



John Ferre

## 'Carriage House Caper' Quite an Experience

If everything that the arresting policeman told me was true, I'd be making license plates with a prison full of faggots in some backwoods jail now. Instead, I'm at Mars Hill reading religion books, writing seminar papers, drinking pots full of coffee, and listening to Leon Russell and Cat Stevens. The people who were nabbed after me don't have it so well; they can serve up to two years. Their charges won't be dropped.

Let me say something about myself. I'm a Resident Tutor; I'm interning with the Mars Hill News-Record; and, after lots of sweat and countless all nighters, I'm graduating in December. I think I'm pretty normal (except I've developed an ungodly fetish for textbooks.) I try to help people (I've retained my boy scout virtues) and I'm trying to earn enough money to keep my car running. In short, I'm not an average criminal.

For the past couple of years, scores of people have told me about the Carriage House, an abandoned nineteenth century set of stables on Beaucatcher Mountain in Asheville. They say it's haunted, but it's not: Upperclassmen take freshmen girls there to scare them. Whether they show their frightened dates the beautiful skyline from the top afterwards, I don't know; but I do know that plenty of Mars Hill students have been there.

About three weeks ago I became bored with a paper I was working on, so I decided to go there with seven other students. Maybe I went out of curiosity; maybe I went to shake up the girls who went and actually believed in haunted houses. Maybe it was both—I can't remember. But I did go.

When we arrived, it was raining a cold rain. The night was quiet and a gentle fog had nestled itself around the mountain. The night had become somewhat eerie, forbidding enough to scare three of the eight into waiting in the car while the rest of us looked for an entrance.

After finding an open window, we crawled in and began roaming through the vacant fortress. Five minutes had not passed before we were outside again. There were no ghosts and no frightening noises; there were cops. We'd set off a silent alarm which detected the sounds we'd made. Three squad cars and a paddy wagon came, discharged what seemed like hoards of big blue-clad men, and hauled off several bewildered students, one of them me.

My immediate thought in the paddy wagon concerned getting my textbooks into jail so I could work on my seminar paper. I sometimes wonder, had I been an underclassman needing hours, if Mars Hill would give internship credit for imprisonment. Sociology or

political science or something. As my head cleared, I began to worry about the fine I would have to pay.

Both Breaking and Entering charges were doled out to each of us who had gone inside; the three others were released. After getting blue sheets which said that if we failed to appear in court on November 9, we could pay up to \$3000 and spend up to three years in prison, we left.

Mike Dixon (the owner of the stables) contacted us two days later and told us he would drop charges. He also told us that there were rats in the stables. He added that he had an unreliable caretaker who toted a gun and had ventelated the walls with bullets. Geez. Mike then bought us refreshments and we left.

The trial was short. The D.A., the schmuck, reluctantly dropped charges and, after each of us paid the \$26 court charge, we left. Two weeks before I had paid \$44 for a speeding ticket in Virginia and by this time I was sick

of courts and fines. I smiled as I left, hoping never to contribute any more money to law enforcement agencies. When I got to my car, I found a manilla envelope with a charge for a parking violation stuck under the left wind-shield wiper. I paid the fine and drove back to school at 50mph.

I haven't written this because I am proud of what has happened or because I want to somehow gain instant fame. I try to avoid ego trips. I have written this to warn others at this college who might unknowingly find themselves in a similar predicament. Only next time, Mike Dixon might not be able to take time off from work.

If I can be showy with my religion for a moment, I would like to thank God for people like Mike Dixon and Detective Medford who gave hours and hours for five of us who needed a break. To a certain court official, I shake the dust off my sandals.

It's been one hell of an experience!

## Union Board Meets

Members of the College Union Board of Directors met on November 2 to discuss issues related directly to the student body. At the beginning of the meeting, Buzzy Scott gave a report about his trip to the Association of College Unions International Conference and announced that he was chosen to be the representative for the Eastern Tennessee/Western North Carolina district.

In the area of new business, the board decided to promote a special admission price for the Sunday night movie prior to Thanksgiving. The money given by the student body will be used to purchase food, clothing, and other needs for a few low-income families in the Mars Hill community. Each student is encouraged to make his Thanksgiving a meaningful one by supporting this event.

The main feature of the November 2 board meeting, however, was the ratification of the Program Budget for spring 1977. A total of \$18,241.00 is requested for expenses this spring by the following eight committees of

the College Union: (1) Coffee-house Committee--responsible for providing entertainment at least three times every two weeks--\$2,100; (2) College Union Board--responsible for intercollegiate travel, steering committee meetings, district travel--\$1,669; (3) Concert and Dance Committee--responsible for entertainment through music and alternative choices, such as movies, comedies--\$5,500; (4) Films Committee--responsible for Sunday night movies and special programs--\$2,832; (5) Outreach Committee--responsible for the development of the craft room, the special interest college classes, and spring fling--\$1,550; (6) Publicity Committee--responsible for promoting and advertising upcoming events--\$660; (7) Recreation Committee--responsible for indoor programs, outdoor programs, and travel to various tournaments--\$1,650; (8) Special Events Committee--responsible for a January ski trip, for events in the spring fling, and for miscellaneous events, such as trips to away basketball games--\$2,280.