

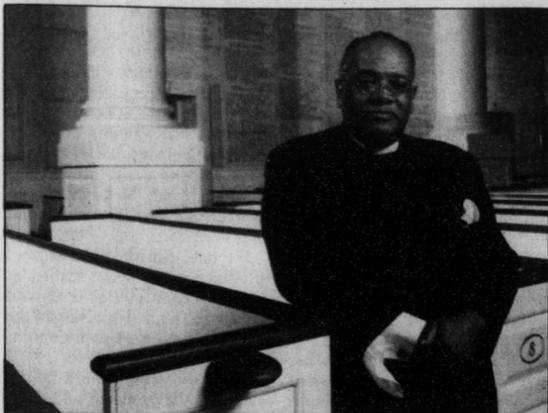
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Harvard minister named May speaker



COURTESY OF UNC NEWS SERVICES

Author, preacher and academic Peter Gomes has been picked to speak at the University's Commencement ceremony, which will be held in May.

CHANCELLOR SELECTS GOMES TO SPEAK AT COMMENCEMENT

BY STEPHANIE JORDAN
ASSISTANT UNIVERSITY EDITOR

He's an ordained Baptist minister, an advocate for same-sex marriage rights and a black Republican who led prayers at the presidential inaugurations of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush.

In May, he also will be the University's Commencement speaker.

Rev. Peter Gomes, a best-selling author and renowned professor at Harvard Divinity School, will bring his diverse perspectives to UNC this spring.

An invitation was extended to Gomes in late May, after the

Commencement speaker committee submitted a list of possible speakers to Chancellor James Moeser.

Gomes accepted in June, and University officials finally released his name to students Wednesday.

"I think his address will be timely, appropriate, from a different perspective we don't always hear on the campus nowadays," said Joe Ferrell, secretary of the faculty council and a committee member. "I think he's going to give a spectacular speech."

Ferrell suggested Gomes to the committee when presenting names of those speaker candidates eligible for an honorary degree from UNC

this year.

Gomes, a faculty member at Harvard University for the past 30 years, holds more than 20 honorary degrees from universities including Duke University and the University of Nebraska.

He earned a bachelor's degree from Bates College and a bachelor's degree in sacred theology from Harvard Divinity School.

Gomes has studied Christianity in society, particularly in education, for many years, Ferrell said.

Despite all of his accomplishments, Gomes does not have as high profile a name as some speakers who have graced the Commencement stage in years past.

"Just because you don't know someone's name off the bat doesn't mean he won't be a good Commencement speaker," said

Jen Bushman, president of the Graduate and Professional Student Federation. "He's spent 30 years teaching and advising students, so if anyone can speak to wrapping up the college experience, I think he's the one to do it."

Moeser, who made the ultimate decision to select Gomes as May's speaker, welcomed the reverend to campus.

"Dr. Peter Gomes is a powerful and eloquent speaker with a great sense of humor," Moeser stated in a press release issued Wednesday.

Student Body President Matt Calabria also voiced his support for the choice.

"I'm looking forward to hearing him speak at my graduation," Calabria said. "There are several

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ACES WILD



DTH/SAMKIT SHAH

Jackson, Alex Basista, David Donovan and Grayson Shirley (left to right) spend Wednesday night playing poker at Spanky's restaurant on Franklin Street in the inaugural free Texas Hold'em Tournament, organized by the N.C. Poker League. The tournaments are free to anyone interested and offer prizes to the winner. The N.C. Poker League keeps track of

participants' standings, allowing them the ability to see how they are matching up with other local players. Top point leaders then get to play in an invitational tournament for a grand prize. Subsequent tournaments will be held every Wednesday at Spanky's, starting Sept. 22, at 7:30 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. For more information, visit the Web site of the N.C. Poker League at <http://ncpokerleague.com>.

Residents want small committee

BY DAN SCHWIND
ASSISTANT CITY EDITOR

Though divided over the possible renaming of Airport Road, many town residents seem to agree on the number of people who should be on the advisory committee charged with deciding the road's future.

The Chapel Hill Town Council had a heated debate Tuesday about how many people should be on the committee before finally deciding to postpone board nominations until its Monday meeting.

Mayor Kevin Foy originally proposed a committee consisting of 17 people plus himself and two council members.

But after Tuesday's meeting, some council members thought the committee should include 59 people — everyone who applied — so as not to disenfranchise anyone.

It was decided Tuesday night that both possi-

SEE MLK, PAGE 4

County faces tough storm

Tornado touches down, but area stays unscathed

BY SHANNAN BOWEN
AND RYAN C. TUCK
SENIOR WRITERS

Remnants of Hurricane Frances produced a rash of weather watches in Orange County on Wednesday, but officials say the county escaped relatively unscathed.

The National Weather Service issued a tornado warning at 12:33 p.m. for the eastern part of Orange County after the service's doppler radar showed a tornado six miles south of Carrboro, moving north at 35 mph.

Gwen Snowden, deputy director of Orange

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Group mulls plans for downtown lots

Plans retreat to discuss development

BY RYAN C. TUCK
CITY EDITOR

In only the second meeting of the full Downtown Economic Development Corporation, the group asserted its mission to equally represent University, private and town interests — and decided to start with a project that is set to make a serious change to the downtown landscape.

Board members erupted into a discussion Wednesday morning about the town's proposed redevelopments of parking lots 2 and 5.

"This is one of about three or four 800-pound gorillas that are going on downtown," said Nicholas Didow, the group's interim executive director.

The Chapel Hill Town Council initially expressed its desire in June 2002 to build mixed-use

development and parking facilities on parking lot 5, located across from University Square on Franklin Street, and on parking lot 2, located behind Spanky's.

At the most recent meeting, subcommittee members decided to pursue a plan that would move the RBC Centura bank to the new building on lot 5. Lot 2 would be redeveloped after lot 5 and would include a transit transfer center. A parking deck would then be built on the RBC property. Residential property also would be built on top of the Wallace Deck, which would extend to Henderson Street.

The board's chairman, Bob Epting, said Wednesday that he doesn't know if the developments

SEE COMMISSION, PAGE 4

UNC throwers aim at golden dreams

BY MARY DUBY
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

For every college football legend, basketball star or baseball standout, the post-graduation dream includes multimillion-dollar contracts with the NFL, NBA or MLB and one of the high-profile shoe companies.

But the avid track and field athlete looks to a future that pays in gold — Olympic gold.

North Carolina throwers Laura Gerraughty and Vikas Gowda took a step toward that lifelong dream last month in Athens.

Gowda, who placed 14th in the men's discus while representing India, grew up on the track because his father coached the Indian National Team.

"I've been competing in track since I was like 8 or 9, so I've been in the sport my whole life," Gowda said. "I don't really set goals 10 years in advance ... but the Olympics were always the ultimate goal."

For Gerraughty, the realization of that goal came to a head while she was walking through the tunnel into the Olympic Stadium during Opening Ceremonies.

"You walk out ... You hear 'The United States of America,'" Gerraughty said. "The crowd goes nuts and you see a whole bunch of American flags, and that's

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DTH/RAY JONES

UNC senior throwers Laura Gerraughty and Vikas Gowda both competed at the Summer Olympics in Athens. Gerraughty competed for the United States; Gowda represented India.



INSIDE

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

Former ambassador to Thailand kicks off program that will immerse students in foreign policy PAGE 11



DIVERSIONS

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

The N.C. School of the Arts takes the road less traveled to fulfill its mission to train artists PAGE 5

WEATHER

TODAY Scattered showers, H 82, L 66
FRIDAY Partly cloudy, H 84, L 64
SATURDAY Partly cloudy, H 82, L 61

