

Students try to SNAP out of two-party system

By Phuong Ly
Staff Writer

The donkey and the elephant. When most people think about American politics, only two parties come to mind — the Democrats and the Republicans.

Independent candidates like Ross Perot are temporary fodder for the media and often disappear from the public eye soon after the election.

But the New Alliance Party hopes to change the two-party system of American politics.

"(The New Alliance Party is) the American affiliate of the pro-democracy movement," said Clifton Toth, staff adviser of the UNC Student-led New Alliance Party. SNAP, which Toth helped organize in 1989, is the Chapel Hill chapter of the national party.

The party maintains that America is not as democratic as most citizens are led to believe because the political process is dominated by only two parties whose platforms are becoming more and more alike, Toth said.

The New Alliance Party fights for legislation that would reduce the number of signatures required to put a candidate on the ballot and would allow independent candidates the opportunity to participate in political debates.

Toth said social changes could not take place "until you change the fact that you have invariably two candidates, paid for by big businesses, who don't represent the interests of the vast majority of this country."

The New Alliance Party was formed in 1979 in New York City when state Sen. Joseph Galiber, a black Democrat, decided to fight back after he was refused his party's nomination for borough president. He had been promised the nomination earlier by party leaders.



Lenora Fulani

Galiber asked for help from two progressive groups and ran in the election as the first candidate of the newly formed New Alliance Party.

Even though the party was only six weeks old, Galiber received more than 17 percent of the votes. The party went national in 1984.

The party made history in 1988 when it placed Lenora Fulani, the first woman and the first African-American presidential candidate, on the ballot in all 50 states. This year, Fulani is on the ballot in 40 states and is a write-in candidate in North Carolina.

The New Alliance Party is the fourth-largest political party in the United States, with an estimated 250,000 supporters. The Libertarian Party is the third-largest party. Support for the New Alliance Party is estimated by the 1988 election results since the party does not keep official membership tallies, said

Caroline Donnola, field organizer for the N.C. New Alliance Party and a coordinator for the Fulani for President campaign.

There are about 5,600 New Alliance Party supporters in North Carolina. State affiliates consist of UNC SNAP and chapters in Raleigh and Durham. The student-led organization has about 15 to 20 people who attend its meetings, Toth said.

Students are attracted to the party because it emphasizes building a more perfect democracy, Toth said.

Senior Anna Meadows, chairwoman of SNAP, said she became interested in the party and joined SNAP last semester because she felt it was advocating people who had been shortchanged by the major political parties.

"(The Democratic and Republican parties) were run by professional politicians who were losing sight of the individuals of this country," Meadows said. "They were so entrenched in politics and getting elected. I didn't think they could see the big picture or the small picture."

"I felt like the New Alliance Party was a voice of tolerance and openness that I hadn't seen anywhere before."

The party describes itself as a black-led, multiracial, pro-gay, pro-women, pro-socialist organization, Donnola said.

Some issues in the party platform include civil rights, gay rights, a national health-care system for everyone regardless of income and free education — from day care to graduate school — for all.

"We are not concerned about how much profit IBM is making," Donnola said. "We are concerned about whether people have the basic things to survive in order to live decently."

Critics describe the New Alliance Party as "psycho-political" and as brain-

washing people, Toth said. "(But the critics are) ignoring the fact that they're very brainwashed." Society has always taught people to keep in place and to do what they're told, but the New Alliance Party is trying to change that, he said.

Other critics call the party racist, Toth said. "(Critics say) we really are black-led, and that means that white people aren't welcome, or that we really aren't (black-led), and we're just a bunch of white people."

Toth questioned how the New Alliance Party could be racist when it was working to promote the openness and acceptance between people of all classes, races and sexual orientations. He added that although the party has many black leaders and supporters, many people of other races were involved in the party.

The UNC chapter consists of a majority of whites, Toth said. One reason is that when black student groups on campus are contacted to help with the New Alliance Party movement, they are already committed to their organizations and don't feel they have time to join the movement, he said.

This year, the New Alliance Party is campaigning for Fulani as well as other party candidates running in state and local elections throughout the country.

No New Alliance Party candidates are running for offices in North Carolina this year. However, Toth said the student-led organization was supporting Marc Marcoplos for Orange County Commissioner because he was an independent and an active environmentalist.

No New Alliance Party candidate has ever won an election, but that does not stop the party from its activities, Donnola said. "We take some positions that some people say if you wouldn't take that position, you'll get more votes," she said. "But our concern is always to represent the people. That's more important to us than how many votes you

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Clinton's classmates, pals stump in Durham

By Alia Smith
Staff Writer

DURHAM — A group of friends and acquaintances of Democratic presidential nominee Bill Clinton rolled into Durham Thursday to stump for the Arkansas governor.

During the last stretch of the 1992 presidential campaign, the groups, whose members call themselves the Arkansas Travelers, are touring small towns to secure votes for Clinton in key states such as North Carolina.

There are about 300 Arkansas Travelers, broken down into small groups, who are touring critical states in the election. A group of eight visited Durham Thursday on their trip through North Carolina.

Most of the Arkansas Travelers now live in Washington, D.C., but are originally from Arkansas. Though it is the first tour for the group that visited Durham, other groups of Arkansas Travelers have been touring since the Florida primaries in May.

The group arrived at the Democratic headquarters in Durham and then made their way to Ninth Street, where they stopped passers-by to discuss the campaign and answer their questions.

Many Arkansas Travelers told of their relationships with Clinton.

"I met the governor when I went to Boys' State in Arkansas and then again at the high school valedictorian/salutatorian dinner at the governor's mansion," said Kurkley Thomas, an Arkansas Traveler and a recent graduate of the University of Arkansas.

"Clinton's a great leader and a great guy. He's done great things in Arkansas, or we wouldn't have elected him five times," Thomas said.

The Arkansas Travelers also are touring rural areas to reach voters who

might not be able to attend the big rallies, said Donna O'Bannon, who attended Georgetown University with Clinton.



Bill Clinton

"We both ran for Student Congress when I was a junior, and (Clinton) was a freshman. It was 1964 — I was the first woman elected to Student Congress, and he was the first freshman," O'Bannon said.

All the Arkansas Travelers are campaigning on their own time and expense because they are so committed to the governor's campaign, said Jennifer Rhodes, who worked with Clinton on his campaign in Little Rock.

"I'm proud to endorse Bill Clinton," said Rhodes, a 1990 graduate of Tulane University. "College students should be especially interested in Bill Clinton. It's tough to get a job now."

Elderidge Bowen, a family friend of Clinton's, said that he was especially sensitive to Bush's attacks on Clinton's character.

"I had leukemia when I was in high school," Bowen said. "(Clinton) kept in contact with me, wrote letters and sent flowers. Clinton makes sure everyone's needs are heard."

Bowen's sister, Laura Bowen Wills, coordinator of the Arkansas Travelers in North Carolina, said she "felt like it was important to get out and support Bill Clinton and defend his character."

"Knowing him personally," Wills added, "we can truly attest to his character." Bowen first met the candidate when she was in sixth grade and Clinton was attorney general of Arkansas.

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Lecture series to teach U.S. foreign policy

By Fred Henderson
Staff Writer

No more excuses for being uninformed about world events. This spring, the Great Decisions lecture series once again will be open to about 350 students.

The class is designed to introduce students to major foreign policy issues facing the United States. The topics will be presented in a series of eight 1 1/2-hour lectures by experts in the field. The class will be held on Tuesdays in Hamilton 100.

"The basis for a working democracy is an informed populace," said Sophie Bolon, chairwoman of the Great Decisions committee.

Staff adviser Richard Ulin of the office of international programs agreed about the importance of the class. "You have a civic responsibility to be an informed voter, and with the world becoming more interdependent daily, our foreign policy becomes more important in our daily lives," he said.

Great Decisions is run entirely by students. Seventeen students, mostly juniors and seniors, make up this year's committee.

During the fall, the committee meets with Ulin to plan for the class. The committee, which receives \$2,000 from Student Congress each year, is responsible for lining up the speakers.

"It's hard to get good speakers when you don't have much (money) to offer them," Bolon said. "You have to sell them on the importance of the program."

In addition, each committee member leads a discussion group that meets for an hour per week. "The beauty of the whole program is that the 400-person class is divided up into intensive discussion groups," said Lisa Stevenson, a member of the Great Decisions committee.

Students can sign up for the Great Decisions class through Caroline as Political Science 89, a graded, two credit-hour class that involves several papers and other graded assignments.

Most students, however, sign up for the class as International Studies 93, a pass/fail class worth one credit hour, Ulin said. Students earn passing grades as long as they attend seven of the eight lectures. Students who miss two lectures can still pass by writing a letter to a congressman concerning one of the

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