

Today: WLOS-TV...

Tomorrow: Dave Letterman

Whacky college pranks: historically there have been goldfish-swallowing, phonebooth stuffing and seeing how many people you could pack into a VW bug...

The latest zany thing going on at Brevard College is the BCPBC, or, the Brevard College Polar Bear Club.

Traditionally, polar bear clubs are groups of hardies who go headfirst into icy waters. But the BC variation borders on S and M.

Not only do these zanies go swimming, but they do it sloshing down the frigid waters of Pisgah Forest's Sliding Rock -- a long and thrilling ride even in the warmest of times.

How did such a group come to be? Turns out it was founded on a bet with President Billy Greer. Earlier this fall, Dr. Greer dared several would-be tough guys and gals that they couldn't brave the icy waters one month through January, with a steak dinner as the prize for success.

At first, the group numbered close to 20. But then, common sense set in. By December the group was down to a hard-core of eight.

Upon hearing their names, Campus Counselor Steve Martin shook his head and said, "And I thought they were the sane ones on campus."

Kenny Gallagher, one of the ringleaders of the cold-water crazies, says the group's motto is "We ain't too bright," and that their slogan is "To bravely go where no sane man has gone before..."

These kamakazies of the winter whitewater recruited Jock Lauterer as their faculty advisor, but he limited his advice to "don't do it... you're outa' your mind."

The Polar Bear Club made a big media splash on Jan. 16 when they made their monthly icy slide, this time recorded by WLOS TV and displayed the next morning on the front page of the Hendersonville Times-News.

Witnessing that event and cheering on the BC students, President Greer furthered his dare, offering a Polar Bear Club sweatshirt to those crazy enough to keep sloshing along through April.

Members Marc Carr, John Kennedy and Kenny Gallagher issued a joint challenge to all colleges and universities in the region to come join the outing by the BC Polar Bear Club.

And finally, the three are wondering why they can't get their antics aired on Late Night with Dave Letterman. "They do stupid animal tricks don't they?" says Carr, "so why not stupid college tricks?"

Sports Commentary...

What is it about sports, anyway?

by John Wellenhoffer
Clarion Assistant Sports Editor

Well, it's a new new year, and along with the year come the happy events that we've all come to enjoy and love -- such as college hoops, hockey, spring training, pro hoops and the almighty Grande Guesso of them all: the Super Bowl.

While watching Rams and Niners go at it in a rather lopsided match of skill, I was reaching for my beloved generic Cheetos when it hit me like a stale bagel: why is it that we US'ers enjoy spectating professional and college sports to such an extent?

Well, it could be that life without them would be as exciting as the repair manual to a '78 Pinto.

Maybe it's just that we Americans share so little in common nowadays that sporting events are a good opportunity for everyone to understand one simple concept: to win.

Of course, there are other reasons.

1. Every American yields to the inner call to run to the EZ-Quik, pick up nine cases of beer, chips and dip (French onion. Not that bean stuff), go

back home and veg in front of the tube for four hours, belching the whole time.

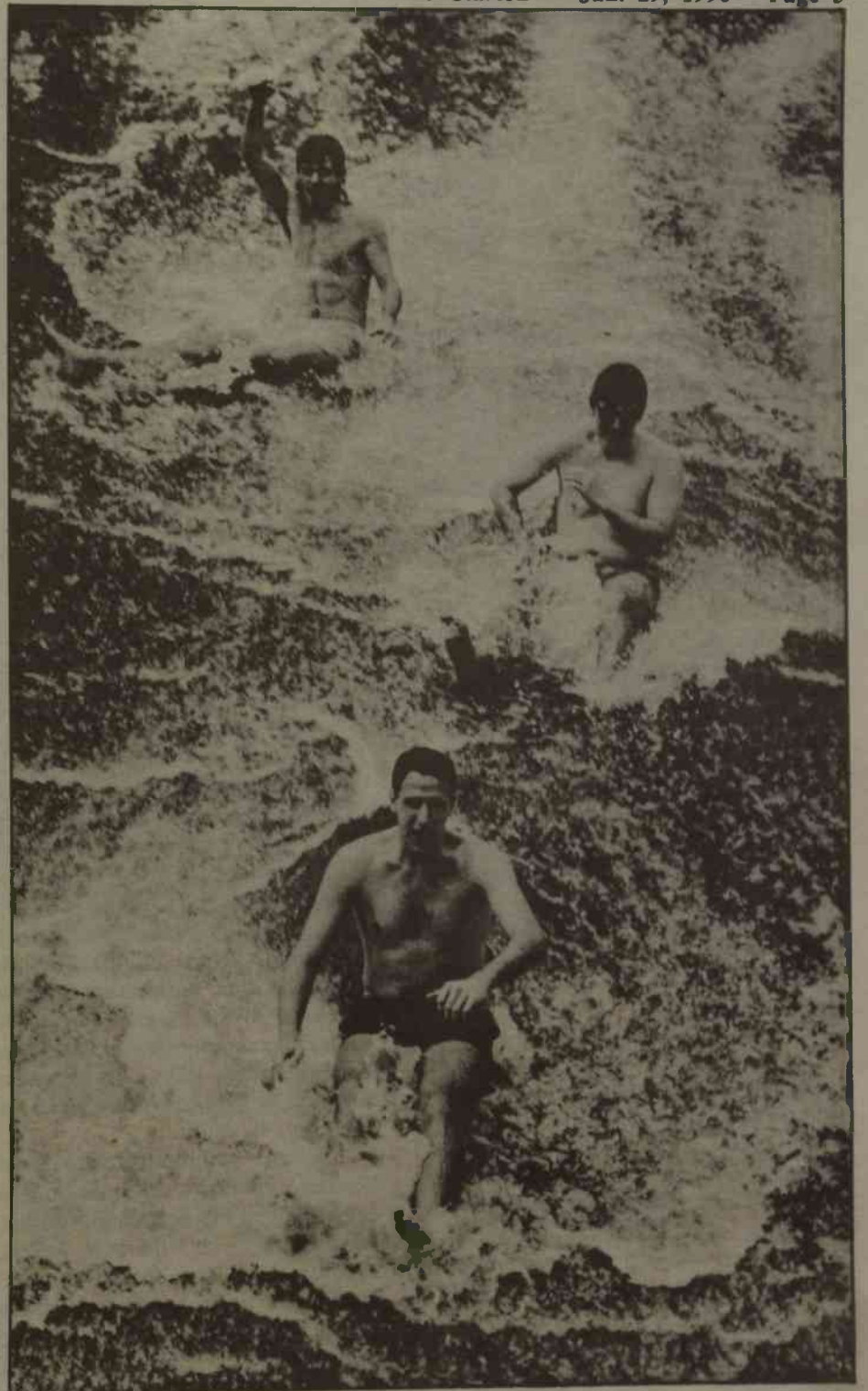
2. Everyone in the U.S. feels the need to pay \$23 a ticket to watch some guy get paid 14 million bucks a year to bat a ball or puck around, work up a mean sweat and then ask for a diet cola.

Is it me? I didn't think so at first, but now I think it is. I've never understood the full concept of this and I don't ever expect to... but in case you do, just remember what old Arnie Palmer told me. He said, "Johnny, just play it as it lays."

I don't know, but I think that's philosophical golf talk which can apply to just about anything.

Athletic events keep us all in tune with the simple principles of life such as winning, losing and the spirit of competition. Though it sounds like an American Express commercial, it's that simple.

In spite of all the drugs, gambling and other technical caca, the world of athletics has and always will remain the same.



Slip-slidin-away... in the frigid waters of Sliding Rock, members of the BC Polar Bear Club make their January run. Top to bottom: John Kennedy, Marc Carr and Kenny Gallagher.



BC President Dr. Billy Greer awards a "high five" to the Polar Bears, whose motto is "We Ain't Too Bright."

(Clarion photos by Jock Lauterer)