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## Burma human rights activist speaks at NCSSM

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Recently, Omar Khin, a Burmese human rights activist, visited NCSSM to remind students that they can make a difference in the world. As a student at a university in Burma, she fought the harsh military rule of Burmese General Saw Maung and is still fighting as a political refugee in the United States.

"Burmese students have always been involved in the search for democracy," said Khin. They led the rebellion against the British in 1948 that produced the independent and democratic nation of Burma.

Khin became involved in the struggle for democracy when the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) took over the Burmese government in 1988. The coup's first action was to bomb a student union and break up a student demonstration with force.

Opposition to the new government was led by Aung San Suu Kyi, a Burmese woman who founded the National League for Democracy (NLD) and gave speeches against SLORC. In response to Kyi's popularity, SLORC placed her under house arrest in 1989, where she stayed until 1995.

Khin and other students have also worked in democratic resistance groups. Their protest has been peaceful but "the only way our government responded was with violence," Khin said.

"[The Burmese people] are beaten, raped, and robbed," said Khin. Each family also had to contribute a man to the government to do what was essentially slave labor in order to beautify Burma for the tourists SLORC was expecting in 1996. They are also being used to build a pipeline across Burma into

Thailand to attract oil companies.

Khin and other Burmese political refugees are asking American students to boycott PepsiCo, Texaco, Unocal, and other companies which retain their ties with Burma even though they are aware of the human rights abuses taking place. The movement is spreading rapidly over the internet and on college campuses.

USA Today reported on Apr. 29 that PepsiCo has decided to pull out of Burma. This was prompted in part by Pepsi contracts being cancelled on major college campuses such as Harvard and Stanford and boycotts pending elsewhere.

Khin is asking for NCSSM students to get involved as well by writing letters to US government officials such as the US ambassador from Myanmar (SLORC's re-naming of Burma), President Clinton, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and the State Department, Bureau of Consular Affairs, which issues travel information on every country in the world. She also urges letters to the companies that are ignoring SLORC's human rights record.

"[The year of tourism] has not gone as well as the government had planned," said Khin. SLORC had hoped for 500,000 tourists, but the rest of the world is finding out about the government's abusive actions and people are deciding not to come.

For more information about SLORC's abuses and how to get involved, Khin can be reached by e-mail at "freeburma@aol.com". The Free Burma homepages are located at <http://sunsite.unc.edu/freeburma/freeburma.html> and <http://danenet.wicip.org/fbc/freeburma.html>.

## Year in Review:

# What a long strange year it's been

Katie Mitlich  
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Features Editor/Staff Writer

1995-'96 will not be remembered as just another school year. It has been a time of adjustment for juniors and a final memory of high school for seniors. The changes, tragedies, and excitements of this year were part of a special experience for both groups.

One adjustment made this year was the **Hill-Bryan dorm switch**. At the beginning of the school year, Hill became a male dormitory and Bryan a female dormitory. This reverts the dorms back to the status they held several years ago. Students had many problems with the switch at the end of last year, but seemed to adapt well to the change. The move created a segregated campus. Male students occupy the Hill-Hunt area of campus, while the Beall, Bryan, Reynolds complex became all female.

**Federal government**



Seniors line up for the senior picture in front of Watts. For all it is the end of over 12 years of hard schooling and a chance to look ahead.

Leonard Tran

**shutdowns** were another big story early in the year. NCSSM students were most directly affected by the shutdowns through the financial aid process. Government closures delayed the processing of the FAFSA for seniors at NCSSM and across the country.

Another area of change this school year was in **discipline**

**procedures**. Early in the fall, the **mugging** of an NCSSM student on his way to Revco after dark brought up questions about the effectiveness of the sign-out process, and led to stricter controls on signing out, especially after dark.

In March the expulsion of three students in three days cast *continued on page 3*

## Students impressed with prom

Akua Asare  
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Staff Writer/Features Editor

Music, dancing, food, excitement...What more could you ask for from a prom?

On May 11, 1996, the Armory was packed with over 150 students dancing the night away. From REM selections to Unchained Melody students were impressed with the night's music. "The variety of music was good," said Junior Shilpa Gadani. "There was something for everybody."

Although the prom lasted only four hours, a lot of time and commitment went into preparing for it. "A total of six hours were spent the night before the prom to prepare for the day's activity along with weeks of preparation before the actual event," said Senior Susan Smith, a member of the Prom Committee.

Many students were impressed with the hard work that was put into prom this year. Senior

Marshall Blango said, "All I know is that this year the decorations were a lot nicer. Last year [prom committee] had a piece of paper up that had some ugly drawings that were supposed to be the 'Crystal Nile.' This year Prom Committee actually took their time."

Students purchased tickets this year for five dollars more than last year's. While part of the additional cost was spent for better decorations, many complained about the cost of prom tickets being five dollars more than last year's. "The decorations were not too bad," said Junior Brooke Kellas. "I only wish they had cheaper prom tickets. They were really expensive."

Not only did many prom-goers like the decorations, many were pleased with the prom overall. "Prom went really well this year," said Senior Paul Nystrom. "Not only was the DJ great, but the chocolate covered strawberries were good, as well."

Junior Tomika Wilson commented on the success of the prom. "I liked seeing everyone

dressed up, looking nice. I'll probably go next year because of the quality of this year's."

While a lot of individuals worked hard to make prom a success, an equal amount of effort went into making after prom activities successful.

"I thought After-Prom went really well. We achieved the goal we had set for it - keeping a large number of students safe and on-campus," said Senior Gabriella Allen, head of After-Prom Committee. "We wanted to make After-Prom a worthwhile experience and had a greater turn-out than expected."

Many students decided to stay off-campus after prom, however. "A couple of friends and I went to a friend's nearby lake house. I can't tell you how much we enjoyed ourselves - good, clean fun!" said Senior Molly McNairy.

Prom proved to be a success for those who attended. "It was great being with my friends. Any excuse to get dressed up and dance is a good idea," said Allen.

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