

## D.U.I Bill - Useful Legislation or Hopeful Speculation?

Legislation is currently in the North Carolina legislature dealing with an important proposal: raising the legal drinking age for beer and wine from 18 to 19 years of age. The bill is being heavily pushed by Governor James Hunt, and current polls of N.C. legislators show that the general consensus favors the measure. It also includes a "Dram Shop" law, which would hold shopkeepers and bar operators liable for customers who drink and cause accidents from liquor attained at their establishment.

We feel the bill is well intentioned, is full of hopes and speculations, but has little value in cutting down on intoxicated drivers on the highways.

First of all, raising the legal limit is not going to stop 18-year-olds from attaining beer or wine. Case in point: Recently in Raleigh, N.C., a 17-year-old worked undercover for the FBI and went to 63 Raleigh stores attempting to purchase beer. Of those 63 stores, 60 gave him the stuff with no questions asked. Several stores checked his I.D. and gave him his beer anyway! The FBI has neither the time nor the money to crack down on every store in the state. Raleigh beer stores will be wary for a time, but this too, shall pass.

Secondly, you can't hold the bar liable for serving a man who decides to drive intoxicated. In the same thinking, the gun store is at fault for selling a gun to one who commits a murder with the same gun. The candy store is liable for Junior's cavities. The company who manufactured your skis is responsible for your broken leg. This is taking it to extremes, but it compares equally to the suggestions made by the Dram Shop proposal.

The second part of the Dram Shop law is nothing new. Stores are *supposed* to be liable for selling alcohol to minors. Bars are *supposed* to be liable for selling alcohol to minors. But are bartenders to keep a breathalyzer on each table so they know who's drunk and who isn't? Checking I.D.'s on customers is a simple, understandable thing to ask of a barkeeper. Keeping tabs on who's drunk and who's not is ridiculous.

Thirdly, we agree with the premise that "If they're old enough to be drafted, they're old enough to have a beer." How can society make a person eligible to fight and die in a war but then forbid him to have a drink? An 18-year-old American can vote in elections, but no brews for him. An 18-year-old can be tried, convicted and sentenced like any adult, but he's not old enough to drink a beer.

We realize there is a problem with drinking and driving fatalities on the highways, particularly among young people. We realize the more people you keep away from alcohol, the less people that will die on the roads.

But the new D.U.I bill isn't the answer. It's fantasy. It would be wonderful if everything fell into place like the legislation suggests, but it won't. We don't have the answer either. We don't know what could be done to suddenly clear up the drunk driving problem. We do know that hollow legislation that "looks good on paper" isn't the solution to such a serious problem.



## Letters To The Editor

### Athletics - No Wasted \$\$

Dear Editors,

In response to Mr. Smythe's letter to the editor in the last issue of *The Hilltop* entitled "Athletics - Too Much Wasted \$," I would like to respond. Mr. Smythe seems to feel that too much money is wasted on athletics at Mars Hill. I disagree.

First of all, scholarships given to athletes do not come from student's tuition or out of the academic budget. Scholarships are given by the school itself. Mars Hill just allows these individuals to come for a reduced price. This in no way takes money from academics. Scholarships allow these students the opportunity to earn their way through Mars Hill by representing the college in athletic events.

Second, another major portion of money that makes up the athletic budget is donated by the loyal members of our Golden M Club. These people contribute to athletics at Mars Hill, and this money cannot be used for any other purpose. With this in mind, I just cannot understand where all of this money is being wasted.

Also, because of our athletic teams, students are drawn to Mars Hill. There are students at Mars Hill now that would not be here if not for our athletic program, and I am one of those. Plus, when Mars Hill gives an athlete a partial scholarship, the athlete must pay the other portion which is revenue for the college.

In response to your quip concerning athlete's Grade Point Average, how can you attack our athletes considering the amount of time they spend practicing their respective sports, while also spending many hours away from campus representing Mars Hill College. Also, Mr. Smythe, did you bother to check and consider that our athletes are required to attend study halls? For instance, our basketball players must spend two and a half hours Sunday through Thursday, while the football players spend approximately two hours. By the way, Mr. Smythe, what is our teams average GPA? I doubt very seriously if you know.

There is more to college life than term papers and tests. To many students, athletics is another major portion. With all that athletics has to offer Mars Hill, even in these times of economic trouble, we should consider increasing the actual athletic budget. After all, it is one of, if not the best, student recruiting systems available.

My response to you, Mr. Smythe, is that you shouldn't write letters about subjects which you obviously know nothing about.

I think Dr. Lenburg, in his letter in last issue of *The Hilltop*, put it best: "ROAR LIONS ROAR!"

- Jeff Southall

## Thank You To Students

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the lovely mum and sharing our grief during this heart-breaking time. We find comfort in knowing that Scott was happy at Mars Hill, enjoyed being a part of student government. God's love and the love and concern of Scott's many friends are carrying us through each day. Our love goes to each of you.

- Bob and Lois Me

Dear Friends,

Kimberly and her family are so grateful for your many kindnesses and lovely yellow pocketbook plant. Many visits and calls have meant much to us. Thank you for your continued prayers and concern.

In His love,  
Doris Worthington

-Turn To Page

Letters to the Editor are welcome and must be signed and include address and telephone number. Name may be withheld at the discretion of the editor.

Copies of THE HILLTOP may be obtained in the Bridges Cafeteria, the page's desk in Wren College Union, the campus Bookstore, the front desk at Memorial Library, the floor of Cornwell, and Marshbanks Hall. Faculty copies are picked up in the mail room in Blackwell Hall. If you would like a copy of THE HILLTOP, please drop by the Hilltop office in the bottom of Wren College Union behind the Hilltop. THE HILLTOP is published bi-monthly.

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## THE HILLTOP

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