

# Soap actor meets fans at Soap's

By **MARTHA WALLACE**  
Staff Writer

Working and reworking his worry beads, Lawrence Lau looked calm as adoring fans fired questions.

"What are Erica and Jeremy going to do?"  
"Do you miss Jenny?"  
These people aren't real; they're characters on the soap opera "All My Children," where Lau plays the innocuous character of young Greg Nelson.

Lau, doing promotional visits in North Carolina, met fans Sunday in Soap's. Yes, the Laundromat. The soap star at Soap's sat in the front room amidst MTV and wash-dry-fold.

"Are you married?" asked one fan swinging a camera. Lau looked perplexed. Maybe he was reflecting on his two previous ill-fated marriages. Was the question directed to his character or himself? In either case, the answer was no.

In a black, leather jacket and cap, faded T-shirt and boots, Lau hardly looked older than the 22-year-old character he plays. Actually, he is 31 and professes to live "a very quiet life."

That contrasts with the publicized accounts of

Lau as an angry troublemaker.  
"Before 'All My Children,' I was always in a race for survival," he said. "Now I don't have to worry about paying the rent, affording classes . . . desperate for a job. (Now), well, I've slowed down."  
Lau landed the Greg Nelson part when his agent discovered him on a late-night movie. Soon after, he was asked to test for the part.

He said his job was fun, but also hard work.  
"I know what my character is going to be doing about two weeks in advance, but we don't get our lines until 12 hours before taping," he said. "That's 12 hours to learn an 85-page script."

The work may be hard, but it has advantages.  
"Each story line for a character has a build-up period and then a resolution phase," Lau said. "During the build-up period it is hard work, but then you can get a two-week vacation during the resolution."

Lau works an average of three days a week.  
On his days off, he said, "I never watch 'All My Children' because we see it all the time on the monitors at work."

"I'm a big 'One Life To Live' fan," he said, adding that he "never watches CBS."

The former business major said he hoped to be on a ranch with horses in five years. "I hope to be raising babies by that time," he said.

That may sound idealistic, but Lau admitted he was a romantic.  
"If a romantic is someone who thinks about what idealistically 'could be' as opposed to 'what is' then, yeah, I'm a romantic," he said. "I guess the term 'romantic' bothers me on a personal level. It becomes lots more troublesome in relationships."

Lau has had his share of troublesome relationships. Within a short time, two marriages ended in divorce. Then he broke up with actress-girlfriend Dona Petrucci. Now he is not dating anyone, which adds to his on-screen mystique.

Besides answering questions about himself, Lau told fans what their other show favorites were like. For example, Erica is a "real sweetheart," a great contrast to her on-screen image, Lau said. And, yes, on the show Lau would love to kill his evil mother, but off-set she is quite nice.

Lau would not, however, disclose any future plot developments. So tune in today, when the character of Greg Nelson returns.

# Penalty forum airs deathly concerns

By **LIZ SAYLOR**  
Staff Writer

"Is the death penalty moral, and may society take a person's life?" asked Joan Byers, assistant attorney general in the N.C. Department of Justice, at a forum on the death penalty in the Student Union Tuesday.

Larry Vellani, co-director of the N.C. Prison and Jail Project in Durham, said, "It's just too grave a responsibility to lay in human hands."

"This issue raises the ire of a lot of people in this state and nation," Tom Rudin, moderator, told about 30 people in his introduction. Rudin also represented Amnesty International, an international human rights organization that opposes the death penalty. The local AI chapter sponsored the forum as part of the Campus Y Human Rights Week.

Each speaker gave a 10-minute introduction, then fielded questions. Both agreed the families of homicide victims often were neglected.

"We focus on the killer," Vellani said in an earlier interview. "The survivors of homicide victims are ignored by both the criminal justice and social service systems. Very few who commit homicide get away with it, but the survivors are told, 'Perhaps we'll get the guy who killed your husband or loved one.'"

Byers said the victims' families often told her they wanted the death penalty. "It is a public policy decision that's been made because capital punishment re-affirms the moral sanctity of life," Byers said. "The death penalty is nothing more than society's collective right of self-defense."

Long-term incarceration, and possibly longer sentences for convicted killers before they can be paroled, are the alternatives to the death penalty, Vellani said.

"Swiftness and certainty are two things that bring about deterrents," he said. "Every instance of life-taking is different."

Byers said, "Too many murders have been dealt with too lightly. Perhaps if we had swift and sure execution after a sentence, it would be a deterrent."

"With due process of law, it is constitutional to take life," said Byers. "Since 1977 there has been no one on death row whose guilt is not sure."

Vellani said in a previous interview that the death penalty encouraged violence in society. "Executions are violent acts," he said. "They cause pain and discomfort for the inmate, family, attorneys and public officials, including the employees of the Department of Corrections who must carry out the execution."

"It costs far more to convict a person to death than to long-term incarceration," he said. "I believe executions turn up the volume of violence in our society."

Byers, however, said any prosecutor's expenses were high. She called the death penalty a "specific incapacitator." In an earlier interview, she said, "It's clearly geared to stopping the 'mad dog' or repeat offender. (Convicted and executed killer James) Hutchins killed three people. If he'd been executed after the first, he wouldn't have killed the other two."

"But our laws don't allow the death penalty if someone just kills a person," she said. "You have to kill in a really atrocious way to get it."

Vellani said minorities received the death penalty more often.

Byers disagreed. "Opinions differ, and studies can be done to show anything you want," she said. "Penitentiaries first began to make you penitent. It didn't work then—hasn't worked since. Sometimes a life locked in a little room with no chance of getting out is worse than death."

Vellani said he had seen men on death row change their attitudes and behaviors.

"I've noticed people improve markedly when they find out if they'll live or die," Byers said. "I've seen people who have the possibility of change, but they are the minority . . . the vast minority."

# 'Turkey fares' dress up holiday travel

By **SCOTT LARSEN**  
Staff Writer

Students without airline reservations for Thanksgiving may find an early Christmas present in the form of reduced air fares. The reduced rates, however, do have some strings attached, said area travel agents.

Many major airlines are offering "turkey fares": round-trip fares of \$58 for flights up to 500 miles; \$98 for flights from 501 to 1,500 miles and \$158 for flights over 1,500 miles.

To qualify for these reduced air fares, travelers must fly out Thanksgiving Day

and return Saturday, Nov. 30.

Dale Alexander, of Continental Travel Agency on East Franklin Street, said procrastinating travelers would find very limited availability on the days they wanted to travel.

Students should look to flying out on Tuesday Nov. 26 and arriving back in Chapel Hill on Monday December 2 because those two days offer more availability, Alexander said.

Sandy Cole of Cole Travel said, "The reduced rates are about the only thing left for these people."  
Students have problems getting

flights on the days they want because the Thanksgiving holidays are over a shorter period, Cole said.

If students can leave a day later than they would like to and can return earlier, then these reduced fares can be real bargains, she said.

"For the student wanting to go on short-distance trips like to Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, these fares are working very nicely," she said.

Liz Parker of Triangle Travel said, "To most people the reduced fares are a bargain anyway."  
Parker said that students should

already be planning for the Christmas flights because many flights are already booked up. The major airlines are expected to offer reduced rates again during the Christmas season, Parker said, but it is wise to plan now.

"The further you plan in advance the more money you save yourself," she said.

Cole said scheduling flights at Christmas was easier for students because it was a longer holiday period and allowed more time to be flexible with making plans.

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