

Police Face Class-Action Suit

Officials say 70 percent of motorists stopped by the Maryland police for traffic violations are minorities.

By JENNIFER HAGIN
Staff Writer

The Maryland State Police Department's legal problems regarding alleged racial profiling by troopers have recently escalated.

The American Civil Liberties Union filed a motion Wednesday requesting class-action status on its lawsuit accusing the department of stopping motorists because of their race.

The issue, known informally as "driving while black," has raised eyebrows nationwide, including North Carolina.

Deborah Jeon, a managing attorney for the ACLU, said minorities made up 70 percent of traffic stops in Maryland.

Jeon said they have been gathering evidence and plaintiffs for several years in order to bring a class-action suit against the police department.

"It's the natural next step in litigation," she said.

In 1995, the police department settled a lawsuit with the ACLU alleging an officer stopped a black motorist and searched his car for no apparent reason.

As a settlement condition, the police

department promised not to engage in racial profiling.

Jeon said although a class-action suit complicated the case, it was more efficient and eliminated duplicate cases.

For these reasons, she said it was likely the suit would achieve class-action status.

"I think (the odds) are strong in our favor," Jeon said.

Fifteen plaintiffs are named in the lawsuit. Jeon said 60 to 70 motorists have come forward already, and more are expected.

Hilary Shelton, Washington, D.C., bureau chief for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said 72 percent of all people stopped in the United States are black.

even though they only make up 17 percent of the driving population.

"This is a huge problem," he said. The "huge problem" has also hit close to home.

On Jan. 1, an N.C. state law went into effect, mandating the collection of data from traffic stops made by state agencies, such as the N.C. Highway Patrol, to see if racial profiling was a problem.

Sen. Frank Ballance, D-Bertie, said he

sponsored the bill after hearing of other instances of "driving while black."

Ballance said that although some police possibly practice racial profiling when stopping motorists, he thinks a small percentage of police are racist.

"Many have a good motive in mind," he said.

"But some misuse their power."

Ballance said the law should curb the use of racial profiling within state agencies. The bill does not apply to local police departments.

He said there were plans to propose a bill within a year enacting the same requirements on local police departments.

"The mere fact that the spotlight is on them will stop them," he said.

Highway Patrol 1st Sgt. Jeff Winstead said the highway patrol did not discriminate when it made stops.

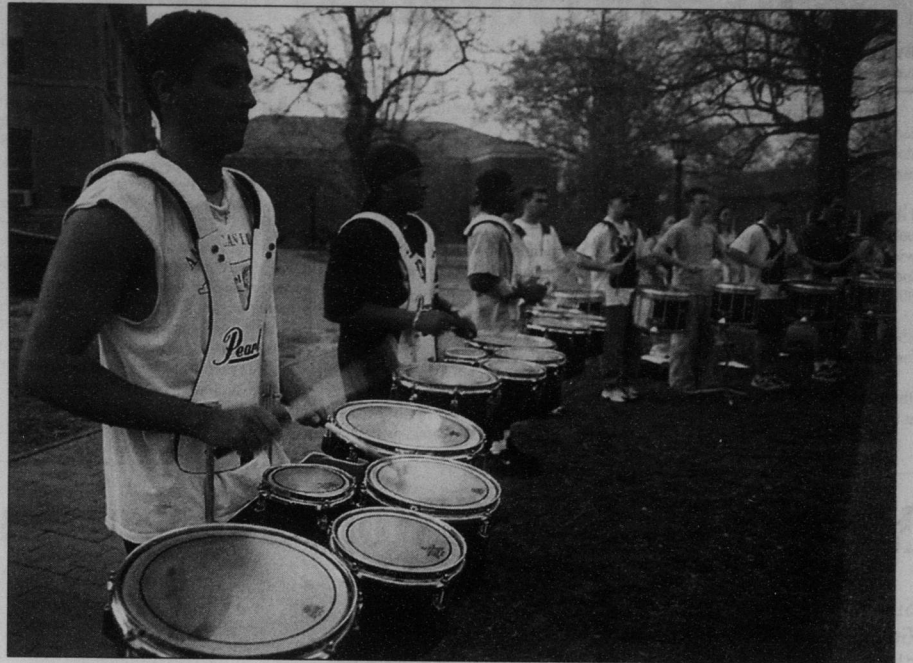
Winstead said the patrol collected data from the past two years and the number of citations showed no evidence of racial profiling. "The citations were a mirror image of the state's population."

The State & National Editor can be reached at stntdesk@unc.edu.

"Many (police officers) have a good motive. ... But some misuse their power."

SEN. FRANK BALLANCE
D-Bertie

LITTLE DRUMMER BOY



Junior Philip Salib practices on his quads with the UNC drum line Thursday evening. The group is rehearsing for "Rhythm Alive," a performance that uses traditional drums as well as items such as trash cans to create a unique percussion sound. The show is free and will be held at 7 p.m. April 11 in Hill Hall.

Professors Sue for Racial Discrimination

Five white professors at Livingstone College claim the predominately black school is racially intolerant.

By RACHEL LEONARD
Staff Writer

Claiming widespread racial discrimination, five white professors at Livingstone College in Salisbury are suing the school.

Livingstone is a historically black college in Rowan County with an enrollment of about 800 students.

The professors claim they were the victims of verbal harassment and passed-over promotions and tenure.

Livingstone's President Burnett Joiner, a black man, stepped down last month after the professors filed suit, but said their allegations of racial discrimination were unfounded. "I do not condone racism," he said. "I regret those professors would say that," Joiner said.

One potential piece of evidence against the administration, which one professor alleged was "the smoking gun," was a document outlining the college's future developmental plans.

"It's very clear that the plan is to remove non-African Americans and replace them with African Americans,"

said Robert Russ, an associate English professor and one of the five plaintiffs. "White professors are not welcome in positions of responsibility. (These issues) are just the tip of the iceberg."

School officials would not comment on the professors' allegations.

But Russ said Joiner knew what was going on. "He perpetuated the atmosphere," he said.

Associate Psychology Professor Robert MacKinnon said he thought Joiner's resignation was suspicious. "I think more has been going on than has been revealed - why else would they get rid of a president in the middle of the year?"

But Joiner's position differs.

"I have simply decided to do something else - it was not the most opportune time, but it became something I felt that needed to happen," he said.

Russ said he and several colleagues complained about mistreatment for years and were ignored by the administration, including Joiner. "His typical response was, 'let's get together next week and talk about it,'" Russ said.

Arthur Steinberg, assistant history professor, also sued the school recently. Shortly after he filed suit, he was notified that he would be dismissed at the end of the Spring 2000 semester. Steinberg said he had experienced racial discrimination countless times. He claimed his for-

mer division chair, Frank Perry, a black man, referred to him using racial slurs.

Perry allegedly suggested that white people tried to destroy black schools and made anti-Semitic references to Steinberg, labeling him a trouble-maker and calling him godless. Steinberg alleged that he reported the incidents but nothing was done.

Perry was contacted, but he refused to comment.

Steinberg also alleged that his car was repeatedly vandalized while parked at the school, and he had also been threatened after he decided to sue by a black co-worker's husband.

"(The husband) said he had three big sons and he was doing all he could to hold them back - and that I better have good insurance," Steinberg said.

MacKinnon, who is white, sued for similar reasons. MacKinnon said he and another white professor conducted a research project dealing with race.

"The division chair called us in and said he didn't want two white professors doing anti-black research, which is a direct violation of academic freedom," MacKinnon said.

Russ said he, along with MacKinnon and Steinberg, was also denied tenure after teaching at Livingstone for 10, eight and 11 years, respectively.

The American Association of University Professors advocates tenure

within seven years of teaching.

"(These things are) a just violation of our school's proper procedures - that's the most offensive thing," Russ said.

But Livingstone Senior Christopher Turner said Joiner was a good president for the school. "I was personally upset by (his resignation) - many students here were," he said.

Turner said he had not witnessed any racial discrimination on campus, but that could be because more than 99 percent of Livingstone students were black.

Dr. Dan Pollitt, a retired UNC Kenan Law Professor, said the white professors could sue Livingstone College under Title 7 of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, stating that it is unlawful for any employer to discriminate on the basis of race, sex and other factors.

Pollitt cited a similar case in 1992, in which a white professor sued Raleigh's St. Augustine's College for discrimination. The school was found guilty and fined \$560,000.

MacKinnon said he was still teaching at Livingstone for now. Although he alleged that school officials were trying to turn students against him, he said most remained supportive.

"I'll constantly have a student say to me, 'Hang in there, Dr. MacKinnon.'"

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Improvements Garner 7th Place for Web Site

One college Web site credits its popularity to an unusual search engine used to look for extraterrestrial life.

By JESSICA CHISM
Staff Writer

Recent improvements have moved the UNC Web site to seventh on a list of the seven most-visited university sites in the nation.

The list, released late last week, was compiled by Top9.com, a directory that ranks Web sites based on the number of visitors.

UNC's February ranking improved on January's eighth-place results.

John Oberlin, director of UNC's Academic Technology & Networks, said the University's site fared well primarily because of recent improvements. "The site has always had good functions,

such as checking grades and application status," he said. "But recently, we have worked to make it more organized and aesthetically pleasing.

"I think the improvements are one of the main reasons people have begun to take notice of the site."

Also on the list was University of California-Berkeley, which ranked first for the fourth month in a row.

UC-Berkeley Webmaster Andrew Baldock said he credited the popularity of the site to an option enabling users to search for extraterrestrial life.

Berkeley has the only university Web site in the country offering the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence function.

SETI allows users to download software for monitoring signals from space, which could indicate the presence of intelligent life.

"SETI is the leading reason for the rankings," Baldock said. "The chance to participate in alien life is pretty intriguing to most people."

He said that although the Berkeley site has had more than 50,000 visitors per day, the university was still looking to improve the site. "We are about to upgrade in a major way," Baldock said. "The improvements should make the site easier to use."

Top9.com President Dan Bohan said certain university sites were more popular than others for several reasons. He said the easier a site was to navigate, the more people it would attract.

"The fewer clicks to get to the information, the better," he said.

Bohan said Top9.com did not examine the organization and accessibility of each site but only monitored the popularity of Web sites. He said Top9.com used a system similar to the Nielsen rating system for television programs.

"We look at 105,000 selected individuals and what sites they visit," he said. "This allows us to determine what sites are the most popular among users."

Bohan said this system had proved to be the most effective method for ranking Web sites. "It is very, very accurate," he said. "We have tested this against other operations, and it works."

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Rhythm of a Culture, Past and Present

American Indian students embrace an ancient ritual and battle stereotypes through cultural expression.

By ALICIA PETERS
Staff Writer

A first-time spectator walking into the Great Hall during a powwow Feb. 26 would immediately recognize the difference between the scene before them and the stereotypical American Indian dancing shown on television.

The only sound heard throughout the room was the intense pounding of drums providing the beat while dancers solemnly swept around the circle.

Dancers wore various types of outfits. One woman in a purple dress covered with little bells jingled serenely around the circle.

"A powwow is when Native Americans dress in regalia, and they dance in an arena-type circle," said Alicia Chavis, a member of the Lumbee tribe and a sophomore who helped coordinate the powwow.

The Carolina Indian Circle, which began in 1974, hosts the powwow each year. The CIC was created for the fewer than 10 American Indian students who attended UNC at the time.

Today, the CIC is run by 30 of the 150 American Indian students at the University.

Powwows originated many years ago as a means of settling protracted disputes within tribes.

Lynette Jeffries, whose husband is a member of the Occaneechi tribe, was at the recent powwow on campus and told the detailed history of the event.

Jeffries said according to American Indian lore, a medicine man named Pow Wow settled differences. Whole-tribes would go to his village with their

problems and would not leave until the problems were settled. Once he settled the disputes, the tribe would celebrate with dance.

Today, tribe members participate in powwows by dancing, watching or selling various goods.

Surrounding the circle in the Great Hall were vendors selling various handmade American Indian items including jewelry, dreamcatchers and moccasins.

Vendors at the powwow said they learned about events by a newsletter, "Tip of the Feather." The publication prints the locations of all powwows in the area. Once there, vendors absorb American Indian culture by watching dancers from the sidelines while they sell their goods.

"I see the people on TV, and it is nothing like real life," said Lady Hawk, who sells handcrafted jewelry.

Television often portrays American Indian dancing by showing feathered, headdressed and scantily clad natives dancing around a fire while chanting.

But at this powwow, dancers were silent and solemn as they made their way around the circle.

While the dancing is not choreographed, some technique is involved. "I learned by watching and letting the drum take my feet," Jeffries said.

But other than studying older dancers, some powwow participants learned to dance in their own way. "It is just inside of you," said Dancing Otter, a member of the Cherokee tribe.

For some dances, people from the audience were invited to join the circle.

Tonia Jacobs, a freshman from Lake Waccamaw and member of the

Waccamawsiowan tribe, said that although guests were invited to join the circle, not just anyone should start dancing because the circle was sacred.

"It's a matter of knowing what you are doing," Jacobs said. "You disrespect everybody if you don't."

Powwows are important to some participants because they want to honor their heritage or be with people who make them feel comfortable.

"It's the best opportunity to be with extended family," said Lindsey Lambert, who has connections with the Cherokee tribe.

"A powwow is when Native Americans dress in regalia, and they dance in an arena-type circle."

ALICIA CHAVIS
Lumbee Tribe Member

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