

# Drinking Laws Have Little Effect On Consumption

by Karen Jurgensen  
Staff Writer

Experts on drinking behavior concluded at a symposium here Thursday that the present laws on alcohol consumption have relatively little influence on drinking habits.

Sponsored by UNC's Center for Alcohol Studies, the public meeting Thursday in The Institute of Government

## At Smith-UNC Exchange

# 'Color Doesn't Matter'

by Anne Lafferty  
Staff Writer

(Editor's note: DTH Staffer Anne Lafferty visited Johnson C. Smith University last weekend with nine other UNC students. The group went to Smith as part of the Smith-UNC Exchange, a program to allow whites and blacks to live in the other's college culture and gain insights into the way each lives. Following is Miss Lafferty's account of her experience.)

The tables were turned last weekend when 10 UNC students journeyed to

presented a summary of a preceding two-day symposium to examine legal influences on the use and abuse of alcoholic beverages.

Present at the meeting were authorities from California, Kentucky, Canada, Virginia and North Carolina.

Some conclusions given by John A. Ewing, UNC professor of psychiatry, were that "alcohol consumption is here to stay," and that the costs in terms of

health, family life and money are enormous.

He said that the group agreed there is a need to try to cut heavy consumption of alcohol.

Ewing emphasized the need for alcohol education. It should be, he said "education with emphasis on knowledge and freedom of choice." Students and adults must be taught that alcohol can be consumed with moderation and that

alcoholism is escapism.

The long-range goal of education, Ewing said, should be the development of relaxed and objective attitudes towards drinking that would lead to moderation.

"If social and economic aspects of the law outweigh the benefits of the law then it should be repealed," concluded Ira Cisin, professor of sociology at the Western Office of George Washington University in Berkeley, California.

He said such factors as age, sex, customs, peer groups and economic status have greater effects on drinking than minor changes in the law.

In North Carolina, Cisin said, there is a "mixed bag" of vague laws passed with no intention of enforcement. "The passage of a law accomplishes very little unless it is vigorously and sympathetically enforced."

Speaking of various hypothesis concerning alcohol consumption, Robin Room, a research scientist also from GW at Berkeley, said only modest laws have an appreciable effect on drinking. The

strongest effect, he said, is good times versus bad times.

Room went on to say studies have shown regional differences within the United States in drinking patterns.

The heaviest drinking was found to be centered in the Northeast and the West Coast. Drinkers in these two areas tend to be steady drinkers. Diseases associated with habitual drinking were found to be more prevalent in these areas also.

Social consequences of drinking were found to be the greatest in the South. The social attitude, he said, is that getting drunk is considered a "time out" from normal behavior. Consequently, drinking tends to be explosive, uncontrolled and violent.

It is this behavior while drunk that must be dealt with in the South, Room said.

The need for educating the young and old about alcohol was emphasized by Gerald Globetti, director of the Center for Alcohol Education at Murray State University in Kentucky.

Speaking of the drinking patterns of the young in affluent communities, Globetti said the young are introduced to alcohol outside the home and that their drinking is isolated from social norms, thus leading to more dangerous behavior.

"The attitude of the people in a given state has more bearing on drinking than laws do," said Wayne Womer, Executive Director, Middle Atlantic Institute for the Study of Alcohol and Drugs.

Womer said also that there are four states, of which North Carolina is one, which do not allow the sale of liquor by the drink.

The per capita consumption of alcohol is lower in those states, Womer said, not because of the laws but because of the attitudes of the people.

In discussing the pros and cons of the influence of advertising on drinking, the point was raised that 10 per cent of the American population consumes 60 per cent of the alcohol and, of that, six per cent consumes 41 per cent.

Johnson C. Smith University and became a racial minority for three days.

Members of the Smith-UNC Exchange, they were hosted at the black institution while 10 Smith students visited UNC.

Tree-shaded and dominated by the memorial buildings typical of most less-than-wealthy private schools, Johnson C. Smith University lies in the black community in Charlotte, N.C. and draws its student body of 1,000 from all over the United States.

What was the Exchange like? Educational in the broadest sense of the word.

As junior Sally Taylor expressed it, "Overall I think that everyone would agree that through the Exchange and being thrown with someone you've never seen, you end up learning a lot about yourself."

All the participants in the Exchange were paired with a student from their host school with whom they lived during

their three-day stay, attending classes and eating in the school cafeterias.

Insofar as possible, participants fit into daily life at the school they were visiting. No special events were planned for the weekend and most activities just happened.

And this was the point of the program: its value lay not in specific activities but in the awareness which all gained. This increased understanding came in seemingly contradictory areas.

Certainly, because of the Exchange, they are now probably more at ease around people of another race.

As freshman Margaret Bobo commented, "Always before they were my black friends. After the Exchange, they were my friends."

However, most of us also realized anew the emphasis that American society places upon race.

Said another freshman participant, Libby Henson, "Before I felt that color didn't matter; I had always gone to school with blacks and had had black friends. But when I went to Smith, I found out that it does."

Everything of which we were made aware, both at Smith and at UNC, was made possible by a group of people willing to engage in frank and free-wheeling discussion.

Explained senior Linda Ayscue, "It was a unique group of people, in that most of us really knew how we felt about things and could really come across."

## Sitterson To Visit Ghana

Chancellor J. Carlyle Sitterson and several officials from the Carolina Population Center will be traveling to the University of Ghana next week.

The purpose of the visit is to explore the possibilities of developing institutional relations between the University of Ghana, UNC and the Carolina Population Center, according to Dr. Moye Feymann, director of the Carolina Population Center.

Sitterson was invited by the vice chancellor of the University of Ghana who visited here last summer.

Other officials making the trip are Dr. Steven Polgar, assistant director of the Population Center, Dr. Arden Miller,

vice-chancellor of health affairs, and Dr. Peter A. Lachenbruch, professor in the Department of Biostatistics.

The group will be leaving either Monday or Tuesday and will be gone for about four days.

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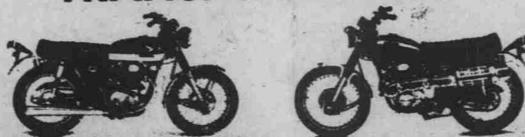
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J. Carlyle Sitterson  
Chancellor

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