

Professor courts readers, fans Local music scene to make waves

BY RACHEL BRODY
STAFF WRITER

Die-hard Carolina fans — who paint their entire body a bright shade of blue and scream until their throats are raw — rarely stop and ask, "Why?"

But English professor Fred Hobson has.

His recently published memoir, "Off the Rim: Basketball and Other Religions in a Carolina Childhood," looks at the phenomenon in the context of growing up with basketball fever on Tobacco Road.

Hobson lectured on the memoir and the culture of basketball Wednesday in Dey Hall. About a dozen people showed up to hear him describe his memoir, which he did not read at the event.

He instead traced his lifelong obsession with college basketball, beginning during his youth in Western North Carolina and developing as a UNC professor.

He said he was inspired to examine the basketball culture some years ago after a painful North Carolina loss to longtime rival Duke.

The agony of defeat was impeding his ability to prepare for the class he was teaching, he said, and he asked himself, "Why do I care so much?"

"I have no financial advancement, social gains or royalties if my team wins. And I know that a lot of other

people wonder the same thing."

The memoir is another turn in what is becoming a trend of writing about the state's favorite past time.

UNC alumnus Will Blythe's "To Hate Like This is to be Happy Forever," an account of the Carolina-Duke rivalry, hit bookshelves earlier this year.

It stands at No. 7 on Amazon.com's list of bestselling sports books, as of press time.

English professor Marianne Gingham, was there Wednesday to purchase a copy of Hobson's book.

"I wanted to buy it to pass it around to my three brothers, who are basketball fiends," she said. "Also, I'm interested in the aspect of basketball as part of your childhood."

Hobson has a long-standing commitment to basketball, starting with his childhood love for the game in a small town where "basketball was everything," he said. Hobson went on to be a member of UNC's 1961-62 men's basketball freshman team.

But it is not merely the love of the game that drives the story in "Off the Rim."

Hobson's lecture was partially what he dubbed "an argument for the educational value of a sports education."

He described how his passion for sports led him into academics.



DITHALICIA TOWLER

Professor Fred Hobson talks about his book "Off the Rim" a tribute to his devotion to college basketball, in a Dey Hall lounge Wednesday.

He read sports sections of the newspaper. Feverishly studying sports cards introduced him to different races and nationalities.

"I would defend kids whose parents think they are too sports-obsessed."

Contact the A&E Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

BY LAUREN STREIB
STAFF WRITER

Rock the Boat is set to roll.

The annual benefit concert that aims to create a fan base for Chapel Hill-Carrboro music will take place from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. today at The Library.

The event directly supports 103.5 WCOM-FM, a grassroots community radio station that operates out of Carrboro.

Rock the Boat also aims to publicize the local music scene, which many of the event's organizers feel is underappreciated by the University's student body.

"It helps to draw the town and the students together," said Jake Baldrige, last year's event president.

Baldrige has been involved with Rock the Boat since the original benefit concert two years ago.

"Getting students out to the local clubs definitely helps the relationship with the town," he said.

A \$5 admission fee provides access to four musical acts, all of which are composed of University students.

Each of the acts is new to the Rock the Boat lineup.

The night will open with Shannon McArthur, a freshman singer-songwriter, followed by the bands Mowgli and Policy.

Headlining this year's concert is local favorite Sweater Weather.

Caroline Hunter, president of the Rock the Boat club, said the club wanted a collective group of bands that would bring people together and encourage audience interest.

The concert traditionally has been a fundraiser for the UNC Sailing Team.

But as of this year, the event is not officially affiliated with the team — organizers from previous years wanted to focus solely on creating support for local music, which led to the creation of the Rock the Boat club.

Kristina Ferrari, who's charge of publicity for the club, said the most important thing this year is making the event increasingly accessible to students.

Ferrari said that in her experience, a large concert "is the most apropos way of getting people involved."

The event has historically attracted a large crowd. As for this year, Ferrari said that the group

ATTEND THE SHOW

Time: 9 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Date: Today

Location: The Library, 120 E. Franklin St.

Info: Call the venue at 968-6004

hopes to pack in as many people as they can.

Though music might take the main stage, one of the most popular aspects of the event is the T-shirt sale.

"A lot of people who can't even attend the event buy the shirts," Hunter said.

Baldrige echoed her sentiment, citing that the \$10 Rock the Boat T-shirts are a celebrated fashion item on campus.

"Whenever I see people around campus wearing the shirts from previous years, I get a kick out of it," Baldrige said.

Apart from all the commendable efforts of the event, in the end it all comes down to the music.

As Baldrige put it, the best part about the concert is always, "kick-back and watching it go off"

Contact the A&E Editor at artsdesk@unc.edu.

Machines offer easy iPod shopping

BY SAPNA MAHESHWARI
STAFF WRITER

Vending machines usually quench people's thirst, and now they can satisfy people's hunger for iPods.

Zoom Systems, a San Francisco-based company that specializes in automated retail, is taking vending machines to a new level by selling more high-end products.

"Zoom Shops" are open 24 hours and sell a variety of products — including digital music players, computer accessories, and prepaid mobile phones — from brands such as Apple Computer Inc. and Sony.

"We're creating a new channel of distribution," says Gower Smith, CEO and founder of Zoom Systems.

"We're placing the best brands (and) most popular products directly in front of consumers at high-traffic locations. We're just like any retailer."

More than 100 of the shops can be found in airports, hotels, convention centers and grocery stores. Company officials say they hope to increase the number of shops to 10,000 in the next five years.

The machines only accept credit

and debit cards, and customers' cards are not charged until the machine recognizes that the product has been delivered.

San Francisco International Airport is among the first places Zoom Systems installed kiosks.

"They were installed about six months ago," says Mike McCarron, a spokesman for the airport. "People seem to enjoy them."

"Zoom seems to be very happy with their sales, so we're happy with that."

The stores only require 30 square feet to 40 square feet of real estate, Smith says, adding that Zoom Shops' revenue per square foot is as high as that of other retail formats. The company typically makes \$200 to \$500 per square foot annually.

If customers have any problems, there is a 1-800 number they can call for assistance from Zoom, as well as a 30-day return policy on products.

But McCarron says he hasn't heard any complaints yet.

"It's like any other tenant. We lease them space and they're responsible for that space," he says.

Raleigh-Durham International

Airport doesn't have the machines, and officials say they aren't planning to add them.

While the shops seem to have been successful so far, the buying experience is different from that of an actual store.

Justin Schnettler, a Macintosh specialist at the Streets at Southpoint's Apple store, says the idea of buying an iPod from a vending machine is odd.

"You're missing out on explanations on how it works, what it can do, the personal aspect," he says. "It's not typical to buy something that expensive that way."

But Smith says that the vending machines take away the pressure a salesperson can put on customers to buy and that they also offer shoppers an impulse-buying opportunity.

"It's a lot like what ATMs have done with banking, a lot like what airlines are doing with self-service ticketing," he says. "There are lots of good signs that consumers really like this way of shopping."

Contact the Features Editor at features@unc.edu.

THE Daily Commuter Puzzle Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

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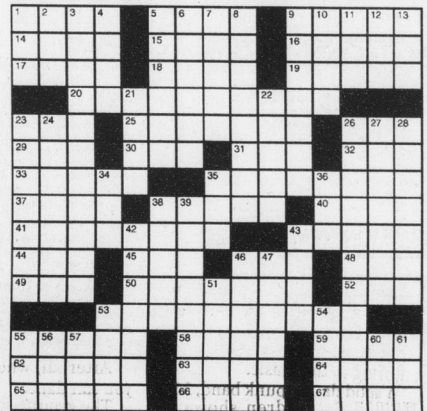
ACROSS


- 1 Org. of Wie and Webb
- 5 Beta (Diphda)
- 9 Ababa, Eth.
- 14 Lawman Wyatt
- 15 Yemen port
- 16 Missionary Junipero
- 17 Clan chart
- 18 Metallic sound
- 19 Authority to decide
- 20 1994 Dana Delany movie
- 23 Took off
- 25 Lobbyists, of a sort
- 26 Leaky PA reactor
- 29 Oak's cousin
- 30 Miscalculate
- 31 At the stern
- 32 That girl
- 33 Open positions
- 35 "The Tempest" character
- 37 Ditty
- 38 Occupied
- 40 Not fer
- 41 Bill Clinton, e.g.
- 43 Paavo the Flying Finn
- 44 Service charge
- 45 Rowler's need
- 46 Tango team
- 48 Shoe width
- 49 Young fish
- 50 Frigate, e.g.
- 52 Dem. of the '50s
- 53 Unable to think
- 55 Humiliate

- 58 Merlot or claret
- 59 Melodramatic lament
- 62 Droops laxly
- 63 Even once
- 64 Storage tower
- 65 Stances
- 66 Charlie Brown's expletive
- 67 Beatles movie

DOWN

- 1 Tennis do-over
- 2 Golf norm
- 3 Long-tailed African primate
- 4 High point
- 5 Hostage taker
- 6 Newspaper boss
- 7 Choir member
- 8 Johansson and Stenmark
- 9 Complies
- 10 College VIP
- 11 Arid
- 12 Tax grp.
- 13 Paulo, Brazil
- 21 March 15th
- 22 Crusoe creator
- 23 Hire new employees
- 24 Tempress
- 26 Mary Astor film
- 27 "Carmen" writer
- 28 Twists of fate
- 34 Earl Grey or pekoe
- 35 Trick of the tongue
- 36 City near Lourdes
- 38 Author Asimov
- 39 More cramped
- 42 Present quality
- 43 Yup's antonym
- 46 Bullock thriller
- 47 Electricians, at times
- 51 Vishnu's partner
- 53 Wight or Dogs
- 54 Writer Ogden
- 55 European peak
- 56 Shout to surprise
- 57 Martino and Pacino
- 60 of the above
- 61 Soak (up)






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