

N.C. Perot supporters gear up petition drive

By Pete Simpkinson
Staff Writer

Although billionaire H. Ross Perot said he only would enter the 1992 presidential race if his name appeared on ballots in all 50 states, N.C. volunteers have been working vigorously to ensure the Texan achieves at least one-fiftieth of his goal.

Perot's declaration during a March 1 appearance on CNN's "Larry King Live" has inspired volunteers across the country to begin mailing out petitions by the hundreds. This effort is well under way in North Carolina, where Perot supporters have set up campaign offices in Raleigh, Winston-Salem and Charlotte.

To get his name on the ballot in North Carolina, Perot must have the signatures of 68,391 registered voters, or 2

percent of the state's voting population, by June 26.

The effort to get Perot on the N.C. ballot probably will succeed, said Johnnie McLean, an administrative assistant with the State Board of Elections. "Judging on the amount of calls we've had, I would not be surprised," she said.

Although McLean said she had heard that Perot supporters had gathered more

than 10,000 signatures, Bill Gunger, a Perot volunteer in Raleigh, called such estimations empty speculation.

Gunger said Perot workers had mailed out between 15,000 and 16,000 signature sheets with space for 25 signatures and were sending out between 400 and 500 more sheets each day.

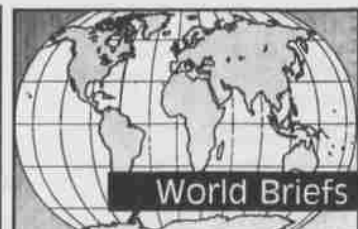
Perot's campaign platform includes the preservation of a woman's right to an abortion, some form of gun control and a reduction in federal spending, Gunger said. The Dallas billionaire also advocates the idea of "electronic town meetings," which would allow voters to

communicate directly with the president by phone during regularly scheduled sessions.

In addition to promising to donate \$100 million to his potential presidential effort, Perot has said he would not accept contributions of more than \$5, Gunger said.

Despite his growing bipartisan popularity, UNC students have yet to make Perot their candidate of choice, Gunger said.

In general, Chapel Hill residents have shown no overwhelming response to the Perot campaign, he said.



PLO leader Arafat survives plane crash

TRIPOLI, Libya — Yasser Arafat, who has survived gun battles, air raids and assassination attempts as leader of the Palestinian cause, walked away Wednesday after his plane reportedly made a belly-landing during a desert sandstorm.

Palestinians around the Arab world celebrated joyously after hearing the news that Arafat was found at dawn, bruised but alive after being missing for 15 hours.

Arafat has been the Palestine Liberation Organization's undisputed leader for 23 years. Had he been lost, it would have been a grievous blow to the organization and could have seriously undermined U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace talks.

Arafat's two most important aides have been assassinated during the past four years, and no one else has the stature to step in as successor of the divided PLO.

Three of five crewmen aboard Arafat's Soviet-built An 26 aircraft were killed when it went down near a PLO training camp at Sarra on Tuesday.

Tennis star Arthur Ashe announces he has AIDS

NEW YORK — Arthur Ashe, the first black man to win one of tennis' Grand Slam tournaments, announced Wednesday that he has AIDS.

Saying he could no longer conceal his condition because of rumors and leaks, Ashe said he contracted the virus during a 1983 heart operation and learned of that fact in 1988.

"I am sorry that I have been forced to make this revelation now, at this time," he said. "Sadly, there is really no good reason for this to happen now. But it has happened, and I will adjust and go forward," he said.

Ashe, 48, spoke with emotion, and at one point his wife had to take over reading his statement.

He said that he would work to teach others about AIDS and that he was inspired by the work of fellow athlete Magic Johnson, the basketball star who disclosed he had the AIDS virus, but not the disease itself, in November.

Ashe had heart operations in 1979 and again in 1983, both before testing of blood for the HIV virus made blood transfusions safer.

British voters prepare for today's elections

LONDON — Prime Minister John Major and Labor Party leader Neil Kinnock both predicted victory Wednesday on the eve of Britain's national elections. But today, voters may prove both men wrong.

At the end of a frenetic three-week campaign that scarcely altered the opinion polls, Britain appeared headed for a minority government that would end 13 years of unshakable Conservative Party rule.

Recent polls put Labor support at 40 percent, a 2- to 3-point edge over the Conservatives. Only the Liberal Democrats, up 4 points to 20 percent, have gained significantly.

If neither of the big parties wins a majority in the House of Commons, Liberal Democratic leader Paddy Ashdown's price for support is a commitment to change the rules.

The Conservatives hold an 88-seat majority in the Commons heading into voting that begins this morning.

—The Associated Press

Campus Calendar

- THURSDAY**
NOON: Wesley Foundation will present Ralph Eanes to lead a lunchtime discussion on "Reclaiming the Jesus you used to know."
Black Interdenominational Student Association will have an MLK Memorial Tribute by Vice Chancellor Harold Wallace in 226 Union.
4 p.m. Public Policy Analysis Majors Union will meet in 122 Abernethy to elect officers.
5:30 p.m. KASA will meet in 205 Union.
6 p.m. BROTHERS discussion and support group for and about African-American male students will discuss the role of religion and spirituality in developing a healthy lifestyle in the first-floor lounge of Hinton James.
6:30 p.m. Women's Forum will meet in the upstairs Union lounge for people interested in following up on the pro-choice rally.
Students for the Advancement of Race Relations will meet in 217 Bingham.
8 p.m. CARE presents "AIDS and Our Society," a panel discussion with opportunities to ask questions of a town council member and others at Hanes Art Center.
Chimera will meet in 208 Union.

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