

Welcome Home  
Family moves in.  
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No. 1 Priority  
Bentley pursues top spot in his  
weight class after taking a year  
off from competition. See Page 11



Makin' It  
Today: Partly cloudy, 50  
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Saturday: Cloudy, 51

# The Daily Tar Heel

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Thursday, December 7, 2000

## Nuclear Expert Takes Issue With CP&L Waste Expansion

By KIM PERRY  
Staff Writer

Nuclear power expert Dr. Gordon Thompson told Orange County residents Wednesday night that the proposed expansion of waste storage facilities at the Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant poses safety risks to the community.

But he won't get to share those same opinions when Carolina Power & Light Co. and Orange County face off today in Raleigh in front of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board.

The ASLB will not hear arguments from Thompson, a nuclear accident risk expert hired by Orange County, in today's legal proceedings to determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement must be issued before CP&L

can expand its waste storage facilities.

Thompson said the proposed expansion of water cooling pools poses a greater risk for potential nuclear waste problems than alternatives such as dry cask storage.

"The county's statement is that an Environmental Impact Statement should be prepared for an expansion of the storage and that (statement) should provide a detailed assessment for alternatives," Thompson said. "I, over 20 years, have been involved in attempts to raise this issue and have been beaten back on every attempt."

CP&L uses two cooling pools that store waste in the form of tightly packed rods. The company wants to expand storage to the use of four cooling pools, with rods more densely packed. Thompson said that by opening the new

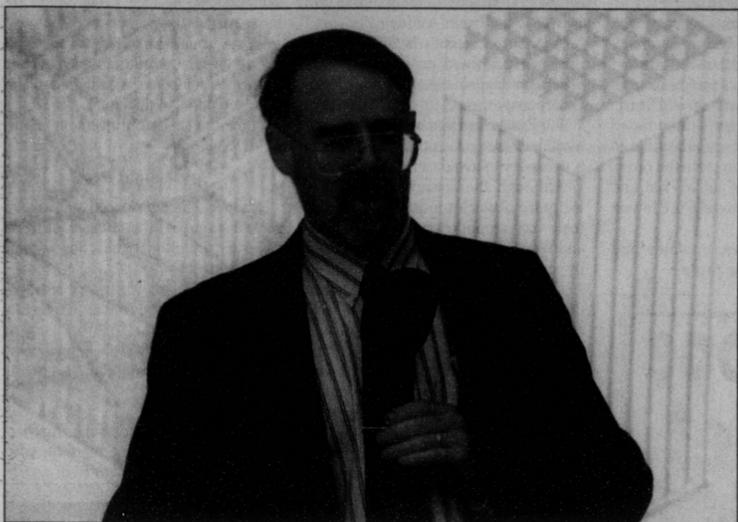
pools, the waste would be packed at the highest density possible. "We're at that point again in terms of pool accidents where the staff is denying it and still doesn't want to talk about it," Thompson said.

"History shows it's only through the relentlessness of citizens or by accidents that these things get attention."

In place of using cooling pools for storing nuclear waste, Thompson said dry cask storage is a much safer alternative. This process involves storing nuclear waste in casks or vaults, which is then cooled by natural air circulation. With dry cask storage, waste has a smaller chance of escaping and catching fire, he said.

But Thompson said that while CP&L uses

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DTH/BESS LOEWENBAUM

Dr. Gordon Thompson describes alternatives for CP&L's nuclear waste storage Wednesday night. Thompson has been hired by Orange County as an expert on nuclear accident risks.

## Gore Puts Hopes in Fla. Cases

Starting today, "sudden death" court rulings over absentee-ballot handling could settle Florida's vote.

The Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Al Gore hung his presidential hopes on legal proceedings moving at head-spinning speed a day ahead of arguments before the Florida Supreme Court, counting on a court shocker to upset George W. Bush's certified Florida victory.

Lawyers sprinted between courtrooms Wednesday to battle over absentee ballots while Bush and Gore submitted papers to persuade the state Supreme Court to rule their way in a fight over recounts.

Late in the day, Republican legislative leaders called for a special session on Friday to choose a slate of electors to enforce Bush's election.

But the two leaders said they hoped such a step would become moot through a final court resolution of the disputed election.

Gore's team set the stakes in its filing with the high court, writing: "In but a few more days, only the judgment of history will be left to fall upon a system where deliberate obstruction has succeeded in achieving delay — and where further delays risk succeeding in handing democracy a defeat."

Bush's team countered that the people had spoken on Election Day and then added that "at no time in our nation's history has a presidential race been decided by an election contest in a court of law."

The stalemate that has loomed since Nov. 7 seemed to be nearing the end of overtime and heading to a sudden-death score, almost surely in the form of a court ruling. One surprise might come from two parallel cases unfolding before separate judges in the same Tallahassee courthouse.

Democrats were challenging a total of 25,000 absentee ballots in Seminole and Martin counties, saying Republicans had been unfairly permitted to correct mistakes on ballot applications, in violation of state law.

Either suit had the potential to switch the lead in Florida's vote count from Bush to Gore, since Bush won the absentee ballots by a 2-to-1 margin.

Bush, leading by a few hundred votes ever since the Nov. 7 election and talking more and more like a president-elect each day, said he had "pretty well made up my mind" on his White House staff.

## Striking a BALANCE

By JERMAINE CALDWELL  
Features Editor

She's satisfied. Things at UNC are just right for Katie Welch — she likes the way her first semester is shaping up.

Her classes, her brother, her sorority, her plans. Everything is coming together. And as she looks toward exams and Winter Break, Welch is optimistically gearing up to hit the books and excited about being around her family again.

Coming into her first year at college, Welch wanted to make sure that all the different aspects of her life were in order.

"I just wanted my life to be under control," Welch said, explaining that although she has no regrets about high school, she wants her time at UNC to reflect lessons she has learned in the past.

And for Welch, that means setting aside the right amount of time for everything from her friends to her studies — a common freshman balancing act that she is up to taking on.

Welch has a 14-hour workload this semester that she said is just the right speed at which to start her college career. "Fourteen hours is a good transition," she said. "I'm kind of just doing what it takes for now."

And with classes from Spanish and English to political science and even a class about the Air Force, Welch is taking it slow but trying to absorb as much as possible.

In order to do this and perform well academically, Welch knew that she'd have to adjust to the college test-taking mentality. "I definitely had to get more focused for tests," she said. "But that hasn't been a hard adjustment."

With exams right around the corner, Welch is gearing up to study but not letting finals stress her out.

"I'm not dreading them," she said. "But I look forward to them being over and behind me. I just plan to take them one at a time."

Welch said she will ultimately be pleased with her grades this semester because she knows the amount of work she put in. "I feel like I deserve whatever I get," she said. "Where I've worked hard it paid off."

One of the most beneficial things Welch said she learned throughout the semester was when to study. "I feel like as the semester moves on and on, I'm learning about my learning environment. ... What's conducive to it and what's not — and trying to weed out what's not," she said.



DTH/ARIEL SHUMAKER

Katie Welch, a freshman from Winston-Salem, helps children from a local orphanage make Christmas crafts for the holiday season.

But Welch doesn't have her eyes focused solely on herself. Balance for this freshman includes time for service.

She joined Kappa Delta sorority this semester and is taking advantage of the outreach opportunities provided. "I just want to serve people," she said.

In order to continue this love of helping others, Welch eventually wants to end up in politics once she is done with her education.

For now, though, Welch is focused on making sure she maintains this distribution of time. This includes making sure her twin brother, Kent, is just as content.

"He's OK with being Kent," she said, noting that to her, he seems to be enjoying UNC and finding his place.

This Welch, however, said she knows the "real deal" about the twin relationship and how often they communicate.

"We talk every day," she said, whether it be in passing, going to grab a bite to eat or sometimes checking out the social scene.

And she knows this because every time the two come in contact with each other, it's something special for her.

"It's a treat for me to see him," she said. "Any time you see someone who you really like, it brightens your day."

But Welch distributes praise equally throughout her family and can't wait to

reconnect with everyone when she returns home for Winter Break.

"I'm really looking forward to spending time with my family," she said. "It's important to me because we've all grown older. The times we're all together are few and far between. And that's what makes it all the more special."

And getting to spend time with her mother is also important to Welch because she and her brother were the last children to leave the house. "It freaked her out," she said. "For 25 years, her purpose to get out of bed was to provide for her kids."

Now, Welch said, "She's enjoying having the empty nest while realizing she's still a mother and we still love her."

But Welch said she and her mother are too much alike for everything to go perfectly. "We're both just really outspoken," she said. "We try to outspoke one another."

For now though, Welch is not trying to fine-tune any relationship but the one she has with herself.

She said, "It's been nice to have work and get it done, go out and enjoy my friends and have time for myself."

Just right.

The Features Editor can be reached at features@unc.edu.



Part Four of Fresh Perspectives: A four-part series following the lives of four freshmen through their first year at UNC. From left to right: Deone Powell, S.J. Barrie-Chapman, Kent Welch and Katie Welch.

## UNC Buildings Await Fix-Ups, Modernization

Major campus construction concentrating on Internet rewiring and enhanced lighting in older buildings is slated to begin in 2002.

By ANGELA PARKER  
Staff Writer

The facelift UNC will undergo from its \$500 million bond appropriation is not just about cosmetic appearances.

Efforts to retrofit campus buildings will give the University a makeover from the inside out — maintaining UNC's surface aesthetic appeal while modernizing the University's infrastructure.

While critics say the University is struggling to remain competitive in the technological field, officials say improvements on the horizon hold promise for the future.

And it all starts from the inside.

### An Agenda for Improvement

Current plans to retrofit and renovate the campus aim for the heart of the matter — the infrastructure.

Steele Building, Saunders Hall, the School of Dentistry, Woolen Gym, the Alumni Building, Howell Hall, Manning Hall and Mitchell Hall are several of the buildings that will receive these internal upgrades, including Internet rewiring and improved lighting.

The renovations are designed to meet new building and accessibility codes; replace existing electrical and heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems; improve lighting; provide new window treatments and refurbish the furniture.

The campus fiber optic backbone infrastructure — the network that connects campus buildings to the Internet — also will receive enhancements including wireless networking, projectors, sound systems and large-image projectors.

John Oberlin, Academic Technology & Networks executive director, said the renovations will provide a faster network intended to be more reliable and consistent across campus.

In an effort to level the playing field, Oberlin said several older buildings undergoing retrofitting will be rewired, bringing network, television and video services to all offices and floors.

He said the proposed improvements will help keep UNC afloat in the constantly evolving field of technology.

"There are likely over 100 campus classrooms that will receive these technological upgrades from the bond package." Many projects have been brought to the table because of annual funding shortages.

Director of Facilities Planning Gordon Rutherford said it is nearly impossible to keep up campus buildings — maintenance and repair — on a year-to-year basis. "The cost of such deferred repair gets too far out of a comprehensible reach," he said.

At this point, these proposed capital improvements are estimated to take about eight years.

### Creating a Blueprint

The Facilities Planning Department has been awaiting appropriations for years, and now officials are ready to dive head-first into retrofitting projects.

Project Studio Leader Anna Wu said the department has been nursing the renovation plans, waiting for an opportunity to execute the project plans.

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Only a life lived for others is the life worth while.

Albert Einstein