

# Documentary tells story of sole survivor

Campus features screening of film

BY JIM WALSH  
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Aug. 19, 2003.  
Gil Loescher, a humanitarian research specialist, is meeting with the head of the United Nations in Baghdad. Before the meeting, he talks to a U.S. official who tells a colleague and him, in a way that later would seem ironic, "Iraq is a much safer place now."

Then tragedy strikes. A suicide bomber barrels a truck full of explosives into the United Nations office, and Loescher is left as the sole survivor.

Badly injured, he spends the months-long recovery process trying to piece together the details of his miraculous rescue.

That is the story his daughter Margaret Loescher recounts in her first feature documentary, "Pulled From the Rubble."

A student of anthropology and film, Loescher has been showing her documentary across the country and around the world. Chapel Hill is her most recent stop in a tour of American universities.

Loescher was on campus Tuesday to screen her film in the

Union auditorium as part of an event sponsored by UNC's Center for International Studies.

The longtime filmmaker was born and brought up in South Bend, Ind., and she moved to England around the age of 12. Her international upbringing affected the direction of the movie.

One of the themes of her film, Loescher said, was that hope and tragedy touch people from all walks of life.

"It's really important — and I think this story demonstrates it — that war doesn't happen in faraway places," she said.

Loescher said she is often asked after screening "From the Rubble" whether she is angry with what happened to her father and the other humanitarians in the office that day.

"I've never been able to be angry with the person who did it... I feel sorry for them that they had a need to take their lives and the lives of other people," she said.

In piecing together the story, Loescher traveled to Geneva and New York to interview representatives at the United Nations. She



Filmmaker Margaret Loescher made a movie about her father's survival of a bombing.

revisited the haunting images of the bomb site and recorded her family as they cared for her father.

The film was designed to shed light on the stories of the dead by highlighting one of a man who survived.

"You hear about the people who have died, but very seldom do you hear about survivors," she said.

Loescher said it's sometimes painful to watch her story, which has been entered in more than 10 screening events across the country, over and over again.

But it's for a reason.

"I commit my time to screening the film because it's a very important story to tell," Loescher said.

"The power of survivor stories really opens up audiences and they can relate to it in different ways."

Contact the A&E Editor at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).

## EARLY VOTING

FROM PAGE 3

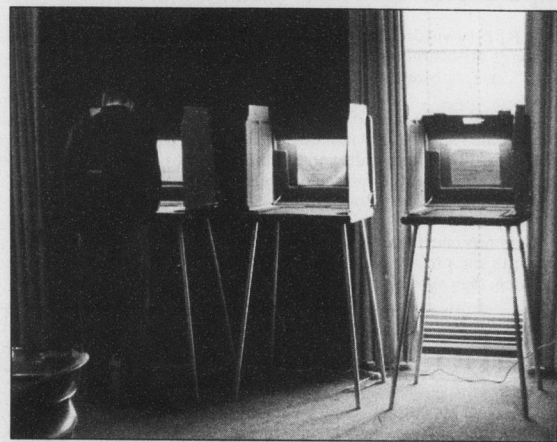
tions to jump on board and help get people to vote," she said.

Organizers added that efforts are underway to obtain the names and phone numbers of registered voters from the Orange County Board of Elections' records to personally ask people to vote.

"It's a lot easier to just delete an e-mail about voting than it is to ignore someone who is taking the time to call you," Whilden said.

Nancy Tolley, a Chapel Hill elections official, said voter turnout is consistently lower during municipal elections.

"Chapel Hill generally doesn't have a great deal of interest generated for local elections."



DTH/BRADY NASH

Only a handful of people such as graduate student Adam Klein have cast their vote early in the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center.

Contact the University Editor at [udesk@unc.edu](mailto:udesk@unc.edu).

## 100 BLOCK

FROM PAGE 3

several upscale clothing boutiques. And it's about to get one more bar — the Blue Horn Lounge plans to open soon next to the Varsity Theatre.

### Looking back

The 100 block didn't always cater so narrowly to students' palates.

As recently as 20 years ago, the greater Chapel Hill population conducted more ordinary business on Franklin Street and shopped at both locally owned retailers and national chains.

"It was the heart and center of the town and community," Jackson said.

Forty years ago, the 100 block sported four drug stores, a hardware store and a bakery, said Don Pinney of Sutton's Drug Store, which opened in 1923.

But now, he said, it's mostly student-oriented shops that take away from the feel it used to have.

More recently, the historic Carolina Theater, built in 1942 and the site of organized student-led desegregation protests in the early 1960s, closed its doors during the summer.

### Bumps in the road

Pinney said the reasons behind the changes are not mysterious. Like many other downtowns across

the country, businesses dependent on a more traditional, non-student population left when customers started driving to malls and shopping centers for their necessities.

Parking issues continue to plague downtown merchants as they compete with other shopping venues.

"People come but say 'I'd love to come here, but sometimes it's too difficult to park. I get sick of driving around,'" said Tamara Galiano, a clerk at Light Years jewelry shop.

Landlords face similar pressures when trying to find tenants for their properties.

Joe Riddle, who owns the three-story building where Top of the Hill operates, said finding business for Franklin Street is difficult because prospective retailers have other options in the area that don't have parking problems.

Business owners and town planners agree that the supply of paid parking is sufficient, but that consumers would prefer to drive to the mall and park for free than pay in a downtown lot.

Business owners also feel that ever-present indigents and panhandlers scare off potential customers.

"It's not a real family atmosphere downtown," said Keith Longiotti, a library technician at the University.

Longiotti said he rarely takes his family to Franklin Street to shop or eat out because he doesn't like to ask his young son to step over a homeless man or explain why

people are asking for money.

"The biggest problem we have is a perception that the streets aren't safe," said Charles House, owner of University Florist & Gift Shop. "That's a lot of hype."

Both police and merchants agree with House that the panhandlers and homeless people are harmless, but they acknowledge that the perception of an unsafe shopping experience can deter potential customers.

Changing shoppers' perceptions is one task facing the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership. The partnership gathers feedback from patrons and merchants and aims to improve business conditions in downtown.

"You have to maintain what we've got better. That's why we're addressing safety and lighting," said Liz Parham, a Chapel Hill native and executive director of the partnership.

"Our goal is a really vibrant, vital downtown that attracts people of all ages and all backgrounds. We're looking to not only fill vacancies, but with uses that create vibrancy," she added.

Riddle is hesitant to cheer just yet. "We make the same list every time, I'm 49. I've been going (to downtown municipal meetings) since '91, but we make the same list every time. When I make a list, I like to check things off it."

Contact the City Editor at [citydesk@unc.edu](mailto:citydesk@unc.edu).

## GOLDSTEIN

FROM PAGE 3

Government lawyers, Goldstein said, immediately told the judge hearing the case to throw it out on the grounds that federal law does not apply at Guantanamo. But the case was not dismissed.

"Does the due process clause (of the U.S. Constitution) apply in Guantanamo, or does it not? That's the legal issue that drives this narrative," Goldstein said.

The judge sided with the law students, and the Haitians were released into the U.S.

"It's an amazing story about how — it's a cliché, but it's true — students can change the world."

The author encouraged audience members to find noble causes of their own. "I hope you find your Guantanamo and you stay up all night to fight for it," he said.

Audience members and the author compared the story, which begins in 1992, to the current situa-

tion at Guantanamo Bay. The base recently has attracted controversy for its use as a military prison for suspected terrorists.

But advocating for the rights of terrorists isn't easy, one attendee noted.

"From a public perspective, it would be difficult to convince the American public because of the difference between refugee status and terrorist status," said Canon Pence, a second-year law student.

Goldstein acknowledged the difference in perspectives.

"I don't know people who are especially sympathetic with suspected terrorists," he said, but added that there are parallels

between the 1992 detentions and those taking place now.

"I think this book is a cautionary tale about how we run our naval base there," Goldstein said.

The book took him six-and-a-half years to complete and put him \$250,000 in debt, he said.

The story also is being adapted into a screenplay, after Warner Brothers purchased film rights in the spring.

Michael Seitzman, who wrote the screenplay for "North Country," is expected to write the screenplay for "Storming the Court," he said.

Contact the State & National Editor at [stntdesk@unc.edu](mailto:stntdesk@unc.edu).

## CONGRESS

FROM PAGE 3

Literatures, which will bring speakers to campus.

Carolina Students for Israel will use the funds to host Carl Schrag, former editor of The Jerusalem

Post, who will deliver a lecture on how to use media to understand the Arab and Israeli conflict.

He will speak at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 10 in Peabody 104.

Contact the University Editor at [udesk@unc.edu](mailto:udesk@unc.edu).

# unsung FOUNDERS

THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY IS INVITED to attend the dedication of the Unsung Founders Memorial, the senior class gift for 2002.

Featured speakers will include Chancellor James Moeser and Bernadette Gray-Little, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, as well as 2002 senior class officers Ben Singer, president, and Byron Wilson, vice president. The student a cappella ensemble Harmonyx will sing, and refreshments will be served. Person Hall will serve as a rain site.

- ❖ NOVEMBER 5th, 2005
- ❖ 10 am
- ❖ McCORKLE PLACE



THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA at CHAPEL HILL

# TO CHANGE THE WORLD, YOU NEED A NEW PERSPECTIVE.

New ideas and new perspectives are what make The New School new. They also make our Master's degree in International Affairs unique. The program combines interdisciplinary study with practical problem-solving skills. More than 200 students from 55 countries work directly with international practitioners and scholars. The focus is on global economics, poverty, international institutions, NGOs, organizations, and culture — with a special emphasis on the problems facing developing countries.

## INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS THE NEW SCHOOL

INFORMATION SESSION: November 9 at 6PM  
66 West 12th Street, NYC

To RSVP or for more information:  
[nsadmissions@newschool.edu](mailto:nsadmissions@newschool.edu)  
212.229.5630

[www.gpia.newschool.edu](http://www.gpia.newschool.edu)

An affirmative action/equal opportunity institution