

Impromptu sledding ends in injuries

BY BROOK R. CORWIN
UNIVERSITY EDITOR

Covered in sleet and ice, Skipper Bowles Drive was transformed into a treacherous sledding hill by hundreds of students early Monday morning, several of whom were sent to UNC Hospitals with concussions or broken bones.

Beginning late Sunday night, several hundred students — including several members of the UNC men's basketball team — used objects such as police barricades, benches and even picnic tables to careen down the steeply sloped road overlooking the Smith Center, said students at the scene.

"Anything that could slide was being taken," freshman Dan Dall'Asta said the next afternoon. "It was pretty out of control."

Between 8 p.m. Sunday and 1:35 a.m. Monday, four people were checked into UNC Hospitals with sledding injuries, including one with a broken bone, said Tom Hughes, a hospital spokesman.

Among those students was Dall'Asta, who said he suffered a concussion when several students sliding on a street sign collided with him near the bottom of the hill.

"The last I heard was 'get out of the way,' and then I was flipped in

the air," he said.

Several officers from the UNC Department of Public Safety arrived at about 2 a.m. to clear the overrun roadway of sledders. No one was arrested, said University police Chief Derek Poarch, but students could have been written up for obstructing the street.

"We could have written up students on the spot for illegally blocking the road," Poarch said. "They then refused requests to move and put up barricades to block the road. ... Next time we may not be as patient with them."

Several students — including one injured at the scene — said police intervention wasn't necessary to ensure the safety of the participating students, some of whom were piling 15 to 20 people on uprooted picnic tables.

"We're all pretty mature college kids, trying to watch out for each other," said Lawrence Bianco, a sophomore public policy who suffered a separated shoulder and a concussion after being hit by a sled. "Accidents happen, but it wasn't because of a lack of concern."

Bianco said that while he was unconscious for a couple of minutes, a group of students gathered to help him to his feet. One of these



Students use a picnic table to sled down Skipper Bowles Drive on Monday. Hundreds flooded the road to sled on anything they could find.

was Matt Mullane, a Robertson Scholar studying this semester at Duke University.

Mullane compared the scene to the vocal and festive atmosphere of a sporting event, adding that most students had safety on their minds.

"I think it's a Chapel Hill tradition that should never be stopped," Mullane said. "It's a classic event I

hope will continue."

Students said they expect the event will continue whenever classes are canceled again.

"I'm certain students will be back out," Bianco said. "It was a ball for most people."

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

Libya welcomes U.S. delegation

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TRIPOLI, Libya — A Republican congressman led a U.S. delegation into uncharted territory Monday: a meeting with Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi and a tour of a Libyan nuclear reactor.

The extraordinary meeting is a hallmark of improving relations between the United States and Libya after decades of animosity.

"It was an extremely positive two hours," said the delegation's leader, Republican Rep. Curt Weldon of Pennsylvania.

While lawmakers said there was little discussion of remaining points of contention between the countries they were impressed with Gadhafi.

The meeting took place in a white tent emblazoned with green palm trees and circular designs, erected beside the wreckage of Gadhafi's house, destroyed by U.S. bombs in 1986. A child said to be Gadhafi's adopted daughter was killed in the attack.

The two nations have come a long way since then. In recent months, Gadhafi has renounced his support for terrorist organizations and invited U.S., British and U.N. experts to dismantle his previously secret programs to develop weapons of mass destruction.

The lawmakers said they were convinced Gadhafi was serious about his new place in the world, and wanted desperately to come back in from the cold after decades of U.S. and U.N. sanctions imposed for his support of terrorists took a toll on his country's oil wealth and regional power.

Rep. Darrell Issa, a California Republican, said Gadhafi "expressed his regret that a quarter century has passed of isolation between our countries."

Coming out of the meeting, the lawmakers celebrated with lunch at the Libyan-American Friendship Association, established in 2000. The lawmakers were three and a half hours late, and most of the 180 guests had eaten already.

A traditional Libyan band played a bagpipe-like instrument and drums as the lawmakers arrived, and a group of girls, ages

3 to 10 in makeup and wedding dresses, received them.

Before their meeting, the lawmakers toured Gadhafi's bombed-out house, damaged in attacks launched by then-President Ronald Reagan in retaliation for the bombing of a German disco that killed a U.S. soldier and a Turkish woman. Thirty-seven people were killed in Libya in the U.S. attacks.

The lawmakers shook their heads at a photograph said to be of Gadhafi's adopted daughter, killed in the bombing. Issa said Gadhafi complained the United States didn't give him the proper warnings before the attacks.

Gadhafi admitted last month that he tried to develop weapons of mass destruction and U.N., U.S. and British inspectors have been inspecting the facilities to determine how to dismantle them. Although the facility wasn't used for weapons development, scientists working on the nuclear weapons program presumably gained knowledge working at facilities such as Tajura.

Libya is hoping to end the U.S. sanctions, in place since 1986, that have cost it more than \$30 billion in lost business. Investment is needed for the oil industry. The delegation indicated the sanctions could be removed as soon as Gadhafi made good on his pledges.

Another U.S. lawmaker, Democratic Rep. Tom Lantos of California, is in Libya on a separate visit. He landed in Libya on Saturday in the first visit by an elected U.S. official in 38 years.

In addition to Weldon, Ortiz and Issa, the delegation includes Louisiana Democrat Rodney Alexander and Republicans Candice Miller of Michigan, Mark Souder of Indiana and Elton Gallegly of California.

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Economy, Iraq war could tip Bush re-election

BY KAVITA PILLAI
STAFF WRITER

As Democratic presidential candidates vie for their party's nomination, experts say President Bush's re-election campaign unofficially has begun.

"The State of the Union speech was clearly a campaign speech," said Allan Lichtman, history professor at American University. "And you don't raise over \$100 million without being an enthusiastic campaigner."

The president's campaign for re-election began even earlier, said James Stimson, a professor of political science at UNC. "The real-

ity is presidents begin thinking about their re-election before they are inaugurated."

Being an incumbent is a clear advantage for Bush, but a faltering economy and problems abroad could prove problematic as November nears.

For the president to be re-elected, "the economy has to hold up, there can't be a compelling scandal, and he has to avoid major reverses abroad," Lichtman said.

Bill Ferguson, a professor of economics at Grinnell College in Iowa, said three economic factors will affect the president's chances of re-election: the economy's growth,

unemployment rates and the federal deficit.

However, if unemployment remains high throughout the election season, the public likely will blame Bush, hurting his re-election chances.

"One would wonder how the public would weigh the trade-off (between the growing economy and high unemployment)," Ferguson said.

Bush's tax policy also likely will come under heavy fire by Democratic challengers as a primary reason for a ballooning deficit.

"Cutting taxes cuts down gov-

ernment revenue," Ferguson said.

He added that while production is falling, government spending is increasing.

But Bush's campaign will emphasize national security and tap into the public's fear of terrorism instead of the economy, Stimson said.

"They are going to hold the Republican convention in New York City so they'll be close to Ground Zero," he said.

Lichtman said one major difference between Bush's re-election campaign and his 2000 campaign will be the public's perception of him.

"Last time he campaigned as the united man who could bridge the gap between conservatives and democrats," he said. "He's more explicitly conservative this time."

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