



ERIN MENDELL

Orange County Kids Need to Habla Espanol

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Hispanics now make up the largest minority in North Carolina. So it's fitting that the Orange County Board of Education is taking strides to make sure its students *habla Espanol*.

School board members restated their commitment to having a full-time Spanish teacher in each of the seven elementary schools Tuesday night.

Currently there is only one full-time Spanish teacher at Grady Brown Elementary School.

The board had already requested three more and added an additional three to the request Tuesday.

It would be easy to write the request off as frivolous.

Yeah, foreign language teachers would be great in an elementary school, but shouldn't we be more worried about reducing class sizes and just getting enough teachers in general?

No. Adding full-time Spanish teachers to Orange County elementary schools is something that should go along with improving education in more traditional ways.

We've all heard the buzz about smaller class sizes and higher-paid teachers, but those are by no means the only improvements that need to be made.

The demographics of the United States and this area in particular are changing.

It's not reasonable to expect English as a second-language teachers, who are often struggling to just keep students from falling too far behind, to pick up the slack.

In this case, there is an increasing population of Spanish-speaking students.

That's an easily targetable demographic.

While full-time Spanish teachers wouldn't directly help Spanish-speaking students learn English, but they would bridge a potentially huge gap — one Orange County Schools officials should try to avoid.

There is a natural divide between people who don't speak the same language.

Racial and ethnic tensions already exist in educational environments.

(Even at UNC, where we like to think of ourselves as enlightened and tolerant, we're constantly holding race relations forums to address conflict.)

If elementary school-aged children were taught Spanish, they could better relate to their Spanish-speaking peers, even the ones who speak English well also.

In addition, Spanish-speaking students wouldn't feel so alienated.

They would see their peers learning their first language and so wouldn't be made to feel like complete outsiders.

It would do a lot to get rid of the "us" vs. "them" mentality that's so easy to get into when you encounter someone different from you.

Besides, when children are immersed in a second language at a young age, they often forget much of their first language despite their parents' best efforts.

Having a full-time Spanish teacher would offer students who speak Spanish as a first language the chance to retain and refine their skills.

That way those students wouldn't have to lose a skill they've already worked so hard to learn.

There is, of course, the nice but unnecessary added benefit of students being able to start learning a second language early.

But that's not where the benefits stop.

Yes, there are budget constraints, and school boards can't get everything on their wish lists.

But Orange County will just have to join the club when it comes to budget constraints.

And full-time Spanish teachers are not items for a wish list.

They are something of a necessity, and Orange County officials should find a way to work them into the county budget.

Columnist Erin Mendell can be reached at mendell@email.unc.edu.

Students Celebrate TAs

By JOE SULLIVAN
Staff Writer

Teaching assistants and their families congregated on Polk Place to enjoy the Thursday afternoon shade, munch on free barbecue and listen to the voices and chords of UNC musical groups.

The food and events were all a part of the fourth annual TA Appreciation Barbecue and SpringFest.

In previous years, SpringFest was a showcase for UNC groups to perform and entertain students.

Former Student Body Vice President Lerissa Rentas said the goal of the event was to thank TAs and to remind them that their hard work doesn't go unnoticed. "There aren't very many perks to being a TA, and this is a way for undergrads to express their thanks to TAs," she said. "And it's also a great way to bridge the gap between the two communities because it fosters an atmosphere for interaction."

The event, co-sponsored by student government and the Carolina Union Activities Board, was expected to draw between 1,000 and 2,000 people throughout the afternoon, Rentas said. She said the

crowd was a mix of undergraduates, graduate students, TAs and their families.

Tents and tables were scattered on the lawn, giving students a chance to play skee-ball, get their faces painted and try their vocal chords at a yelling contest with the chance to win a DVD player.

Several UNC groups performed on the steps of South Building, including the Loreleis, the Achordants, Opeyo! and Carolina Style.

CUAB Issues of Diversity Chairwoman Kristi Booker, who will be CUAB president next year, said the talent showcase and TA Appreciation Barbecue were combined into one afternoon to enhance the atmosphere of each. "We wanted to create this festival to showcase UNC talent and to unify the Carolina community," she said. "I'm just pleased that people are out having a good time and taking a break from the end-of-semester crunch."

Chancellor James Moeser also addressed the crowd Thursday afternoon to lend his support. "This is a great way to thank all of you for all the hard

See SPRINGFEST, Page 7



Six-year-old Chisung Cho plays with bubbles at one of the activity areas set up for SpringFest on Thursday. The event also featured free food, bands and carnival attractions.



Chapel Hill Stands Out In Conservative State

By MICHAEL MCKNIGHT
Staff Writer

When state leaders were deciding where to build a state zoo in the late 1960s, Chubb Seawell, a conservative lawyer from Carthage and guest on Jesse Helms' Viewpoint Editorial on WRAL-TV, suggested that the easiest solution might be to simply put a fence around Chapel Hill.

Many conservatives like Seawell viewed Chapel Hill, the epicenter of campus activism in North Carolina, then as they do now — a dark spot on a state map dominated by those of similar political persuasions.

On the other side, many liberals see Chapel Hill and the Triangle as symbolic of an emerging progressive movement within the state.

Others think the divide is minimal and between moderates from both parties. As thousands migrate to the state and the Triangle, the historical divide between liberal and conservative could be changing.

The Great Divide

Just as the state has divided itself along technological, economic and

racial boundaries, it also appears to be divided on the political front between a traditionally conservative state and a more liberal Triangle.

To some analysts, such a divide has persisted for all of recent memory. UNC political science Professor Thad Beyle said Chapel Hill and the surrounding region always has been more liberal than the rest of the state. "It's always been true," Beyle said. "When I came here in 1964 it was true."

Evidence of a distinct progressive mood in the region abounds in nearly every facet of Triangle politics from U.S. Rep. David Price, D-N.C., to Carrboro Mayor Mike Nelson, the state's first openly gay mayor.

Beyle noted that North Carolina's fourth district House seat, currently held by Price, which covers large portions of Durham, Orange and Wake counties, always has been home to the state's most liberal member of Congress.

But some see the divide much more subtly.

John Aldrich, a political science professor at Duke University, said the divide could be exaggerated. "The Triangle is not the Democratic bastion," Aldrich said. "The state is fairly evenly divided between the two parties, and the Triangle is too."

Aldrich said the split ideology is better described as being between a moderate Triangle and a conservative state.

Aldrich and Beyle both noted that Raleigh's election of a series of conservative mayors, such as Tom Fetzer and Paul Coble, could be indicative of a political divide within the Triangle between the traditionally more liberal Durham and Orange counties and a fairly conservative Wake County.

The Liberal Triangle

Reasons for the divide are varied, but the most common are racial and economic. "The history of the South has led it down a different path," Aldrich said. "The most conservative people in the South tend to be poorer. That's why Jesse Helms' support is stronger in the east."

Wake Forest University political science Professor Jack Fleer suggested that region's political bearings might be impacted by Raleigh, the seat of state government. "In the case of Raleigh, you have a large number of government employees there," Fleer said. "They're people who are more likely to view government more favorably."

All three analysts cited the area's close academic ties and a high minority population as the factors most responsible for the Triangle's leanings.

A Changing State

Bill Cobey, chairman of the N.C.

Republican Party, said the liberal nature of the Triangle, especially of Chapel Hill, is entrenched in the university community.

"People across the state love Chapel Hill, but they hate the politics that comes out of there."

While change might not necessarily happen quickly, it likely will occur as the population of the state and the Triangle explodes and thousands of new residents pour in — bringing their own political leanings.

Beyle said that during his tenure at the University, newcomers to the area have made it more politically balanced. "A lot of people are moving (to the Triangle) and bringing their Republicanism from the Northeast and Midwest with them," Beyle said.

Cobey agreed that Republicans were gaining strength in the Triangle. "Here locally, there was no respect for Republicans, and you were treated like an outcast, and now you're treated with respect."

But Cobey said the great number of liberal Democrats associated with the area's universities and Durham's large minority population make it difficult for his party to grow in the area.

Cobey said the party was instead focusing on trying to grow in other areas of the state, like in the East and in the suburban areas of Charlotte.

See SOCIAL, Page 7

Forum Aims To Advance Moratorium

Wrongly accused former death row inmate Darby Tillis described his prison term as "pure horror."

By MANDY MELTON
Staff Writer

A wrongly accused former death row inmate and the sister of an N.C. death row inmate told audience members Thursday night that a moratorium to halt all executions is needed now and that the abolishment of the death penalty should soon follow.

Rose Clark, the sister of death row inmate Ernest Basden, opened the campus forum sponsored primarily by the UNC Campaign to End the Death Penalty by apologizing in advance for her emotions. She said her experience with the death penalty was a harsh education.

Clark said during her brother's trial she became aware that money and a high social status sometimes give defendants greater influence in court.

"When you're an average poor person, you don't have as good of a chance as wealthier people," she said.

"If you're ignorant (about the judicial process), then it's even worse. It's not an equal system at all."

Darby Tillis took a more personal attack against the death penalty. He described his experience on death row as nine years of pure horror. "I was incarcerated for nine years, one month and 17 days in a penal system for a crime that I did not commit," he said.

Tillis was sentenced to death row in 1977 for double murder and armed robbery and was later acquitted.

Tillis said the death penalty is the most powerful weapon that a state can use against criminals because once sentenced, inmates only can sit and contemplate about when they will be executed.

See DEATH PENALTY, Page 7

Two Candidates to Vie For ASG Presidency

By COURTNEY REID
Staff Writer

This Saturday, two candidates will vie for the post of president of the UNC Association of Student Governments at N.C. State University.

Current ASG President Andrew Payne will run for re-election against challenger David Chesley, who is ASG vice president for legislative affairs.

The following is an outline of their platform goals.

Andrew Payne

Payne, who has served as president since last September, is a senior double major in environmental science and engineering at N.C. State University.

In the past, Payne also has served as student body treasurer and academic committee chairman at N.C. State.

As president, Payne helped organize the Students' Day at the Capitol in February, where students lobbied state lawmakers to raise awareness about student concerns.

Payne said he wants to return for a second term as ASG president because the organization still has room for growth.

He said he hopes to make the organization more accountable to UNC-system students by giving them a vested

interest in ASG via a student fee, a proposal that students would vote on in a referendum. "I want students to vote on the idea of a mandatory refundable fee that will hopefully serve as a referendum on ASG," Payne said.

Payne went on to say he would focus on the internal structure of ASG if re-elected. "We have visions of large goals, and we try to jump at them instead of taking the daily steps to make the visions become reality," he said. "I plan to change that."

Payne's running mate is Sonja Blanks, student body president of Fayetteville State University.

Payne said her experiences in student government and at the small, historically black university will be of great value. "We need to strengthen ties between ASG and other organizations such as the N.C. Black Student Organization."

David Chesley

David Chesley is Payne's only opponent in the upcoming ASG election.

Chesley, a junior political science major at Western Carolina University, is the ASG vice president for legislative affairs. He also served as a student senator and chief of communications at WCU.

See ASG, Page 7

Face Behind the 'Freak'

By LANITA WITHERS
Staff Writer

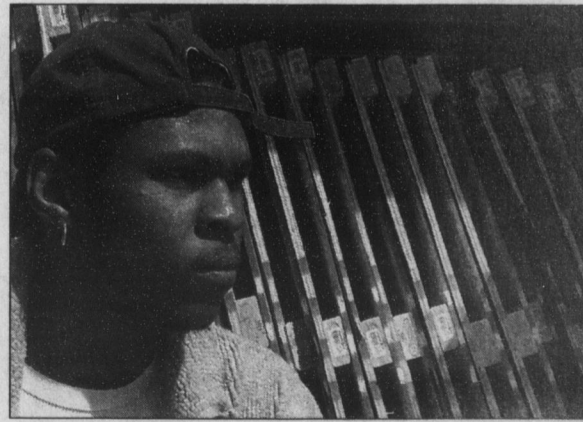
Hundreds of hours of organizing, making phone calls, forming strategies, meeting with committees and writing letters will have their grand finale tonight. Then senior Charles Campbell will have a chance to relax.

Maybe.

Greek Freak is the annual step show and afterparty sponsored by the Mu Zeta chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity Inc. Last year Greek Freak had a record attendance of 8,132 people. The show has earned a reputation as one of the premiere step shows in the South, with appearances by Black Entertainment Television's Big Tigger and major corporate sponsorship by BET.com and Heart & Soul magazine.

For the past two years, Campbell, a computer science major from Pemberton, N.J., has worked as coordinator or co-coordinator, collaborating with show pros, security, the head of Greek affairs and corporate sponsors to produce a successful and secure event.

"Last year Big Tigger was a big name," he said. "This year we said, 'Who could bring in a bigger crowd?'"



Senior Charles Campbell rests in front of the truck that holds the stage for Greek Freak 2001. Thousands are expected to attend Friday's show.

Most everybody agreed on (BET personality) Hits From the Street."

So Campbell got busy, called BET and scheduled Hits to host the show. "People say 'you guys have connections,'" Campbell said. "But I just picked up the phone and called. They give you the rundown, but by the end of the day, you have Hits' manager's phone number in your hand."

LaMar Mack, president of the Mu

Zeta chapter, is not surprised by Campbell's dedication. "A lot of people don't see a lot of the backstage work that goes into Greek Freak," Mack said. "That's stuff that Charles very actively and energetically takes a hold of."

Campbell has devoted the majority of his time to making sure the show goes off without a hitch. He uses spare

See CAMPBELL, Page 7