

Skating, bubble-blowing Wacko defies tradition

By MARYMELDA HALL
Staff Writer

Many people on the UNC campus know Eric V. Walker, if not by name or face, then at least by feet.

Walker is, as he puts it, "that damn fool on the roller skates."

Walker and his skates entered UNC a year ago and created a bit of a stir on campus. Although roller-skating to class, in class, and up and down stairs was a fairly novel occurrence in the Chapel Hill community, for Walker it was nothing new.

"I started skating my sophomore year in high school," he explained. "I lived too close to catch the bus and too far to warrant walking. And at my high school, you didn't really take your bike if you didn't really like it, and you didn't mind it going home with someone else."

Walker hung up the skates when he got his driver's license his senior year, trading the eight wheels for four. Then he came to Carolina and saw those bricks. "Hey, skating on bricks. No problem!" The hills under the bricks were a little more challenging.

"When I'm coming down hills I stick a whistle in my mouth and blow for all I'm worth," he said. "Contrary to popular belief, there are no brakes on skates."

Skates do have toe stops, and with these he climbs up and down stairs. About the only obstacle that defeats him is rain, which rusts the metal bearings on the wheels.

Walker wears the skates everywhere he needs to go, but skating on campus means dodging a lot of pedestrian traffic and making many sudden stops. But has he ever fallen? "Not in public," he says, laughing, "although I have come close a couple of times."

Walker has a nickname which fits a kid who braves traffic and roller skates on the UNC campus — Wacko. And like the skates, the nickname also started in high school.

Walker played goalie on his high school soccer team. "I don't really have the build to play goalie, so I developed my own style," he said. This style involved rushing out of the net and throwing himself onto the feet of whoever had the ball. A large forward for the opposing team decided he had to be crazy, Walker said.

But students at Walker's high school disagreed. "He's not crazy, he's wacko! Wacko Walker!" And the name stuck.

When Wacko Walker isn't skating to classes, he's skating to meetings — lots of meetings. Walker is a member of the Ebony Readers, the N.C. Fellows Program and the Order of the Bell Tower, where he serves as chairman of the host committee.

Walker also serves as president of the Carolina Comic Book Club. "The club is a forum for people who like comic books," he said. "Comic books are really pretty good — truly intelligent reading." His seriousness about comics can be seen in his extensive collection (he has about 800 comics here at school) and in the comic book posters which line his walls.

Alongside the comic book posters hangs a poster of Bruce Lee. Bruce Lee?

"Bruce Lee was a bird chest. That's why he's on my wall," Walker said, grinning. "I'm about to start a new club on campus — Bird Chest of Carolina. I'm tired of being pushed around by big no-neck football players, tall gangly basketball players and these boozing womanizing lacrosse players and fraternity guys. It's time for us birds to unite!"

When Walker isn't organizing the bird chests or going to class (and sometimes even when he should be going to class) he can be found sitting in the Pit — blowing bubbles.

UNC students spend a lot of time Pit — sitting. Bubble blowing, however, is a different matter.

"I get on these childish whims every now and then, like whenever I'm awake, and I saw these bubbles in a toy store, and I liked them and I bought them," he said with a smile. "On a very sunny day in the Pit I started blowing bubbles. It's great to see people's reactions." Walker also got a friend, Tom Maxwell, into bubble blowing. "We're forming Bubbles for Peace," he said. "We're going to sit in the Pit and blow off all our classes and blow bubbles."

What does the president of the Carolina Comic Book Club, bubble-blower and roller-skater that he is, plan to major in? "This week it's philosophy and sociology, and I think I'm pretty happy with it, except . . . what the hell can you do with a philosophy/sociology degree?"

Walker is currently writing a book of poetry — *Love and Other Stupid Stuff I Don't Understand*, by Eric V. Walker. Walker said he always goes by Eric V. because he hated his middle name, Victor. What's wrong with Victor? "What's right with Victor?" he asked.

From skates and comics to bubbles and poetry, all make up Eric V. Walker. "I like to be different, just for the state of being different," he said. "Not to be different to arouse anyone's ire. Not to be different just to be a pain in the ass. I just like to be different because being different's fun."



DTH/Jamie Moncrief

Wacko Walker: an amusing campus personality, he skates across the Pit

Opportunities for travel are many for students

By JENNIFER KELLER
Staff Writer

College is a time for dreaming. Traveling, for many, is a dream that can be and is fulfilled while at UNC. With the abundance of study abroad programs, students can explore other cultures, and practice or perfect a foreign language for a summer, a semester or a year.

"It's usually the first time you're able to detach yourself from your country's social norms and be critical," said Dr. Darryl Gless, advisor for study abroad programs in the Office of International Programs.

UNC offers programs or exchange agreements in Montpellier and Paris, France; Manchester and Bristol, England; Kansai Gaidai in Osaka, Japan; Göttingen, Germany; Rome, Italy; Copenhagen, Denmark; Seville and Madrid, Spain. The possibilities for study abroad are endless; students can set up programs through other schools.

The Office of International Programs in Caldwell Hall is a fount of advice where students can glean information developing a study abroad experience tailored for particular needs and desires. "With advanced planning, there is no difficulty in getting credit and graduating on time," said Zerla Young, administrative assistant in OIP. Increased popularity of foreign programs is

because of an accumulation of years of student travel and word has spread, Young added. Young also pointed out that there are fellowships, awards, and grants possible in easing the financial burden.

Gless called study abroad "a wonderful, appropriate extension of what one comes to a liberal arts university to get."

Many students come back with markedly different perspectives: Challenged values, introspection, independence, and a new tolerance of social and political structures are some of the changes, Gless said.

Quillian Reeves, a senior from Atlanta spent last year in Montpellier with about 30 others in the UNC program.

"It was the first time language was a means of communication rather than being strictly academics," Reeves said. Reeves lived with a French family, which he strongly recommends doing. The Mediterranean is 15 kilometers away, and the Pyrenees are a short drive away from Montpellier.

"Some went with false expectations — a trip to Disney World — and they were shocked," Reeves said. "You get used to the atmosphere and living a simpler life, it's a question of learning to think in French."

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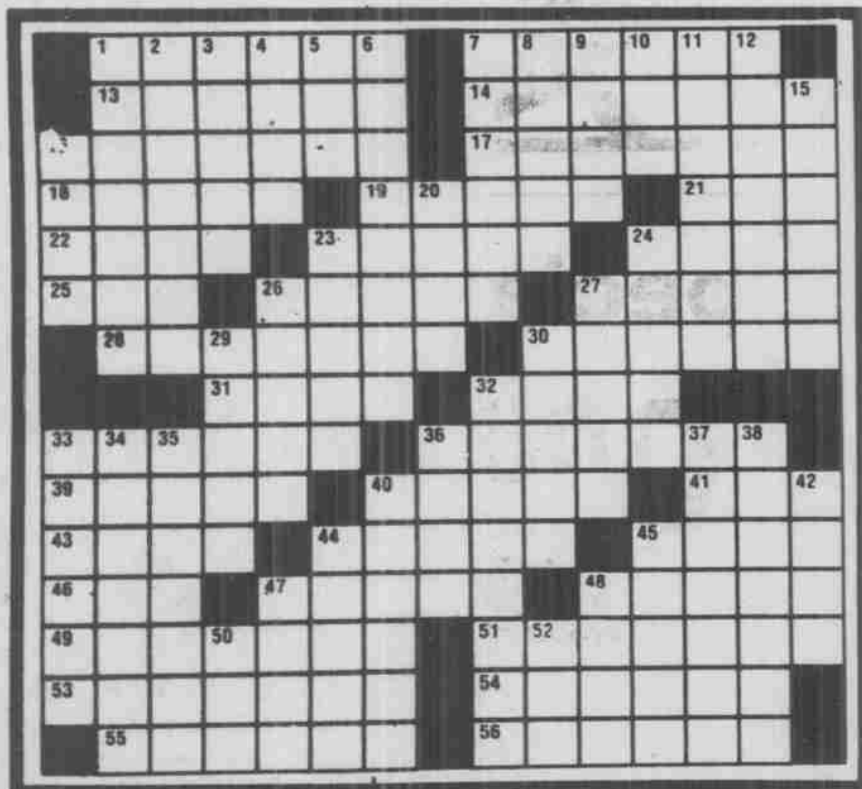
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- 1 Large area in Afr.
 - 7 Vernon of a dancing team
 - 13 Threhold
 - 14 Cupidity
 - 16 Joint knowledge
 - 17 Teacher's aide
 - 18 Ramblers
 - 19 Flavorful
 - 21 Timetable abbr.
 - 22 Chooses
 - 23 Turk. money
 - 24 Son of Aphrodite
 - 25 Exclamation of triumph
 - 26 More depressed
 - 27 Carpentry tool
 - 28 Regards highly
 - 30 Of greater height
 - 31 Trirame equipment
 - 32 "— Mable"
 - 33 Vary nearly
 - 36 Course of study
 - 39 Distributed
 - 40 Catches the breath
 - 41 Lunar vehicle
 - 43 Small amounts
 - 44 Blouse
 - 45 — out (annihilate)
 - 46 Hagen the actress
 - 47 — nez
 - 48 Island in the Aegean
 - 49 Most depressed
 - 51 Instruction books
 - 53 State policeman
 - 54 Kind of scout
 - 55 Smart
 - 56 Commences
- DOWN**
- 1 Gr. chorus movement
 - 2 Bristle-like structures



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Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

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|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--|
| 3 Aplaries | 4 Cuckoos | 5 Rodent | 6 Small white flowers | 7 Portable dwelling | 8 To have: Fr. | 9 Beach stuff | 10 Preceder of corn or pod | 11 Verbatim | 12 Environmental area | 15 Student item | 16 Indonesian boat | 20 Primates | 23 On one's toes | 24 Glasgow the author | 26 Beauty's friend | 27 Eur. city | 29 Contents of a chest | 30 Provoke in a way | 32 Dinner courses | |
| 33 Rectify | 34 Outfit for dancing | 35 Man in the corrida | 36 Levant ketch | 37 Sustenance | 38 Explosive noises | 40 "Elmer —" | 42 Interfere | 44 — up (learns) | 45 Shore bird | 47 — up (energizes) | 48 Room in a casa | 50 Bambi's mother | 52 Nosh | | | | | | | |