

Popular Cook Treats All Fairly

Billy Ray Penny, the wise-cracking cook at Time-Out restaurant, possesses a first name that is a household word at UNC. "Billy," as Penny prefers to be called, is the center of attraction for many college students when they stop in at the chicken restaurant on late nights during the

been living in Pittsboro?

BILLY: All of my life.

INK: What brought you to Chapel Hill?

BILLY: A job (he laughs). I have been working at Time-Out for about 15 years off and on.

already white meat, or they say they want a white leg, and they know they can (only) get a dark leg.

INK: Were you aware that you have become well-known among college students?

BILLY: Well, if you work for the public, you're supposed to be nice to them regardless of if they're poor. You treat everybody fair and you show no favoritism.

INK: Do you love your job because of the students?

BILLY: Yes, because you get to meet basketball players, football players, people from Duke, State, and different schools.

INK: Do you know many of the students by name?

BILLY: Well, most of the fraternity boys because I used

to hang out over there at the fraternity house. I used to come up here with my cousin and hang out at the fraternity house and play basketball, and my sister's husband works over there at one of the fraternity houses.

INK: Do you like UNC's campus?

BILLY: It's nice because it's peaceful and quiet, but the students need to learn to get along better. It used to be that the lacrosse team couldn't get along with the football players. I mean, you're going to the same school and we're the same. You know you play lacrosse and I play basketball, so what's the big difference? I used to go to Player's (nightclub) and would see the football players in one corner and basketball players in the other corner, and lacrosse players sort of spread out. They wouldn't be with one another.

INK: So you used to hang out at Player's?

BILLY: Yes, but I hang out at Rosey's now (he laughs).

INK: Are you married?

BILLY: Are you crazy? Please!

INK: What is wrong with getting married?

BILLY: Marriage is just not for me. I have one brother and two more sisters and they have kids. No thank you. I can keep the kids, but I can take them home to their parents. When I get up and want to go out, I can go out. I don't have to come home to someone saying that I didn't get in until 3:00 in the morning. I don't want a wife saying for me to be in at such and such a time. No thank you.

INK: Who do you normally go out with when you hang out at Player's or Rosey's?

BILLY: Me, my sister, and some of my friends go out to have a good time. Most of the places you go to have people ready to fight. They say, "You're looking at my woman man!" That's not for me. We tell people that we just came out to have a good time. We didn't come to fight.

INK: Tell me a little more about yourself.

BILLY: I hang out with highway patrolmen. Me and the Orange County sheriff go bike riding in the summer. I went snow skiing, and

that was no fun.

INK: Why was snow skiing not fun?

BILLY: Black people don't snow ski, trust me. It looked easy. Man, they took me all the way up to the top, and I ate snow from the top to the bottom.

INK: What other things do you like to do?

BILLY: Well, I tried water skiing, but that didn't work out. We went skiing at Jordan Lake, and let's just say I didn't get on the skis that day. I like jogging, basketball, and football. I have one dog, but she ran away (he laughs). I had one dog.

INK: So, you just like enjoying life, right?

BILLY: Yes. I get up in the morning and learn how to play frisbee disk. I haven't got the hang of it yet. I'll try to learn anything. I'm supposed to be going with a friend of mine to jump off a cliff and learn how to hang glide. My mom said I would get killed trying that stupid mess.

INK: Do you live with your mother?

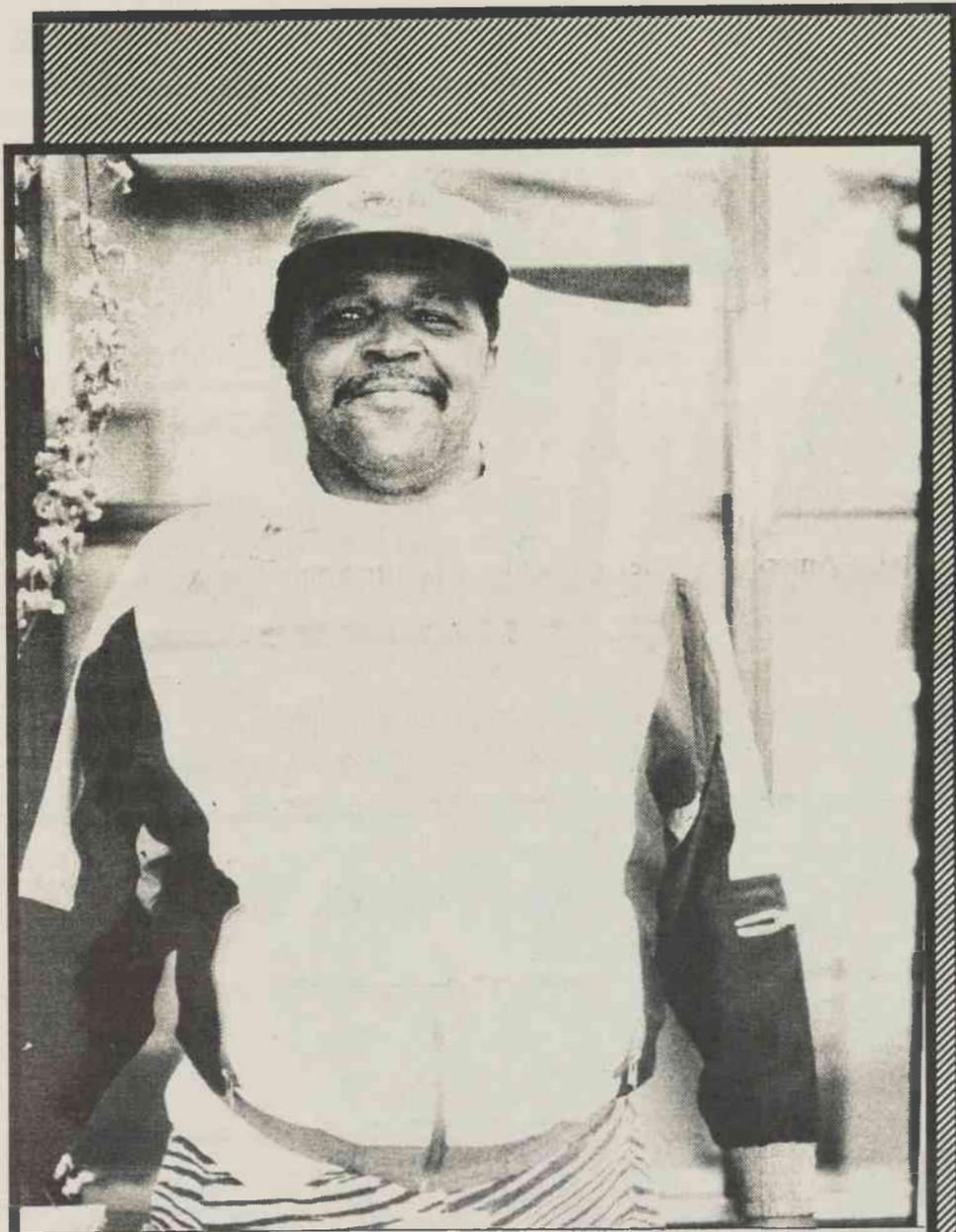
BILLY: No, I live in a trailer and she lives in a house, but she doesn't live too far away from me.

INK: Do you have any children?

BILLY: No! I don't need any children...please! Working here, you barely make ends meet.

INK: If you had a message to send to all of the college students on campus, what would it be?

BILLY: To live together in peace and harmony. You don't judge the other guy because he's black or white. You have to treat everybody equal because fair is fair. I don't play favorites with anybody. If you've got money, give. That's the way I was raised up by my grandma. You know, like those old people say: "If you've got a nickel, give five cents."



Michael Bowden/Black Ink

Billy Ray Penny stays active in his spare time

week and on weekends. Ink Staff Writer Chandra McLean was able to catch this Pittsboro native down at Time-Out, and he had much to tell the Ink about his personal thoughts, private life, and the ways that he likes to have fun.

BLACK INK: How long have you

INK: What is it about your job that makes it so much fun?

BILLY: The students and the way they come in here and talk and act. They don't know the difference between the chicken. They'll sit there and holler that they want a white breast, and a breast is