

Fort Lauderdale

Where the boys (and the girls) still are—every spring break

By PHIL WELLS

During her Easter vacation in 1960, Connie Francis fled the snow at her small midwestern college and cruised to the sunny beaches of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., with three of her girlfriends in a convertible.

The once-popular movie star and her friends went in search of men, and men they found. Each one found the love of her life; one ended up getting married; and they all lived happily ever after.

This run-of-the-mill story actually is the plot of the MGM comedy *Where the Boys Are*, which was filmed in Fort Lauderdale and started a college tradition of which UNC students now are a tremendous part.

This tradition is the annual flock of students to Atlantic Boulevard, Ocean Drive and the three-mile-long strip of sand at Fort Lauderdale.

"Our business with students during spring breaks has been booming ever since (the movie was made)," said Tommy Mercer, manager of the Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce Tourism and Convention Department.

Students still swarm to Fort Lauderdale during their break for two reasons, Mercer said. The first is to get away from school and the second for guys is to meet girls and for girls is to meet guys, just like in the movie.

"This should be our biggest year ever," Mercer said. The Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce is expecting about 250,000 students throughout the spring break season.

"This place will be inundated with

cars," Mercer said. "There's no gas shortage here."

But the week of March 2-8, Carolina's spring break, should not be as busy as the last week of March and the first two weeks of April, Mercer said. Most schools have their breaks around Easter.

But a check at four Fort Lauderdale motels showed that there were no reservations available during the week of Carolina's break. The check also indicated the high cost of staying in Fort Lauderdale.

The cost of staying at the Fort Lauderdale Motel is \$40 a night for two people. The Holiday Inn, Lauderdale-by-the-sea, which has its own private ocean beach, heated pool, two restaurants and two lounges, costs \$55 per night for two people.

At the nearby Hilton, also on the beach, the cost is \$64-\$76 a night for two people, depending on the location and newness of the room. The cost at the Jolly Roger Hotel, which has a bar overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, private pool, lounge, dining room, beauty shop, gift shop,

game room and laundromat, is \$45 a night for two people.

"Historically, students come down here and spend a full seven days," Mercer said. Each student usually spends about \$40 a day, which adds up to \$280 a week, so the spring break season is worth about \$60 million to the Fort Lauderdale economy, he said.

For students trying to cut costs, Eastern and Delta airlines offer super-saver rates to Fort Lauderdale. The cost is \$138 for a round trip out of the Raleigh-Durham Airport.

The Carolina Motor Club also offers a package deal which is beneficial to students. It includes two nights at either the Sheraton Yankee Clipper, Sheraton Yankee Trader or Stouffer's Lauderdale Surf, a ride on the Jungle Queen, a four-hour boat trip through the Intercoastal Waterway, and complimentary drinks. The cost is \$80 per person.

Most students travel by car or airplane instead of taking a bus or

train, said Cecile Eskridge, a Carolina Motor Club consultant.

Besides the beach, the city of islands offers students many places to go and things to do, Mercer said. The Jungle Queen boat trip has always been popular because of its smorgasbord dinner and hour-long vaudeville show on a nearby island.

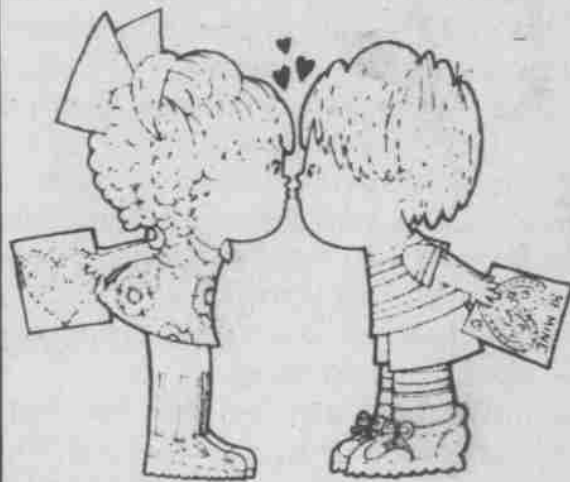
There are also a lot of wet T-shirt contests, Mercer said. The Button, a bar near the filming site of *Where the Boys Are*, has a free keg of beer every afternoon at 3.

So whether you and your friends are making the 795-mile trip to Florida to scope out the opposite sex or just to get away from school, there should be plenty to keep you busy.

With thousands of other scoping students and a motel shortage, there should be no problem meeting people. Just remember, Francis and her friends fell in love and lived happily ever after. Enjoy the sun and fun. □

Phil Wells is a staff writer for *The Daily Tar Heel*.

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