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Candidates solicit students' ink

BY KEVIN KILEY
STAFF WRITER

Election hopefuls will attempt to make a lasting first impression around campus this week as they race to gather initial support for their campaigns.

Candidates for all offices must gather a certain number of signatures to gain a spot on the ballot. Those hoping for victory in the Feb. 13 elections were out in full force Wednesday — the first day they could solicit students.

"Petitions are really the first instance of competition between candidates," said Jim Brewer, Board of Elections chairman. "Especially with the student body president, a kind of signature war commences," he said.

Signatures required varies by office, ranging from 800 for student body president to 20 for Student Congress.

Candidates have until Tuesday to turn in their petitions

to the elections board, at which point they can start campaigning officially.

Students have tried various tactics through the years to garner signatures, including standing in the Pit and on the P2P, passing petitions around classrooms and "dorm storming."

The most popular option for candidates in the past has been dorm storming, in which campaign teams go door-to-door in residence halls soliciting signatures.

Bernard Holloway, a candidate for student body president last year, used dorm storming to get more than 1,500 total signatures. "Primarily on South Campus dorms, where there's a high volume of students, dorm storming is extraordinarily successful," he said.

Student Body President James Allred said he gathered more than 500 signatures in the first night through dorm storming.

The chance to petition is one of the first opportunities for

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DTH/LAUREN COWART

Sophomore Jessica Ra signs a petition for student body president candidate Caroline Spencer on Wednesday.

None enter GPSF race

Officials hoping to see write-ins

BY DEBORAH NEFFA
STAFF WRITER

Although candidates running in the student government elections have begun campaigning, the Graduate and Professional Student Federation is still in search of candidates to run for its top post.

Tuesday's mandatory candidates' meeting, which marked the start of official campaigning, drew a crowd for undergraduate positions, such as student body president.

But no candidates for GPSF president showed up.

"I'm not surprised that no one came to the meeting," said Lauren Anderson, GPSF president. "I have thought about running again, but I'd like to graduate next year."

Anderson said that most students in their mid to late stages of graduate school are very busy and aren't interested in running.

"It takes a lot of time," she said. "There's a certain degree of bureaucracy, and that's a game that not too many people have the patience for."

Anderson said that she's not aware of anyone interested in running but that she will try to recruit people for the position. If no one steps up to run as a write-in candidate for the Feb. 13 election, there will be a special election for the post.

Student Body President James Allred, who works hand-in-hand with Anderson, said the time commitment might dissuade people from seeking the office.

"It takes a lot of long hours to do it well, and graduate students are mainly focused on their own research," Allred said.

Some of the responsibilities of the position include serving as a member of the tuition and fee advisory committee and meeting with many top administrators to represent the interests of the more than 10,000 graduate and professional students at UNC.

Although nobody interested in running for GPSF's top post came to the meeting, the opportunity for students who want to fill the position still is available.

"There is the possibility of there being a write-in candidate," said Jim Brewer, chairman of the Board of Elections.

He said write-in ballots often occur, and it's common for write-in candidates to be unaware of their nomination.

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THE BEST MEDICINE



DTH PHOTOS/BETH ELY

Rita Bigham reads a book to Cherish Randolph, 2, (left) and Chozzyn Randolph, 4, in the Pediatric Outpatient Clinic waiting room Tuesday while they wait for their 1-month-old sister to finish with her doctor's appointment at the N.C. Children's Hospital. Bigham volunteers at the hospital with Carolina HA HA and seeks to use laughter as medicine.

Program helps patients, families through laughter

BY KATIE HOFFMANN
FEATURES EDITOR

As Rita Bigham read "The Lady with the Alligator Purse" in the N.C. Children's Hospital, four-year-old Chozzyn Randolph was quick to point out the story's hero: pizza.

But it was laughter that entertained Chozzyn and her sister Cherish, 2, while they waited for their 1-month-old sister to finish her doctor's appointment.

Laughter is the best medicine, after all.

Bigham comes to the hospital about once a week as part of the Carolina Health and Humor Association, a nonprofit service group that takes a Patch-Adams-style approach to health care.

"When we visit a patient, we give them a little humor treatment," said Ruth Hamilton, who founded Carolina HA HA in 1986.

"We get them to give a good belly laugh."

Hamilton worked in the facility accounting department at Duke Medical Center when she noticed patients seemed bored. She quit her job, and Carolina HA HA was born.

Now a self-described humor therapist, Hamilton teaches humor workshops to help others learn to keep stress out of their lives. She's even encountered the real Patch Adams, a doctor who preaches the curing power of laughter; she went to Russia with him in 1989 as part of a hospital clown troupe.

"It's a diversion," Hamilton said. "Patients are in a lot of pain. They're so uncomfortable."

In 2003 a study by Stanford University showed

SEE CAROLINA HA HA, PAGE 12



Bigham entertains 1-year-old Lisbeth Pineda of Burlington, who comes to the hospital to be treated for her seizures.

West galvanizes crowd with keynote

BY HANNAH EDWARDS
STAFF WRITER

An unconventional speaker continued the week's celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. on Wednesday night with criticisms

Honoring the 1/15/07-1/19/07 dream

Cornel West, a renowned scholar who has drawn praise and criticism for his provocative style, gave a speech to a packed Memorial Hall.

"Martin forces us to ask the question 'Who are we?' when we take off the mask," West said, addressing King's ability to navigate even the most taboo subjects of his time.

West, who has said he has been influenced by everything from the Black Panthers to European philosophy, focused on King's legacy and teachings that have been lost since his assassination.

"It is no accident that Martin Luther King Jr. spoke publicly over and over again about love," he said.

"When Brother Martin talked

about love, we listened."

White supremacy still is being dealt with today, West said.

West said many Americans now are dealing with being hated for their nationality, rather than just blacks for their racial identity.

Terrorism in America, West said, now puts international terrorists, such as those from the Sept. 11 attacks, in the role of white supremacists.

"If black people had decided to respond to American terrorism in the way in which our fellow citizens in high places did, there would have been a war in every generation," he

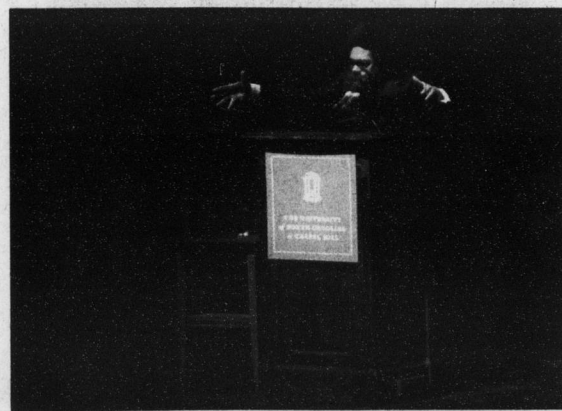
said.

Before the week's keynote speech, the night kicked off with a candlelight vigil at the Old Well. About 100 people gathered to honor King's life and legacy.

Brittani Bonner, a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority Inc, the sorority that sponsored the vigil, said members wanted to provide a personal and intimate event to the week's schedule, which has consisted mostly of panels, presentations and speakers.

The vigil included two poetry

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DTH/MAGGIE SARTIN

Cornel West, a renowned scholar and professor of religion at Princeton University, speaks to a packed crowd in Memorial Hall on Wednesday.

announcement

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A GRAND FINALE The state mandates senior projects for high school
MINOR PARTS PlayMakers's latest production centers on movie extras
JUST A SWIPE Debit cards are offered to the unemployed instead of checks



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THE ENVELOPE PLEASE
Predictions abound for who will garner nominations for this year's Oscars. See if your favorites made our list, and check out a review while you're at it.

this day in history

JAN. 18, 1989 ...
Students complain after only 550 of the promised 2,000 lower-level tickets are distributed for a men's basketball game against N.C. State.
UNC builds 50 more student seats.

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