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TENNESSEE--Schedule of meetings for week of September 8-14.

TENNESSEE--Southern Baptist disaster units head for N.C. in wake of Fran.

NORTH CAROLINA--N.C. assembly, SBC seminary tormented by Hurricane Fran.

ALABAMA--Seemingly innocent bingo could fuel gambling in Ala.

MISSISSIPPI--Miss. gambling woes began with charity, Jones reminds.

CALENDAR

TENNESSEE--Christian Life Commission trustee meeting, Sept. 9-11, Nashville.

TEXAS--Radio & Television Commission trustee meeting, Sept. 9-10, Fort Worth.

**Southern Baptist disaster units
head for N.C. in wake of Fran****By Steve Barber****Baptist Press
9/6/96**

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist disaster relief units were on the road Sept. 6, heading to eastern North Carolina in the aftermath of Hurricane Fran.

The storm came ashore at Cape Fear, N.C., at about 8 p.m. Thursday night, Sept. 5, packing 115 mph winds. Reports Friday morning, Sept. 6, indicated at least 11 people had been killed. Carolina Power and Light reported about 670,000 people were without electricity in North Carolina alone.

Mickey Caison, the Brotherhood Commission's on-site disaster relief coordinator, reported Sept. 6 "early indications -- and I do mean early -- are pointing to more damage from Fran than from Hurricane Hugo," which struck the South Carolina coast in 1989. Caison is en route to Wilmington, N.C., and based his projections on discussions with the American Red Cross.

At 10:30 a.m. Central time Sept. 6, Caison reported the following location assignments, subject to change, for disaster relief units: North Carolina (first unit) and South Carolina to Wilmington; North Carolina (second unit) to New Bern, N.C.; Alabama to Raleigh, N.C.; Florida to Fayetteville, N.C.; Kentucky to Jacksonville, N.C.; Georgia (two units) to Lumberton, N.C.; and Tennessee to Wilson/Greenville, N.C. The arrival of Fran marked the second time this year the southeast coast has faced a major storm. In mid-July, Hurricane Bertha plowed into North and South Carolina, killing nine people and causing \$100 million in damage, with Southern Baptist feeding units from both states serving more than 70,000 meals in the aftermath.

The Southern Baptist response to Hurricane Andrew in August 1992 stands as the largest in the ministry's 26-year history. Feeding and child care units from 15 states were called into service, with 10,000 volunteers providing 2.6 million meals and care for hundreds of children in south Florida and Louisiana after Andrew killed 15 people and caused \$30 billion in damage.

The American Red Cross has estimated Southern Baptist disaster volunteers have prepared 80 percent of the meals served under ARC auspices since Hurricane Hugo in 1989.

The Brotherhood Commission coordinates multi-state disaster response on behalf of all Southern Baptists. Contributions in support of the disaster relief effort may be made to the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104.

**N.C. assembly, SBC seminary
tormented by Hurricane Fran**

By Art Toalston

WILMINGTON, N.C. (BP)--The morning after Fran's assault on North Carolina, there was an ominous telephone recording at the coastal North Carolina Caswell Baptist Assembly saying it had been closed by the hurricane and, inland, a preliminary estimate of \$1 million in damage at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest.

The Caswell facility, damaged earlier this year by Hurricane Bertha, was in Fran's landfall path Sept. 5. The assembly's telephone recording said calls should be directed to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina offices in Cary, near Raleigh. Those offices, however, also were closed Sept. 6, the day after Fran exacted a toll that included at least 11 deaths in North Carolina.

At Southeastern Seminary, the \$1-million damage estimate included:

-- removal and cleanup of "trees everywhere," by one description -- stately trees uprooted by Fran, such as the magnolia in front of the president's home which had occasioned the resident's name, "Magnolia Hill," and two tall oaks in front of Binkley Chapel.

-- repair and cleanup of roof damage, which had given way to building leaks; broken windows; and 30 inches of flooding in the boiler room of the seminary's plant services building.

Additionally, students have lost cars, while faculty and administration homes were damaged by wind, rain and fallen trees, reported Greg Kingry, Southeastern's director of public relations.

The campus was without power, as was much of North Carolina and Virginia along Fran's northward route as a hurricane-turned-tropical storm. Southeastern officials were alerted the outage might last four or five days.

Southeastern President Paige Patterson stated, "We are profoundly grateful to God for the personal safety of our people. We have an assignment from God and we continue with that assignment, even as we join hands in a massive cleanup and rebuilding effort. Please pray for those who have lost so much."

Russ Bush, academic vice president and dean of the faculty, said classes nevertheless will resume on Saturday, Sept. 7, despite the power outage.

Elsewhere, Fran's 115 mph winds toppled a Civil War-era 197-foot brick steeple atop First Baptist Church, Wilmington, N.C., a casualty seen nationally over network news broadcasts.

The church was built between 1860 and 1870 with two steeples. According to a book of the congregation's history, the taller, now-destroyed steeple had served as a lookout for Union and Confederate troops, depending on who was occupying the coastal city at the time. In 1958, the steeple had withstood Hurricane Helene's 135 mph winds.

Elsewhere in the city, named in colonial times for the Earl of Wilmington, markers commemorating conflicts from the French and Indian War to World War II were twisted and bullied by the hurricane.

David Brisson, director of inner-city ministries for the 62-church Wilmington Baptist Association and assisting in the coordination of disaster relief efforts, had not yet been able to gather church damage reports. He said power at the associational office, however, had been restored Sept. 6 around 10 a.m.

In Richmond, Va., among the cities and towns hit by widespread power outages from Fran's winds and an anticipated six inches of rain -- with as much as 12 to 15 inches feared elsewhere in the state -- the offices of the Baptist General Association of Virginia were closed. At the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, a worker said the agency was "operating with limited staff due to the weather conditions."

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**Seemingly innocent bingo
could fuel gambling in Ala.**

By Jennifer Davis

**Baptist Press
9/6/96**

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Bingo. The past time of many senior citizens. The game played next to the cake walk at carnivals to raise money for high school band uniforms. A form of fund-raising for various nonprofit organizations.

Such an innocent game. How could it ever cause any problems?

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But, in Alabama, controversy has arisen. That controversy deals with a proposed amendment to appear on the Nov. 5 ballot that would do away with limits on the monetary amount of prizes offered on bingo games in Jefferson County.

While the amendment seemingly only affects one area, opponents say the state is in danger of falling prey to the gambling industry if the amendment passes.

Daniel R. Farnell, a research pathologist who has done extensive research on the gambling effort, said the amendment would allow governing bodies of any of the more than 30 cities and towns in Jefferson County, as well as the Jefferson County Commission, to set the limits for prize money at bingo games.

"Apparently, some legislators want us to believe the proposed amendment is harmless," said Farnell, of Hoover, Ala.

He added legislators claim the amendment calls for the upper limits on the size of bingo prizes to be set by the legislature, rather than individual city and town governments in Jefferson County approving the proposed local law.

The proposed amendment reads: "Relating to Jefferson County, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of Alabama of 1901, to provide that the monetary amount of prizes for the playing of bingo shall be established by local law."

The amendment is intended to change existing Amendment 386 to the Alabama constitution, which permits bingo games in Jefferson County but strictly limits the amount of money offered in prizes.

The Alabama constitution currently states prizes given by any non-profit organization for the playing of bingo games shall not exceed \$1,200 in cash or gifts of equivalent value during any bingo session or \$2,400 in cash or gifts of equivalent value during any calendar week.

Tony Petelos, chairman of the Jefferson County House delegation, said the purpose for removing the prize limitations on bingo is to allow organizations to change prize amounts to adjust for inflation and cost-of-living increases -- \$1,200 in 1996 is not the same as \$1,200 in 1979 when the limit was established and passed.

But Petelos said limits still need to be established. "This amendment would just allow local law to set the limits rather than constitutionally," he said.

Farnell warns Alabamians not to be misled -- opening the door for unlimited bingo would allow for more sophisticated gambling to plague the state.

"The proposed amendment, if adopted, will in effect be comparable to repealing Section 65 of the Alabama constitution, which now bars operation of lotteries and casino gambling in Alabama," Farnell said, adding bingo is simply a form of lottery limited to relatively small prizes. "Large prizes convert bingo to a full-fledged lottery."

Farnell noted an amendment to legalize bingo had to be adopted in Jefferson County because Section 65 of the constitution prohibited bingo, calling it a form of lottery.

"The question of whether local law to set the amount of bingo prizes in Jefferson County will be enacted by the legislature or by the governing bodies of cities and towns in Jefferson County is not the vital issue," Farnell said. "The real issue is this: By adopting the proposed amendment, the people of Alabama would be giving up our constitutional protection against high-stakes bingo games."

A legislative analyst in Alabama, Larry Raby, contended the proposed bingo amendment would have no affect on Section 65 because it is an amendment to Amendment 386 to the constitution, which legalizes bingo in Jefferson County. Thus, the proposed amendment does not deal with Section 65.

He confirmed while the term "local law" means the limitations for bingo prize money would still have to be passed by the state legislature, it is possible every city could have different prize limitations. Those local prize limitations would have to be proposed in a bill sponsored by the legislators from that district and adopted by the state legislature.

Farnell said he understands the proposed amendment will not formally repeal Section 65 of the constitution, but he predicts a bleak future if it is passed.

Some of Farnell's concerns include:

-- Bingo prizes in one or more Jefferson County cities or towns, or elsewhere in the county, will be set at a very high level.

-- Gambling establishments to house those bingo operations will function essentially as any other gambling casino.

-- Because of the existence of one or more of the bingo "casinos" in Jefferson County, the state will be legally obligated under federal law not to oppose establishment of similar gambling casinos by the Poarch Band of Cree Indians, with involvement of out-of-state gambling interests. The bingo and casino gambling operated by Indian tribes in any state is regulated by the U.S. Indian Gaming Regulatory Act of 1988. According to provisions of that act, each state must allow the Indians to conduct any type of gambling that is otherwise legal in that state.

-- Renewed pressure will be brought on Alabama legislators to remove any remaining legal obstacles to operation of a state lottery and gambling casinos.

"The generous campaign contributions exerted on legislators and other government officials by pro-gambling interests is well known to Alabamians," Farnell said.

"Because of the inclination of many legislators to champion the spread of legalized gambling, it would be extremely unwise for Alabama voters to give to city and town officials or to the Alabama legislature the authority to increase the size of bingo prizes in Jefferson County.

"It is no accident that in the Code of Alabama lotteries and casino gambling are listed as crimes, between chicken-stealing and prostitution," Farnell said. "The people of Alabama deserve better than to have our legislature and voters continually subjected to trickery and greed-driven pressure to legalize lotteries and casinos."

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**Miss. gambling woes began
with charity, Jones reminds**

By Jennifer Davis

**Baptist Press
9/6/96**

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Don't legitimize any type of gambling for any cause, counseled Paul Jones, executive director of Mississippi Baptists' Christian Action Commission.

"I've never seen a gambling law that didn't have a flaw in it," Jones said.

In a state that now has 30 floating casinos -- with as many as 50 new ones on the way -- and numerous mega-bingo parlors, Jones noted: "Modern gambling in Mississippi started with something as innocent as raffles."

Legalized gambling started with religious and private organizations pressuring legislators to pass laws making raffling legal so the organizations could earn money, he said.

Mississippi, one of the nation's three poorest states, legalized charitable bingo in 1987 "because it was for a legitimate cause," Jones noted. "But it wasn't long before most, if not all, of the money was going to the gaming industry instead of the charity.

"The bingo parlors hide behind the charity, but the truth is they merely have to be held in behalf of a charity," he said. "The law does not require that the parlor give any money to the charity if it (the parlor) can prove that it needs the money to operate, such as paying rent, bills and salaries."

Mississippi boasts of being the home of the third-largest casino in America, said Jones, but "it is the problems that we do not hear about."

Gambling addiction, breakdown of the family, loss of businesses and jobs, embezzlement of money (even within the church) are all areas of concern, he said.

"Where you find gambling, you find destruction."

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