

# The Decree

OFFICIAL STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF  
NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE

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The Decree is located in the Hardee Building, North Carolina Wesleyan College, 3400 Wesleyan Blvd., Rocky Mount, NC 27801. Weekly staff meetings are held Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. in the Decree office.

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## Good journalism valued by Decree

News is defined as “material that the public must have because it is important and material that is entertaining, that is fun to read.” (Melvin Mencher, “Basic Media Writing”) This definition, of course, is affected by each media outlet’s audience. For *The Decree* the college community is our audience and includes students, faculty, and staff.

Dissension has been a role the press has played since the origins of newspapers. To inform the public of the important information it needs to know is at the heart of all media enterprises. The sad fact is that our society has become one which thrives on sound bites and *USA Today* style stories.

The editors at any newspaper structure the tone of the paper. Why are some media outlets labeled liberal and other conservative if this is not the case? Yes, the editors of *The Decree* shape and mold the paper; it’s our job. As we like to say, “That’s why we get paid the big bucks!”

Sure, coverage of campus events is poor, we admit that. We apologize for the poor coverage which is given to events. We, along with the rest of our small staff, do not have super powers. We carry a large number of semester hours while spending a minimum of 20 hours

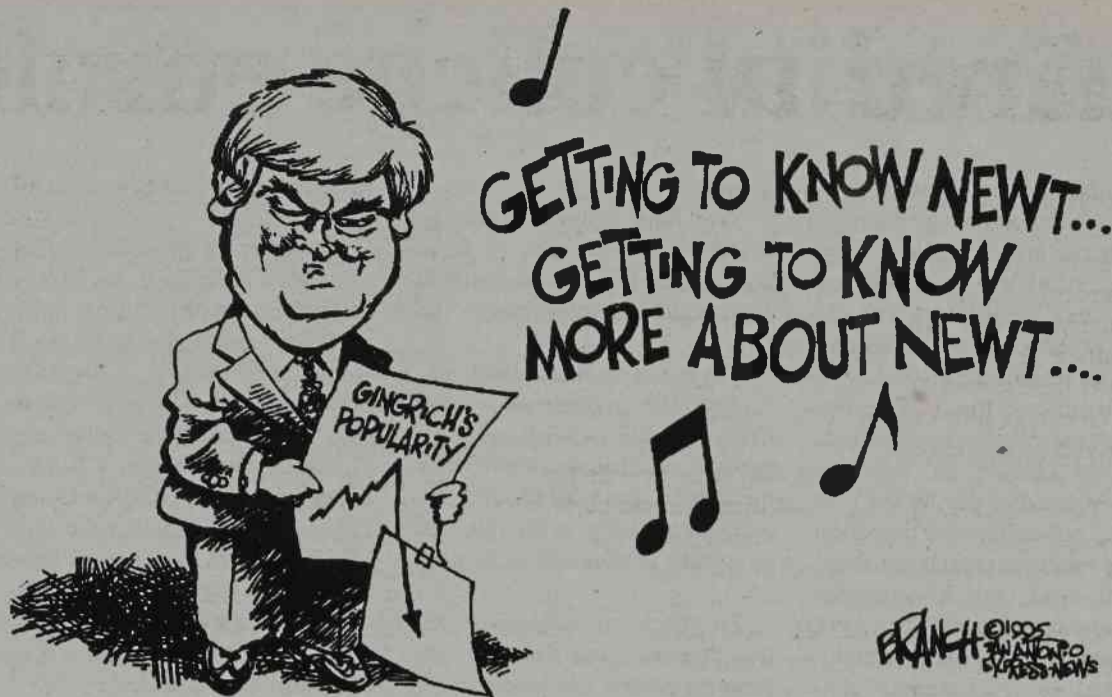
per week working on the paper. We have as much work as other students but still try to cover as many events as possible, whether they make it in the paper or not.

In choosing what will actually go into each issue we evaluate what events we can cover that interest our audience. There is also the factor of timeliness to consider. Because we come out every other week, we attempt to cover events which will be timely when the issue is actually published. Unfortunately, the school does not provide us with the equipment to layout and print our own paper so we can’t lay out an issue in one night.

It takes about a week for the entire product to come together. This includes at least two trips to Spring Hope, where the paper is actually laid out, and a trip to Nashville where it is printed.

No one except the editors sees the actual makeup of the paper until it is published. Our advisor does not take any role in selecting stories or editing copy. He does evaluate each issue and point out our strengths and weaknesses once it is published.

The problem may be that the college is not used to the level of quality *The Decree* has achieved in recent years. Still, we are proud of what we have done and continue to aim for higher goals.



### Humans out of touch with nature

## Do animals have feelings, too?

By DR. STEVE FEREBEE

As I was rinsing pine pollen from my spring flowers I noticed an impressive bird eyeing me with what I can only assume was bird amusement. It was perched on a pine tree branch just a few feet away from me.

I had to notice this bird — an intelligent-looking stocky brown, white, and rust-red animal with a menacing curved beak. Some kind of hawk, I thought to myself — later confirmed in my *Audubon Field Guide* as probably a Red-Tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) (though what it was doing in my pine tree, I cannot say; they prefer meadows with juicy mice).

I’m not a bird watcher, though I am trying to learn a few names of visitors to my garden. Seems only polite. But hawks and eagles are immediately recognizable. And this one seemed to want

something from me.

I know that’s not true. At most it must have hoped that I was about to scare up a small rodent for its dinner, but at the moment I really thought we were communicating. I had some old rhythm and blues playing on the boom box, so I fancied that we were about to dance.

Then it screamed. I can’t describe the sound any other way. It sounded like a child. The bird hardly moved; it just opened its beak to emit a cry — a cry for what? For help? For food? For sex? For the love of Roy Brown’s “Good Rockin’ Tonight?” I

wanted to scream back. But of course I didn’t know what to say.

We live in the midst of and yet separated from what we like to call “nature.” I toil in my garden to connect not only with my ancestors but also with eternity. Hunters or campers or gardeners feel closer to some less cluttered, less complicated existence.

What makes us think we are so much more complicated than my hawk visitor? I remember another time when I was hiking in the mountains of New Mexico and I rounded a corner and almost stumbled over a black bear sunning itself on the path which humans had cut into the wilderness. Or the time I was diving for shells in the turquoise waters of Puerto Rico and disturbed a moray eel. These animals are flying, sunning, and swimming through

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## Decree not doing its job well

Dear Editor:

In the last issue of *The Decree*, statements were made concerning the events the staff reports on. I am president of the psychology club and spend an infinite amount of time planning campus events. The psychology club’s program “Drug Search” on Wednesday, March 22, was very well attended.

I personally saw at least three *Decree* staff members at this successful event. Reporters from *Local CNN* were there, along with a reporter from the *Rocky Mount Telegram*. Was I under a general delusion to expect a person from *The Decree* staff to write a few

sentences about an event that had an attendance of over 100 people?

Obviously I was because nothing was mentioned about it in the last issue of *The Decree*. I realize that the editors claim that there is just too much to report on in each issue and that non-staff members should write their own articles if they want anything relevant to appear in print. I believe that for the psychology club president to

write articles about psychology club events is a conflict of interest.

My question is, what are the six staff members, two editors, and two contributing writers doing while events are occurring? Is joining the newspaper staff just an attempt to embellish resumes? The words “journalistic obligations” are obviously misunderstood by *The Decree* staff.

I expect certain things from a school newspaper which indirectly receives my money through SGA. I do not think that it is too much to ask that campus events

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