

# Cabaret brings nightclub atmosphere home

## Lunch and evening entertainment provides alternative to downtown bar-hopping scene

By ANNA TURNAGE  
and PAM EMERSON  
Staff Writers

"Informality. That's the rule for Cabaret," said Howard Henry, the man behind the original idea for UNC's Student Union nightclub.

"There really wasn't anywhere to hold plays or hear bands that had a cozy and intimate atmosphere like a Cabaret. That's where the idea started," said Henry, former Union director.

The possibility of a Cabaret was slim to none when Henry had the idea. "Eight years ago the drinking age hadn't changed and the idea was to provide a place different from the regular bar scene," he said.

### Now showing

The Cabaret finally made its debut as UNC's new club last January. The atmosphere is informal as planned, with an indoor amphitheatre style, tiered with floor seating and a stage. All this is packed into what used to be a billiard room across from the bowling alley in the Student Union.

But the Cabaret looks nothing like a billiard room today. The walls and tables are black, and red chairs provide seating for 180 people around a large area for performance and dances.

"It's a cozier type atmosphere," Henry said.

### A different scene

The Cabaret distinguishes itself from other nightclubs in the area because it offers students who can't drink a place to hang out. For those 21 or older who do drink, the Cabaret allows beer and wine in the room, although they do not serve alcohol on the premises.

"The clubs on Franklin Street try to cater to a drinking crowd and not to other student tastes. That's the whole reasoning behind the Cabaret. We're trying to provide an alternative," said Billy Pizer, Cabaret committee chairman.

Unlike many nightclubs in Chapel Hill, the Cabaret is designed for students. "It's clean, not smoky, and it's located right in the middle of campus," said Morgan Howell, Union social committee chairwoman. Howell meets the artists and acts as mediator between them and the

technical staff.

She said the Cabaret committee made a list of goals at the beginning of last semester. "We wrote out a list of goals for our little baby, and one was to appeal to as many different people on campus as possible."

Howell said most of her co-workers are involved in the Cabaret simply because they enjoy music. "It's fun to have a hand in getting new bands off the ground," she said.

According to Pizer, the club's program listing is unlimited. It is open Wednesday through Saturday, providing different live jazz, reggae and college bands. Plays, poetry readings, lectures and literature readings are among the other programs offered.

Attendance varies according to the performer, but several performers have played to a full house. About 3,000 people have tried out the Cabaret this academic year, Pizer said.

"We're averaging over 400 people a week this semester. Most of the time we get big crowds for student performers because people like to come and watch their friends," he said. This is an increase from 50 to 75 people per week last semester.

Student bands like Dillon Fence, Liquid Sound and FIREHOSE are usual attractions at the club, drawing at least 80 people per show. Other student groups like the Clef Hangers and the Loreleis and different comedy teams often perform.

Bands from out of town usually don't do as well, drawing much smaller crowds, Pizer said. For this reason, the Cabaret committee tries to encourage student performers because it gives the students exposure and gives the Cabaret good publicity through word-of-mouth.

"We want the Cabaret to be a place where people can go and hang out, like the bars on Franklin Street, but more student-oriented," he said.

To make the club a regular hang-out, they try to keep a regular schedule to accommodate people who want to perform and to make sure there will always be entertainment for patrons.

The Cabaret committee is one of 10 committees on the Carolina Union Activities Board that schedules events. The other committees

on the Board also use the Cabaret when they have performers or events they want to present.

"They look at the schedule and decide where they want to be, and then we fill up the rest with bands, comedians and other things," Pizer said. "The performing arts board may want to do a play, or the Forum Board might add in a lecturer."

The Cabaret is also open to members of the community. "We don't necessarily cater to any one group of people," Pizer said. But the audience varies with the performer. For instance, the Friday night dances draw a younger crowd than the jazz performances.

Because the Cabaret is funded by student fees, admission is charged only when an artist is particularly expensive or popular. Students are usually charged only fees of \$2 to \$6, depending on a performer's popularity.

Upcoming events include a concert by the Black Student Movement's Gospel Choir, the play "Godspell" and performances by Rolly Gray and Sunfire, the Loreleis, and Dillon Fence.

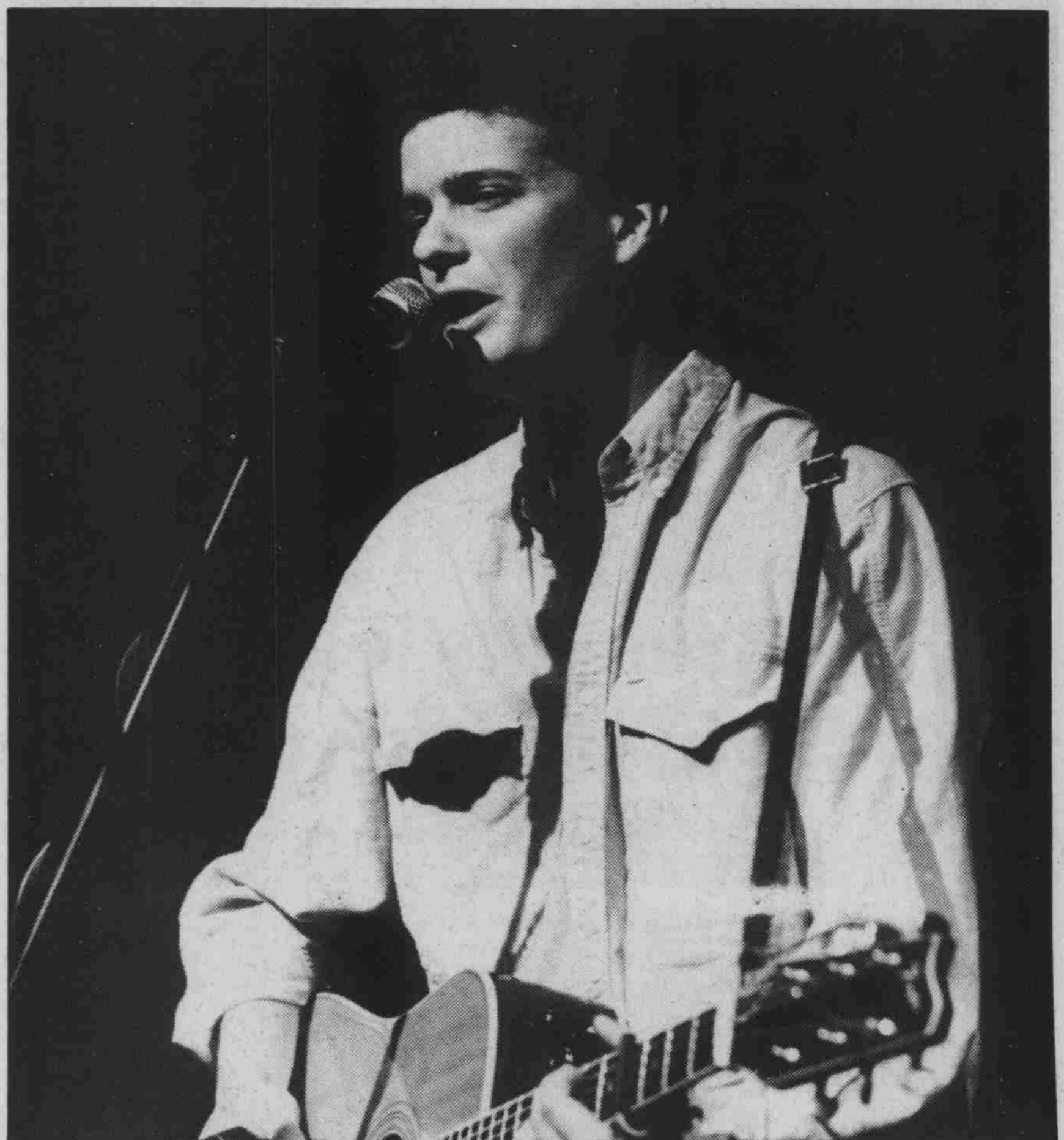
Special events in April will include a simulcast with WXYC, featuring Mary on the Dash and Chapter Two, both local bands. The Association of English Students will conduct a reading of poetry and creative writing, and Bland Simpson, a playwright and performer whose work has run on Broadway, will be presented. In addition, Los Angeles comedian Cary Long will perform, with Chris Brown and friends opening.

Calendars for the remainder of the semester will be available at the Student Union desk within the next two weeks.

### Let's do lunch

In addition to evening shows, the Cabaret also offers lunchtime programming. Since January, it has opened its doors from 11:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. Monday through Wednesday, providing an alternative place for students and faculty to spend their lunch hours.

Live performers, usually guitarists or pianists who sing along as they play, entertain while the audience



DTH/David Surowiecki

Jamie Block, a junior English major from New York, plays in the Union Cabaret Tuesday afternoon

eats, studies, chats or simply listens.

"The music is a lot more artsy than the regular rock bands that we usually have," said Barbara Gwynn, a lighting technician for the Cabaret.

According to Gwynn, the club has not been very successful yet for its lunchtime crowd. "But with more publicity I think it will turn into a good alternative place to have lunch besides Lenoir," she said.

Junior Karen Moore, newly-elected chairwoman of the Cabaret

committee, said most people who have been to the Cabaret during lunch or have heard about it are really excited about the idea.

"It has a really relaxed, informal atmosphere," she said, "something very different from Lenoir, where there is no atmosphere."

Moore said the idea to open the Cabaret during lunch was planned in conjunction with the opening of Union Station. "We had some say-so in what types of food they would

offer," she said, explaining that sandwiches, croissants and other not-so-messy foods were encouraged.

The Cabaret's lunch shows also provide student performers with an opportunity to obtain exposure. "So many people think the Cabaret is just a big room down there," Howell said. "We want to have as many people as possible walk through the doors and see how great it is."

# Movies from matinee to midnight

By MYRNA MILLER  
Assistant Features Editor

Free movies, or movies for under \$2, are not a thing of the past, at least not at the UNC Student Union.

"The Accused," "No Way Out," "Who Framed Roger Rabbit," "Purple Rain," and "Die Hard" are among the upcoming movies planned for this semester by the film committee of the Carolina Union Activities Board (CUAB).

One of the main goals of the group is to get new releases and lesser-known films, said Memsey Price, a senior committee member from Raleigh. "For example, the Australian film 'Breaker Morant' was a great film students wouldn't normally get a chance at," Price said.

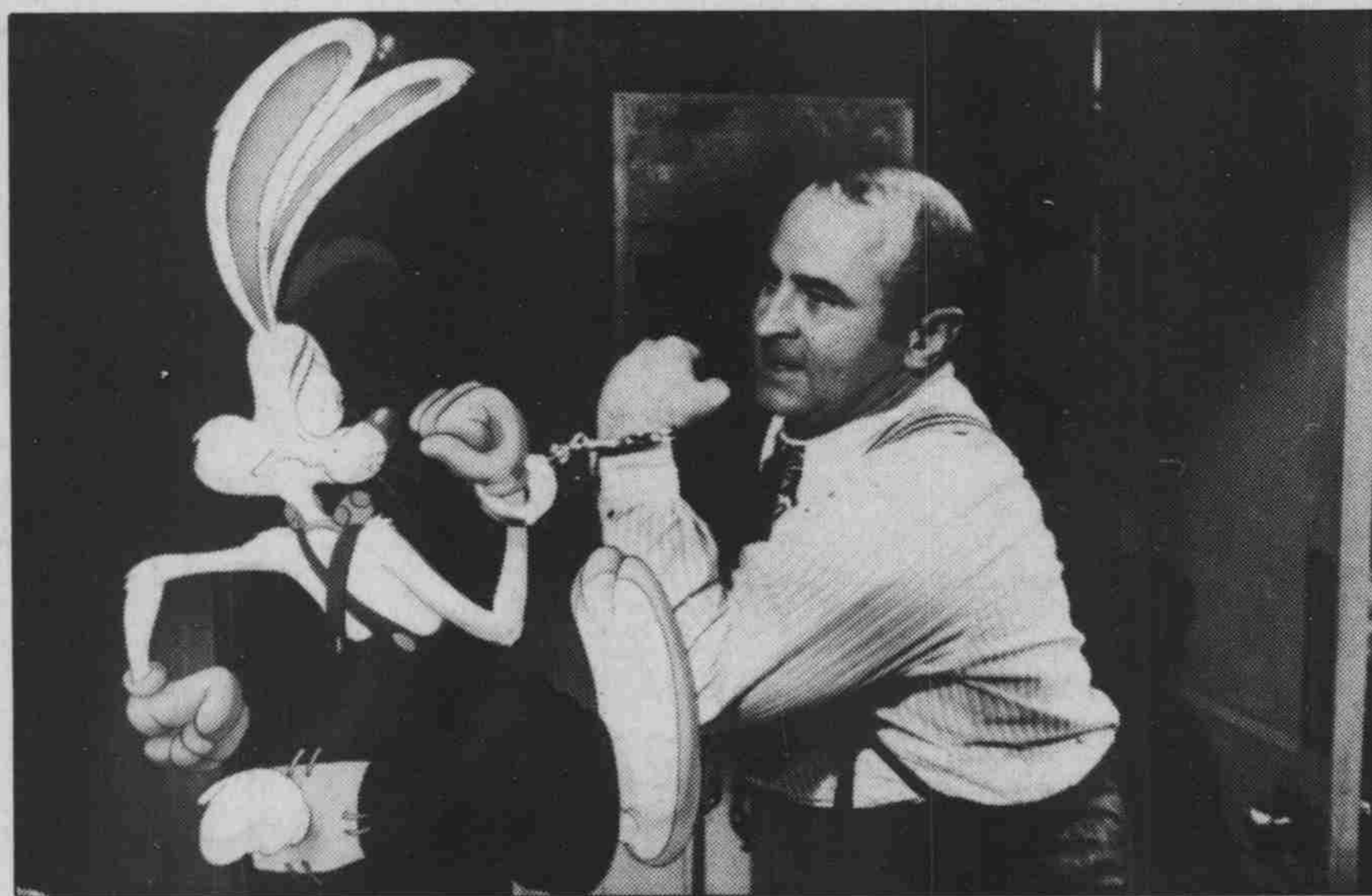
Charles Harraghy, a freshman from Cary, said he especially enjoyed the foreign films offered. "You really don't have access to them anywhere else," he said.

The committee works for variety in programming. "We reserve places for a certain number of comedies, dramas, foreign films and admission night films," said Sharon Kessler, committee chairwoman. Many of the movies are free to students with valid student identification, while others have a nominal admission price.

The group spends an average of \$27,000 a semester on films, purchasing movies from several film distributors, according to Kessler. The price depends on each film. "For example, we spent over \$1,000 on 'The Last Emperor,'" she said. The money for the films is provided from the CUAB budget, which comes from student fees.

Films are shown two or three evenings during the week and on weekends. One specialty show is the midnight show, which often has an admission price, she said. This gives students a chance to see movies after other theaters have closed.

Friday night films and midnight films usually have an admission price of \$1.50, while several Sunday



'Who Framed Roger Rabbit' is but one of the many films offered in the Union Auditorium

matinees cost \$1. The money raised from admission night films goes back into the fund for future films, although the committee only gets back about half of what it paid out for the movies, Kessler said.

"Although we often sell out for all three shows on Friday nights, we also have a regular crowd that comes to certain movies," she said. "We see a small regular group that comes to the foreign films and the Sunday matinees."

"New movies also do really well, and Monty Python movies always sell out," she added. In addition, classics like "Casablanca" tend to draw a large crowd.

Price said she is often surprised at some of the movies that sell out.

"The Unbearable Lightness of Being" sold out for all three shows," she said. Also, "Amarcord," an Italian film directed by Federico Fellini,

was packed on a Thursday night.

Students often complain about problems with the sound or film, Kessler said, but they don't understand the circumstances. "The movies are free and student-run, so everything may not be perfect," Kessler said. "It's still better than paying \$4.50 for a movie somewhere else."

Problems may result from poor film quality or from old, used equipment, she said. Old projectors may eventually be replaced, but it could take several years, according to Kessler.

Students say they appreciate the Union movies, even if technical problems do occur. "The sound is sometimes too loud, and sometimes the film cuts off in the middle of the show, but you have to realize that you only paid \$1.50 and that the problem does get fixed," said Regina

Sink, a freshman from Kernersville.

The 14-member film committee bases its decisions on members' own opinions and knowledge. "We try to get people with different interests as well as film knowledge," Price said. "That way we don't have an entire committee of drama fans or comedy fans."

Anyone interested in being on the committee can pick up an application later in April at the Union desk, she said. There are a certain number of spaces to fill, with a couple reserved for qualified incoming freshman next fall.

Committees of the CUAB also sponsor other entertainment activities in the Union and around campus. These include speeches by moviemakers such as Spike Lee, director of "She's Gotta Have It" and "School Daze," who will come to Memorial Hall on April 17.

# Theme nights offer on-campus dances

By LAURA FRANCIS  
Staff Writer

Wanna dance the night away?

The Cabaret offers weekend dance nights, along with other types of entertainment, for students and faculty to let loose their anxieties and meet new friends with similar interests.

"You can relieve tension by dancing, and there are a lot of new people to meet," said Chris Osborn, a freshman from Albany, Ga. "I really like the idea a lot because there are only two other places around Chapel Hill, WFUN and the Cat's Cradle, to get in and dance if you're under 21."

The Cabaret is in a convenient location for interested students who may not be able to go to other dance clubs. "A lot of people have said they've really enjoyed having a place to go out dancing, with no cover charge and a central location on campus," said Billy Pizer, president-elect of the Carolina Union.

The Cabaret hosts different dance nights such as a 1970s dance and the Both Sides Dance and Party Night.

Students outside the Cabaret came up with the idea of Both Sides. At the beginning of this school year, four students "got together and wanted to create a place where we could go, hang out, dance and have a good time," said Jason Kelly, a freshman from Washington, D.C. "We wanted to rent out the Cabaret."

Pizer, who is also chairman of the Cabaret committee, said, "They presented the idea to the Cabaret committee, and we incorporated these guys into the committee — we adopted them. They had the idea, and we developed it with them."

Osborn said the Both Sides Dance Nights are successful in that they "promote racial togetherness because music unites everybody."

The Both Sides dances have a "wide range of danceable music, and everyone likes the overall idea of a mix," Pizer said.

"We also take requests from the crowd. It's kind of a strange mix (of music). People always come up and say it's a really good idea. We've really been packed," Kelly said.

"We'd like to serve non-alcoholic refreshments, but the Committee thinks that would be too messy — maybe next year," he continued.

Jennifer Bielstein, a sophomore from Houston, danced at the Cabaret on '70s dance night. "They played all the songs you grew up with, like 'Brick House' and 'You're the One that I Want,'" she said.

Osborn, who also attended the '70s dance, said it resembled American Bandstand because "at one point, the whole floor was moving together" to the tune of "either 'The Hustle' or 'Bus Stop.'"

The Cabaret will offer its first-ever international dance on Saturday, April 8, from 9 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. Co-sponsored by the Korean American Student Association and the Carolina Union Activities Board, the event will feature Japanese, Korean, French and Spanish music, as well as American rock 'n' roll.

No admission will be charged, Pizer said, and efforts are being made to encourage students from State and Duke to attend.

In addition to the International Dance, the Cabaret committee will also sponsor two more Both Sides Dance and Party Nights on April 14 and 21.