

COMMENTARY

Wilderness gives different type education

By JOHN DRESCHER

For Scott Baker, a Morehead Scholar who will soon begin his freshman year at UNC, it was an education of a different kind. And after a month of hiking through the wilderness of Wyoming as part of his Morehead program, Baker was ready to leave the classroom of the trail.

Small wonder. The last four days of the journey, the "survival" segment, he'd had almost nothing to eat.

"The night before we finished I was so excited," he said. "It was like I was a little kid and it was Christmas Eve all over again. I sat there and stared at my watch all night. I couldn't wait."

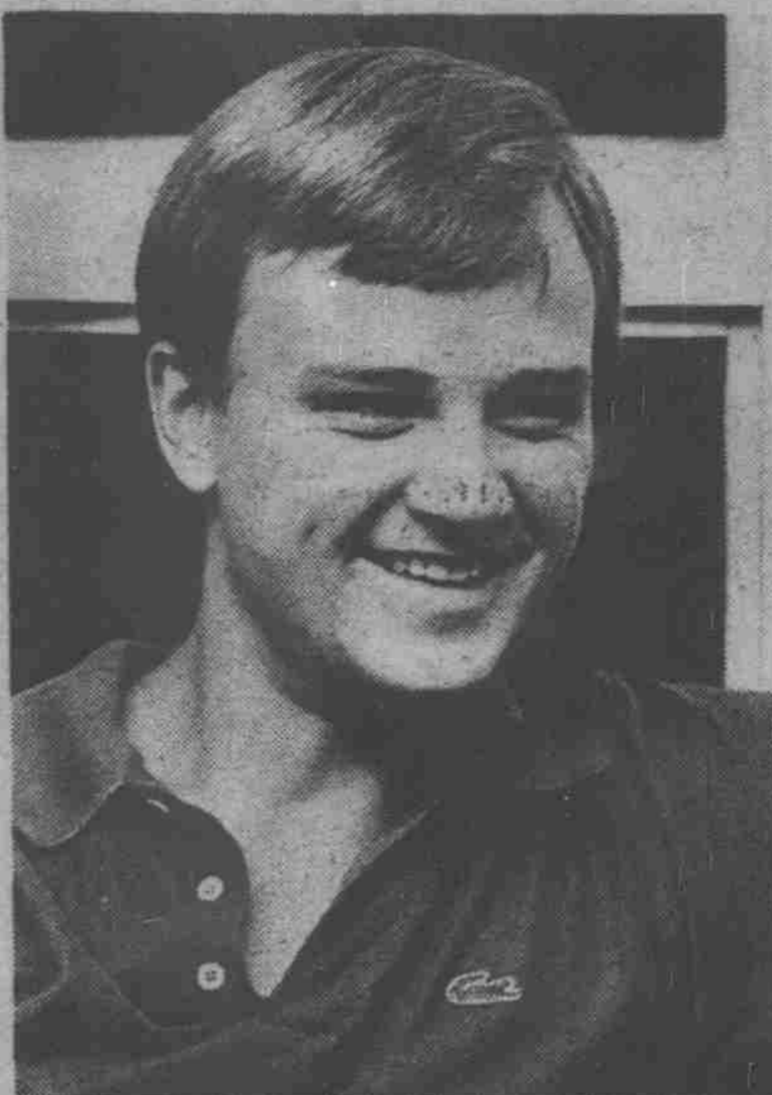
The last day of his trip was the culmination of a month of hiking with a group from the National Outdoor Leadership School. His trip began on June 16 with a series of flights—including the first one of his life—that took him from his hometown of Concord to his destination in Lander, Wyoming. There he met his group of 16 students and three instructors that he would spend his next four weeks with.

Baker, three-time conference golfer of the year in high school, was quickly forced to change from the boy next door to the boy in the forest, a change he admitted didn't come very easily. While never having much trouble with chemistry and trigonometry—he graduated first in his high school class in June—packing backpacks was a different story.

"I felt kind of lost with all this stuff and I didn't know how to get it all in the pack," he said, "but the instructors never made me feel ignorant—which I was."

Proving that one type of education really isn't all that different than any other, he quickly picked up the ways of the outdoor world and began to enjoy himself. The students typically broke into three groups, set a destination for the next night and hiked about six miles a day to meet the others at the campsite.

"But six miles out there is nothing like hiking the Piedmont in North Carolina," he said. High altitude, usually about 10,000 feet, and a lack of trails made the hiking more difficult.



Scott Baker

Each had a backpack that weighed from about 60 to 70 pounds. Three times during the month they were given rations of food, which came out to be two pounds of food per person per day.

While Baker enjoyed his encounter with Mother Nature, it wasn't exactly breakfast in bed. After all, the rocky sides of the Wind River Mountain range are a long way from the 18th green at Cabarrus Country Club. Below-freezing temperatures wouldn't let him forget it.

Among his largest problems was thinking about his final day and how much time it was going to take to get there. He said setting goals early in the trip proved to be a mistake.

"Later I tried not to think about the end," he said. "I liked to be last in the line (when hiking). I liked to hang about 20 feet behind and take in all the scenery."

"I liked to sing to myself, too: church hymns, Jackson Browne, whatever. It was really hard to talk to other people when you were hiking, so most of the time I just kept to myself."

The trip gave him the opportunity to do a lot of things he had never done before, like mountain climbing. He performed one climb of more than 80 feet, including a vault over an overhanging, which is quite a task for someone who's "a little bit" scared of heights.

"Lots of times you were hanging on with your fingernails, literally, and you wouldn't know where you were going to go from there," he said. A rope was attached to a seat harness, which limited falls to six inches, although he said he considered himself lucky that he never slipped and had to test the rope.

There were other, less adventurous firsts—like sleeping in a three-person tent with two girls. "It's hard to express but you get to know them so well that you don't think about some things," he said. There were a few romances developing but as far as his love life was concerned, he said his mind was back on his girlfriend in North Carolina.

"Sometimes at night I'd get lonely and stare at the stars," he said. "Every Sunday, especially, I'd sit and think about what they were doing at home."

Finally came the last leg of the trip: four days to cover 30 miles with just a small amount of food for emergencies and a fishing rod.

"You're so spacey when you're that weak," he said shaking his head. "You wake up and you feel like you've got the Hong Kong flu. You say there's no way you're going to be able to get out of your sleeping bag. I'd sit there and stare at my boots for 30 minutes. It amazed me how I'd stare at anything."

Finally, though, his destination was reached. There he ate a enough to last him for his flight home and probably enough for a week after that too. In all, the group covered about 110 miles—enough for Scott Baker to learn that there's much more to education than just what's found in a classroom.

John Drescher, a senior journalism and history major from Raleigh, is associate editor of The Tar Heel.

Segregation at UNC

A call for affirmative action in University housing

By LYNNE THOMSON

Twenty years after the controversial *Brown vs. Board of Education* desegregation suit brought blacks to this campus, few thoughtful people can deny that it was the right thing and has benefited the University and the state that it was designed to serve. Now it is time to complete the work begun by *Brown* and desegregate Carolina.

A report prepared by the Housing Department estimated that of the 944 minority students living in University housing during the 1980-81 school year, 803 live in the four dormitories of south campus. Eighty-five percent of the minority students live in Morrison, Hinton James, Ehringhaus and Craige.

Minority students make up approximately 25 percent of the population on south campus while they average 2 percent of the students living in Spencer, McIver and Old East. There were no minority students in Old West.

When I was a freshman I was assigned to one of those horrible triples everyone hears about. My two roommates were both very nice women, away from home for the first

time, having a little trouble with the work and missing their hometown boyfriends very much. When the phone rang each would look up expectantly, hoping that it was for her. They counted the days until Friday when each could go home and see "him."

These two fast became friends. What was significant about their relationship was that one was white and one was black and neither had had much contact with the other race before. They were both from socially segregated Eastern North Carolina.

The white woman's father was horrified that his daughter was sharing a room with a black and pulled all of his alumni association Ram's Club strings to get her moved. He would have been very shocked to hear his daughter tell me: "She's just like we are." It had never occurred to this long-sheltered white that someone whose skin was a different color would feel exactly the same things she felt.

She probably did not realize it but this slight change in attitude was a significant part of her liberal arts education. The problem is that few students receive this education and we all are the worse for it.

The UNC campus remains segregated and the time has come to change this pattern.

The University housing office makes room assignments without regard for the race of the student. This system has led to a segregated campus which denies students a valuable learning and growing experience and will deny society a future of reduced racial tension.

The best way, actually the only way, to achieve social equality is for people to see each other as simply people; as individuals not as races. This can only come with mingling and the best mechanism available to us to do this is integrated housing.

Some blacks defended the segregated housing on campus saying that going to school on such a white dominated campus, blacks need to be able to live in a near-numerical parity position. Superficially this seems to have merit, after all, the University is not forcing blacks to live on south campus, many blacks choose to do so. However that argument is not good enough. For the rest of their lives blacks and whites can live in segregated worlds if they choose, but for the one to two years average that students spend in campus housing at this taxpayer supported University they should be exposed to the rest of the world. It should be an integral and vital part of their education. Every day we hear of growing racial tension.

The University has the moral obligation to do everything it can to help solve the problem.

The motto of the University is *Lux Libertas* meaning light and liberty. There is no greater light the University could cast than that of education—education about one's fellow man.

Integration of University/Housing would be very controversial and one group likely to be opposed is the very alumni who have done so much for the University. Just as my roommate's father, they love Carolina but they see it the way it was when they came here and are often unwilling to let it change. They will resist having their children live with students of different races. They must understand that the mission of this University is to educate the young people of the state for the good of the entire state. That is why it was founded.

True integration of the University is the next vital step. Integrating schools numerically was progressive in its day and has moved society closer to equality. Now it is time to move again by integrating Carolina from within.

Lynne Thomson, a junior from St. Louis, Mo., is a staff writer for The Tar Heel.