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Torchbearers ready to run for Olympics

By Alice Shelton and Jim Wicker

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It was only after the packet of official information about the 2002 Olympic Torch Relay arrived that Kate Catlin began to realize the significance of her selection as a torchbearer. Catlin, a senior at Eastern Alamance High School, was nominated because she serves as chairwoman of the National Students against Violence Everywhere (SAVE) Youth Advisory Board. She is president of the SAVE chapter at Eastern.

“I was shocked to learn that I had been selected to carry the torch,” Catlin said. “I have watched the Olympics, but I have not kept up with the torch relay. This puts a whole new spin on it.”

The torch relay will start Tuesday in Atlanta and arrive Feb. 8 in Salt Lake City, where the 2002 Winter Olympics will be held. Catlin will carry the torch, which is about 33 inches tall and weighs a couple of pounds, for two-tenths of a mile, or about one lap around a track, next Tuesday afternoon in Clemson, S.C. She’ll be dressed in the official torchbearer’s uniform — a white windbreaker jacket, long-sleeve T-shirt and white windbreaker pants. And if it’s especially cold that night, she can slip on the matching gloves and hat.

Cheering from the sidelines will be her parents, Tom and Jane Catlin of Mebane. “I think it will be a lot of fun,” Catlin said.