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Committee: University Needs Dual Labor Ties

By ARMAN ANVARI
Staff Writer

After vigorous and occasionally contentious debate, a University committee decided unanimously Wednesday to recommend that UNC accept membership in two labor monitoring groups.

Following weeks of controversy, the Licensing Labor Code Advisory Committee voted to recommend to the chancellor that UNC remain in the Fair Labor Association and conditionally join the Worker Rights Consortium.

Interim Chancellor Bill McCoy will attempt to make the final decision with regard to membership in both organizations by April 3.

"I think what (the recommendation) signifies is a willingness of the various members of the committee and hopefully the larger community to work on this issue together," said committee Co-chairman Rut Tufts. "Of course this is just a recommendation to the chancellor. We'll have to see what he does."

Students for Economic Justice, the student organization that pressed for

WRC membership, does not favor the committee's recommendation, said Todd Pugatch, an SEJ member and one of three student members on the advisory committee.

SEJ members met with McCoy Tuesday to persuade him to end UNC's ties with the FLA and join the WRC.

"(The recommendation) may not be a position that SEJ as an organization agrees with, but it definitely is not going to forestall activism on their part," Pugatch said.

Wednesday's meeting began with a

roundtable tally of each member's opinion of four options: joining both the WRC and the FLA, joining only the WRC, joining only the FLA or enrolling in neither group.

The FLA is a nonprofit organization comprised of apparel and footwear companies, labor rights groups and universities.

The WRC is a group of companies, universities and nongovernmental organizations recently formed with student input that claims it can better protect workers' rights at factories that produce

university apparel.

The committee's eventual decision to recommend both groups was surprising, considering that in the initial discussion, most committee members were either indifferent toward or staunchly opposed to WRC membership.

"I think that the WRC goes against one of the principles that was set out - working in concert with manufacturers to bring about change," said Director of Athletics Dick Baddour, who attended

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Court: Fees Don't Limit Free Speech

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that student activity fees could be used for political campus groups.

Staff & Wire Reports

WASHINGTON - Public colleges and universities can use money from mandatory student fees to finance campus groups engaging in political speech some students find objectionable, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled Wednesday.

The court voted unanimously to uphold the University of Wisconsin's student-fee system, which the justices said did not violate any student's free-speech rights.

And while some University of Wisconsin students were happy with the decision, saying it allowed equal rights for all student groups, supporters of limitations on fees said the decision was unfair to students who objected to some ideological groups.

Had the justices ruled the other way, public colleges and universities across America would have had to stop giving money to controversial student groups or figure out some way to give partial refunds to students who wanted them.

"The First Amendment permits a public university to charge its students an activity fee used to fund a program to facilitate extracurricular student speech if the program is viewpoint neutral," Justice Anthony M. Kennedy wrote.

Several law students objected to having some of their money funneled to liberal organizations. Their lawsuit identified as objectionable 18 of the 125 subsidized campus groups, including the International Socialist Organization.

Scott Southworth, the lead plaintiff and now an attorney, said in a recent interview with The Associated Press, "As a conservative and a Christian, it was frustrating to see the money going to organizations I disagree with."

David Muhammad, chairman of UW's student government diversity committee, said he was very surprised and happy with the Supreme Court's decision. "It was like cold water on my face early in the morning," Muhammad said. "I was shocked."

Muhammad said the decision gave a boost to the confidence level of UW's student government, which had fought for the university's right to allocate fees

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TEARING DOWN THE CLOSET

From entertainment to legislation, the gay movement is forging ahead.

By KATHLEEN WIRTH
Staff Writer

Rock Hudson spent a lifetime hiding his homosexuality, fearful the secret would jeopardize his image as a 1950s sex symbol.

After rumors circulated among the Hollywood elite, Hudson's agent quickly married him off to secretary Phyllis Gates in 1955. Predictably, the union fell apart within three years.

But almost half of a century later, gay and lesbian celebrities refuse to be trapped in the closet - indicative of not only a heightened visibility of homosexuality for mainstream America, but an increased aggressiveness within the movement as well.

Indigo Girls musicians Amy Ray and Emily Saliers nationally exited the closet in 1994. Actress and comedienne Ellen DeGeneres' famous 1997 coming out episode of her sitcom "Ellen," followed by an emphatic Time magazine cover declaring "Yep, I'm Gay," spawned "coming out" parties across the nation.

Kevin Williamson, director and creator of the teen-drama sensa-

tion "Dawson's Creek," publicly came out in the papers earlier this year.

This trend, which signals an unprecedented acceptance by the mass media, has pushed Generation Y to deal with a full-blown gay rights movement that neither Hudson nor his agent could have imagined.

After his film, "The Next Best Thing," premiered second at the box office this month, grossing more than \$5.9 million in ticket sales, actor Rupert Everett became a sex symbol to both genders.

But, unlike his counterpart Hudson, Everett can embrace his sexuality both on the screen and off - revealing the evolving attitude of widespread tolerance for gays, lesbians and transgenders.

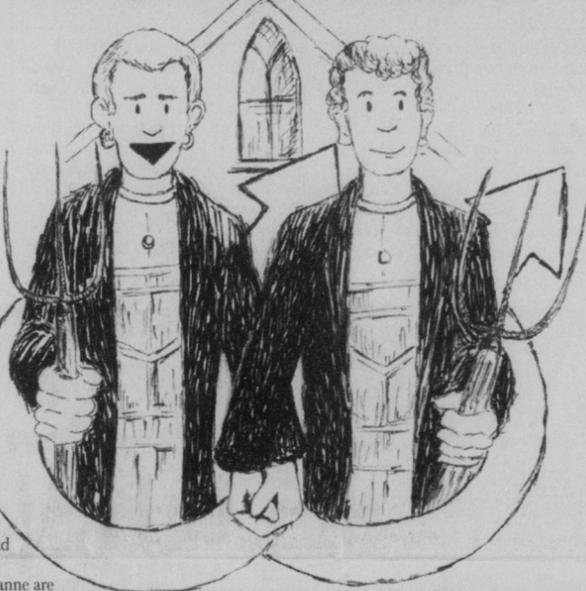
Now, cultural icons like Ally McBeal and Roseanne are locking lips with their female friends, and a gay man, not diamonds, is a girl's best friend on "Will and Grace." And as the token black sitcom character is replaced by the gay neighbor, mainstream America, whether it likes it or not, is tuning in to a newly powerful gay culture.

"Once you see gays on national TV depicted as everyday individuals, people realize these fears are unsubstantiated," said Glenn Grossman, president of Carolina Alternative Meetings of Professional and Graduate Students. "It's pushing the people who are anti-gay out of the mainstream and exposing them as bigots."

But beyond the pop-culture arena, area gay and lesbian youth say legal acceptance of homosexuality continues to plague the movement.

Chris Allen, a gay graduate student in the School of Public Health, said the popularity of gay-oriented films which star openly gay actors, have been a double-edged sword. "Even though you think, on the surface, everything's OK, but the fact is that gays don't have equal rights of the federal level in terms of marriage and job security," he said. But activists say the movement advanced through small steps toward tolerance that transcend the attitudes of mass media.

In 1969, hundreds of enraged gays and lesbians, frustrated by what they perceived as unfounded harassment by police, stormed the streets of New York City in violent protest, resulting in 13 arrests and four injured police officers. After police raided the Stonewall Inn, a popular Greenwich Village gay bar, about 400



youth laid siege to the tavern with an impromptu battering ram, shouting "Gay Power" and "We want our freedom."

Gays and lesbians had finally fought back.

To many, the Stonewall riots catalyzed the modern gay movement, leading to the formation of support groups nationwide, Grossman said. "Stonewall was incredibly violent, but it also created visibility for (issues affecting homosexuals)," he said.

In sharp contrast to the New York riots, the 1980s outbreak of AIDS, first viewed as a gay disease, unintentionally opened closet doors as thousands literally fought for their lives. "People had nothing to lose by coming out because they were going to die anyways," Grossman said. "AIDS really helped gays come out."

As details surrounding Hudson's death of AIDS-related complications in 1985 surfaced, the American public faced the unfortunate reality of a disease which knew no boundaries and the hidden homosexuality of a man considered by many to be the epitome of male virility.

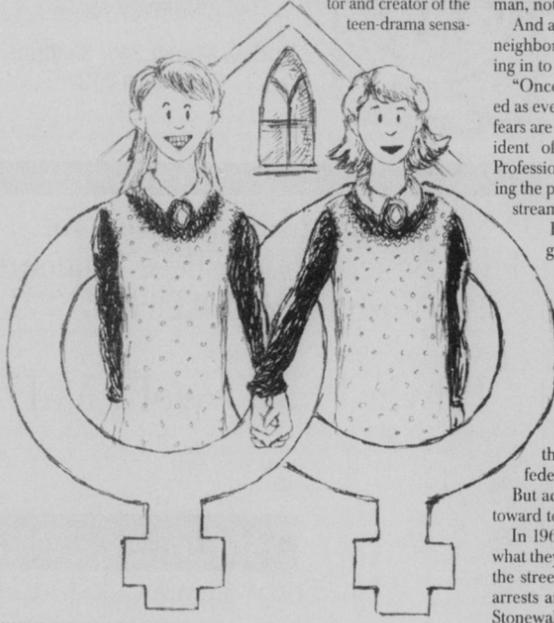
Since the onset of AIDS and during the aftermath of the Stonewall riots, America's youth has rejected open harassment, a generally accepted reaction against homosexuality. Maia Kaplan, chairwoman of UNC's Queer Network for Change, said Generation Y, through its own activism and awareness, has curbed violent homophobic responses.

"More and more people are finding that kind of harassment against gays unacceptable," she said. "The younger generation feels

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Part four of a 10-part series examining the issues that will face our generation in the coming millennium.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES PHARR

Nun Recounts Long Walk With Death Row Inmates

By GEOFF WESSEL
Staff Writer

A renowned lecturer who spiritually guided several death row inmates through the last minutes before their executions addressed a packed crowd in Memorial Hall auditorium Tuesday night.

Sister Helen Prejean, author of "Dead Man Walking," recounted her experiences as spiritual adviser to death row inmates and how meeting the "victims of the state" led her to form a strong stance against the death penalty.

Her speech, co-sponsored by the Campus Y and the Campaign to End the Death Penalty, was part of the University's Death Penalty Week.

"We are going to change this when we wake up and see what's happening," Prejean said. "We are going to change this the way we changed slavery and other injustices in this country."

Prejean maintained that regardless of the method of execution, the death penalty should be considered torture, which she said Amnesty International defined as "an extreme mental or physical assault against someone who has been made defenseless."

But she said people were torn about whether executing death row inmates really compensated for their crimes. "On the one hand, we have the outrage we feel when we hear about these terrible crimes," she said. "But on the other hand, we have the principles of not wanting to have people tortured and killed by the state."

Killing a murderer only creates another victim, she said.

Prejean moved the audience to tears as she described one death row inmate saying goodbye to

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Sister Helen Prejean speaks to a packed house at Memorial Hall on Wednesday evening. Prejean, author of "Dead Man Walking," was spiritual adviser to five death row inmates.

DTH/LAURA GIOVANELLI

We love without reason, and without reason we hate.

Jean-François Regnard

INSIDE Thursday

Repairs in Progress

The N.C. Botanical Gardens received a flood of anonymous donations Wednesday to help repair the historical Old Well gazebo that was destroyed this week. See Page 3.

Open Up a Can of ...

The baseball team broke its four-game losing streak Wednesday with a 25-2 pounding of Towson. Ryan Earey led the Tar Heel charge by blasting a pair of home runs and tying a career high with seven RBI. See Page 11.

You Know You Want It

Take the helm and lead The Daily Tar Heel into the next millennium. Apply to be the next editor. Applications are available in the DTH front office and are due by noon Friday. For more information, contact current Editor Rob Nelson at rnelson@email.unc.edu or at 962-4086.

Today's Weather

Partly sunny;
Mid 60s.
Friday: Sunny;
Low 70s.