

# Be a friend

by Bernard Cook  
Staff Writer

For foreign students arriving in the United States, UNC is a "culture shock." To ease the shock, the Campus Friends program aims to give them someone to contact on a one-on-one basis. For the first two to four weeks of classes, UNC students give them advice.

Students from non-English speaking countries face new situations. They have to deal with American banks, telephones, buses and mail and to survive registration.

"This is the most difficult period of readjustment for foreign students," said Peter Topper, program assistant. "They need someone they can turn to to get questions answered."

Many UNC undergraduates have volunteered for the program, but more graduate students are needed since most of the incoming students are graduates.

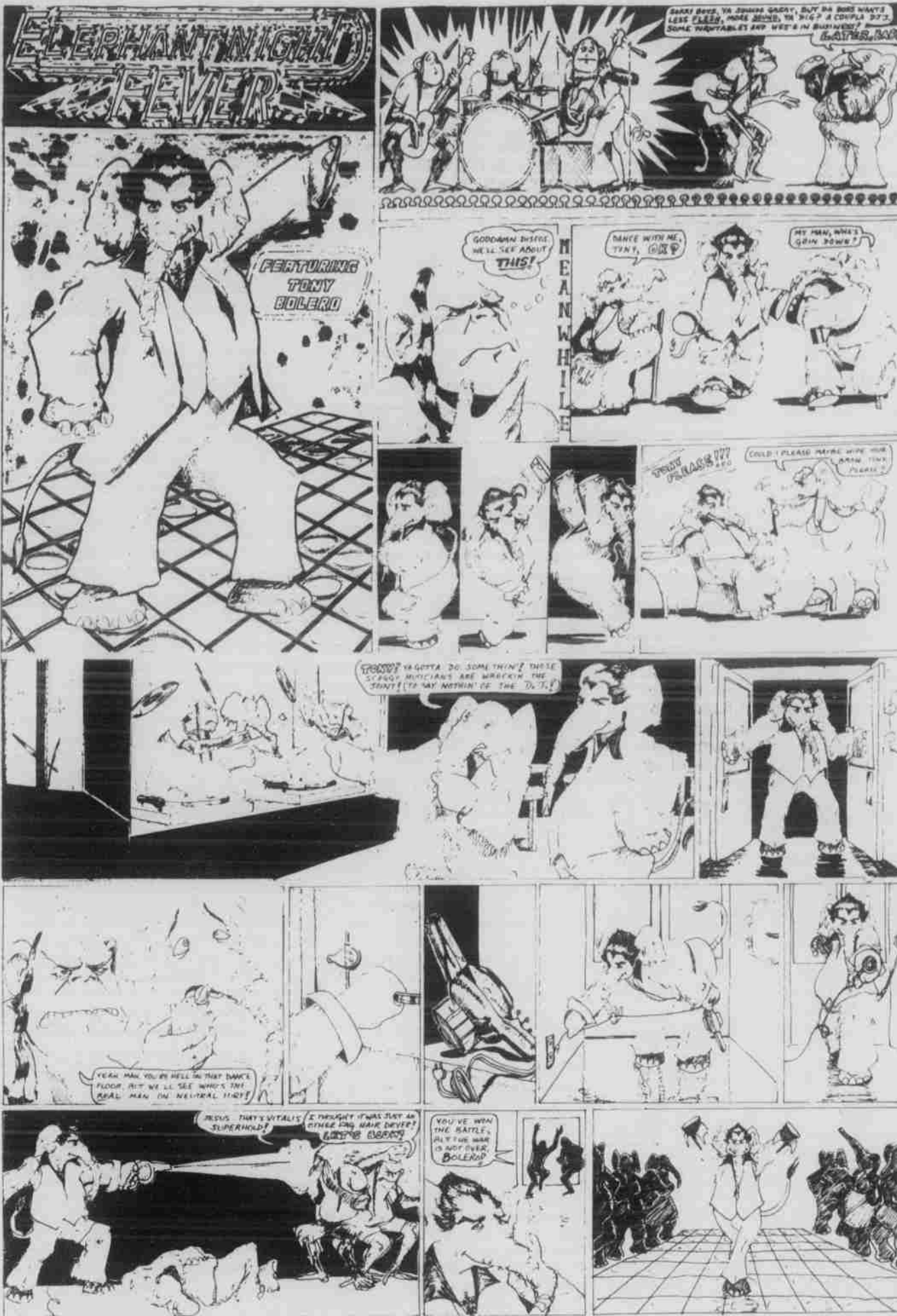
Once in the program, each Friend is matched with an incoming student. "We urge Friends to write and introduce themselves," Topper said. After an orientation meeting, the Friends are asked to spend the first Monday of registration with the new student.

"That is when new students are the most compulsive," Topper said. "They want to register, open a bank account, and plug in the phone. After that, it's up to the Friend."

"It's a chance for an American to get to know someone from a different culture. It's very low risk. At worst, you've helped someone, and at best, you've made a new friend."

There are approximately 250 foreign students on campus during the fall and spring semesters. Between 50 and 100 new students come in each year. Many of them are from Western Europe although an increasing number are coming from Far Eastern and African countries.

Interested students can sign up at the International Center in Bynum Hall by August 1.



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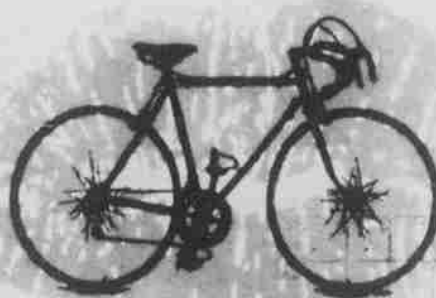
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