

Strike continues

Workers feel effects

From staff and wire reports

Local striking Communication Workers of America say they are ready for the strike against American Telephone and Telegraph Co. to end. However, the CWA, the largest of the three unions that went on strike Aug. 7, is willing to stay off the job until all 34 of its local contracts have been settled.

Negotiators seeking to end the nationwide strike against AT&T reached a contract settlement Saturday between the CWA and one more local company.

Talks continued between the union and two other regional companies, including employees of the installation division of Western Electric Co. in Greensboro.

Union and company spokesmen said the CWA reached a contract agreement with the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Co. Saturday afternoon. Details of the agreement were not available.

Disputes remained, however, involving Bell Telephone Co. of Pennsylvania, and some employees of Western Electric Co., the company's manufacturing arm.

"People want to go back," stated local CWA worker Jerry Holt from Chapel Hill. Holt said that he believes the CWA is better unified than anyone thought and that the workers will stay off work as long as is necessary. Holt, along with other CWA workers, has been picketing in front of the Southern Bell office on West Franklin Street.

However, the three-week-old strike has placed many CWA workers in financial difficulty. Holt said that he was not financially prepared for the strike. In spite of the financial strain, Holt said that the strike has allowed the workers to keep their benefits and also gain new ones.

Another local CWA worker, Billy Williamson, also of Chapel Hill, said that 25 percent of the employees' job benefits, such as health care, were being decreased by AT&T. Job security is also a major complaint of the strikers. Williamson said that a test center in Chapel Hill was "phased out." As a result, many people lost their jobs. AT&T has now agreed to initiate a program that will train workers who have lost their jobs for new positions.

Williamson summed up the feelings of many CWA workers saying, "I'm still ready to stay out. We will do whatever it takes to keep what we have."

Southern Bell officials in Chapel Hill were not available Sunday to confirm whether local employees would be returning to work. But other Southern Bell employees have reported that they will be returning.

Southern Bell employees in North Carolina began returning to work Sunday after a 21-day nationwide strike ended with agreements between a union and subsidiaries of AT&T.

Bob Wofford, vice president of CWA Local 3611 in Raleigh, said the 900 employees represented by the local would return to work on their next scheduled shift.

Wofford, a lineman, said he was eager to return to work.

"I'm a telephone worker, not a professional union person," he said. "We'd like to go back to doing what we do best."

By 2 p.m., all 18 of the operators working at Southern Bell in Raleigh were regular operators, replacing management personnel brought in during the strike, said operator Frankie Santoro.

"I feel that everything worked out fine," she said. "Everyone is very satisfied with the outcome. Everyone was very cooperative and stood behind a cause."

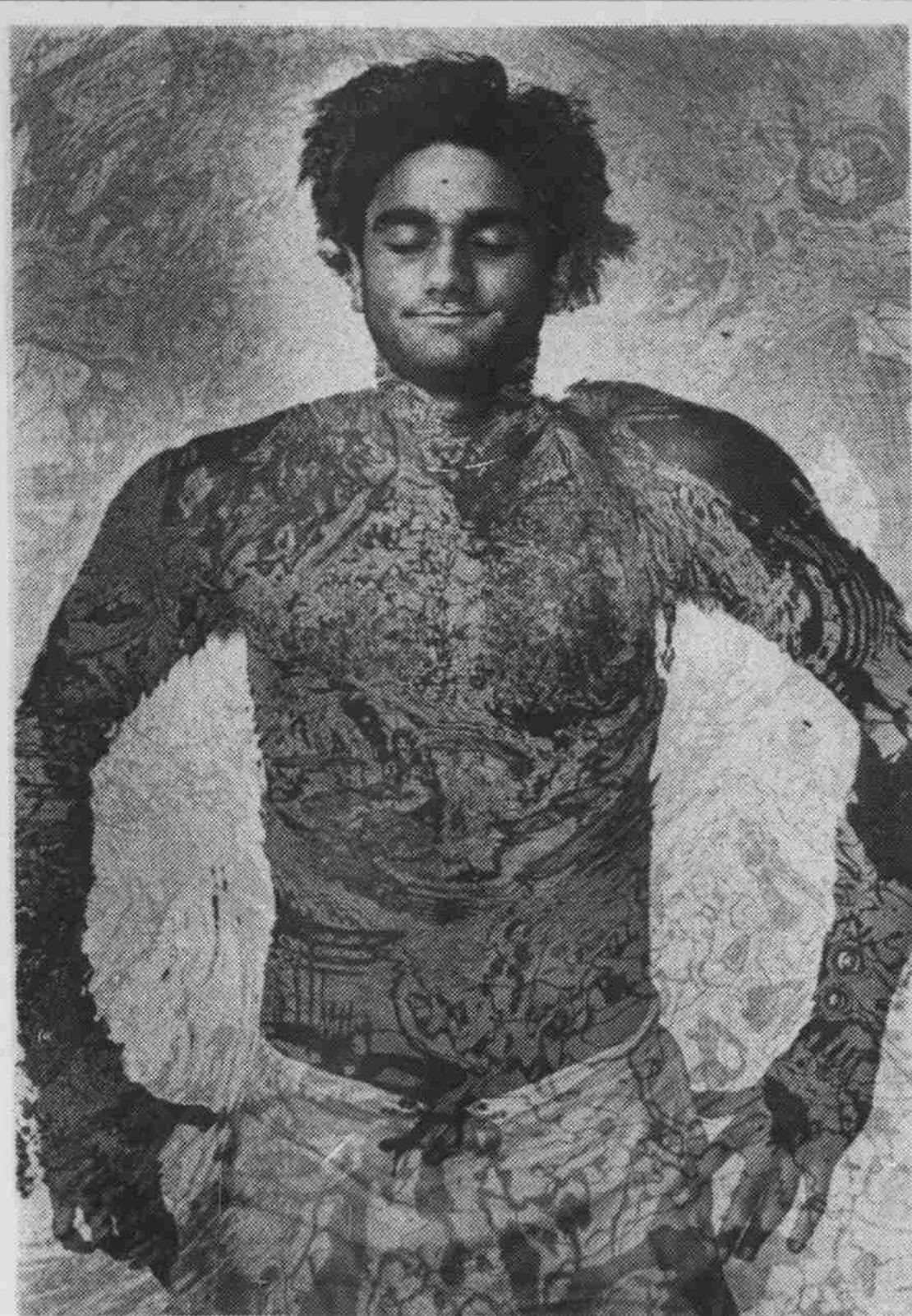


Photo by Charles W. Ledford

Wet test

As all students eventually find out, one of the tests you have to pass at Carolina to graduate is the swim test. For this freshman, who took his test during Orientation week, it seems to be more enjoyable than most tests at the University.

Funding of Gospel Choir faces test in student court

By MARK STINNEFORD
Staff Writer

A complaint challenging the use of Student Activity Fees to support the Black Student Movement Gospel Choir could be heard in the Student Supreme Court as early as next week, Chief Justice J.B. Kelly said Thursday.

Campus Governing Council members Steve Reinhard (District 1) and Allan Rosen (District 7) presented the complaint to Kelly on April 22. The complaint charges that the choir is a religious organization and that the group's use of student fees violates the Student Government Constitution.

Funding of the choir is being challenged under a new amendment to the Student Government Constitution that prohibits the CGC from funding programs, services or events of a religious or political nature. The amendment was passed in a student referendum last February.

The CGC's own budget rules also prohibit funding political or religious groups and events.

'If you look at what they do and where they go, you cannot help but come to the conclusion that they are religious.'

— Steve Reinhard, CGC member

Kelly said that he had originally planned for the court to hear the case following the spring semester exam period last May but that it proved impossible to contact all the participants at that time.

Since the Student Supreme Court's ruling on the complaint could affect groups other than the choir, the delay in scheduling the case will give all interested organizations an opportunity to file briefs with the court, Kelly said.

While accepting Kelly's explanation of the delay, Reinhard said he believed the controversial nature of the issue had caused the Supreme Court to do some "footdragging."

Before a firm date for the case can be set, it must be determined that three of the five Student Supreme Court justices are available to hear it, Kelly said. Kelly plans to meet with Student Body President Kevin Monroe to determine how many justices from the spring semester are still at UNC.

Reinhard, who will serve as counsel for the plaintiffs, said he believes he has a "strong case against the choir."

"Given the information that we have about their (the choir's) conduct, I don't know how it cannot be considered religious," he said. "If you look at what they do and where they go, you cannot help but come to the conclusion that they are religious."

Reinhard declined to reveal specific allegations against the choir for fear of giving away his strategy in the case.

BSM President Sherrod Banks and Gospel Choir Director Fletcher Gamble were unavailable for comment Thursday. But the BSM has long maintained that the choir is a cultural rather than a religious organization.

Assistant Student Attorney General David Maslia, who will serve as counsel for the defense in the case, said that the CGC's continued overwhelming support of the choir should serve as an indication of the constitutionality of funding the group. Defendants in the case include the CGC, the BSM, Student Body Treasurer Burke Mewborne, CGC Speaker James Exum, BSM Treasurer David Hogan and BSM Gospel Choir Treasurer Lee Cooley.

In the 1983-84 Student Government budget passed last April, the CGC approved a \$1,700 budget for the choir. During that April meeting, the council voted 20-3 to reject a proposal by Rosen to deny funds to the choir. It also rejected a subsequent attempt by Reinhard to give the choir only \$1.

A separate complaint brought before the court under the new constitutional amendment may be dropped. Last April, Phil Painter, a former CGC member, and Leake Little, a former member of the Student Attorney General's staff, opposed the CGC's allocation of money to lease buses to transport students to a production rally at the N.C. General Assembly in Raleigh. Little and Painter charged that the rally was a political event.

The plaintiffs were unable to obtain a temporary restraining order to keep the buses from going to Raleigh for the April 14 event, and Painter and Little have since graduated.

Painter, who is currently working as a researcher on the re-election committee of U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms said it was no longer possible for him to pursue the case.

"I just don't have the time. I'm working real hard around here," he said.

Reinhard, who is listed as counsel for Little and Painter, said he would seek voluntary dismissal of the suit, although he believes Student Government probably acted unconstitutionally in leasing the buses.

Students spared phone connection fee increase

By MONT ROGERS
Staff Writer

Students escaped an increase in the price charged for telephone connections this year, but the future years may not be as kind.

According to George Mullen, manager of the Southern Bell office in Chapel Hill, connection rates may increase as long-distance rates decrease. Rates may also increase as a result of a proposed rate hike to be decided by the Utilities Commission, he said.

In 1981, Southern Bell charged \$15.50 for a connection in a dormitory and \$20.90 for a connection off-campus.

Rates for 1982 and this year are \$31.90 for a dormitory connection and \$41.40 for an off-campus connection.

Mullen said the telephone company gives the dormitory residents a discount because the Residence Hall Association distributes and collects the cards residents fill out for telephone service.

The strike by telephone workers has not hindered the connection of telephones in dormitories, but connections off-campus and in Chapel Hill may take longer, he said.

"Connections in places where there has been prior service will not take long," he said. But if a customer has no phone and is planning to use one of Southern Bell's, it may take a few days for installation, he said.

Mullen said connections take less time for people who own their own phones, and in the future he expects more people to have their own equipment.

The charge for the connection of a telephone is below what the connection actually costs, Mullen said.

"The customer is establishing a billing record, a record for directory assistance, and enabling himself to make local and long distance calls," he said. "It takes six people to connect one phone."

According to Mullen, one of the six telephone workers is involved in the physical connection of the telephone to the system. The five others do clerical or service work related to the connection.

Other costs are those for director assistance service, listing in the telephone directory and billing records.

The charges for installation and local services are kept low by over-charging for long-distance calls, he said.

Deregulation of the Bell System will cause long-distance charges to drop in the future, but local service charges will increase to make up for the change, Mullen said.

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