

LETTERS



Lounging in the BCC Lounge!

WANNA PLAY BALL?

by Michael Hicks

Our view of universities and colleges today has been distorted, from a place of learning to a place of high dollar sports activities. When you say "the University of North Carolina," the first thing that pops into most people's minds is basketball. Other university's names are also associated with their sports rather than with their academics. We spectators sit at home in front of the television, or in the stands, watching these fine amateur athletes play the games we all love. What we don't realize is that these same sports heroes may be washing cars or sweeping floors in the future. Many collegiate athletes are making big bucks for their schools, but are being denied an education.

The problem is seen daily on television and in the headlines. The graduation rate is astonishingly low in our Division One schools. When these athletes find out they can not play professional sports, they are worse off than when they began their college careers, because they didn't get a degree. The odds of a college athlete making the pros is 1 out of 183. Between 1973 and 1983, only six out of fifty-eight basketball players graduated from Memphis state. At the university of Texas at Austin only 39% of the football team and 18% of the basketball team got degrees. These players that never make it pro, or get a degree, often find themselves doing manual labor after their ball playing days are over. One case in point was a Ga. Tech player who averaged 22 points a game. He quit to go pro, but was cut early. He now works as a maintenance supervisor earning \$13,200 a year.

Why is the graduation record so shameful? Many schools rely on

football or basketball teams to earn revenue to pay for sports programs. To do this the school must recruit top players, no matter what their educational status might be. College sports brings in big money from fans and television. It's estimated that this year alone Division One football programs will raise 1 billion dollars. Ticket and concession sales often top \$50,000 per game. Coaches no longer care what they have to do to get players. They are often found guilty of payoffs and gifts "given" to players through the program. Insecurity on the coach's part is a major factor in recruiting. If he doesn't win, he could easily lose his job.

Our high schools are also guilty of filtering athletes through without good educations. A survey of 1,359 black athletes showed that only 14% graduated in four years. Among 4,067 white athletes, 53% graduated.

There are ways to help sports and academics go together. One suggestion is to have shorter seasons. This would enable athletes to spend more time in the classroom. Also, if freshman were considered ineligible to play their first year they might concentrate harder on adjusting to academic life. Scholarships for players who can't graduate in five years must also be abolished.

Many collegiate athletes are making big bucks for their schools, but they do deserve an education. No one has all the right answers, but we are finally on the right track. Not all colleges and universities have bad athletic and academic records, but the ones who do must be dealt with sternly. An athlete is a person like anyone else, not a dollar bill. Let's start treating them like people. We must make young athletes realize that age and injuries sooner or later will get you in sports but an education is something that can never be taken away.

WHY THE CONTRA CARTOON?

by Ashley Goodnough

The reason why I did an editorial cartoon, on the situation in Nicaragua, was because I wanted to express my feelings on a subject that I feel very strongly about.

I believe that U.S. support for the Nicaraguan Contras is wrong, because there have been reports from such agencies as Amnesty International, American Watch, and from Christian missionaries serving in Nicaragua, that the U.S. backed Contras have committed various atrocities, such as murder, rape, kidnapping, and mutilation on

unarmed civilians who have no connection with the Sandinista government.

Just because I have done a cartoon cutting down the Contras, does not mean that I am unaware of injustices committed by the Sandinistas, which have also been documented.

I believe that the United States should try spending some of its money, on the disadvantaged and homeless people, instead of wasting it all on an increasingly bloody war in Nicaragua, where only peasants, women, and children are being killed, and not Sandinistas, which are who the Contras should be fighting and not the innocent.



Celebrating National Library Week.

PROS AND CONTRAS

by Keith Douglas Miller

After having read the cartoon in the last issue of the ALETHEIA, I felt compelled to respond.

The cartoonist has incorrectly compared the indigent and homeless of the United States with the contra fighters of Nicaragua. The homeless on many of our streets have made the choice to ruin their lives with alcohol, drugs and various other means. I personally did not intend for my tax dollars from my hard work last summer to fund those lazy individuals who chose to inhabit the streets of America and consume my tax dollars at their expense. I did intend for my tax dollars to support a group of freedom fighters who saw more to life than communism's rut. In many respects those bums on our streets share the same rut. They are in a slump they cannot pull out of. Those contras who are so courageously fighting for their freedom do not care to walk in that rut.

If you believe that Communism doesn't destroy life, you are appealing to your own ignorance. After having spent several weeks in Eastern Europe this past summer, I am personally convinced that communism is not the way to freedom and justice. There is a lack of motivation and dissent in

Eastern Europe that is a direct result of the oppression caused by communism. It is a paradox that our Democratically controlled Congress and Senate freely give money in the form of welfare and other handouts to those who destroy their own lives through laziness and dependency while a small minority has to constantly fight for funding for those who fight for their lives, freedom, and independence.

Before you criticize those of us who support the Contras and the freedom they fight for, analyze your own freedom and how much you value it. Can you honestly say that you would be willing to give up your independence and individuality to support the State, the central government? In communism, the individual does not exist. Those of you who are Christians should realize that there morally should be no separation of church and state. This separation in a communistic society has replaced the importance of religion with the concept that communism IS the state's religion.

Communism has no freedom. Freedom refuses to accept communism. By supporting peace movements in Nicaragua, you indirectly support the Communistic government which, ironically, has no intentions of granting freedom or peace in their society.