

# Unconfirmed radio broadcast causes cut classes, raises false hope

To the editor:

This letter is a protest against the blatant incompetence of WCHL in their failure to confirm a news statement before airing it on the morning of Jan. 25.

At 1 a.m. WCHL (1360 on your AM dial) announced that all UNC classes which met before 12 noon would be cancelled due to the snow and the poor driving conditions. You can well imagine the shock felt by those of us who heard this news! Diligent students that we were, we decided to further investigate this incredible statement. Several people called the radio station and were once again told, that yes, all UNC classes which met before noon were cancelled. We were also told to have a nice day! Several signs were made proclaiming the great news that we could all sleep late that morning. These signs were put up the halls, and all

concerned students were notified.

Around 7:15 a.m. there was some commotion. A few students said that they had just heard that classes were to be conducted as scheduled. One of us called WCHL once again to see what was going on. We were then told that classes were *not* cancelled, and that the initial statement was a hoax which had not been confirmed by any University official. Nevertheless, WCHL never bothered to announce that their original claim was false.

Due to this incident, many students missed their classes unintentionally. We ask how any news media dare misinform and mislead its constituents with such slipshod information. Furthermore, we demand a public apology for this injustice!

This letter was signed by 56 Granville residents.

Rock 'n Rimbaud here to stay

To the editor:

Re: Ethan Lock's letter of Jan. 25: I agree that Patti Smith is the "wave of the future." She was indeed "bold and abrasive," and yes, she did "scare a lot of people."

Patti did much more, though. She provoked, taunted, exhilarated, terrified and bewildered us like no other singer/performer could. No one who heard the chilling lyrics of "Land" and "Gloria" powerfully resounding throughout Memorial Hall will be quite the same. No one who saw her perform—black-matted hair flying, jaded serpentine eyes shifting, fists pumping—will forget it.

Of course, there will be people who will chuckle and still call her shallow and pompous and even boring.

There are many more whose hearts and souls are in flames, whose minds are thinking: horses, angels, death, gems, the sea, histoire.... they will be flattered for quite some time.

Rock 'n Rimbaud is here to stay.

Elizabeth Richey  
504 1/2 North St.

## Hiring, firing—'left to the dull and senile'

To the editor:

Prof. Richard Sharvey's letter of Jan. 24 is right on in its evaluation of the problems created by tenure. His solution is logical...which will probably result in a quick put-down by the "Powers That Be."

However, Prof. Sharvey does not address the problem of who will decide whether a teacher should be fired or his/her contract renewed. At present, this decision is made by a small group of full professors in each department whose "carbon copyness" to each other is exceeded only by their desire to maintain and perpetuate the status quo. The great majority of them think alike, act alike, dress alike and talk alike. In our department, 50 per cent of them have even been educated alike. Seven out of the 14 full professors received one degree or another from UNC, and this incestuous relationship has created a veritable bastion against ideas, teaching methods or styles

which do not conform to their own entrenched views. In other words, the very qualities of innovation and change which are necessary for a vital, dynamic learning experience are systematically discouraged or killed. Consequently, any junior professor who does not fit into their particular mold, who tries to be innovative or add vitality to the educational experience through "unorthodox" methods, is certainly not going to have his/her contract renewed.

The students, of course, are the ones who must suffer the results of all this with dull, boring, uninspired, incompetent conformity. In many cases, students spend thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours only to be given mediocre teaching at best. As consumers of education I think they should be given more for their time and money. Instead, they are given student government! They should demand a great deal of input as to how their time and money is

spent. This includes the selection and retention or firing of *all* teachers.

Both students and professors should decide, perhaps by secret ballot, which teachers should remain and which should be let go. Obviously, such a democratic process in this "post bicentennial year" of ours would meet with bitter opposition from the elite minority whose power and jobs would certainly be in jeopardy. King George knew what that trip was all about. History has demonstrated that those in power will kick and scream and fight like hell against any attempt to take away their "divine rights." After all, "ya can't have them ignerunt students" deciding how their educational lives will be spent. Better leave such weighty matters to the dull, the boring and the senile.

P.S. I include myself among the dull, boring, senile, etc.

Jerry Foster  
Assistant Professor of Spanish

## comment

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## Academic flexibility exists despite claims of politicians

It is that time of year again when campus politicians emerge from seclusion and begin vying for the honor of becoming a student body president. As usual, one of the major issues in the campaign is academic reform. Calls abound for the extension of the drop period, the establishment of a four course load, and an end to the computation of incompletes as F's.

From these cries, a student is likely to conclude that the University is very rigid in its academic regulations and allows little flexibility in the choice of an academic program.

In some instances, this view may be valid. What many students are unaware of, however, is that the University offers several academic options which provide great freedom and flexibility to the student. The University's only fault is its failure to properly advertise these options.

One little known academic option is double registration. Students with a minimum 3.0 QPA can register for six hours of credit in a regular three hour course of particular interest to them and double the amount of work they do. Double grade and credit are given. All that is necessary for double registration is permission from the instructor and Dean of Honors George Lensing in 303 South Building.

Another little known option is Special Studies 90. This course, created for departments without independent study programs, allows students to create a course not currently available based on their personal interests. Credit and grades are given. A group of students with a common interest can plan a course that is not available and draw up their own syllabus and reading list.

If one's problem is not only the lack of a certain course, but the lack of an entire field of study, this too can be resolved. Students are able to create a program for a major outside normal department lines. Prof. Lewis Lipsitz, dean of experimental and special studies, is available to discuss these interdisciplinary majors. No minimum QPA exists for admission.

These options and others—such as the possibility of taking courses for credit at N.C. State and Duke Universities with no tuition—give the student at Carolina a great deal of flexibility in designing an academic program. Every effort should be made to inform the entire student body of these and other options and to let them know that the academic structure is not quite so rigid as the candidates make it seem.

—D.P.

Wise up, gals

To the editor:

As someone who waits tables, I wondered if some ladies on campus might be as "stumped" as someone who wrote to Ann Landers recently. I'd like it reprinted for coeds because some *should* recognize themselves and keep in mind that a standard tip is still between 15-20 per cent. As Ann would say, Wise up, gals.

"Dear Ann Landers: Tonight five of us girls who work in the same building had dinner together at a good restaurant. The food was excellent and so was the service. When it came time to pay our checks, I started to figure out what to leave the waitress. One of the group (well-traveled and sophisticated) insisted that since we were all women it wasn't proper to leave a tip. Two of us disagreed. May we have the final word from you?—STUMPED.

Elizabeth Richey  
504 1/2 North St.

"Dear Stumped: The waitress who served you didn't work less because you were female. Women should tip for service as well as men."

M. Christenbury  
901-B Dawes St.

Festering Sore

To the editor:

The controversy over recent promises by student government candidates to support this group or to cut funding to that organization, illustrates the contradiction inherent in the claim that mandatory funding of these junior politicians' gift bags is in the student interest. The use of political power to allocate resources (student fees) creates a festering sore of intolerance, since one group can only get its way to the dissatisfaction and at the expense of another fund-seeking organization.

War is the norm, peace the impossible.

The only beneficial aspect of mandatory student fees is an instructive one. It provides an example of the strife and bitterness created when the government, be it federal, state or student, first expropriates individuals' wealth and then invites special interest groups to battle over the division of the spoils.

If the same allocation of funds had occurred without the student government first expropriating and then dispensing our money, then there would be no justification for such a farce. If a different allocation resulted, then by definition...some students would "lose." Greater individual (and total) satisfaction would have resulted, had each student had the opportunity to decide where his money went. That the "losers" often feel bitter about the groups and causes that were granted their money is unsurprising.

What of the individual student that desires nothing more than to be left

alone, to make his own decisions on what groups or projects he wishes to support? Alas, this is Chapel Hill. And there has never been any shortage of authoritarians lurking behind these ivy-covered walls, all eager to impose their version of "right" on us all.

Tom Ball  
2-D Kingswood

The *Daily Tar Heel* welcomes letters to the editor. Letters must be typed, double spaced, on a 60-space line and are subject to editing for libelous content or bad taste.

Letters that run over 25 lines (150 words) are subject to condensation. Letters should be mailed to the editor, *Daily Tar Heel*, Carolina Union.

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## Forebears include pig wrestler, potato carver

# 'Ruts'—the genealogy of an American slob

By MACK RAY

Last Thursday afternoon, just after "The Beverly Hillbillies," I was overwhelmed by a compulsion to trace my genealogy to its origins. I had been vexed by the dilemma of the dignity of the individual in an increasingly fragmented society ever since "The Gong Show" that afternoon. I was in a quandary. I felt pulled apart, torn in many directions. I doubted if I could make it through "Hogan's Heroes" without collapsing across my rabbit ears from the emotional strain of a major identity crisis.

There was only one thing for me to do. I had to trace my ancestry back through the years and discover what divine acts of Providence had guided my ancestors in their ultimate, sublime accomplishment—the creation of me. What inspired adventures and heroic deeds of my progenitors had paved the way for me to skip class and lol like a mollusk in front of an electronic tube all afternoon?

I resolved to trace my ancestry as extensively as I could, to the original immigrant to America and beyond, if possible. It would mean years in dusty libraries, poring over records in obscure county courthouses, a job that could quite possibly take 17 years. Or I could call up my grandmother and get her to tell me the entire story in at least half that much time.

I popped open another Pabst and got on the phone to my grandmother in Arkansas. As usual, she was in good health and glad to hear from me. She was fixing supper after a hard day's work down at the slaughterhouse (entrails department) and was enjoying an evening cocktail also. "I never take more than one, you know," she reminded me, and I chuckled, remembering how she always served them up in quart mayonnaise jars. I explained my research project, and she gladly settled down to outline my family history for me.

First, she refreshed my memory about her husband, my namesake, Armando Caruso McKnight, who was known as the Laundromat king of Eufala, Ala. He singlehandedly built a laundromat empire from the dust of Eufala, a town formerly famous only as the location of Bill S. Dance's Jelly Worm fishing lure

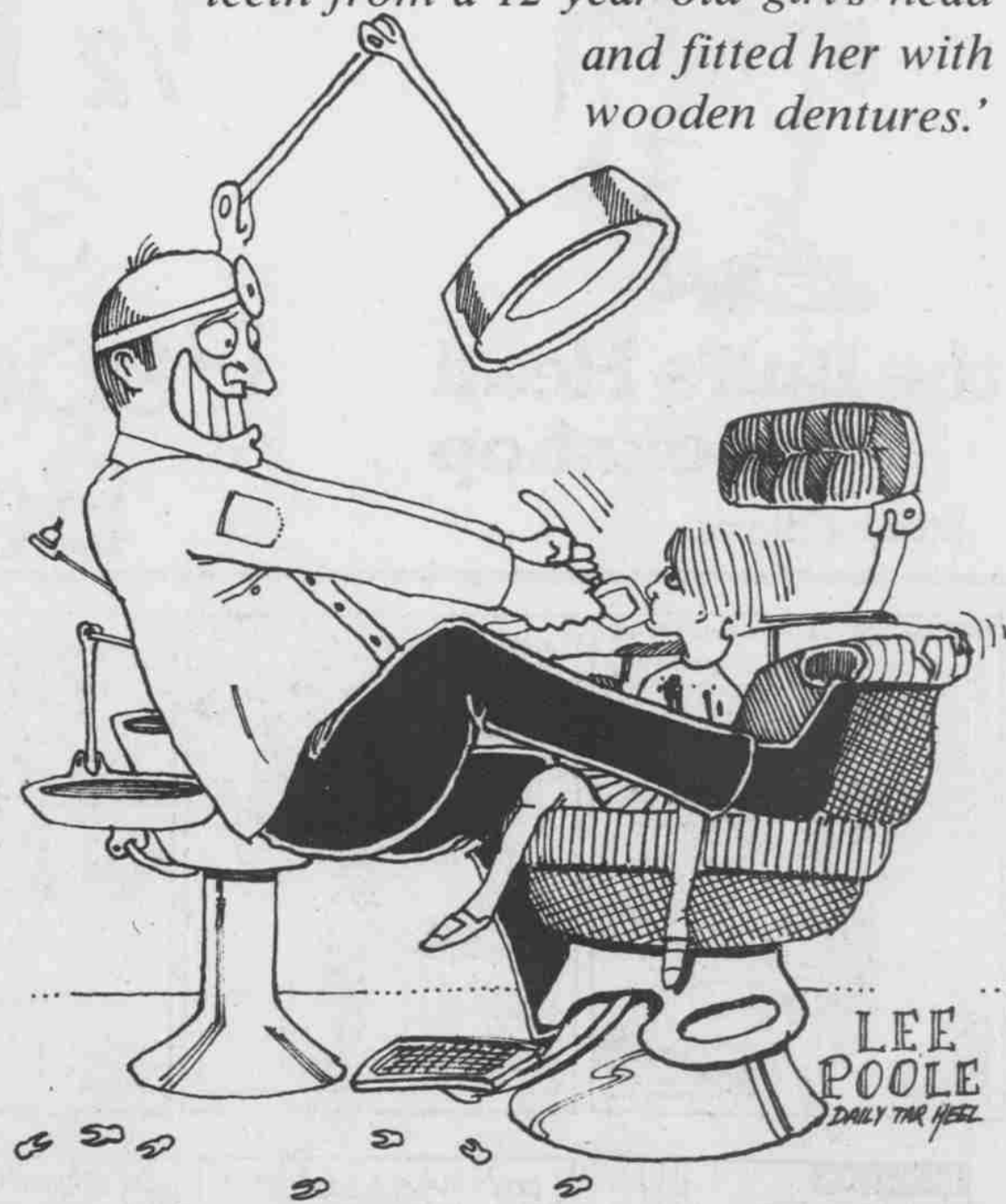
laboratory. But a combination of unsound investments, unscrupulous business partners and Granddaddy Armando's philanthropy in regard to several young ladies of dubious employment left him penniless by 1965. He fell out of a fig tree and never fully recovered. Within six months, the strain of his debts and his injury proved too much for this broken man, and he died by his own hand. He was found in the kitchen after beating himself to death with one of Grandmother's largest frying pans.

Granddaddy Armando's only brother, Bellafondo McKnight, distinguished himself by being employed for a total of two months in his lifetime. He was hired by a used car dealer in Fordyce, Ark., when he was 38, but lost his job seven weeks later when he was arrested for drinking the brake fluid out of a '57 Ford and driving the same vehicle into the display window of the Fordyce K-Mart. The Fordyce Police Department reported that he found Bellafondo vigorously assaulting one of the department store mannequins in the display window, when he arrived on the scene. Bellafondo has since received several promotions, however, and is now the chief trustee at Tucker State Prison Farm in Arkansas.

Alfonzo McKnight, father of Armando and Bellafondo, was born in Squash Flats, Miss. in 1861, the son of a chorus girl and an itinerant shoe-dye salesman. Granddaddy Armando only spoke of his father as a cruel and embittered man who brushed his teeth with barbed wire and gargled with battery acid every morning and urged the other family members to do likewise. The cause of Alfonso's bitterness may have been his physical deformity, for he was an extremely bow-legged hunchback. Alfonso always cursed his mother for raising him in a footlocker, and swore that his children would have a better life.

The itinerant shoe-dye salesman was probably one Uriah McKnight, a former barber and dentist from upstate New York who was banned from the state for unscrupulous practices. Uriah had been put on probation several times for shaving customers with his dental tools, and vice versa. His license was revoked, and Uriah rode out of town on a rail when he was convicted of removing all 32 perfectly sound teeth from a 12-year-old girl's head and fitting her with wooden dentures. He began

'Uriah removed 32 perfectly sound teeth from a 12-year-old girl's head and fitted her with wooden dentures.'



hawking his home-made formula for yellow shoe dye from state to state, and probably could have been in Mississippi by 1861.

Uriah's parents were courageous people. He was the son of Angus McKnight, a Scottish immigrant, and Miss Elsie Boompers, a powerful but kind woman who managed a living by wrestling pigs, burros and other domestic animals in various taverns and public houses around New York City. The church records of Drumhumbumshire, Scotland show the birth of Angus McKnight, son of Smedley McKnight, a groomsmen, on February 5, 1798. By all accounts, Angus was a cheerful simpleton who wandered off to Ireland while still a young lad. Angus was trapped accidentally in a potato barge while dining one evening, and found himself in the United States a few weeks later.

Authorities at Ellis Island dismissed Angus as a common specimen of vermin found at the bottom of potato barges. Angus was free to make his own way in the New World. He became renowned for his artful carvings of religious trinkets from raw potatoes, which he sold on the streets of New York.

I thanked my grandmother for setting me at ease about my ancestry and promised to call back soon to find out the history of all the women in my family. I hung up the phone a contented man, secure in the knowledge of my antecedents, with a strong sense of purpose and destiny. I was ready to pop open another Pabst and sit down to another evening of serious TV watching.

Mack Ray is a junior English major from Crawfordsville, Ark.

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