

'Scatterbrain' willing to take risks

By MARK BRETT

In America these days, it seems that we're expected to toe the line; those who take risks or go against the flow are regarded as trouble-makers. People in authority seem mortally afraid that someone will be offended by something that is said or written, and they go out of their way to make sure that such things are suppressed.

Using such catchy phrases as "libel" or "editorial policy," they practice their peculiar brand of censorship on almost everything we see, hear, or read. These forces are even at work on this very campus (not that I'd name

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any names, of course; that might be deemed offensive. Besides, you know who you are.) This practice leads to an illusion of mutual kindness that just doesn't exist and, more disgustingly, to a stifling mediocrity.

Fighting this oppression on the musical front is a group called Scatterbrain. With a style that combines thrash-metal grunge with rap harmonies, they're sure to immediately alienate half of their potential audience and every hit-minded record company

executive in the nation. Their debut album, *Here Comes Trouble*, seems to be very conscious of all this, since it's primarily about freedom of expression.

This theme is presented in the strongest terms in "Good-bye Freedom, Hello Mom," a song about the many "protective" regulations passed in the last few years that have violated many of our basic rights. Here Scatterbrain lashes out at such policies as record labeling, helmet and seatbelt laws, anti-abortion laws, the drinking age, and the "Just Say No" campaign, all enacted in the name of the public good.

This song is full of good lines, so much so that it's tempting to simply quote the entire thing and let it speak for itself. However, I'll quote the two lines that best convey the message: "1984 has passed, forget about Big Brother/Welcome to the 90's where the government's your mother," and "First amendment casualties, but they won't be the last/Kiss the Bill of Rights goodbye it's disappearing fast."

While the group is criticizing the laws, they are not necessarily supporting the activities restricted by them. Rather, they are supporting the individual's rights to do as he pleases, no matter how stupid or life-threatening such activities may be.

This attitude is demonstrated on two other songs. "Here Comes Trouble" and "Outta Time." The first presents a life of drunkenness and violence for what it is: a stupid, self-destructive activity. The second is apparently narrated by the Grim Reaper as he gleefully watches someone slowly deteriorate through a life of drug addiction. Both songs take a realistic stance, as both the good and the bad aspects of alcohol and drugs are shown.

Of course drugs make you feel good; if they didn't, no one would get addicted to them. The price is your life. This contradic-

tion is crystallized in the line "How could something good be bad?/That question drove ya mad." An attitude quite a bit more complicated than "Just Say No," and one that makes a lot more sense.

The album also confronts conformity in "That's That," a nightmarish view of life in modern America. From the opening lines, "Color by numbers, stay inside the lines/Ya got a question? Check the rulebook, see the grand design," we are presented with a string of phrases urging conformity. Each phrase, however, is so cliché-ridden that the whole becomes meaningless in the need. This, of course, only makes the point since most jargon of this type has little thought behind it and is mainly designed to stick in the mind through its very familiarity.

You only realize how well Scatterbrain has done their job here when you find yourself singing the mindless chorus for no apparent reason: "Hey kids, check it out/Upside down or inside out/This is it, is what it's all about/Strike one, strike two, strike three you're out."

The really amazing moment on *Here Comes Trouble*, however, is in "Down with the Ship (Slight Return)." An attack on the music industry's habit of forcing new bands to use an already-established "sound," this song is made up of nothing but various distinctive guitar and drum riffs from famous rock tunes of the past.

The vocals, barely squeezed in between overpowering riffs, chastise the industry for such ul-

timately self-destructive habits. The title is a tribute ultimately self-destructive habits. The title is a tribute to the much-copied "Voodoo Chile (Slight Return)" by Jimi Hendrix. The guys obviously had a lot of fun with this one.

The album includes quite a few "fun" songs. "Earache may Eye" is an adaptation of a tune by Cheech and Chong. "Don't Call Me Dude" attacks that infamous and all-preventing catch-phrase of the 80's, "Dude." "Drunken Milkman" is a sort of Jim Morrison-like drugged beatnik poem, believe it or not.

Finally, we have "Mr. Johnson and the Juice Crew," which is about that distinctly male organ Dean Marron won't let us roll condoms over. Though this song seems rather pointless at first, in the end it becomes a commentary on all those over-sexed rock stars out there. The final line of the song bears this out when, in reference to "Mr. Johnson," vocalist Tommy Christ sings "Girls can't keep their hands off him and neither can I."

Scatterbrain shows a lot of guts and intelligence with their debut, and will probably continue to do so in the future. Unfortunately, they'll also probably continue to be widely ignored. Unless, that is, some brain-dead disc jockey makes a comparison between them and the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Then they might get some coat-tail support. Ironic, no? Oh well. There are lots of worse groups to be associated with, I suppose. New Kids on the Block comes to mind...

Cars reveal true campus character

By DANIELLE MECKLEY

One interesting aspect of North Carolina Wesleyan College is its cars. If the automobile reflects the personality of the driver; then Wesleyan's cars reflect a very curious character.

Wesleyan's cars are unique because an uncommonly large number of them are luxurious. A BMW is not an unfamiliar sight on Wesleyan's campus. Almost daily, a slick black Beamer sits aloof and dignified in front of the Admissions Office.

On certain nights, one can see another BMW, the silver green color of the U.S. Treasury building on the back of a crisp \$10 bill, parked behind the cafeteria. And who hasn't yet noticed the radiant orange Vette lounging in the parking lot like a chilly orange popsicle under a warm summer sun?

Wesleyan's license plates are just as interesting. Some people truly identify with their cars, and want to tell the entire automotive world who they are. HAH-LEE. KMW. SUZY 65. K SHARON. MARIJA. KATIE.

Some plates express personal credos: O LET IT BE. D DOORS, and AUDACITY. I NEED B. BUMPNIT.

Certainly one of the most individualized automobiles on campus is Dr. Finney's Toyota truck. Although from far away it appears harmlessly normal, this illusion is broken on closer inspection. The license plate displays the obscure message, DR? DR?. The cab hails a green flag, weathering from the flaps and claps of riding through the wind towards that eternal battle. Which battle is uncertain.

North Carolina Wesleyan College offers the benefit of a small school's ability to seek and give personal attention. It seems Wesleyan's cars also participate in this search for individualized attention.

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