

Report finds problems with voter registration

BY RICHARD M. COE III
STAFF WRITER

The U.S. Government Accountability Office released a report Thursday stating that, during the 2004 elections, officials in 13 of 14 election jurisdictions from seven different states experienced problems with voter registration.

The GAO discovered that 12 of 14 election jurisdictions had problems with incomplete or last-second voter registration cards from voter-drive organizations while seven of 14 had trouble contacting citizens to verify missing information.

"Every year you are going to have some voters who appear at the polling place and believe that, because they are United States citizens, they are entitled to vote regardless of whether they have registered," said Johnnie McLean, deputy director of the N.C. Board of Elections.

North Carolina was not studied by the GAO report.

Many voter registration drives attempt to crank out as many registration cards as possible and as a result, important information is

left out, said Bill Jenkins, director of homeland security and justice issues for the GAO.

There were significant problems discovered with the polls as well, not just the voters or the voter drives themselves.

Six of 14 jurisdictions faced challenges processing all their cards because they were under-staffed or received too many registration cards close to the deadline.

And in eight of 14 districts, poll operators did not efficiently administer provisional ballots to those who needed them.

Jenkins cited deadline dumping of voter registration cards by voter drives, lack of manpower and lack of support as the biggest problems at the polls.

After a registration deadline, which is anywhere from 30 days before an election to Election Day, boards of elections only have a limited amount of time to process all the cards. When voter registration drives or other voters submit large quantities of cards at the last minute, that puts a lot of pressure on election officials, Jenkins said.

With these most recent find-

ings, boards of elections across the country now are faced with the task of creating a more efficient voting process.

Jenkins said that increased communication between voter registration drives and the boards of elections as well as help for poll officials are two solutions.

"Our challenge is to make sure these people have the training, skills and support to carry out their responsibilities at the poll on Election Day," he said.

In Orange County, there have been very few setbacks, said Carolyn Thomas, director of Orange County Board of Elections.

"We feel comfortable with our election process," she said, also noting that students generally are good about reporting changes of address and other relevant information.

But McLean is not as optimistic about a change in voters' last-minute tendencies during the 2008 national elections.

"People, just by human nature, wait until the last minute."

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

POLICE LOG

■ A breaking and entering was reported by a Franklin Street restaurant at 5:46 a.m. Saturday, according to Chapel Hill police reports.

An unknown suspect used a paving stone to break the window of India Palace, 508A W. Franklin St., reports state.

Cash stolen totaled \$100 and structural damage from the broken window was valued at \$300, according to reports.

■ A Chapel Hill youth was arrested at 205 Culbreth Park Drive on Saturday on charges of nonviolent assault and communicating threats, Chapel Hill police reports state.

Tyrone Keith Riggsbee, 16, also known as T.K., was arrested at 5:28 p.m. for an incident that occurred at 201 Culbreth Road, according to reports.

Riggsbee assaulted an unidentified victim by holding a realistic BB gun to the victim's throat, reports state.

Police seized the gun, valued at \$50, according to reports.

Riggsbee was released into his

mother's custody under restrictions, reports state.

He is scheduled to appear in district criminal court Dec. 12, according to reports.

■ A 20-year-old female student reported her car stolen Saturday, according to Chapel Hill police reports.

The vehicle, valued at \$3,000, was reported stolen at 11 a.m. Saturday from 204 Pritchard Drive, reports state.

■ A gas drive-off was reported Saturday afternoon, Chapel Hill police reports state.

The Citgo Mini Mart at 1200 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. reported \$44.49 worth of gas, along with an energy drink and chewing gum, stolen at 4:13 p.m., according to reports.

■ A Chapel Hill resident reported vandalism Friday evening, according to Chapel Hill police reports.

The victim reported that a pumpkin was stolen from her porch, 400 Brookgreen Drive, and

smashed, reports state.

The pumpkin was valued at \$5.

■ Randy Roberson, of 501V3 Jones Ferry Road, received a warning for trespassing at 8:03 a.m. Thursday on the property of the Carolina Inn, University police reports state.

According to reports, Roberson entered the Inn's kitchen and told employees he was waiting for the personnel office to open.

After he refused to leave the premises, an officer escorted him off the property, reports state.

■ University police officers were called at 3:23 a.m. Thursday to Stacy Residence Hall to respond to a unconscious student found in one of the shower stalls, according to University police reports.

A Wake Technical Community College student from Raleigh was unresponsive except to painful stimulus, reports state.

Emergency management technicians and the fire department were called, and the student was transported to UNC Hospitals, according to reports.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

■ Students can meet and chat with the Homecoming Court candidates from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. today in the Pit. The event is a part of Homecoming Week 2005 and is hosted by the Carolina Athletic Association, the Carolina Union Activities Board and the General Alumni Association.

■ The Orange Water and Sewer Authority, Anna Maria's Pizzeria, Chick-fil-A and the American Red Cross will sponsor the annual Halloween Blood Drive from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. today in the Community Room of the OWASA administration building, 400 Jones Ferry Road.

Blood donors are encouraged to contact Stephanie Glasgow, OWASA safety and training administrator and blood drive coordinator, in advance at 537-4223 or send an e-mail to sglasgow@owasa.org to make an appointment.

■ There will be a debate on "Toward Common Ground: A Dialogue about Work and Opportunity in America" between former Senator John Edwards and

Jack Kemp, former secretary of the department of housing and urban development, from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. today in the Paul Green Theatre. This event will be moderated by Dan Gitterman, professor of public policy.

■ The chancellor's task force on engagement with North Carolina will meet at 2:30 p.m. today in the Freedom Forum in Carroll Hall.

■ The Carolina Women's Center director search committee will hold its third of three meetings at 4 p.m. today in South Building 105.

■ Carrboro's annual Halloween Carnival will be held from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. today at the Carrboro Town Commons. The best costumes are awarded with prize ribbons, and activities include a cake walk, howling at the moon, games, prizes and many other fun-filled activities. Call 918-7364 for more information.

■ "Poverty and Plenty: Economic Change in North Carolina," a

panel discussion moderated by Dr. William Leuchtenburg, will be held at 7 p.m. today at the Levine Museum of the New South on the corner of College and Seventh streets.

■ Virtuous Woman magazine will sponsor Hallelujah Night: a Creative Mix of Church and Street Ware from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. today in the Cabaret of the Student Union. The event, which costs \$3 at the door, provides students with an alternative activity to Franklin Street festivities.

To make a calendar submission, visit www.dailytarheel.com for a list of submission policies and contacts. Events must be sent in by noon the preceding publication date.

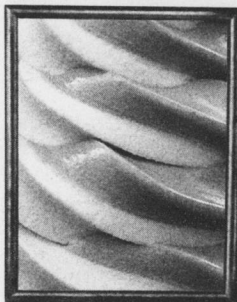
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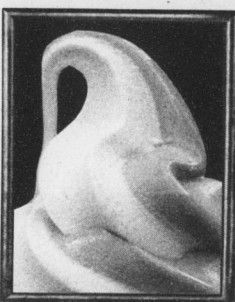
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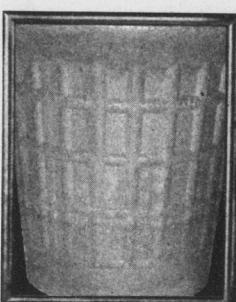
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<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * African/Reggae DJ 	<p style="text-align: center;">Friday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Arabian Nights * DJ Nunda * Belly Dancing 	<p style="text-align: center;">Saturday</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Arabian Nights * DJ Nunda * Belly Dancing

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