into play, they do a great job (predicting the weather)."

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P.J. ROBINSON
UNC Geography Professor

Board to Call for Delayed UNC Elections

By **KIM MINUGH**
Assistant University Editor

After blizzard conditions closed UNC for three consecutive days, officials are planning on delaying upcoming student elections. The elections, which were originally scheduled for Feb. 8, have now been tentatively planned for Feb. 15, said Elections Board Chairwoman Catherine Yates. Yates will officially appear before Student Congress on Tuesday to request a postponement in the elections process. Elections would be pushed back to give candidates sufficient time to campaign, Yates said.

Students cannot officially begin campaigning until after a mandatory elections meeting is held. The mandatory filing meeting for candidates previously scheduled for Tuesday will now convene at a later time depending on weather conditions, Yates said. Students intending to run in the Feb. 15 elections are required to attend the mandatory filing meeting. Candidates for student body president must present petitions with 500 signatures.



Other candidates are required to show less than 500 signatures, but must still present petitions. The meeting was delayed in accordance with the Student Code, which mandates that 12 days separate the filing meeting and the elections date, Yates said. Because the filing date was pushed back, elections had to be delayed as well. A new date for the meeting has not been announced. "We are waiting to see what happens," Yates said. "It depends on the weather." Five candidates have publicly announced their candidacy for student body president, one less than previously anticipated.

A week and a half after declaring her candidacy, junior Jamie DeMent has decided to drop from the race for student body president. She said personal problems would interfere with her campaigning. The race for Carolina Athletic Association president is currently between four candidates, while only one candidate has publicly announced his candidacy for Residence Hall Association. Junior Jen Senthouse is the only candidate for the post of Senior Class president. The University Editor can be reached at udesk@unc.edu.

N.C. Forecasters Keep Watchful Eye on 5th Storm

RALEIGH - Hurricanes are one thing. But full-blown snowstorms? North Carolinians, becoming used to dealing with the sloppy cleanup after the wind and rain of hurricanes, were not prepared for the kind of paralysis brought by 2 feet of snow that still left thousands without power Thursday. "It's far worse than any hurricane we've had," said Moore County Manager David McNeill. And forecasters said a very slow thaw and more precipitation is in sight. During the next few days, high temperatures should hover near freezing, with lows dipping into the 20s and teens, slowing any melting of the white stuff, the National Weather Service office in Raleigh said. More moisture is on the way Saturday and Sunday, but forecasters

said it was not clear whether it would add rain or snow to the already treacherous mix. "Something's coming," weather service Meteorologist Jonathan Blaes said. "But there are still a lot of question marks." But North Carolina is not the only Southern state that has seen unusual snowfall in recent days. Much of the nation saw snow - and braced for even more - while still digging out and trying to return to normal Thursday after the wintry punch that caught so many people flat-footed earlier this week. A strong disturbance caused snow from the Texas Panhandle and Oklahoma into Louisiana, Arkansas and Mississippi. In Oklahoma, schools were closed statewide, meetings postponed and state employees excused from work.

Some courts also shut down so workers could stay safe at home and not have to traverse icy roads. Forecasters called for more snow in central Oklahoma - as much as 10 to 14 inches - and said some roads could become nearly impassable. Slipping and sliding, Arkansas residents abandoned their jobs by the thousands and tried to make it home as up to 15 inches of snow fell. "At one time it was coming so thick, it looked like the world ended 200 yards from the windows," said Pati Brown, the manager of the Mountain Harbor Resort in Mount Ida, Ark.

Many schools and businesses were closed, and tens of thousands remained without electricity Thursday throughout the Carolinas, Texas and Florida. Alabama residents stripped store shelves bare, closed schools and generally hunkered down, while freezing rain, sleet and snow interrupted hundreds of airline flights, snarled highway traffic and cut power to thousands of homes across north and central Texas. Baltimore announced that it already had exhausted its annual snow removal budget as of Thursday, half of Maryland's school districts remained closed and commuters cursed snow-nar-

rowed streets as traffic crawled. Georgia residents as far south as Albany and Columbus were nervously awaiting more snow, sleet and freezing rain that were predicted. Images of last week's ice-covered roads and darkened houses in the Atlanta area are still fresh on their minds.

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Honor Society Nomination Process 2000

Help us identify members of the University community who have demonstrated excellence that has advanced the University by nominating them for recognition by the Order of the Golden Fleece, the Order of the Grail-Valkyries, the Order of the Old Well or the Society of Janus Chapter of the National Residence Hall Honorary.

Each of the honorary organizations recognizes members for distinct contributions to campus life. As you prepare your nominations, please carefully consider which honorary organization is appropriate for those you nominate. Here are brief descriptions (additional information is available on the individual nomination form).

- The Order of the Golden Fleece** Founded in 1903. Recognizes individuals - students, faculty, staff members and alumni - of demonstrably high character and who have made some specific long-lasting, innovative and extraordinary contributions to the University community.
- The Order of the Grail-Valkyries** Founded in 1920 and 1941. Recognizes students who have demonstrated excellence in scholarship, leadership, character and service. The Order continues to challenge its members to make substantial contributions to the University and community.
- The Order of the Old Well** Founded in 1957. Recognizes students of high character who have demonstrated exemplary and generous humanitarian service and who have served in a capacity such that their service contributions have not been previously recognized.
- The Society of Janus Chapter of the National Residence Hall Honorary** Founded in 1957 and 1999. Recognizes students and staff members who have made outstanding and lasting contributions to the quality of residence hall life, primarily through programming.

Applications may be picked up from the FPG Student Union Desk or by emailing djemiga@email.unc.edu

Nominations are due by 5pm on January 31, 2000
No late nominations accepted.

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- 13 SU FLICKER
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- 19 SA HOT WATER MUSIC
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