

STUDENT LIFE

Top 5 college embarrassments from someone who should know

Just when I thought college was going my way, I thought I'd finally escaped the horrific social nightmares I experienced in grade school, times so bad that I wanted to take my Charlie Brown lunch pail and jump off the top floor of the elementary building, just when I thought I had built up a sufficient quantity of friends that made me feel like a worthwhile human being, riding my bike to my poli sci class.

Pedaling across campus with the autumn leaves making little whirlpools in the crisp Carolina morning sun, I sped in front of Saunders building. A girl I knew from C-TOPS, a pretty young woman on which I had one of those freshman hormone crushes, came out of the front door and yelled to me.

"Hey, Ian! What's up?"
 "Hey," I said, turning around. "What's up with you?" and before I had any chance to exchange pleasantries, I plunged right into a crisp Carolina shrubbery, sending my bike into a dumpster and my poli sci homework into the ionosphere. I lay sprawled out on the sidewalk with my shoe across the quad and a deciduous branch sticking out of my pants. And suddenly every friend I'd ever made, every goal I'd ever accomplished and every good time I'd ever had was suddenly *negated* — all I wanted to do was curl up into fetal position and have my mommy make me a baloney sandwich.

It was then I decided to write this column, just in case someone out there thinks that embarrassments are for uneducated children who don't know any better, and also as an absolution for myself and maybe anyone else who has gone through The Five Most Embarrassing Moments in College.

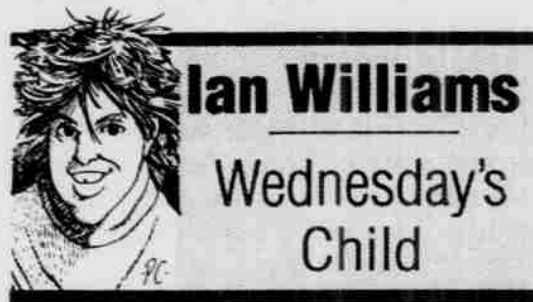
5. The Mistaken Wave

This seems like a fairly harmless embarrassment, but it is a deadly mood-killer. Picture yourself sitting in the Pit, casually reading your eagerly-awaited issue of *Shout!* magazine. Whilst perusing an article on the fashion benefits of mammary reduction operations, the guy you've been staring at for two months in English class stops about 20 feet in front of you. Putting down his backpack and smiling that gorgeous smile, he waves to you and motions that you come over. You wave back enthusiastically, your bad day suddenly bright and cheery, and start to get up. Just then, another girl cuts you off on the steps, walks proudly over to him, and the two embrace in a testament of obvious true love.

This is an archetypal embarrassment scheme, the old I-was-talking-to-the-girl-behind-you trick that has been played out since caveman days, so don't feel alone in this one. With all the effusive waving going on around here, it's hard not to get caught in the social crossfire. Do what I do — *always* assume that they're waving to someone behind you infinitely more beautiful and higher on the evolutionary ladder than thou.

4. The Abortive I.D. Scam

As a rite of manhood, it was your token first night on the town, the first time you were going to go out and Get Drunk With the Boys, to scam on babes and generally have something to tell



Ian Williams
 Wednesday's Child

your grandson when you go fishing with him 50 years from now. The problem was, you were still 19, and even with the new abortion ruling making you 19 and nine months, you would still have to wait a year and a half in the snow outside Four Corners in order to get in. Enter some dude in your dorm who through some shady DMV forgery managed to get a hold of an I.D. that "looks just like you, I swear, man..." The night came, and the line started to move into the bar. Your buddy slipped you the I.D., and it turns out that it is the long-expired truck license of 28-year-old Ramone Proudfoot, a Native Indian from Tuscon, Arizona. The bouncers take turns laughing at it, and you spend the rest of the evening watching your friends and your date doing Wild Turkey shots through the window.

3. The Date's Dental Nightmare

Another primal humiliation. You and your date were at Aurora's, having a great time. Money was no object tonight, and you splurged on salad, antipastos and powerful wine. For the first time in months, you seemed to have met someone that really appreciates you for who you are, someone who understands you when you speak, someone who is a

wonderful combination of intelligent and sexy. Halfway through the evening, however, he seems to get uncomfortable about something. He constantly looks down, and begins to answer in muffled monosyllables — finally, the tension gets a little too great, and you exercise your usual means of escape.

"Ummm, I think I need to go to the little ladies room."

You walk in, and are confronted by the mirror. Nothing seems amiss, you think, and smile just to prove it. But there, on your teeth, is no ordinary chive, no speck of pepper — you seemed to have your entire hors d'oeuvre stuck to your dental work. Even emergency flossing doesn't remove it, and you look for a window to crawl out of, so that you can die an old maid in peace.

2. The Frat Dance

Maybe it's something genetic, maybe it's some sort of environmental influence, or something in the water, but *white males just can't dance*. Girls can pretty much do anything, and as long as it's somewhat rhythmic, we call it "sensual," but most guys just end up looking like they got saddle sores somethin' fierce. To compensate for this utter lack of *soul*, guys will perform the Frat Dance, a disjointed wobble while holding a full plastic cup of beer aloft. Later in the evening, he may shed the beer and perform a dance probably only known to the sun gods of ancient Egypt and those suffering from various neurological disorders.

For guys, dancing is that fine line between rapture and fruity-ness, if any girl says that they're stupid, they will

immediately lose their buzz, hide behind the keg and never dare the Watusi again.

1. The Fart Heard 'Round the World

There is no doubt that this is the humiliation of humiliations, the Big Cheese of embarrassments, the one great equalizer of humanity.

I was in this quaint art seminar. The teacher was droning in a pleasant monotone, as the class approached that time every period when everyone seems to sink into a deep pleasant reverie — when suddenly the loudest, most horrific sounding tempest of a fart came exploding from the guy sitting in front of me.

It lasted for 10 seconds and was so loud that it scared me, it shook the paintings on the wall and probably set off the seismograph in Raleigh. For a few seconds afterwards, no one knew what to do, and the class was in a silent chaos. Even after 18 years of schooling, a double major and 22 years under my belt, I burst out laughing. So did the guy in front of me and all the girls, and the teacher tried to get the class to order. Finally, he let class go early, and we all ran outside with tears on our faces.

What happens in the end? Even on statistically abnormal days when all of these things have happened to us, we still managed to wake up the next day alive and well, still biking to class and still with enough loved ones around to make us feel worthwhile. So anytime you feel your heart plummet, remember your caveman ancestors — how nice it was to wave wildly in a savage dance

ritual, be any age you want, fart and not even floss around a not-too-distant campfire...

Editor's note: This column is re-

printed from the Oct. 18, 1989, edition of *The Daily Tar Heel*. Ian Williams is a 1990 graduate of UNC from somewhere in Los Angeles.

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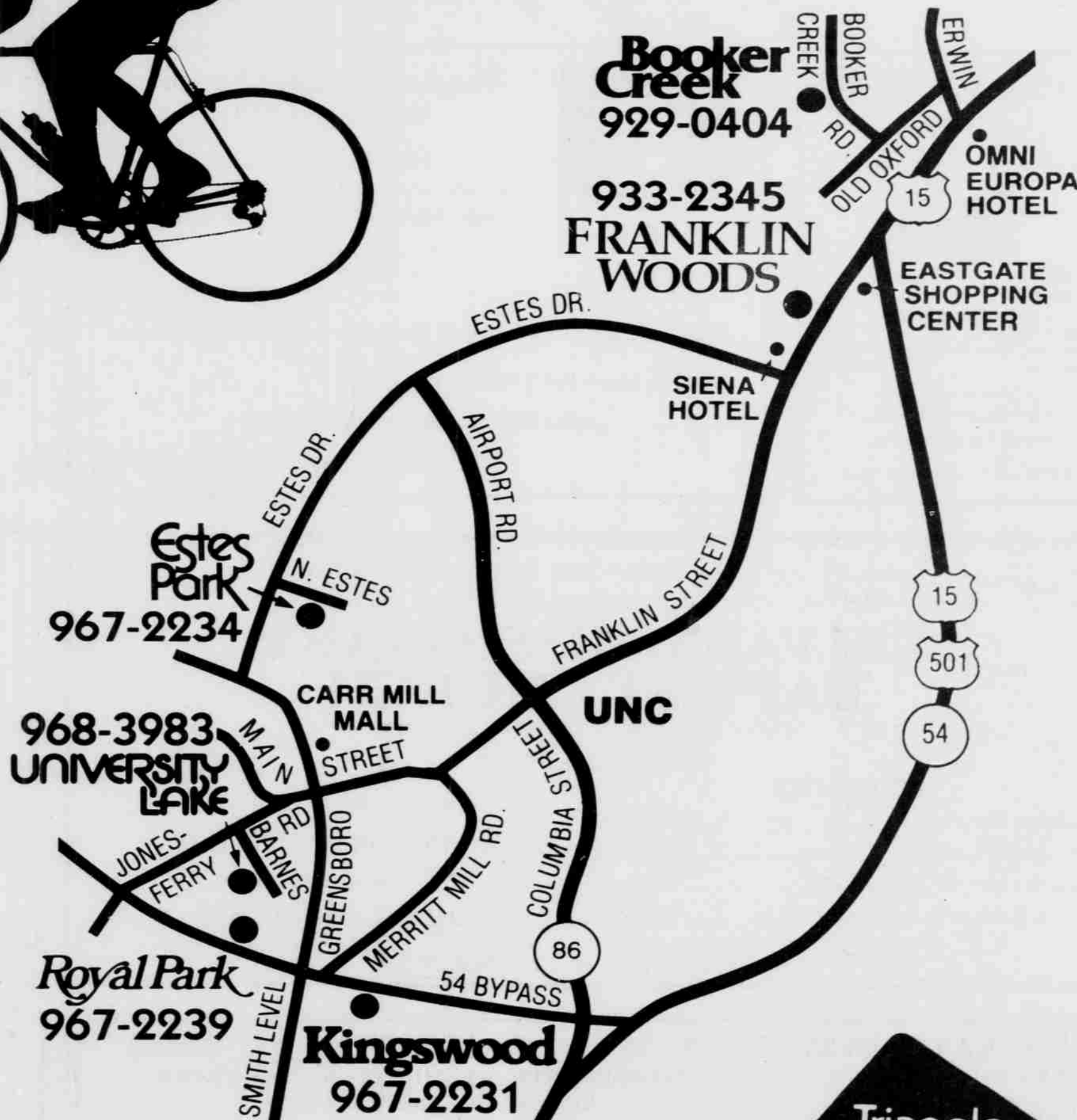


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