



# A change of purpose

(Reprinted from the Daily Tar Heel Nov. 17, 1971.)

Social institutions and traditions of UNC are taking a beating of late. Many students claim they are dead. Others maintain they are dying. Traditionalists argue both are still operative and faring quite well, thank you.

But one point seems valid. The social institutions and traditions have lost their original purpose. Many have found new purposes. Those which have not are on the brink of becoming obsolete.

Take them in order: fraternities and sororities, the homecoming football game, dances, concerts, dating and dormitories.

**THE FRATERNITY** system once enjoyed popular sovereignty on this campus. To wear a Greek letter was to be the apple of a sister sorority's eye. It was a symbol of brotherhood, friends pledged to common causes and ideals. There was community effort towards delicately mixing academics and fun (sometimes not so delicately) and social intermingling — new friends, lifelong associates, contacts.

No time for that now. The 1971 student has declared himself an individual apart from the brotherhood. The larger community has broken down into many smaller ones. Friends are contacts, they are chosen at the discretion of personal tastes, not by contractual agreements.

Goodbye fraternities and sororities.

The homecoming football game was **THE DAY** on campus. Football players got cheers from the stands and cheers in the locker room. "Do it for the Gipper, Choo Choo." Parades clogged downtown traffic, floats lined the sidelines, and, oh, the crowning glory of the homecoming queen. The parties, the imported dates, the liquor.

"**THERE'S A WAR** going on, man. What about poverty? What about civil rights? A homecoming football game is irrelevant. Too many pressing issues that are more important. And look at the bod they've chosen to be homecoming queen. Rank chauvinism is what it is. You aren't going to catch me dressing up in some monkey suit for some giggling broad. No money for a corsage, for God's sake."

Goodbye homecoming football game.

The Tin Can was once called the most useful building on campus. It served many purposes, but alumni remember it best in connection with the **BIG DANCE**. Guy Lombardo's appearance

there in the thirties packed the couples onto the floor. This campus used to swing.

The **BIG DANCE** gave way to the little dance at frat parties, dorm mixers and nightclubs. And these have given way to no dances. When the dances slowed down so did enthusiasm for dancing.

Goodbye dances.

**THE NATURAL** replacement for the dance was the concert. And this tradition still draws large crowds. But they will wane. Too many problems.

Jubilee fell because of the mess and gate crashers. Gatecrashers are a problem at coliseum concerts. Trouble with name groups puts the number of concerts on the decline. People come to hear music that evaporates into noise at Carmichael auditorium. The concerts cost a lot of money. They're here now, but how much longer?

Goodbye concerts.

Dates used to be challenges of male virility pitted against girlish submission. Too much sophistication nowadays. Free love, free sex, birth control pills take away the challenge. Ideals have changed, too.

Goodbye dating.

**DORMITORIES WERE** study rooms and playhouses. Anybody for a poker game? Finished by studies, how about a water fight? Pillow fight? But campus political organizations were winding down to the dormitory level and the playhouses soon found themselves wrapped in bureaucratic protocol. The hall clown was replaced by the hall president, the dorm partier by the dorm social chairman. Organizing, organizing everywhere in the dorm. And off-campus housing is just a tad more comfortable and about as cheap.

Goodbye dormitories.

Undoubtedly, these traditions and social institutions will be replaced only if new purposes are not introduced. If frats and sororities cater to individuality, they will remain. If the homecoming football game is played on behalf of charity fund raising campaigns or poverty, it will remain. When the new meaning of dating is understood, then dancing will return. And so on.

It is not the social institution and tradition that is dying. It is their purpose.

## pages of opinion

UNCC

Opinions of the *Journal* are expressed on its editorial pages. All unsigned editorials are the majority opinion of the Editorial Board. Letters and columns represent only the opinions of the individual writers. Opposing editorial viewpoints may be printed by contacting the Editor.

charlie peek

# The Christmas Greening of the Avenue

With Madison Avenue guiding and gilding all aspects of our lives from the cradle to the grave, it comes as no divine revelation to realize that Christmas, along with underarm protection, mouthwash and love, is marketable.

It is not enough that capitalism, the shining product of democracy and God, soaks all it can from the deepest of human emotions and feelings for humanity. No, they must go deeper still and pervert one of the few honorable traditions left in the Western world.

If anything brings home to man the feeling that he's living in a plastic make-believe world, in which he is even made to think that an extra dose of humanity lasts only from Thanksgiving to New Year's, it is the gross exploitation of Christmas.

I cannot help but believe that it must do something to a child's character, something far reaching and pervasive, to go see Santa Claus in a modern department store. The poor kid has to stand in line for close to half an hour listening to other mothers shout at their "brats" to keep quiet and keep still or Santa Claus won't bring them anything (another Christian-American dogma of do good-get something, do bad-lose out). Then he's propped up on the old guy's lap, given a piece of candy and is expected to pour out his fondest desires at the drop of a hat, with dozens of people staring at him and grinning like idiots.

Thirty seconds on Santa's knee, then a flashbulb pops and he's dragged over to the cash register to wait for his parents to pay for the pictures. Standing there listening to the cash register ring over and over, all in anticipation of the day when he can tear into \$200 worth of presents. It has to do something to a child's value system. Twenty years from now, what will be his fondest memories of childhood Christmases.

Whether you're a Christian or not, one should still be able to enjoy the season. It's ideally a time for fellowship, goodwill, peace, oranges, Brazil nuts, and fireplaces. But just work in a retail store over the Christmas holidays. People come in like



hungry wolves looking for ANYTHING that will fit their budgets and keep them from losing face with their friends and relatives. I worked at K-Mart one Christmas (a mistake) and at closing time on Christmas Eve people were still beating down the doors, trying to buy, buy, buy. Working at a cash register, I saw so much green, I almost got seasick. Yuletide is measured in neckties and cologne.

But invariably, some bonehead will counter with: "What about all the 'Christmas Spirit' that surrounds everything and everyone?"

Any person who is a true Christian or even a convicted humanitarian will feel no all pervading, Damascus Road, divine 'Spirit' solely at Christmas. From what I understand of Christianity, a "Christmas Spirit" should be present throughout the year. Having a longing for peppermint candy and eggnog is a far cry from a true commitment to goodwill and peace that the "Spirit" is proposed to be.

So what's one to do to shed the plastic, \$1.99 coating of Madison Ave. Christianity-Capitalism. One could simply ignore it altogether. This can save much frustration and even promote some amusement for yourself.

However, if one is bound and determined to get something personal out of the season, I suggest a few possibilities: 1) buy a real, live, authentic GREEN tree, 2) decorate it with homemade decorations, regardless of how ugly or simple they may be (you'll still be proud of them), 3) MAKE a present for someone special, with your own two, grubby, hot little hands, 4) give a toy to a child who might not get one. I don't mean give it to the Marines or the Salvation Army; I mean give it directly to him and just watch his face. 5) don't stay in a department store more than 15 minutes at a time, 6) bake some cookies on Christmas Eve (even if you can't eat them, just sit there and look at them).

These are only a few suggestions. Try one or two and you might be inspired to think up some more of your own. Have a Happy Christmas. Shalom.