

# Shocked town mourns jogger's death

By Vicki Cheng  
Staff Writer

More than 200 people crowded into a school auditorium last Thursday to mourn the woman who was killed July 15 while jogging near the school and to protest the lost sense of security in the event's aftermath.

"Like you, I am shocked, angered and horrified by this senseless act of violence," said Chapel Hill Town Council member Art Werner speaking on behalf of Mayor Ken Broun, who was out of the country.

"Like you, I've looked for an explanation for what happened just outside this building. And like you, I have no answer."

The community speak-out at Guy B. Phillips Middle School on Estes Drive began at 7:30 p.m. and lasted until about 9 p.m., when candles were distributed and a memorial walk was held along the path Kristin Lodge-Miller, the 26-year-old victim, was traveling when she was attacked and shot dead.

Lodge-Miller was taking a morning jog on a path near the school when police suspect Anthony Georg Simpson, 18, attempted to rape her, police said. As she broke free, police say he shot her five times with a handgun.

That morning, police arrested and charged Simpson, a Chapel Hill High student, with first-degree murder and attempted rape. Orange County District Judge Patricia Love found probable cause Friday to try him for those charges in court.

The gathering was organized by the Orange County Rape Crisis Center, the Orange County Women's Center and the Orange-Durham Coalition for Battered Women.

"The purpose is to grieve the loss of Kristin Lodge-Miller and for people to grieve the loss of safety," said Catherine Dickman of the women's center. "The community needed the opportunity to coalesce around this issue."

About 25 people took turns at the microphone, many reading from prepared notes and a few breaking into tears while speaking.



A candle-light procession mourned the death of Kristin Lodge-Miller by walking along the path she jogged before she was killed

One issue that quickly surfaced was a woman's right to feel safe in her community. Sandra Shahady, a mental health counselor who works at the Parsonage Counseling Center Inc. on Estes Drive, said the short distance between her building and the site of the crime made her fear for her own safety.

"I'm really frightened to be in that building," she said. "I've started to lock the door all day long. I feel very, very angry that I as a woman have to be so frightened to work in a building and have to keep my door locked every day."

At least one man suggested that societal influences played a major role in outbreaks of violence. "We have a swelling rage among people who do not have the experience of power, so their ex-

pression of power comes out in perverted ways," said Dan Reimer, Orange County Health Department director.

"In Chapel Hill and Orange County, we have a greater disparity between the haves and the have-nots than in the rest of this state. In spite of the fact that we pride ourselves in having a well-educated, highly accomplished community, we do have a large sector of our brothers and sisters who are not faring as well as the rest of us."

Chapel Hill resident Zach Ralston blamed much of today's violence on society's glorification of the gun as a symbol of power.

"The handgun is the great symbol of violence," he said. "We give them to our children to play with. We glorify them in our Westerns, in our movies, in

our novels and in our songs.

"If we do not protest what is happening on our television screens and in our movie houses and in our songs, then we are complicit in the disastrous state of our civilization."

As people filed into the auditorium for the speak-out, many lined up to add their names to a list of residents interested in forming a local group to promote gun control.

Werner said the town was open to suggestions for improvements. "For the young woman jogging where anyone would have thought was one of the safest parts of town, on a path next to a reasonably busy street not far from the police station, to be attacked, chased and shot down is beyond my comprehension."

# Gun ban considered to curb fear, violence

By Kelly Ryan  
Associate Editor

Two weeks after a 26-year-old jogger was shot and killed on Estes Drive, residents and local politicians are questioning whether a local ban on handguns is the answer to the increasing number of gun-related crimes.

Despite a constitutional right to own a gun, local civil rights attorney Alan McSurely said government officials should try to solve the underlying problems behind gun use — such as fear and alienation — instead of simply considering a complete ban.

"We need to take the fears out of the hearts of law-abiding citizens so they don't feel like they need guns to protect themselves," he said. "The negative incentives that this system has created for poor, young people have very little deterrent value."

Kristin Lodge-Miller, a resident of Shadowood Apartments, was shot five times July 15 when she went out for an early morning jog. Police suspect Anthony Georg Simpson, 18, attempted to rape Lodge-Miller before opening fire at her across a well-traveled road, police said.

Don Beamon, manager of the Colonial Gun Shop in Hillsborough, said guns should be used strictly for sport. "I would like never to see someone buying a gun for the pretense of using it on another person."

Beamon said the justice system was to blame for paroling criminals who have been convicted of gun-related felonies. "We've got these cats running loose on the streets. We've got citizens like you and I getting stopped for speeding," he said.

"There's something backward about that. When someone gets caught, punish them. Don't slap them on the hand and turn them loose."

There are no gun shops in Chapel Hill because students, who are living on tight budgets, typically are not interested in guns for sport, Beamon said. Orange-Chatham District Attorney

Carl Fox said he thought the new N.C. gun-storage laws were a step in the right direction to making schools and streets safer. The N.C. General Assembly recently passed a law that would punish gun owners if their children committed crimes using a gun from home.

"Once parents realize that they are going to be held accountable, they should be, and hopefully will be, more careful," Fox said.

Fox said a ban on handguns just for Chapel Hill would not be effective because of its close proximity to other towns and counties.

"Some of the homicides are committed by people who live outside (of Chapel Hill). It wouldn't take much — you could live in the county or in Carrboro."

Fox said that if a handgun ban were to be effective, it would have to be governed by the state and not individual, local communities.

Chapel Hill Town Council member Art Werner, who spoke at the vigil last week about the need for handgun control, said he planned to schedule a public hearing about the issue in early September. "There's an awful lot of public outcry for it in Chapel Hill. More than there was in the past," Werner said.

McSurely said that, as a community, Chapel Hill should work with its youth to keep them from feeling alienated from society.

"I would love to see every gun in the world melted. We could have a big bonfire on Franklin Street and use it to build a factory to give 500 jobs to people," McSurely said.

"But you can't just say do away with handguns without making an equal commitment to jobs."

**Correction**  
In the July 22 table "Comparison of UNC faculty salaries," George Rabinowitz was misidentified. His rank is professor, not associate professor, and he began teaching in 1971. The DTH regrets the error.

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