

# NEWS & OPINION

## OPINION: Successful Step Show Prompts New Questions Over Cancellation of Last Year's NC Wesleyan Production

By Jessica D. Jones  
Decree Opinion Editor

At this point, I am going to indulge myself in the use of improper speech—please bear with me, because “I ma” put it out there. Now that the Administration knows that a bunch of Black People can gather in one setting and compete without acting their supposedly true essence—ignorant—, will NCWC officials finally let the Greek Life organizations have their own Step Show?

Why the hell not? After all, on September 15, 2006—seven months after NCWC Greek Life organizations proposed their Step Show idea—Elizabeth City State University held its “Down East Viking Step Show” in the Dunn Center. The ECSU Step Show was the same as the show proposed to the NC Wesleyan administration last year by masterminds Martin Hill and Lacey Maloney. It was in the same building with the same audience.

Is it fair? Hell no, and I personally believe that the school knew it wasn't fair which is why they gave NCWC students a chance to purchase their tickets at \$5.00 a pop, which is cheaper

than ordering the tickets in advance (\$10.00) or purchasing the tickets at the door (\$15.00). Since the school allows students to purchase any Dunn Center event ticket for five dollars, I believe that NC Wesleyan students should have gotten into the Step Show for free.

Let's backtrack for the newcomers to the NCWC population and go over a couple of reasons why NCWC administrators would not allow Greek Life Organizations to have a step show.

1—Dr. Vann Newkirk, Vice-President of Institutional Research and Planning, was paraphrased in the March 3, 2006 issue of the Decree as saying that administrators raised questions over the size and strength of the security detail that the organizers had planned to employ, noting that the step show would have attracted crowds from Rocky Mount and the surrounding area, in addition to students from NC Wesleyan and the competing schools.

FACT: The Rocky Mount community and the surrounding areas in addition to students from NC Wesleyan and the competing schools were at the Down East Viking Step Show.

I went to the step show and I alone counted four police officers, numerous “bouncer” type ladies and gentlemen, who played crowd control (You know, keeping people from standing in the walk way) and God only knows how many other people who help maintain order.

When I asked a police officer exactly how many officers were patrolling the event, he replied with, “We have enough”. So my question is: What the hell is enough? Either way, ladies and gentlemen, the event was still peaceful. On September 26, I held a phone interview with Susan Autrey from the Dunn Center who confirmed that there were only six Rocky Mount Police Officers and that ECU also brought their own campus security (which explains the “bouncer” type ladies and gentlemen, who played crowd control). Just for the record, please take note that during another phone interview Lt. Larry Woodley from the Rocky Mount Police Department suggested there should be at least eight police officers at an event. No matter the lack of security guards or the extreme amount of ECSU's campus security, there were no acts of violence, or acts of vandalism reported.

### Correction:

Staff writer Sean Riccio's name was misspelled in the last issue of the Decree due to an editing error by the faculty advisor

### PROFESSORS from pg 1

make gemstone jewelry and work on other craft and decorating projects. She is proud to say that her 15-pound Calico cat, Abigail, won a recent beauty pageant.

A Tarboro native, Dr. Daphne O'Brien will teach writing courses as well. She earned B.A. and M.A. degrees from NC State and a Ph.D. from UNC-Chapel Hill; her specialty is American literature pre-1900. Over the years, besides teaching writing, Dr. O'Brien has served as a freelance writer and editor, working on academic books and journals for Oxford University Press, UNC Press as well as clients in archeology, engineering and medicine. She lives with her husband, Michael, and son, Anderson, in a 180-year-old farmhouse in Edgecombe County. Her family operates Fishing Creek Flower Farm.

Carl Lewis, a 19-year veteran of the Rocky Mount police department, has taken an early retirement

Last year Maloney, a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., predicted the non-violence of Step Shows when he said, “We're not Bloods or Crips. We're organizations about community service and scholarships.”

2—Last year Dr. Newkirk said that a smaller event with college groups from around the state would have been preferable.

FACT: NCWC Greek Life

Organizations were thinking very BIG by drawing groups as far as Florida A&M and Virginia Commonwealth, as well as local schools such as Wake Forest and North Carolina State—but what is wrong with that?

For anyone that did not go, please note that the Dunn Center was packed with so many people! Who's to say that Tom, Dick, and Harry sitting in the first row were not from Florida A&M, or A&T, or Norfolk State? After all, the Down East Viking Step Show was promoted with television commercials, radio advertisements, and (although, we don't care for its new style) the step show was advertised on Facebook.com and God only knows what other college-friendly websites.

In addition, Elizabeth City State University is 45 minutes from Norfolk. So would the NCWC administrators have been “concerned” if all of Hampton Roads, Virginia showed up at its back door, after all, ECSU's radio stations are the same radio stations as that of Hampton Roads! These same radio stations—103 Jamz, 92.1, 104.5, 88.9—did advertise for the Down East Viking Step Show and linked colleges such as Norfolk State University, Old Dominion University, Christopher Newport University, The College of William and Mary, and Hampton University. All those schools have an active Greek Life and two of those colleges are Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Hell, the host, ECSU, is a historically black college.

3—(THE BIGGEST ISSUE OF THEM ALL) MONEY!!!! Dr. Newkirk said that the students canceled the event after the administration encouraged the organizers to scale back and lower the costs.

FACT: The NCWC Greek Life event was to cost more than \$6,000 with primary funds coming from SGA and Greek Council, as well as money used out of SGA's contingency money.

However, after seeing the Dunn Center's Minges Auditorium packed to its full capacity (1,202—a sell out), I concluded that money was indeed made that Friday night. So had the school given NCWC's Greek Life Organizations the

chance to put on the event, I believe they would have been just as happy (if not more so) as the people who collected the money for the Down East Viking Step Show. As a matter of fact, Shelia Martin, executive director of the Dunn Center, confirmed that the Dunn Center has booked The Down East Viking Step Show—again—for September 21, 2007. Some money had to have been made if ECSU's Administration has signed a contract with the Dunn Center to allow for the “Big Event” to occur once again.

For the hell of it, let's play mathematicians. Say the Dunn Center was sold out and the audience was filled with nothing but NC Wesleyan students: 1,202 times five dollars equals \$6,010 that would have been made that night. Which implies that everyone involved money wise would have been paid back with ten dollars made. Next math problem: say the event was sold out and everyone attending ordered their tickets in advance: 1,202 times ten dollars equal \$12,020 that would have been made that night. This again implies that the school would have doubled their money—point blank and simple. Last math problem: say the event was sold out and everyone attending paid for their tickets at the door: 1,202 times fifteen dollars equals \$18,030 that would have been made that night. That is triple the money used to get the whole Step Show off the ground. Let's not forget the fact that the masterminds also wanted to include vendors, meaning they would have received a cut of that profit as well. Basically, what I am saying is that there is no reason financially that the school could not have supported their NCWC Greek organizations in developing a Step Show worth our while. And as far as prize money—the prize money would

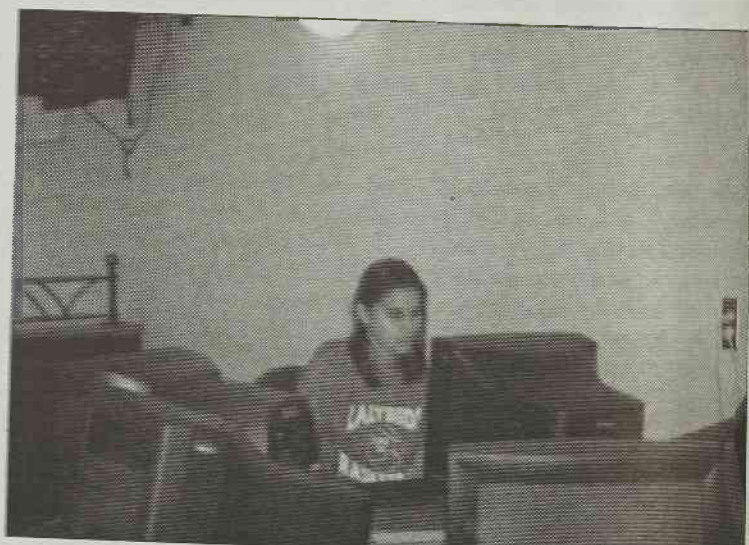
not have been the issue, simply because ladies and gentlemen, the money would have been made back!

So again I will be bold enough to repeat my original question, “Now that Administrators know a bunch of Black People can gather in one setting and compete without acting their supposedly true essence—ignorant—, will NCWC officials finally let the Greek Life organizations have their own Step Show?”

When it is all said and done, I am very pissed off that the NCWC Administration trusts “outsiders” more than they do their own student organizations. So it's okay for other schools to go to The Dunn Center and vandalize and tear down our only building large enough to hold a large body of people; however, when it comes to students that live and function at NC Wesleyan, it's a problem!

What makes me mad about the whole situation is that I bet you NCWC Administration's response will be, “We don't have a say in who The Dunn Center books in their facility, because we don't own it. It is merely on our campus and nothing more.” HA! Nothing more than a place where we hold our SGA meetings, almost all events for Freshmen Orientation Week, plays put on by NCWC's Theater department, C.A.B. and Student Activities events, Visiting Writer's series, Graduation, President's welcoming dinner for the freshmen, athletic banquets and God only knows what else. NCWC might claim they don't have a say, but I find that hard to believe, especially since almost every activity requiring a large venue occurs in that building.

So when it is all said and done, I will sit back with the rest of the concerned student body waiting for the next heap of excuses to pass on by.



Freshman Amanda Sagadraca catches up on school work in the computer lab at the NCWC Commuter Lounge, which opened this fall in the space that used to house the Powerhouse Grille.

Gene Heavner, a native of Lincoln (“near Charlotte”), Heavner earned BA (Pfeiffer University) and MM (Appalachian State) degrees in music education with specialties in instrumental music and choral directing. He was employed for one year at Edgecombe County Public Schools prior to coming to NC Wesleyan, where, this semester, he teaches music appreciation, instrumental ensemble and a class for the Wesleyan Singers. Besides teaching, Heavner will help the Admissions office in its recruitment efforts, with the goal of strengthening the college's music program. Heavner enjoys camping and other outdoor activities, and three years ago, he took a cross-country trip on his motorcycle.

Dr. Molly Weise has joined the Education and Social Science Division as an assistant professor of sociology. Dr. Weise is a political sociologist who focuses on voting behavior and the impact of social structure and culture; other

academic interests include family sociology and sociology of health and illness. A native of Jamestown, New York, and a graduate of Syracuse University, Dr. Weise now considers herself a Texan, having earned an MS in human development and family studies from the University of North Texas and a Ph.D.—she defended her dissertation in early September—from Texas Women's University. In her free-time, she likes to travel by train, study architecture and history of the South, and spend time with her dog, Lola, and cat, Choo Choo. Before grad school, she was an amateur bodybuilder.

Six NCWC professors left the college after the 2005-06 school year: Drs. Kaye Campbell and Kevin Moberly, both of the English Department; Tom O'Connor (justice studies); Sydney Parrish (chemistry); John Perry (math); and John Poffenbarger (political science).

### THE DECREE

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