

CAROLINA COMPASS

One of a kind — The Rathskeller

By LISA LORENTZ
News Editor

It's a tradition.

It's a UNC tradition.

It's a Chapel Hill tradition.

It's The Rams Head Rathskeller, more commonly referred to as "The Rat."

The Rat, a restaurant with a dark, earthy atmosphere, opens at a heavy wooden door in Amber Alley off of Franklin Street. The restaurant is as much a part of Chapel Hill as the Old Well or Silent Sam.

Since 1948, people have been coming to The Rat to leave their initials in the solid wooden picnic-type tables, see 'their' waiter and to sink their teeth into The Rat's specialty, the "Double Gambler," a tender, sizzling steak served on a skillet at 500 degrees.

With its famous Carolina blue-bordered paper menu, The Rat also offers a patron anything from a bowl of soup to a double roast beef dinner, ranging in price from \$2.50 to \$8.75. Lasagna, ribs and barbeque chicken are also popular items. The Rat's iced tea is a delightful thirst quencher, and

each table gets its own pitcher, so waiting for a refill is never a concern.

The most expensive item on the menu is an around-the-world pizza at \$14.75, containing hamburger, sausage, onions and several other delightful toppings. This is not just any pizza, though, said Charles Smith, general manager of The Rat since 1981. "This is the same pizza served when The Rat first introduced pizza to the people of North Carolina."

Although Smith admitted that there has been some question as to whether The Rat did serve pizza first, he says, "As far as we know, it was first, but if anyone knows another restaurant that served pizza earlier, let us know, and we will gladly concede."

Smith said there are two major characteristics about The Rat that make it so unique. "The first is the staff. Most of the people have been here for an average of 20 to 25 years. These workers are professionals. They know what their job is, and they do it. It makes my job a lot easier when I don't have to go behind someone and



Tar Heel/Laura Patterson

Customers enjoy the atmosphere at The Rat

tell them what to do. Most of the waiters have their own 'following.' Some customers will come in and ask for 'their waiter.'

Caricatures of each of these waiters can be found behind the fireplace, on the back wall.

The customer, Smith said, is the next unique characteristic. "There are so many people that frequent The Rat three, four and sometimes five days a week," he said. "These are the people, along with the faithful alumni, that have kept The

Rat rolling along for almost 40 years. It's special to me when I can build friendships with the customers. You get to know them on a first-name basis and try to make

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Tar Heel/Steve Matteson

Bike theft — it could happen to you

Avoid the parking problem; get there on Moped or bike

By JUDY WILSON
Staff Writer

The most efficient way to get around campus is either by Moped or 10-speed bicycle, according to University Police Sgt. Ned Comar.

"These vehicles offer local students more freedom of effort than cars do," he said. "If I were a student residing on campus or nearby, I would use a Moped or bicycle so I wouldn't need to worry about parking, slashed tires, broken windows, stereo theft and outlandish insurance. It's also cheaper to operate a bicycle or Moped than it is to operate a car. "You don't need a permit to use a bicycle or Moped on campus," he said. "We'd rather have these vehicles to deal with than cars."

Comar said a vehicle is considered a Moped if it has pedals that will move it and if it has a certain amount of horsepower. "If it can't be pedaled, it's a motorcycle," he said, adding that a motorcycle driver must have a special driver's license, wear a helmet, shine a headlight, abide by insurance laws and have a license tag.

Students who ride Mopeds and bikes must follow certain rules of the road. Comar said the rules are simple; just think as if you're driving a car. "Riders of Mopeds

and bikes in any public areas must obey all rules of all other vehicles, such as cars," he said.

These rules include those pertaining to speed limits, stop signs, turn signals, reckless driving and DWI. The driver of a Moped or bicycle can be charged with driving while impaired by alcoholic beverages.

"Violations of these rules are not misdemeanors, but they are infractions, and violators must pay fines," said Comar. "You have to go to court for reckless riding, though."

"There is a University policy against riding Mopeds on sidewalks," he said. "If you violate this law and then hit a pedestrian, you will have a terrific, large lawsuit to deal with."

"Most people would sue, and since Moped drivers are not required to have insurance, you would really drain your personal resources. From a legal standpoint, you don't have a legal leg to stand on."

Except for a few restricted areas, bicyclists are allowed to ride on sidewalks. "There are four blocks where bikes are not allowed," said Comar, "and they are the blocks on Franklin and Rosemary Streets between

Columbia and Henderson Streets."

Students can park on campus at any place where there is a bike rack. "Fastening bikes to wheelchair ramp railings, stair railings and trees is prohibited," said Comar. "We might cut them loose if they're parked in one of these places."

There are bike paths going from campus to all directions out of town. Comar said these are designated bike paths, and students are encouraged to use them.

Comar said bicyclists were relatively safe in Chapel Hill. "There is an average of two accidents per year in which a bicyclist is involved," he said. "This is low, considering that many bicyclists cut through heavy traffic and generally drive unsafely. Someone must be looking out for them."

However, Comar said, both bicycles and Mopeds are highly subject to theft. "They should be secured with something stronger than a light chain or padlock," he said.

As a further precaution against theft, Comar said, students should register Mopeds and bicycles through the Chapel Hill Police Department.