

ONE STOP VOTING

Orange County Board of Elections office

110 E. King St.
Hillsborough, N.C.

Oct. 20 to Nov. 5
M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturdays | Oct. 22,
Oct. 29 and Nov. 5
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Morehead Planetarium & Science Center

250 E. Franklin St.
Chapel Hill, NC

Oct. 24 to Nov. 5
M-F, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturdays | Oct. 29
and Nov. 5
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Carrboro Town Hall

301 W. Main St.
Carrboro, NC

Oct. 24 to Nov. 5
M-F, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Saturdays | Oct. 29
and Nov. 5
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

IMPORTANT DATES

Today

Voting begins
in Carrboro and
at Morehead
Planetarium
9 a.m.-4 p.m., M-F,
9 a.m.-1 p.m., Sat.

Nov. 1

Last day to
request absentee
ballots by mail

Nov. 7

Absentee ballots must
be at the Orange
County Board of
Elections office by 5
p.m., delivered either
by mail or by hand

Nov. 8

Election
Day

Early voting is more convenient

Starting today, every site open

BY TED STRONG
CITY EDITOR

In much of America, there are only two ways to vote: Show up on Election Day and pull the levers, or apply to the bureaucracy and mail in an absentee ballot.

Orange County is different. Here, the concerned citizen has 15 days, in addition to Election Day, in which to vote at one stop voting locations scattered throughout the county.

Voters can cast their ballots anytime until Nov. 5, Monday through Saturday, in Hillsborough, Carrboro or Chapel Hill.

The polls were packed for early voting last year, with major student registration efforts and a hotly contested presidential election on the line.

But the percentage of early voters drops in election "off" years, said Carolyn Thomas, director of the county board of elections.

Thomas said the rationale behind the program, which has been in the area for seven or eight

years, is simple.

"It's for their convenience, basically, if they don't have a real flexible time, where they can vote on one particular day," she said.

And while Thomas said that early voting isn't as hot in municipal elections as it is in national ones, the trend is clear, she said.

The more people know about early voting, the more people want to do it.

The voting experience itself is the same, save for one small difference — voters are asked to give their name and address.

This is to ensure that voters don't change their mind and try to vote again, something elections officials tend to frown on.

When it comes to tallying the votes, everything comes in at once anyway, with early-cast ballots getting counted the same day as Election Day votes.

And while early voting is simple, Thomas said, there is one trick of which prospective voters ought to be aware.

That's the art of avoiding procrastination.

"Usually, there's a line the last day, and we're there for two weeks," Thomas said.

"It's for their convenience ... if they don't have a real flexible time, where they can vote on one ... day."

CAROLYN THOMAS, DIRECTOR

Thomas added that anyone in line by the close of voting hours will be allowed to vote, but noted that last year, wait times for such students ranged up to two hours, when 48 hours before there had been no line.

In Hillsborough, early voting takes place at the heart of the electoral universe, the Orange County Board of Elections office, at 110 East King St.

For the those west of campus, Carrboro Town Hall will feature one-stop voting.

The closest location to campus is actually on campus. The Morehead Planetarium and Science Center will offer early voting on the same schedule as Carrboro Town Hall, and on the same times and dates.

Vote this year: These elections affect your lives

Why vote in town elections? With the registration season having come to a close, I'm no longer trying to find ways to convince people to move their registration to Orange County.

My focus now is on convincing many of the 10,090 voters aged 18-24 who voted in the 2004 national election to come show their interest in local affairs.

Many students feel that the campus impacts their lives more than the great towns surrounding it. While this may be true for some students, it doesn't justify forfeiting your opportunity to make your life yet better.

Here's a sampling of how town policies affect your life:

All of those empty buildings on Franklin and Columbia streets could be great places to shop. Instead, they're eyesores, and they encourage students to visit the Streets at Southpoint, further diminishing sales of the remaining non-restaurant storefronts downtown.

I've heard some people complain that the poor lighting on Rosemary Street makes them scared of being raped or sexually assaulted.

If brought to the Town Council's attention, this will almost certainly be improved.

Proposals have been considered over the course of the last two years that would limit the number of unrelated members of a house further — from four to two.

This is a direct effort to curb students' ability to live in their own community.

If you've visited your friends at Chapel Ridge, you may have noticed there's no parking. This is due to town restrictions on parking spaces.

Parking restrictions extend throughout the town, in an effort to convince everyone to use public transit, yet students seem to be disproportionately affected by these laws.

Almost every candidate has proactive ideas to improve the transit system which students from both towns need to get to their classes every day. These



JEREMY SPIVEY
VOTECAROLINA PRESIDENT

range from increasing route times to using buses of different sizes.

This election may affect your ability to walk home safely at night. It may improve or diminish your ability to get to places around town, and, in the worst-case scenario, it might even make living off-campus a distant, unaffordable dream.

In order to gain influence in the town here's what you need to do: Walk to Morehead Planetarium, on Franklin Street, one day from Oct. 24 through Nov. 5. (The full schedule is on the next page).

Stand in line, which likely will be short. If you've changed dorms, tell the election workers.

Finally, take 10 minutes to read about each of the candidates you'll be considering, also provided in this guide, and cast your vote. We've even included a sample ballot on page 11, which you should be able to fill out, take into the polling place with you, and transfer the information to an official ballot.

Be sure to thank the election volunteers for making early voting available to all of us.

In 2003, 329 students voted in Chapel Hill, and less than 100 voted in Carrboro.

These numbers make it quite difficult for prospective council and board of alderman members to run on a "pro-student" platform, especially in those situations when non-students seem to be at odds with students.

With your help, we can raise these numbers to a respectable percentage of the student population, and begin the process of becoming an active, critical voting constituency in Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

Contact Jeremy Spivey
at jkspivey@email.unc.edu.