

Other states add new chapters to ASG 'stories'

BY SETH PEAVEY
STAFF WRITER

Student groups across the country are following the lead of the UNC Association of Student Governments when it comes to integrating personal stories into student lobbying efforts.

In the fall of 2003, the association began gathering narratives from students and parents across the state with the aim of highlighting the human element in the debate over tuition and budgets.

By February of 2004, the association put together a 500-page book titled "The Personal Stories Project: Faces, Not Numbers," compiling more than 800 individual narratives from those who were affected adversely by tuition increases.

"I knew it was practically impossible to have hundreds of students to come to the state legislature," said Amanda Devore, the former ASG president who spearheaded the project.

"I thought of this as a way to get their story across," she said.

Copies of the book were distributed to N.C. Governor Mike Easley, the UNC-system Board of

Governors, university chancellors and state legislators.

"We decided that these people really needed to see who they were affecting," said Zack Wynne, the current association president.

The book won praise from other student government groups across the country, who saw the project as an effective way to lobby against tuition hikes.

"I thought it was a very good idea and very innovative and creative," said Eddy Morales, president of the U.S. Student Association.

He said the USSA always encourages student advocates to include those people who are being impacted directly.

"It's always good to come up with new ways of highlighting those personal stories," he said.

While no other universities have exactly copied the ASG's book, they have developed their own variations on the idea.

After seeing the book, student government groups in Oregon compiled a yearbook showing students affected by tuition increases and leaving empty spaces representing those pressed out of

college by financial concerns, Morales said.

Eastern Illinois University is taking a different approach by gathering personal stories and photographs to send to state legislators in the form of postcards. They've dubbed the initiative "Faces Not Figures."

"Right now we are challenging our student government people to go out and find these stories," said Adam Howell, former chairman of Eastern Illinois's Student Action Team.

Howell, who keeps a copy of the ASG book, said the personal stories will represent an ongoing effort in Illinois, not just a one-time event.

While there are no plans as of yet to release a second Personal Stories book in North Carolina, Wynne said the idea is not about to fade away.

"I think we will probably rev it back up at some point, maybe not this year, but there's certainly no reason not to continue with it."

Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.

Center celebrates first year

BY JABEEN AHMAD
STAFF WRITER

Dogs at Orange County's Animal Protection Society's adoption center had cause to celebrate Saturday, as the society hit an important milestone in its young life.

The APS Felicité Latané Animal Sanctuary celebrated its first birthday complete with purple balloons and a performance by the APS drill team — an elite canine cadre that engages in obedience drills and other maneuvers.

The full day event included "Doggie Daze," an agility course challenge for dogs and their owners, as well as an official dedication ceremony and a reception for all donors.

Animals go from Orange County's animal shelter, located on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in Chapel Hill — as well as shelters in Durham, Caswell and Franklin counties to Felicité Latané be prepared for adoption.

The facility, located in Mebane, includes 18 dog rooms, two large cat rooms, a kitten room, a barn for large animal care, a learning center, a training facility, a 3-acre private dog park with natural settings and an agility course.

Saturday's celebration marked a year since the county took control of the shelter management from the society, which had been criticized for its management of the shelter.

The center's start was slow, but there has been constant improve-

ment, said Ali Johnson, manager of the shelter's dog training program.

All dogs at the center are trained and walked four times a day, she added. The goal is "alleviating stress from a shelter environment," Johnson said.

That environment was one of the concerns critics of the county's animal shelter cited in years past.

Kay Flaminio, executive director of APS, provided a future outlook on the center.

"We hope to expand the center, expand the learning center, build up more courses, everything that feeds into increasing adoption rates," Flaminio said.

"August was our highest adoption month; 62 animals were adopted.

"Since we have opened, 558 dogs and cats have been adopted," said Flaminio, who called the center a success.

Flaminio noted that all animals that come through the shelter would have otherwise been euthanized.

One success story from the shelter was Jenn Merritt, a certified pet dog trainer, and her adopted dog, Bernie, a collie mix, who were in the dog park.

"If he's the caliber of dogs that you get at this facility, then you couldn't go wrong," said Merritt, giving a thumbs-up sign.

Bernie has taken five obedience training classes with APS since he was adopted during the summer. "He's the perfect family dog,"



DTH/GILLIAN BOLSOVER

Denise Johnson, a volunteer at the Animal Protection Society, coaches an Airedale Terrier, Penny, at APS' adoption center festivities Saturday.

Merritt said. Robert Marotto, Orange County's director of animal services showed up to support the center.

"It is a wonderful facility with progressive work that cultivates responsible pet ownership," he said. "The shelter is going well. We are working to smoothly increase adoption transfer numbers to APS."

Contact the City Editor at citydesk@unc.edu.

Congress OKs appointments

Officials take less time than last year

BY MAC MOLLISON
STAFF WRITER

Members of Student Congress met in a special session Sunday to consider the appointments of students to a number of student government committees.

Most of the appointments were made by the executive branch of student government, and every nominee that was present at the meeting was confirmed.

More than 40 students were approved to boards and committees including the student advisory committee to the chancellor and

Union Board of Directors.

Emma Hodson, chairwoman of the student affairs committee, said she was excited about the new appointees.

She said the appointees to the Freshman Focus Council, all of whom are new to student government, showed potential and are likely to lead the campus in the future.

"I think the group will serve the freshman class and the campus very well."

The appointees had already been approved in separate meetings of

the student affairs committee and the rules and judiciary committee Tuesday.

"The way this process unfolded is a sign of the progress we've made towards efficiency," said Student Congress Speaker Luke Farley.

He pointed out that the session lasted only about one hour — an improvement from a similar session last year, which lasted until 3 a.m.

He attributed much of the progress to the work of the student affairs committee.

Contact the University Editor at udesk@unc.edu.

PHELPS

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Despite its importance, attracting new businesses can be a difficult task, he said. He cited Hillsborough's high tax rates and low unemployment rate as two possible reasons for the difficulty.

But Phelps said Hillsborough's feel will help attract business.

"You just try to sell them on the fact that it's a great place to live, and that we're just a nice community."

He said that he believes the downtown area is as developed as it can be, and that any additional growth will be outside of the city's center.

"You can remain a small town, and I love a small town, but when you don't grow ... where does the

"I think I know what's vital to Hillsborough. I've been here my whole life and I'm not sure you could get me to leave."

JOE PHELPS, MAYOR

extra revenue come from except for from the taxpayers?" Phelps said.

Phelps also said he thinks protecting the Eno River is important.

Though his stances on the issues haven't changed, Phelps said he will put more effort into this year's campaign than in the previous election because he is being challenged.

He plans to get the word out by distributing literature, going door to door and posting signs.

Phelps said he hopes people

will keep his experience in mind when they head to the polls in November.

He stressed that he thinks it is important for people to know all they can about a candidate before they go to vote.

"My political philosophy is to try to help the tax payers save money by being more efficient," Phelps said. "I think I'm a proven leader."

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STEVENS

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Development that doesn't impede Hillsborough's historic atmosphere likely will be a major concern for both government office hopefuls and residents this term, Stevens said.

"I believe we need to encourage growth, but encourage the kind of growth that enhances the broadest base of prosperity for everyone," he said.

"(We should be) encouraging locally owned businesses and having a good plan to preserve and celebrate historical cultures and natural aspects we have."

But while growth is important, Stevens said the area's water availability and rising costs must be addressed first.

"I believe we should we should support the things we believe in, and I believe in Hillsborough."

TOM STEVENS, CANDIDATE

Town water and sewer rates have risen markedly in recent years.

"Water resources is clearly one of the major issues," he said. "We need a long-range plan so we know how to allocate water. The other issue has to do with cost — we can help stabilize water rates by having a plan and keeping up with infrastructure."

"If we aren't careful, we could see major problems."

Stevens also said the town should delve into initiatives

already in place by Habitat for Humanity and local churches that seek to eliminate area homelessness.

"Homelessness has to do with economic opportunity for people, mental health and basic services," he said.

"We need to make sure that as a town we cooperate with county and state organizations to benefit those who don't have homes."

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