

# The Daily Tar Heel

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## Leaders beam with record vote count

BY KEVIN KILEY  
STAFF WRITER

Although he wasn't running for office, Board of Elections Chairman Jim Brewer said Tuesday's campus election results were a personal victory.



With 7,441 students filling out ballots, the 2007 election saw the most votes cast in UNC history.

"Laying claim to the highest voter turnout is definitely something to be proud of," Brewer said.

Turnout this year was 20 votes more than the previous record of

7,421 in 2002.

But the elections board can't rest on its laurels yet. It still must oversee Tuesday's runoff election between student body president candidates Eve Carson and Nick Neptune.

Runoffs typically see lower voter turnout than the general election. In 2005, the last time a student body president race saw a runoff, 2,218 fewer students voted the second time around.

And a high turnout should be taken with a grain of salt, as some of the issues might be lost on voters. Brewer said part of the point of recruiting voters, however, is to pre-

pare them for the next year.

"I think the more people who vote and participate in the process become more enticed to get educated about the next election."

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Some voters chose to write-in athletes and religious figures.

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Board members posted signs in the libraries and banners in high-traffic areas. They even gave out UNC T-shirts in the rain to people who voted at the Smith Center

before the Virginia Tech game.

Freshman Ronald Bilbao, the enhancement officer in Cobb Residence Hall, worked with the community government and the elections board to distribute a voter education pamphlet to residents, as well as establish a polling station at Cobb — the sixth one on campus.

"I know the polling place had cupcakes for anybody who voted," said freshman Berkley Webster, a Cobb resident who voted. "That probably enticed people to come out."

The measure proved effective, as 55 percent of the Cobb community voted in the election, Bilbao said.

Although Bilbao tried to help Brewer establish polling sites in every residence hall, RHA President Denny Lyons said the halls needed more time to enact such a measure.

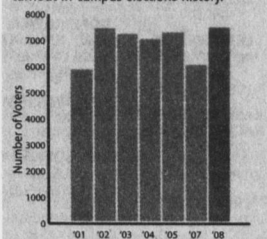
"We usually require a month to organize things, and Jim and the board only came to us a week before the election," he said.

"To organize polling stations in each dorm would require the entire community government to organize in less than a week and ensure that each member give up time to ensure they get certified."

Lyons said the idea would have

### Voter turnout

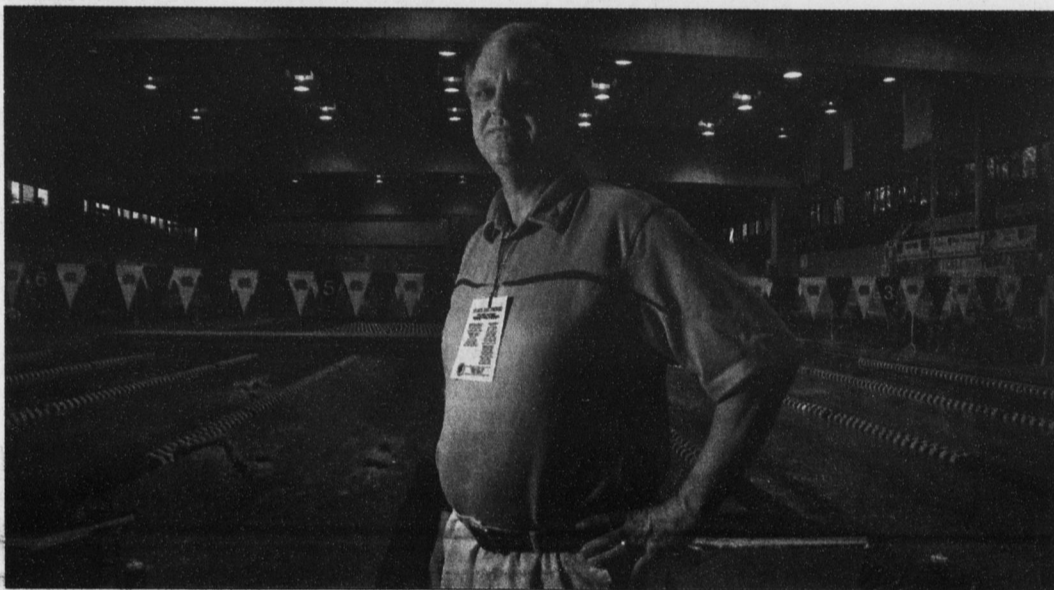
Tuesday's election saw the highest voter turnout in campus elections history.



SOURCE: BOARD OF ELECTIONS  
DTH/ALLIE WASSUM

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## FINDING COMFORT IN RETIRING



DTH/LOGAN PRICE

North Carolina swimming coach Frank Comfort stands by his home pool, Koury Natatorium, on Wednesday as swimmers in the background prepare for the ACC Championships. Comfort, the winningest dual-meet coach in NCAA history, is retiring after this season.

### UNC swimming, diving coach made a big splash

BY JESSE BAUMGARTNER  
SPORTS EDITOR

As every reporter who covers North Carolina swimming and diving discovers, coach Frank Comfort likes to go off the

record. Not just once, or a couple times, but in every interview, on many subjects and at any point.

In the low-revenue, low-profile world of NCAA swimming, such behavior seems a bit out of the ordinary.

But then again, an ordinary coach doesn't win a record 578 career dual meets.

An ordinary coach doesn't win 25 ACC Championships — 10 with the men and 15 with the women.

So who wants to be ordinary?

Now finished with his dual meet career and entrenched in his last ACC Championship meets — which are fittingly hosted in Chapel Hill — the coach is nearing the end of his storied career, and the accolades are beginning to pile up.

Comfort was honored at center court during halftime of the UNC-Virginia Tech men's basketball game Tuesday night with his family in attendance.

"I've always wanted that," he confided softly while standing next to the pool at Koury Natatorium.

Back in his office, a large framed certificate sits on the floor proclaiming Comfort one of "Carolina's priceless gems," signed by Athletic Director Dick Baddour and UNC

### A lasting legacy: Coach Frank Comfort

- ▶ 30th year coaching at UNC
- ▶ Finished with an overall men's and women's record of 578-173-2
- ▶ Winningest college dual-meet coach in collegiate swimming history
- ▶ Twenty-five Atlantic Coast Conference championships, 10 with the men's teams and 15 with the women's — the most in conference history by a single coach
- ▶ Comfort passed the 500 victory mark in dual meet wins in his career in the fall of 2002.

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## Election has long history at University

### Began as a result of rowdy students

BY ERIN WILTGEN  
STAFF WRITER

Eve Carson and Nick Neptune are starting the final duel to be student body president.

But there was a time when student government didn't exist — and students just duelled for the heck of it.

At the University's beginnings, rowdy student behavior — including fist fights, pranks and even pistol duels — rapidly drew the attention of the administration. None of the duels were fatal, but many students were expelled.

"The students were a rambunctious lot," said John Sanders, former director of the School of Government, who was elected stu-

dent body president in 1950. "They tended to engage in various pranks or activities to amuse themselves."

In response to the misbehavior, particularly the duels, the Board of Trustees implemented a system of student monitors in 1805, and the seeds of student government were formed.

The students despised the new monitors system, which required the chosen monitors, among other duties, to report on fellow students when they skipped class, missed church or swore.

The Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies — debating groups that formed in 1795 and constituted the entire student body between the two of them — developed an unofficial judicial nature in the 1830s.

The societies were the first to elect student leaders and to gov-

SEE ELECTIONS, PAGE 9



COURTESY OF WILSON LIBRARY

Members of the University Party wait for the 1957 student election results. The group was rivaled by the Student Party until both dissolved in the '70s.

### Get up to speed on the Jim Black scandal ...

**September 2005:** Meredith Norris, a political campaign director for Black, is found to have worked during a legislative session marked by lottery debate as an unregistered lobbyist for Scientific Games, one of the two vendors competing for the N.C. Education Lottery.

**October 2005:** Kevin Geddings, a state lottery commissioner appointed by Black, abandons his position hours before Scientific Games discloses that Geddings worked for the company during the period when legislators planned the N.C. lottery.

**August 2006:** Norris is found guilty of lobbying law violations, and Michael Decker, a former Republican state representative,

reveals that he accepted \$50,000 to switch parties and support Black's third run for Speaker.

**October 2006:** Geddings is found guilty of five counts of mail fraud.

**February 2007:** R. Scott Edwards, former treasurer of a state optometrist political action committee and an ally of Black, pleads guilty to obstruction of justice for his role in the distribution of blank checks to PACs and candidates, including three to Decker.

**Tuesday:** The Charlotte Observer reports that Black's lawyer confirmed his client's intention to plead guilty on Thursday to a federal public corruption charge.

## Embattled Black resigns from House

BY LINDSEY NAYLOR  
ASSISTANT STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

Former N.C. House Speaker Jim Black resigned from his seat Wednesday amid speculation that he will issue a guilty plea to federal charges of public corruption.

The Democratic representative of Mecklenburg County held one of the most powerful positions in N.C. politics for eight years, working tirelessly to earn the money and support necessary to maintain the post.

"There's a very fine line these people walk between raising their money and crossing the line into illegality," said UNC political science professor Thad Beyle.

"Black overstepped the line." The Charlotte optometrist, set to appear in federal court Thursday, faces up to 10 years in prison and a



Former House Speaker Jim Black is expected to plead guilty to corruption charges.

\$250,000 fine for charges that he accepted illegal gratuities.

The Charlotte Observer reported Tuesday that Black intends to plead guilty. His resignation came as no surprise in light of an N.C. statute barring felons from public office.

After allegations of political impropriety began surfacing in 2005, Black narrowly retained his position as state representative and forfeited his speaker seat to Rep. Joe Hackney, D-Orange, in January.

The power accumulated by Black during his time as speaker, Beyle said, stemmed from his ability to raise and distribute money to potential supporters in the House.

He said Black helped forge the competitive, money-driven style of politics that led to his downfall.

"The cost of running for office in state government has gone up," he said. "It's not easy."

John Aneralla, chairman of the Mecklenburg County Republican Party, called the timing of Black's resignation disappointing and said he should have come clean before his 2006 run for re-election.

"I'm not surprised that Black is being convicted of some type of corruption charge," he said.

"The real tragedy is that he continued to mislead people to

the point that he still was elected, then resigned, and the Democratic party will be able to replace him."

Michael D. Evans, chairman of the Mecklenburg County Democratic Party, said a replacement probably will not be chosen before March. Of the three people who had expressed interest in the post as of Wednesday afternoon, only one — Jack Flynn, who ran for Congress in 2004 against U.S. Rep. Sue Myrick, R-N.C., — was willing to make his interest public.

Aneralla said the state's political environment should serve as a springboard for dialogue about Democratic control in Raleigh.

Both parties agreed that the case signals a need for new ethics

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**BUCKLING UP** Child safety week raises awareness of car seat dangers

**DANGER IN DARFUR** UNC students present children with facts about Darfur

**AN EAR TO LISTEN** A statewide phone line provides help to substance abusers

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### STAND-UP CHARACTERS

Diversions takes a look at the headliners of this weekend's Carolina Comedy Festival, including UNC alumnus Lewis Black of "The Daily Show" fame.



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### CRUNCHED BY TIME

The Tar Heels' lack of experience in playing in close games down the stretch proved too much to overcome during Tuesday's loss to the Virginia Tech Hokies.

this day in history

### FEB. 15, 1977 ...

A student government petition to the N.C. General Assembly to legalize the sale of alcohol on campus gathers 400 signatures, with the goal of gaining 20,000.

weather

Partly cloudy  
H 42, L 21

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