

Chapel Hill Police Roundup

■ A resident of Elliott Woods told police Saturday that a man tried to get into her apartment, but she did not want to see him. The woman was sleeping after working the night shift. The man left before police arrived.

■ A person entered the Circle K Convenience Store on Ephesus Church Road Monday and talked rudely to an employee. He also threatened to hurt the employee. When the employee dialed 911, the suspect got into a car with three other people and left.

■ A woman told police Saturday she had drunk a bottle of NyQuil and had taken some pills, but she did not know what kind. Police found the pills and called the rescue squad. The woman was transported to North Carolina Memorial Hospital.

■ Someone slashed a tire on a car parked at the Chapel Hill Police Department Saturday. Police have several suspects in the incident.

■ The recent rash of break-ins and robberies from cars continued during the weekend, with several break-ins occurring at the Kingswood Apartments complex Friday.

A Mazda RX-7 had its right rear window broken out, and a radar detector was stolen. During the investigation of this incident, the officer found several other cars that had been damaged and robbed.

Among the other incidents, stereos were stolen from a Honda CRX and a Datsun 200SX, and a 1986 Ford Mustang was damaged.

■ Police found an abandoned car Sunday that had been in an accident. The car apparently went off Deming Drive, sideswiped a tree and stopped on the shoulder of the road. The vehicle's driver left the scene. Police estimated damage to the car at \$3,500.

— compiled by Larry Stone

Opening closed doors

Legislature to consider changes in state's open meetings law

By CRYSTAL BERNSTEIN
Staff Writer

Closed meetings may become a thing of the past if the N.C. General Assembly approves a bill proposed Monday by Rep. George Miller, D-Wake.

The proposed Access to Government Act would be an amendment to the open meetings law, which states that a meeting can be closed if it is in the best interest of the state or if the meeting's discussion could cause personal embarrassment to a legislator.

The amendment calls for all meetings of all committees and subcommittees to be held in open session and minutes of these meetings to be made available to the public and executive, or closed sessions to be held with previous notice only.

Certain matters require closed meetings, legislators said.

"There is a time when you have to be permitted to go into executive

"Anybody in the state ought to have access to open meetings."

— Rep. Jo Graham Foster, D-Meck.

session. But there should be a reason," said state Sen. Donald Kincaid, R-Caldwell.

Almost all General Assembly meetings are now open to the public, although meetings having to do with personnel or ethical matters are generally closed, said Rep. Don Beard, D-Cumberland, speaker pro tempore of the House and chairman of the governmental ethics committee.

Meetings of this nature are often held to separate fact from accusation and need to be closed to protect those accused, he said.

Advisory budget meetings are also closed at times to avoid pressure from other legislators and the public to

fund certain projects, said Richard Wright, former member of the House.

Legislators agreed the public is suspicious of closed meetings.

When people are denied access to legislative sessions, they think legislators are trying to hide something, said Rep. Jo Graham Foster, D-Mecklenburg.

"Anybody in the state ought to have access to open meetings," she said.

People feel the legislators must be discussing something they are embarrassed about if they hold private meetings, said Tony Rand, former state senator from Fayetteville.

Open meetings are "necessary to

give the people a little more understanding of the institution," he said. Beard said as many meetings as possible need to be made open so the public can be aware of what legislators are doing and how tax dollars are being used.

"The public just wants to know what's going on, insofar as it's possible and feasible," he said.

Rep. Joe Hackney, D-Orange, said the proposal will probably have widespread support.

"Members of the General Assembly know that the public generally believes that meetings should be open," he said. "Everybody votes for bills like that."

Speaker of the House Josephus Mavretic will also support the bill, said Tim Kent, executive assistant to the Edgecombe County representative. "Our general feeling about the bill is that we're very, very much in favor of the open meetings law," Kent said.

County tops state list for bigotry incidents, report says

By SANDY WALL
Staff Writer

Orange County had the most incidents of racial and religious bigotry of any county in North Carolina, according to a report released Wednesday by North Carolinians Against Racial and Religious Violence.

"We had 38 counties affected this year," said Rob Sikorski, spokesman for the Durham-based group. "Orange County came out the highest overall."

The UNC campus and the towns of Chapel Hill and Hillsborough were the primary locations of the 12 incidents that made up Orange County's high total, Sikorski said.

The group counts incidents, such as legal marches and rallies and illegal bigoted violence, and then compiles a yearly report, he said.

University incidents included in the group's report were the racial incident involving two black women at a Teague Residence Hall party in April and the harassment of student activists supportive of Robeson County Indian activist Eddie Hatcher in October and November.

"What we count are racial incidents, religious incidents and bigotry against gays and lesbians," Sikorski said. "This is now the fifth year for the report."

The group bases its report on

newspaper clippings and follow-up phone calls to county sheriffs and district attorneys, he said.

"The only constantly reliable source is our newspaper clips," Sikorski said.

But some groups urged caution before declaring Orange County the most bigoted county in North Carolina.

"You have to be cautious when you draw conclusions," said Sara Bullard of the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Ala.

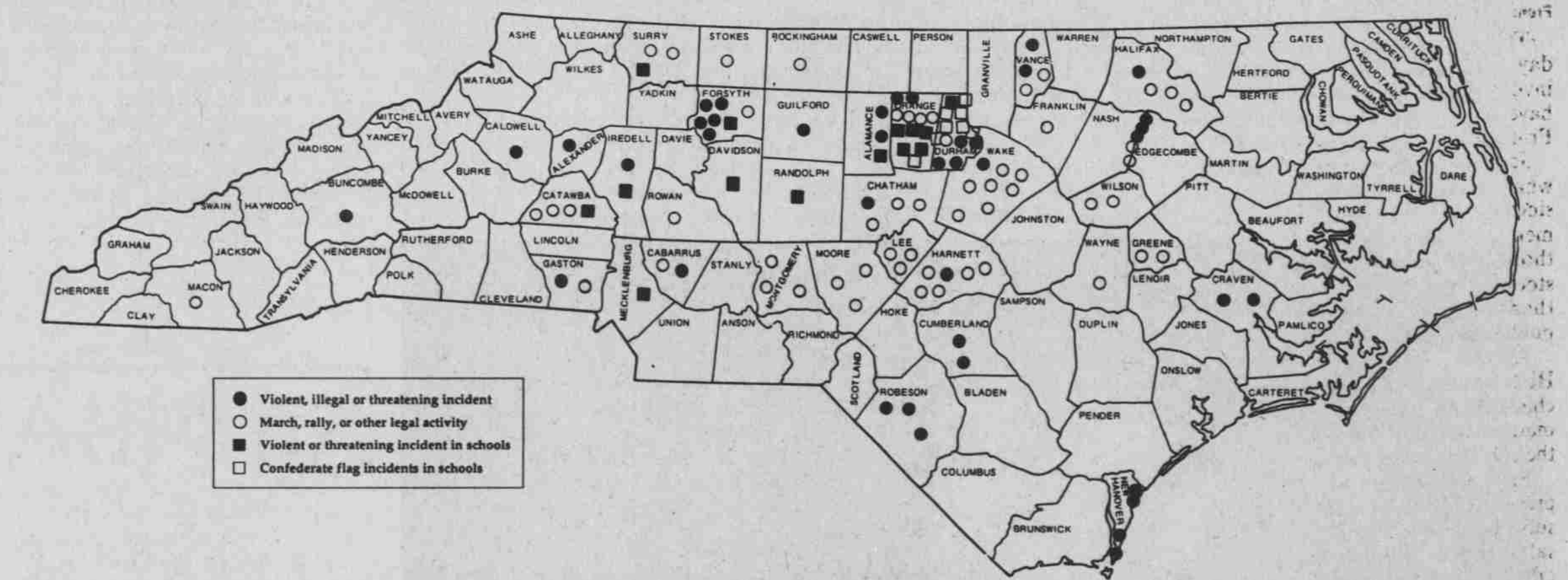
Bullard, whose group shares information with — but is not affiliated with — Sikorski's organization, said many incidents go unreported, so it is hard to get accurate statistics.

"I'm not questioning the validity of their conclusions at all," she said. "(But) there's no system for gathering information."

Hillsborough Police and the Orange County Sheriff could not be reached for comment, but a spokesman for the Chapel Hill Police Department disagreed with the statistics.

"Honestly, I don't see this," said Capt. Ralph Pendergraph. "I don't know where they're getting their statistics."

Pendergraph said he could not speak for the rest of Orange County, but that in Chapel Hill, there was no



Incidents of bigoted activity and hate group organizing in 1988

noticeable increase of bigoted violence in 1988.

"These statistics seem to be shaky," he said.

Sikorski said his group is seeing several trends develop across the state related to bigoted violence. Among these trends is an increase in violence at legal activities and a gradual increase in the total number of incidents.

There was an increase of total incidents in 1988, he said, adding there were 45 constitutionally protected marches or rallies held by the Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan in North Carolina in 1988.

Five deaths were attributed to bigoted violence in 1988, up from three the previous year, Sikorski said.

The increase of incidents is not the result of better methods of reporting

and recording, but a true increase in the number of both legal and illegal incidents, he said.

"We're seeing a true increase," he said.

His group is also seeing an overall decrease in the age of people involved in bigoted incidents, Sikorski said.

The wearing of Confederate flags to school has become a provocative issue and has been the root of several

recent incidents of bigotry, he said.

Students wearing Confederate flags were responsible for several incidents in Forsyth, Durham and Orange counties. "They are major statements," he said.

Bullard agreed with Sikorski, saying the "skinheads" are a good example of the overall decrease in the age of people involved in bigoted violence.

Town council gets limited public response at legislative forum

By WILL LINGO
City Editor

The Chapel Hill Town Council got little input Monday night at a public forum on its potential 1989 legislative requests to the N.C. General Assembly.

Only five residents spoke on the four requests the council is considering to submit to the legislature.

The public forum is part of the process the town must use to ask the General Assembly for the authority to enact certain programs and policies.

The council got the most input on possible expansion of its tree protection regulations. The town now has the right to regulate the removal of trees on property in town limits, but this right would be expanded somewhat under the new request.

Officials of Duke Power and the Homebuilders Association of Chapel Hill and Durham expressed concern about the possible final form of the ordinance.

Opposition could endanger the legislation; the General Assembly is traditionally less likely to approve

controversial local requests.

But Claire Cooperstein of the Sierra Club said her group, which includes 900 members in Chapel Hill, was 100 percent behind the legislation.

Cooperstein said she was disturbed at the thought of waiting until the ordinance was in its final form before asking the legislature to pass it.

Waiting for a final ordinance would push the request to the 1990 short session of the General Assembly, she said.

"Any controversy would then be pushed aside, as I'm sure Duke Power and the Homebuilders Association are well aware," Cooperstein said.

The council is also considering three other requests to send to the General Assembly. Only local builder Pete Thorn offered any comment about any of the other requests.

Thorn said he supported a proposal that would apply relaxed density standards to developers who built housing for low- and moderate-income families.

But Thorn said he would support

the ordinance only if it was available as a bonus for homebuilders, not as a requirement.

"Would this require builders to build affordable housing, or just give them the opportunity?" he said. "I would oppose it if it affected all new building."

Mayor Jonathan Howes expressed some reservations about using the program in Chapel Hill, but he said the council should send the request to the legislature so it could be considered.

"I wonder about the feasibility (of the program) in such a small market as this, but I would like to be able to consider it," Howes said.

The council is considering two other potential requests. A public facilities requirement would give the town the authority to make adequate water and sewer, transportation management, recreation and other facilities mandatory for new development.

Another request would require the mayor and council members to disclose their property interests.

Board to pick remedy for crowded schools

By LYNN GOSWICK
Staff Writer

A solution to the overcrowding problems of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools will be decided upon at a Feb. 20 meeting of the Board of Education.

Members of the board will choose from several possible temporary solutions to curb the overcrowding problem at the system's 11 schools for the 1989-90 school year.

One option seems to have the approval of the board, said Neil Pedersen, assistant superintendent for support services.

This option includes moving rising sixth graders from Seawell and Estes Hills elementary schools to Phillips Junior High School, and from Frank Porter Graham Elementary School to Culbreth Junior High School.

Also under this option, rising ninth graders from Phillips Junior High School would move to Chapel Hill Senior High School (CHHS).

According to a report presented to the board by Pedersen and Superintendent Gerry House, the combined enrollments of rising sixth graders at Seawell and Estes Hills elementary schools will be about 146.

Because of increasing enrollment in kindergarten through fifth grade at the schools, the sixth-grade class

would be assigned to Phillips Junior High.

Sixty-eight rising sixth graders at Frank Porter Graham Elementary would make up 2.5 classes at that school, but they would instead be moved to Culbreth Junior High.

Classrooms freed by the move to Culbreth will be used for class space and possibly a system-wide exceptional education class.

To relieve crowding at Phillips, which now houses grades seven through nine, 234 rising ninth graders

would be moved to CHHS.

This would create an enrollment of 1,389 students at the high school. That is higher than the present enrollment, but not as crowded as past enrollments of 1,518.

School board chairman Theodore Parrish said moving ninth graders from the junior high to the high school has been a controversial topic for the board and administration.

Because ninth graders have never been grouped with high school students before, parents are worried

about the influences of high school students on their children, he said.

Also included in this option are proposals to reassign Carrboro Elementary School students living in the Ironwoods neighborhood to Seawell Elementary and to reassign Carrboro students living in the Colonial Heights neighborhood to Estes Hills Elementary.

Students in the sixth-grade academically gifted class at Glenwood Elementary School would also be moved to Phillips Junior High.

Council

from page 1

it, Hakan said, and the Carrboro Board of Aldermen has been supportive of the commission.

Council member Julie Andresen, who serves as a vice president of the Downtown Commission, said the commission would have to justify its budget before the council every year. Hakan proposed adding a three-year review amendment to the tax district resolution.

Hakan and Dibbert will present the tax district plan to the Carrboro Board of Aldermen meeting Tuesday night.

The Downtown Commission is a branch of the Public-Private Partnership. The commission is dedicated to improving the downtown economy.

In other action, the council directed the town manager to study petitions from residents of the Boundary Street neighborhood. The residents want the town to restrict parking on North Boundary Street.

Sally Sather of 206 N. Boundary St. said the number of cars parked on the street has gotten out of hand.

"Our entire block is used as a parking lot," Sather said.



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