

The Tar Heel

Serving the students and the University community since 1893

Monday, August 24, 1987

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

News/Sports/Arts 962-0245
Business/Advertising 962-1163

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 barbecue 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 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 them feel at home."



Tar Heel/Laura Patterson

Customers enjoy the atmosphere at The Rat

So special was that friendship with one customer, Bill Ludwick, that the big table in the front room bears a plaque dedicated to his memory. The Ludwick family had been coming to The Rat for years for food and beer before Carolina home football games, and they always sat at the same table. Ludwick died two years ago, but the plaque captures his memory: "To the memory of Bill Ludwick, who loyally occupied this table through Tar Heel seasons, both good and bad, for many faithful years."

Another impressive group of

people to visit The Rat, beside the regulars, includes Andy Griffith, Ronnie Howard, James Worthy and Michael Jordan — and they are just a few of the famous people who frequent The Rat.

It's the regulars, though, who carve graffiti all over the tables and walls. There's not a nook or cranny where a knife or key hasn't made its imprint. Every accessible piece of wood in the restaurant proclaims someone was here and was in love with someone else who was also here.

The Rat is not without its own creativity. The backs of each table

have words of wisdom inscribed on them. "The more things a man is ashamed of, the more respectable he is," says one booth. "That's the nature of women . . . not to love when we love them, and to love when we love them not," says another.

All the tables are placed uniformly throughout the dimly-lit restaurant, so that there is an emphasis on atmosphere. Art adorning the old-fashioned walls is hard to figure out, but adds greatly to the overall feeling

See THE RATT page 10

Changes made in effort to improve registration

By JUDY WILSON
Staff Writer

There will be several changes in registration procedures this fall, according to University officials.

First, seniors and graduate students will be allowed to register or drop/add after 1 p.m. on August 25, which is the second day of registration, said University Registrar David Lanier. The first day is still reserved for incoming freshmen only. In the past, seniors had to wait until the third day of registration to make class schedule changes.

"A senior who preregistered for the fall shows his schedule at the gym door to get in," said Lanier. If a senior did not preregister, he will need to make an appointment to register that Tuesday afternoon and obtain a permit to register at his dean's office.

"Transfers will be able to register all day that Tuesday, mostly

by appointment," said Lanier.

He said these changes were made after the student government requested last year that the registrar's office do something to alleviate registration problems that seniors often face.

There will be eight cashiers at Fetzer Gym during the registration period this fall. "We hope this will speed things up," said Lanier. If a student needs to pay an outstanding bill before he can register, he can do so without leaving the room where he picks up his schedule. Lanier said this should cut down on the long lines at Bynum Hall, where there are only three cashiers.

"We've done about as much as we can with the gym," he said. "We are really looking forward to these changes. We're excited about them."

Currently, the University is trying to fund a totally new and

unique approach to preregistration. Lanier described it as "a telephonic registration system, whereby a student can pick up a touchtone phone anywhere in the world and preregister at UNC."

"Of course, the student will still be required to have his adviser's approval before he can preregister," Lanier added. "Student-adviser interaction will be a key to the effectiveness of this system."

To give upperclassmen priority for class choice, seniors will be able to "call in" during a certain week, juniors the next week, and so on. Upperclassmen will also be able to call in during the remainder of the preregistration period.

"We are shooting for spring 1990 for this system to take effect," he said. "We are trying to see if we can afford the one-half million dollars it will cost to get it. We wanted to see if there would be some kind of student registration fee that could be charged to

students.

"We have talked to student leaders about this, and we'll try to go to the student government and make a referendum this fall," Lanier said. "The system does involve quite a bit of overhead. It would require 32 telephone lines to the University; four of these would be toll-free lines."

Lanier said the telephone system will eliminate his office's preregistration paperwork, since there will be no preregistration forms.

"About 10 or 15 other universities in the country have these systems; most of these are schools in the Midwest," Lanier said. "Brigham Young University was the first to have the system, in 1984, and the enrollment there is 26,000 or 27,000. Students at the universities that have the system really like it."

He said departmental members and faculty members here are

willing to try the new method, but they are somewhat hesitant.

"We'll always have closed courses. We can't teach everyone everything they want," Lanier said. "This new method, though, gives students time to figure out what's open and what the alternatives are. These would be real registrations, and I hope departments will realize this."

In This Issue

UNC's
Presidential
debate page 2

Tie-dyes
that bind page 14

Football
preview page 24