

Senate Race A Must-See Contest

One of the hottest races this election season is now officially under way.

Ersine Bowles, an investment banker from Charlotte, filed for the U.S. Senate on Wednesday.

Bowles joined Secretary of State Elaine Marshall and former Durham City Council leader Cynthia Brown, who have also filed for the race to succeed Jesse Helms, who is retiring after 30 years in office.

APRIL BETHEA
STATE & NATIONAL COLUMNIST

After filing, Bowles wasted no time in taking a quick jab at his likely opponent, ex-presidential candidate and former director of the American Red Cross, Elizabeth Dole.

As of Thursday, Dole had not yet filed for office. Dole, a native of Salisbury, is hoping to gain Helms' seat after living outside of the state for almost four decades — something Bowles is sure to emphasize repeatedly during the election.

"The folks I've met here want a senator who knows North Carolina, who has lived here, raised a family, paid taxes and started a business," he said.

That might be true. The past few years have been, at times, very trying for the state.

Almost three years since Hurricane Floyd ripped through North Carolina, residents in the eastern part of the state are still struggling to repair homes and communities damaged by the storm.

And the past two years have seen the state grapple with multimillion-dollar budget deficits that have threatened to cut back on services at a time when residents might need them the most.

In their involvement in the state, Bowles, Brown and Marshall have seen firsthand the impact that these and other events have had on North Carolina.

So it is unlikely that showing voters that they are aware of the state's day-to-day comings and goings will be difficult.

Dole, on the other hand, faces a daunting task.

Will she be able to convince voters that, despite her absence from the state, she understands their concerns and is deserving of their vote? It's possible.

After all, 55 percent of N.Y. voters elected Hillary Rodham Clinton to the Senate in 2000. The former first lady had close to zilch connections with the state after having lived in Illinois, Connecticut, Maine and Arkansas before heading to the White House.

So should Dole manage to win the election and become North Carolina's first female senator, it would almost be like a fairy tale come true.

A hometown girl travels to Washington, makes a name for herself, then decides to come back home, runs for office and bring glory to the state.

Sounds peachy, right? Not exactly.

In order for Dole to win the election, she will have to rid herself of the carpetbagger image that Bowles and other Democrat hopefuls will likely try to pin on her throughout the election.

Dole will need to show that her close Washington ties will result in good news for the state. She also will need to emphasize her extensive record of public service, including stints as secretary of labor and secretary of state.

The task might get a little easier, thanks to a lift from President Bush.

Political pundits have predicted that Bush's high approval ratings since Sept. 11 could boost the campaigns of Republican incumbents and hopefuls. But even that might not be enough to coast Dole to victory.

Still, Bowles' election is no sure thing either.

After learning the ins and outs of Washington as White House Chief of Staff to President Clinton, Bowles is now trying to distance himself from his former boss, a la Al Gore in 2000.

Some said Gore's reluctance to ride Clinton's coattails might have been a factor in his defeat.

If that's the case, the same could happen to Bowles.

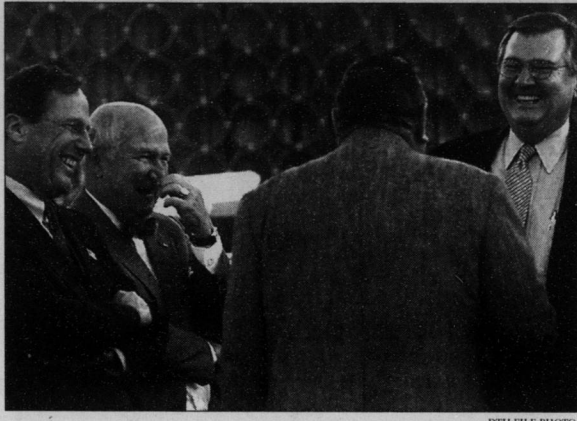
Plus, Bowles will have to contend with several other Democratic candidates who are just as eager as he is to replace Helms.

So as week one of campaign filing comes to an end, could the Senate race be the "must-see" event of the election season? Could be.

Who will come out victorious in the end? That's still up in the air. But it's sure to be fun to watch.

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Budget, Districts Might Slow Session Again



Legislators celebrate Dec. 6 as the longest legislative session in state history ends. Many hope history won't repeat itself this year.

By NATHAN COLETTA
Staff Writer

N.C. legislators hope the 2002 legislative session will conclude on time, though lawmakers likely will face another summer of budget troubles and redistricting battles.

The tasks that delayed adjournment of the 2001 session — dealing with a large budget deficit and the drafting of a legislative redistricting plan — might come up again when the state legislature convenes its short session in late May.

N.C. officials estimate that the budget shortfall for the 2002-03 fiscal year will be more than \$1 billion.

To contend with the state's fiscal mess, House Speaker Jim Black, D-Mecklenburg, and Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight, D-Dare, announced Wednesday that they would call appropriations committees back to Raleigh in late March or early April to start working on a budget for the fiscal year that begins July 1.

No concrete date has been set for when the committees will return.

Also, a state judge recently ruled that state district lines — which were drawn last fall — are unconstitutional, possibly forcing legislators to spend time in the next few months drawing new ones.

Last year the combination of state budget problems and redistricting led to the longest session in state history.

"I hope this session doesn't run nearly as long," said Sen. Charles Carter, D-Buncombe. "I thought the length of the last session was ridiculous."

Rep. Wayne Goodwin, D-Montgomery, said he thinks the session will end on time for two reasons.

"After last year's marathon session, I can't imagine anyone in the state who has the stomach for that again," Goodwin said. "It's also an election year, so legislators need to be home talk-

ing with their constituents. People need to see their legislators."

Despite some lawmaker confidence, Rep. Edgar Starnes, R-Alexander, said the state's budget shortfall could prompt a lengthy session. Starnes said the session's duration hinges on the Democratic leadership's response to the budget woes.

"They can either raise revenue, which means a tax increase, or cut spending," Starnes said.

But Carter said he does not think the budget alone will cause an extended session. "We know it's going to be a tough budget year," he said. "But we've had those before and still gotten out of here in a timely fashion, so I think we should this year as well."

Carter, Goodwin and Starnes all said lengthy sessions have negative effects on legislators. "It wears us down," Carter said. "Everyone gets pretty tired of mak-

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Local Officials Worried About Fire Violations

Two fraternity houses had a high number of fire code violations, and fire department officials are concerned about awareness.

By CHRIS BLOW
AND RUTHIE WARSHENBROT
Staff Writers

A large number of fire code violations for some fraternity houses have local officials concerned that fire safety is not being taken seriously enough at UNC's fraternities.

Pi Kappa Phi fraternity's 27 fire code violations and Phi Gamma Delta fraternity's 11 violations were the highest among the 24 houses examined in the fall 2001 UNC Fraternity & Sorority Report, published Wednesday.

Shawn Manberg, president of Pi Kappa Phi, said members of the fraternity were surprised by the number of violations, but he believes the house is not in danger. "We're concerned that that number is out because it doesn't look good on the house, and it doesn't reflect the safety of the house. This is a very safe house."

Chapel Hill fire code violation reports state that Pi Kappa Phi's 27 violations — ranging from broken exit lights to overloaded extension cords — were all fixed before a third inspection last fall.

Phi Gamma Delta had 11 fire code violations in the fall but has yet to meet with the fire department for another inspection, reports state. Chapel Hill Fire Chief Dan Jones said lack of communication between many fraternities and the fire department is common.

"Finding the responsible parties is the hardest part of the deal — they don't return our phone calls, they don't keep appointments. So we go to the house, and everybody says that they don't know anything — that they aren't in charge," Jones said.

A third inspection of the Phi Gamma Delta house should occur this semester, and the fraternity might face a fine for non-compliance, Fire Marshal Caprice Mellon said.

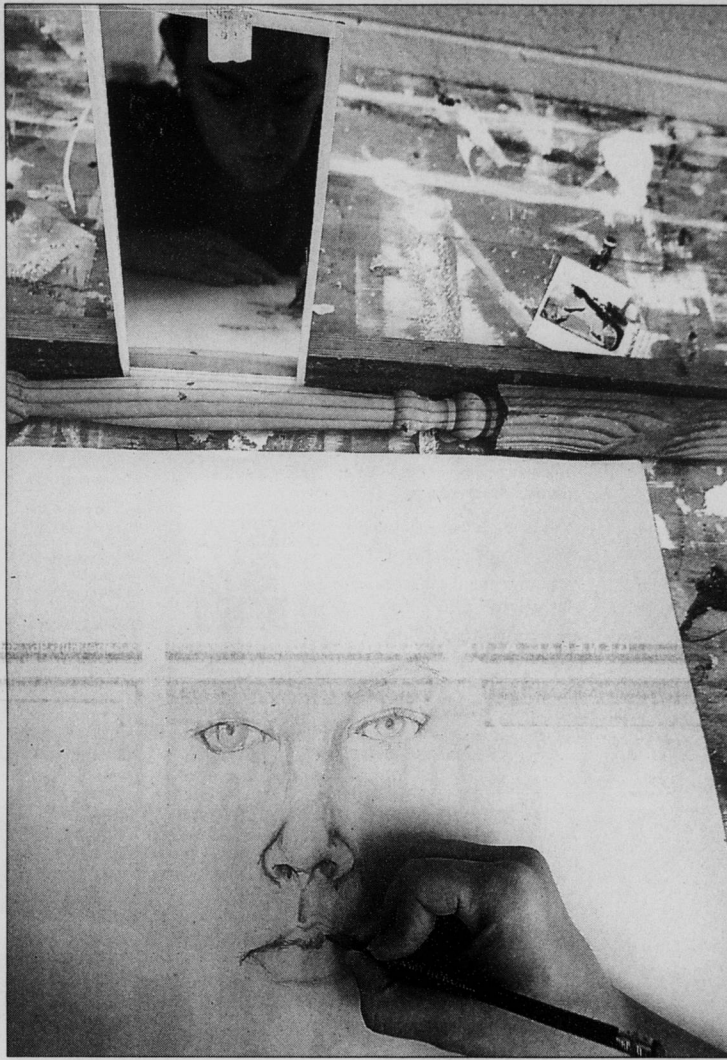
A fraternity that consistently does not comply with fire department regulations could face up to \$500 in fines or eviction, town attorney Ralph Karpinos said.

In 1996, five students died in a fire at the Phi Gamma Delta house. Phi Gamma Delta Fire Marshal Breck Gibbs said the fraternity has been making vast safety improvements since the 1996 fire. The most important thing is to make sure the number of fire code violations goes down, he said.

Since the Phi Gamma Delta fire, the town has required the

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THE ART OF REFLECTION



Sophomore studio art major Sara Jones works on a self-portrait sketch for her painting class in Hanes Art Center on Thursday. After completing her sketches, Jones plans to do a full-scale painting of herself.

Carrboro Hosts Talk On Transit

Representatives from two local transit departments met to hear residents' views on public transit in the area.

By SCOTT LAPIERRE
Staff Writer

Two months after introducing fare-free bus service, local public transit officials heard congratulations, complaints and suggestions Thursday night at Carrboro's annual public transit forum.

Chapel Hill Transit and Triangle Transit Authority officials made separate presentations to an audience of about 20 residents and town officials that outlined future plans and highlighted the success of the fare-free busing system enacted Jan. 1.

Chris van Hasselt, chairman of Carrboro's Transportation Advisory Board, opened the forum by saying the goal of fare-free service, which was to increase ridership, has been met.

"From the numbers so far, ridership has improved," he said.

Chapel Hill Transit Regional Transport Planner David Bonk presented a summary indicating that the system's weekday service miles had gone up about 1,000 miles since August 2001. He said service hours during that period jumped from 451 to 509. Both of these factors indicate that service has expanded considerably, he said.

David Bleicher, a representative of The Village Project, a local organization dedicated to land use and transportation reform, said, "Fare-free transit is a great idea whose time has come."

But Bleicher urged the transit officials to expand hours and make schedules more logical.

"Routes that change, chameleon-like, See TRANSIT FORUM, Page 7

Survivor Talks About Coping With Sept. 11

By ERIN GANLEY
Staff Writer

David Douglas, a survivor of the Sept. 11 attacks, recounted Thursday the chaotic events of that tragic day and the personal impact on him to a full auditorium in Hill Hall.

The talk, which was sponsored by Campus Crusade for Christ, began dramatically with a montage of photographs of the terrorist attacks and aftermath, many of which were taken by Douglas himself.

Douglas came to prominence after "Dateline NBC" followed his search to find his mother, who lived just three blocks away from the World Trade Center. Although Douglas fortunately was reunited with his mother after four hours of searching, he still was profoundly affected by the events. "There were many days I did not stay together," said Douglas, in response to a question on how he coped with the tragedy.

On Sept. 11, Douglas first became aware of the attacks while watching television from his New York City office at Chase JP Morgan. He said he saw one of the World Trade buildings on fire and knew something was wrong. "As a pretty tough New Yorker, I just took notice," Douglas said.

He then became worried about his mother's safety.

"I was immediately on the phone with my mother. She was crying hysterically," Douglas said.

Douglas said he left work against his supervisor's orders to be with his mother, who has emphysema. When he arrived, his mother's apartment building was empty, and the streets were filled with debris and rescue officials.

"It was something like you might see in a cheap action movie," he said. "The reality was New York was not prepared for it. Collectively they did not know what to do." Douglas eventually found his mother, but then was separated from her two more times.

After finding her the second time, he flagged down a passing car, and they agreed to take his ailing mother to a hospital. Douglas tried to follow on his bike, but could not keep up. "I'm a good cyclist, but I'm not training for the Tour de France or anything, so she lost me."

Then, with "Dateline NBC" tagging along, Douglas searched four hours for his mother, at local hospitals in the area. But eventually he found her back at his apartment building.

Douglas was relieved to have found his mother, but the trauma of the events was far from over.

The aftermath of the attacks was surreal, Douglas said. "To have armed militia and national guard in your neighborhood keeping you off the streets after 11 o'clock — you can only liken it to a movie."

Disasters of this magnitude, Douglas said, "bring into question a number of

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From UNC to Peaceful Tomorrows

After his brother's death in the Sept. 11 attacks, David Potorti stopped writing his thesis to co-direct Peaceful Tomorrows.

By ANDREW MCGLAUGHON
Staff Writer

People come to UNC for many reasons. For 46-year-old David Potorti, it was a love of people and their stories that propelled him to Chapel Hill.

It was this same love that led him away.

Potorti arrived at UNC in 1999 to study folklore as a master's student. He was preparing to write a thesis on occupational folklore, focusing on the story of the UNC janitorial staff.

But he now finds his life focused on a different story, using lessons learned from his brother's death during the Sept. 11 attacks to help other people carve peaceful tomorrows out of today's violent climate.

As the co-director and eastern U.S. coordinator for Peaceful Tomorrows, a nonprofit group organized by family members of Sept. 11 victims, Potorti works to promote nonviolent responses to global terrorism.

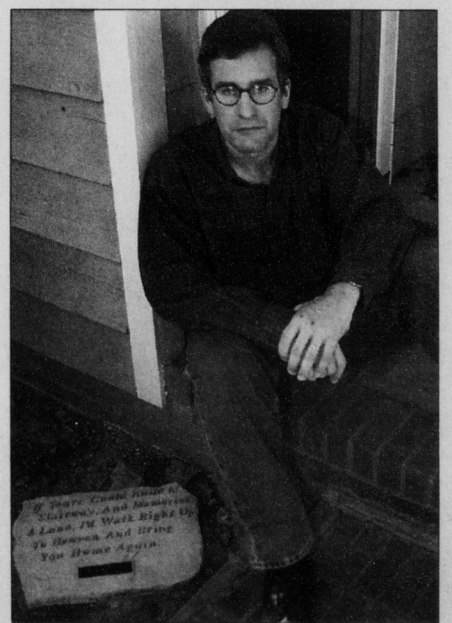
Taking their name from a Martin Luther King Jr. quote, "Wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrows," Potorti said the group wants to end the perpetual cycle of violence in the world.

Potorti made his initial return to New York after Thanksgiving. His first trip back to his former home and the site where his brother died was an emotional one. "I cried. ... You look up past the people living, and there is this massive wreckage," he said.

During the trip, a walk through Manhattan to honor the victims of Sept. 11 led Potorti to meet other family members who shared his view on the response to the attacks.

"We didn't want to extend the same harsh treatment our family members and others had received," Potorti said.

To reach this goal, Potorti and other members of Peaceful



David Potorti sits next to a plaque honoring his brother, who died in the World Trade Center collapse.

Tomorrows are working to communicate their message to President Bush. On Feb. 14, the group held a press conference in New York asking Bush to create an Afghan victim fund. Potorti and his colleagues mailed the president a

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