



KAREY WUTKOWSKI  
UNIVERSITY COLUMNIST

## No more 'Animal House'

The Greek population is tired of being discriminated against, and damn it, it's not going to take it anymore.

After years of having to deal with oppression in the form of fellow classmates' scorn and parents' overbearing concerns, fraternities are undergoing a perception makeover, aiming to let people know that they're more than just beer bongs and weekend formals.

The perception makeover is part of a bigger process to make improvements that are intended to show fraternities' commitment to academics. The changes include moving the start of the rush process until after Labor Day, allowing the rushees to focus on their classes for the first week, and requiring all fraternity houses to hold three open-house nights to allow rushees to visit, creating a more welcoming environment.

Leaders of both student-run and official-run organizations agree these changes are necessary because the Greek population is pretty low in the public's esteem. They say the membership numbers have been decreasing in past years, partly because parents don't want to subsidize four years of intoxication. The fraternities also say they have to fight everyday to combat the perceptions kids get from movies and that MTV.

And Wyatt Dickson, president of the Interfraternity Council, essentially wishes Jim Belushi was never born.

But the complaints seem overly dramatic. It kind of gives you the same feeling as when celebrities complain about getting so much attention and having to look beautiful all the time. It evokes little sympathy when they made the choice to become a celebrity and lead a life known to attract others' attention and scrutiny.

Once you get through all the complaints that the houses are suffering financial hardships because of decreased membership, it seems that the fraternities' core complaint is that they're sick and tired of being thought of as popular partyers. Hard life, eh?

But ultimately, they do have a point — there is a perception problem with fraternities at UNC, partly because frat boys lead a lifestyle that is an easy target. The Greek population has a strong culture on campus — there's an easily identifiable look (the floppy hair, the polos and the Rainbows), an endless onslaught of rumors (of hazing, drug use and STDs) and an exclusiveness that has Greeks often only socializing with other Greeks.

The culture makes it all the easier for Daily Tar Heel cartoonists to mock Greek life and for other students to snub anyone with the typical Greek look.

It creates an us vs. them mentality at UNC, building a tension between the Greek and non-Greek populations.

The Greek population constitutes only about 16 percent of the undergraduate student body, but somehow it makes itself seem like a larger presence.

The Greek population has somehow ingrained itself so much in the UNC community that it is one of the first things that comes to the minds of outsiders — countless times I have been asked what sorority I'm in after telling someone that I attend UNC.

Some of the tension comes about because of the dominating force and the exclusivity of the fraternities and sororities on campus. There's a clear divide between those who are Greek and those who are not.

It's respectable that Greek leaders are taking efforts to improve their image, but ultimately it's not likely to achieve much if they don't address the divide and tension that is such a part of the campus community.

As long as the tension still exists, people will always take pot shots at Greeks, tagging them as mindless partyers. And the reputation inevitably will filter out to the outside, to the parents and incoming students.

So until there is some ingrained change in the UNC social dynamic, the Greek population will have to persevere as a discriminated people.

Contact Karey Wutkowski at [karey@email.unc.edu](mailto:karey@email.unc.edu).

# GPSF recounts past year's successes

Achievements include TA stipends

BY RACHEL HODGES  
STAFF WRITER

The Graduate and Professional Student Federation released its April Report last week detailing the events of the last six months.

"This past year has been all about relationships," said former GPSF President Branson Page. "We stressed building relationships with the administration, members of the Senate and graduate students on various committees, and

when it came time to make decisions, there was an atmosphere of respect."

In the report, Page said that he is pleased with the work done during the past year and that he is confident his successor, GPSF President Dan Herman, will be able to build on the groundwork that has been laid.

"It's wonderful to have someone entering office who has been working with us all year long," he said.

Page said he is most pleased with the work regarding teaching assistant stipends, creating good relationships between students living off campus and community members, raising financial aid for graduate students and looking into the grading system in the Graduate School.

"I was very happy that we were able to raise awareness with TA stipends," he said. "The increase in financial aid was one of the big things we did behind the scenes, and I was pleased that we secured the continuation of the Future

Faculty Program for next year."

Emily Williamson, Page's chief of staff, also cited the Future Faculty Program — a weeklong program for TAs to help them improve classroom skills such as grading practices — as a major success.

"It's a program created this last year to develop graduate students who teach undergraduate courses, because knowledge of a subject doesn't make a person a teacher," Williamson said.

Page also said he is pleased that GPSF worked to increase financial aid for graduate students by col-

laborating with the Office of Scholarships and Student Aid and the Office of Institutional Research to adjust their projected living expenses.

Williamson said she also is pleased the administration was able to increase graduate student involvement in campus decision-making.

Stephanie Schmitt, vice president for external affairs, said she is proud of the administration's work on increasing awareness about

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## WHILE MY GUITAR GENTLY WEEPS



DTH/SHILPI PAUL

Members of Punto Cinco, sophomore Gerardo Maradiaga (right) and alumnus Jorgo Gueurero play at the Carolina Hispanic Association's 12th annual Noche Latina. Punto Cinco only plays for CHisPA's largest event of the year. Other events included dancing,

many bands, comedians and other cultural activities. Participants also practiced Capoeira, a combination of dancing and martial arts native to Brazil. Prior to the festivities, many dined on traditional Hispanic foods including tamales, carne mechaga, black beans and pupusa.

## House picks 8 for seats on BOG

Process happened faster than usual

BY JENNIFER SAMUELS  
ASSISTANT STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR

The N.C. House on Wednesday swiftly elected eight new members to the UNC-system Board of Governors — but some said the expedited process used this year stifled communication between candidates and legislators.

Five board members — Addison Bell, a Charlotte businessman; Patsy Perry, a retired educator from Durham; Gladys Robinson, an executive from Greensboro; Priscilla Taylor, a foundation executive from Chapel Hill; and Peter Keber, a Charlotte banker — were reappointed.

The new members are Leroy Lail, a businessman from Hickory; Brent Barringer, a Cary lawyer; and Cary Owen of Asheville, who served on the BOG from 1995-99.

The House approved the candidates in a 99-16 vote. The eight appointees include four Democrats and four Republicans. Keber was the only Republican incumbent.

The board will focus in its upcoming term on ensuring affordable, quality education, Taylor said.

Keber, who said he is gratified the House had the confidence to re-elect him, added that he hopes the BOG examines chancellor salaries in its upcoming term.

"There are some very excellent chancellors at our campuses," he said. "It's going to be a real challenge to keep them if we can't pay them what they're worth."

Barringer said he will work to improve the system's role as the state's knowledge infrastructure.

Some of the new members said changes to the election procedure provided inadequate opportunity to discuss ideas with legislators.

Owen, who ran for re-election to the BOG in 1999 but lost, said it is traditional for people wanting to be on the board to have to run as if

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## Tepper taps Cabinet members

BY SARAH DERREBERRY  
STAFF WRITER

While rain water-logged Chapel Hill during the past week, the Tepper administration also was inundated — with Cabinet applications.

More than 100 students applied this year for the 22 committee chairmanships and 16 executive assistant positions available.

After the examination of applications, Student Body President Matt Tepper said he and his officers interviewed many of the 101 applicants.

"You can't tell that much from an application," he said. "But we were able to combine the applica-

tions with interviews and really get some great Cabinet members."

Tepper said certain qualities were attractive in candidates he met with throughout the interview process.

"We really just looked for experience, dedication, new ideas and, of course, knowledge about the University," he said. "We also tried to look at how all the Cabinet members would work together as a team."

Junior Ankeet Shah, who was selected as co-chairman of the Minority Affairs Committee, said he applied for a Cabinet position because he hopes to make a lasting impact on the University community.

*"We really just looked for experience, dedication, new ideas and, of course, knowledge about the University."*

MATT TEPPER, STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT

"I'm a senior this year," he said. "I want to leave Carolina feeling like I've done something really meaningful."

Shah emphasized cooperation as one of his main goals for the coming year.

"I'm very excited to work with the Office of Minority Affairs to promote diversity and hopefully to set up programs with advisers for

minorities and (minority) focus groups for freshmen," he said.

Sophomore Bret Barden, who was chosen as co-chairman of the Public Service and Advocacy Committee, also said he had a vested interest in fostering communication and cooperation.

"I think it would be great to pro-

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## Housekeepers' union gathers to discuss fairness strategy

BY MEGAN DAVIS  
AND RACHEL HODGES  
STAFF WRITERS

As tensions between workers and upper-level administrators in the UNC Housekeeping Services Department mount, local union members and allies gathered Saturday to develop their Workers Fairness Campaign strategy for the upcoming months.

The daylong meeting addressed several overarching issues that are the source of complaints against housekeeping zone manager Chuck Matheson, who was transferred April 1 from a zone in which he was accused of being disrespectful and intimidating to staff.

When asked Friday for the specifics of Matheson's transfer, Director of Housekeeping Bill Burston would not comment.

Seven workers in his new zone filed an official letter of complaint to Chancellor James Moeser's office Thursday. The letter asked University administration to curb Matheson's alleged tactics of intimidation, including a claim that Matheson breached employee confidentiality.

Matheson declined to comment when reached Friday. "I feel like I've been persecuted," he said. In past interviews with The Daily Tar Heel, Matheson has denied any allegations against him.

"What we want is either to gain respect from him or get him out of

here," said Cynthia Lowen, one of the workers who signed the letter.

Marsha Tinnen, a member of the N.C. Public Service Workers Union UE Local 150, is one housekeeper who filed an earlier letter of complaint with Moeser about Matheson before his transfer. She said she was not surprised that issues concerning Matheson's leadership tactics resurfaced in his new zone.

Tinnen also said she is frustrated with the administration's decision to transfer Matheson from a volatile personnel situation only to place him in charge of other workers without solving the initial issues.

Laurie Charest, associate vice chancellor for human resources, and Carolyn Elfland, associate vice chancellor for campus services, could not be reached for comment. The housekeeping department reports to both of their offices, and the two have been involved in meetings with concerned housekeepers since December.

Moeser had not had a chance to respond to the newest letter as of Friday. But Lowen said Sunday that she and the others who filed the complaint have been contacted by officials and assured that the Office of Human Resources will be in touch with them shortly.

Workers' frustrations with Matheson are only one of many

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## Cirque brings unique talent

Circus combines acrobatics, dance

BY ERIN SULLIVAN  
STAFF WRITER

It's not every day that a burly man in silver pants comes to Chapel Hill twirling giant cubes.

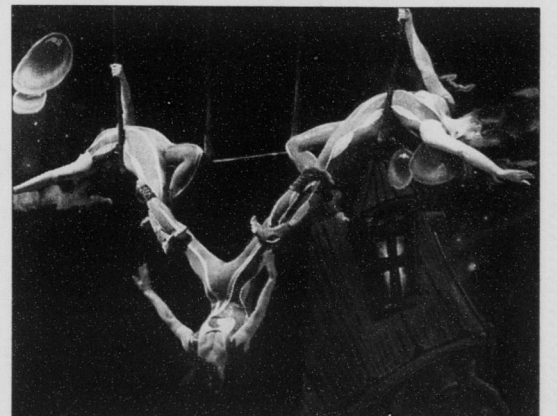
But last week, with the arrival of Cirque Inc.'s "Dream It Live," pretty much anything seemed possible. For two nights, glittery acrobats took over the Smith Center, giving locals a taste of a different kind of circus.

Like its big brother, Cirque du Soleil, Cirque Inc. descends from a French circus style that began in the late 1800s under Jules Verne. Animal-free and condensed to a single stage, the performance combines dance, acrobatics and European artistry to capture its audience's imagination.

But in contrast to most other companies, Cirque Inc. is U.S.-based and bears an over-the-top Broadway style that teeters toward ridiculous.

With its performers decked out in feathery headresses and neon spandex, it's not surprising the show was originally developed for casino stages.

Even so, Cirque Inc.'s motley crew didn't fail to delight Thursday night. With performers hailing from Mongolia to the Ukraine to Canada, a steady



DTH/MALLORY DAVIS

Bringing a veritable circus to the Smith Center, Cirque Inc.'s "Dream It Live" included incredible acrobatics and European artistry.

stream of unique talent kept the audience engaged for a full two hours.

Set in a dream world of fantastic shapes and psychedelic colors, three petite contortionists were the first act to make jaws drop. Swathed head to foot in multicolored bodysuits, they melted over and into one another like dripping candles, pausing occasionally for the audience's applause.

Soon after came a wiry man and shaky tower of chairs, which continued to grow as he executed a variety of handstands from its

summit.

Perhaps most impressive, though, were the aerial acts that appeared almost effortless. Using only a silky blue sash suspended from the ceiling, two acrobats danced through the air like ethereal spirits. Their graceful choreography masked the physical strain of their performance, allowing reality to give over to fantasy.

Given its theatricality, the show might have fared even better at a slightly more intimate venue. But

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