

CAMPUS BRIEFS
Employee Forum members approve several resolutions

Members of the Employee Forum passed three resolutions during their meeting Wednesday. The first resolution, to allow further negotiations on the development of a UNC-system staff assembly, received unanimous support.

The idea for the assembly was first raised in 1997 with a goal of establishing a staff among the 16 universities in the UNC system to exchange information more easily.

The second resolution welcomed former Sen. John Edwards as the director of the University's Center on Poverty, Work and Opportunity and congratulated Chancellor James Moeser for its establishment. The resolution passed with three votes abstaining.

The final resolution addressed employee health insurance. Although it originally was not on the forum's agenda, 19 members voted in its favor, five opposed and three abstained.

A health insurance task force also was discussed in regard to a pilot health care plan. The plan would improve benefits for employees and their spouses and family members.

CITY BRIEFS
Forum on high school reform today to be first of 4 held

The first public discussion forum on high school reform in county schools will be held 7 p.m. today at Cedar Ridge High School in Hillsborough.

The forum is the first of four such events, designed to give parents, students, school officials and community members a chance to discuss what students should achieve by high school graduation to ensure future success.

A high school reform task force made up of students, parents, educators and other community members will use information gained at these sessions in developing reform recommendations that it will present to the school board in June.

Each forum will last from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. The others forums will be held:

- March 8 at New Hope Elementary School
- March 8 at Efland-Cheeks Elementary School
- March 10 at Orange High School

2 middle school students make state geography bee

Two area middle school students have qualified for the 2005 state-level competition of the National Geography Bee.

Williams Parker, a seventh grader at C.W. Stanford Middle School, and Alex R. Bynum, a sixth grader at A.L. Stanback Middle School, both qualified by scoring in the top 100 statewide in school-administered competitions in December and January.

The winner of the state competition, scheduled for April 1 in Raleigh, will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., for the national competition.

The May 25 competition, moderated by Alex Trebek of "Jeopardy," will be televised nationally by PBS.

The first-place national winner will receive a \$25,000 college scholarship.

STATE & NATION
New law re-validates ballots in race for superintendent

RALEIGH — Candidates in the state's still-unresolved schools superintendent race returned to court Wednesday for the first time since the Supreme Court invalidated thousands of provisional ballots, and the General Assembly re-validated them.

Atkinson leads Fletcher by 8,535 votes from more than 3.3 million cast, but the state Supreme Court last month threw out at least 11,000 provisional ballots cast in the wrong precincts on Election Day.

This week, Democratic lawmakers passed a bill that essentially overrides the ruling by the Republican-controlled court.

The measure asserts that the provisional ballots were cast lawfully under a 2003 law and should be counted; Democratic Gov. Mike Easley signed the bill into law hours before Wednesday's hearing.

The superintendent's election and an outstanding race for Guilford County commissioner could turn on a ruling by Judge Henry Hight on whether the new law can be applied to a four-month-old election.

If so, Atkinson would be on the way to victory. If not, election officials must figure out how to remove unlawful ballots from the final count.

— From staff and wire reports.

Town to ask for employee bargaining

Proposal may lack immediate effect

BY SUSIE DICKSON
STAFF WRITER

Members of the Chapel Hill Town Council will propose Friday that the state repeal its law prohibiting collective bargaining by public employees.

The current law allows unionizing but prevents bargaining with employers, limiting the rights of pub-

lic employees — including University and municipal employees.

Members will present the proposal at the council's annual legislative breakfast with the area's representatives in the N.C. General Assembly. Mayor Kevin Foy has spoken out in favor of repealing the law.

"Once you associate (with a union), (the state) prevents you

from approaching your employer," he said. "It's not clear why that should be. It doesn't seem right."

Foy said that although the law might not be repealed right away, it is important that the council register its ideas with the legislature.

"Just because something is not a popular position today, it doesn't mean that over time it won't become a general conclusion," he said.

David Zonderman, an N.C. State University professor who specializ-

"University employees, like all workers, want to have some say about the condition of their labor."

SALADIN MUHAMMAD, UE LOCAL 150 INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

es in labor law, expressed similar views.

"In this (legislative) session, I'm not real optimistic," he said of the probability of repealing the

law. Zonderman added that many people see repealing this law as an extremely radical action.

SEE BARGAINING, PAGE 9

"I only just had to take advantages ... because I was denied the privilege to do the things I wanted to do." HARVEY ALEXANDER, TUSKEGEE AIRMAN



Harvey Alexander, a member of the Tuskegee Army Air Corps, speaks to McDougle Elementary School fifth-graders Wednesday morning. He spoke to teach the students history as well as to dispel negative stereotypes about race.

AIRMAN SHEDS LIGHT ON PAST

Talk on war experiences, civil rights aims to eradicate racism

BY LAURA OLENIACZ
STAFF WRITER

For the nation's first black military airmen, World War II was fought on two fronts: in the skies above Europe and back home, where prejudice and racism clouded expectations for success.

While touching on those struggles, former Tuskegee Airman Harvey Alexander spoke Wednesday about the group's unquestionable achievements to fifth-grade students at McDougle Elementary School.

Alexander said the group shot down more than 400 enemy planes and escorted every one of its bombers to safety out of more than 200 missions during the war.

Alexander, a family friend of Lisa Oglesby, a fifth-grade teacher at McDougle, was asked to speak to help dispel any negative stereotypes that students might harbor about race.

"He brings a personal touch that

they don't get in textbooks," Oglesby said, adding that her friend is a positive role model for minority students.

The Tuskegee Army Air Corps, which began in July 1941, prepared black pilots, navigators, nurses, bombardiers and flight engineers for battle in their Alabama-based program.

Alexander said racism and prejudice kept the airmen out of combat until February 1944.

"The program was created to prove to the American people that blacks were physically and mentally incapable of flying airplanes," Alexander said.

But the airmen did more than work to dispel that prejudice, Alexander said.

When U.S. bombers were escorted by other airmen, they lost 35 to 65 planes in every 100, he said. But the Tuskegee Airmen never lost a single bomber, he said.

Fifth-grader Maya Handa said she was impressed "that none of the

Tuskegee airmen lost planes."

Beyond fighting on the European front, the airmen also were influential in the civil rights movement, working to expose racism.

Alexander's 477th Medium Bombardment Group — stationed in Freeman Field, Ind. — staged a takeover in 1945 of the officers' club after it continued to practice active segregation against black servicemen and treat the airmen like trainees.

All of the 100 or more officers involved were arrested and court-martialed, though the majority of the court-martials were dropped almost immediately.

Fifth-grader Emma Eble was struck by Alexander's situation.

"... It must have been sort of hard for them, and it must have been an important job," she said.

Alexander said he continued to

SEE AIRMAN, PAGE 9

Congress extends CAA reform talks

BY ERIN ZUREICK
STAFF WRITER

Although the cloud of controversy that has loomed over the Carolina Athletic Association this year appears to have lifted, members of Student Congress still are debating possible reforms to the organization.

Congress established a student ticket distribution committee and a Homecoming Collaboration Committee during its Feb. 15 meeting, but the body considered changing the newly approved legislation during Tuesday night's meeting.

Members also withdrew a proposal to alter the ticket distribution advisory board and discussed creating a referendum on the number of basketball tickets allotted to CAA.

The body has one meeting left before the 86th session draws to a close April 5.

CAA President Lindsay Strunk said she is discouraged by the continued debate.

"It's frustrating," she said. "How am I supposed to steer a ship when I have to defend it?"

Congress members and CAA officials both said that a select group of persistent Congress members continue to propose reforms, leading to the cycle of debate.

"It comes down to the personal

"It's frustrating. How am I supposed to steer a ship when I have to defend it?"

LINDSAY STRUNK, CAA PRESIDENT

feelings of a couple of members of Congress," Strunk said.

During Tuesday night's meeting, representatives proposed moving the newly formed Homecoming Collaboration Committee from Title VII of the Student Code — the section relating to CAA — to Title VIII, which concerns student government appointments.

But Congress voted down the proposal, deciding it was too soon to tamper with the brand-new committee.

"It was a bit too drastic," said Luke Farley, chairman of the Rules and Judiciary Committee.

Speaker Charlie Anderson said he believes the misunderstandings between Congress and CAA will be ironed out once the new groups meet this semester.

"People are not on the same

SEE CONGRESS, PAGE 9

4 to leave system's governing board

3 encounter term limit; 1 steps down

DEPARTING MEMBERS

BY INDIA AUTRY
STAFF WRITER

Four members of the UNC system's governing body will depart their posts at the end of this year. They say they will leave behind a worthwhile experience and a strong UNC system.

Irvin Aldridge, Bert Collins and Jack Cecil are leaving after 12 years on the Board of Governors. Members are limited to three four-year terms.

Addison Bell said he will resign after six years on the board, in the middle of his second term, to devote himself to his Matthews-based engineering company. Carotek, founded in 1965, has operations in North Carolina and Virginia.

Bell said he is confident that the university system will do fine without him. Despite a funding crunch, he said, N.C. public universities will continue to thrive.

"The university system is in excellent condition right now," he said. "There's not a university in the country in better condition."

Bell said he considers the increase in private donations to the system as a great achievement. He added that pledges for endowments increased from \$1.4 billion to about \$5 billion since he's been on the board.

"In the past, public universities have not pushed hard enough for private money," said Bell, who has been serving on a special commit-

tee that reviews the funding model for enrollment growth.

Tight state budgets have forced the system to look outside the legislature for funds, he said, but the General Assembly does what it can.

"We have the best legislative support for universities in the country," he said. "We have been able to stitch together a budget year after year."

But Aldridge said he thinks reduced state funding during his tenure has been more of a problem for the university system.

"We've cut back to what I consider the bare bones," he said. "If there was any fat out there, I think it's gone."

Aldridge, last year's BOG vice chairman, had wanted to serve on the budget and finance committee before leaving the board, but term limits would not have given him enough time to carry out the two-year commitment.

But Aldridge, currently involved with university governance, has routinely attended budget meetings and has given his input. "If I'm not in my committee, I'm usually in somebody's," he said.

He likes to talk about issues one-on-one because decisions are sometimes made before meeting deliberations, Aldridge said.

SEE BOG, PAGE 9



Irvin Aldridge plans to spend continue his tradition of traveling in his RV and has a trip scheduled for June.



Jack Cecil is the president of commercial real estate company Biltmore Farms, located in Asheville.



Bert Collins heads the oldest, largest black-owned and -operated insurance company in the nation.



Addison Bell will leave the board after six years to spend time on his engineering company, Carotek.

RESIGNING MEMBER