



North Carolina Collection
Thomas Wolfe

Wolfe—editor, debater, irreverent jokester

by Ben Steelman
Staff Writer

This is another in a series of articles on intriguing characters and events from the University's past.

In *Look Homeward, Angel* and his later works, Thomas Wolfe liked to picture himself as a lonely, alienated college student, set off from his fellows by his hill-country gaucherie and his single-minded dedication to art — ignored by the slick, glib, well-dressed Big Men on Campus.

Nothing could have been further from the truth. Admittedly, Wolfe did pledge Pi Kappa Phi (at that time a low-status, "bobtail" fraternity) as a protest against Greek social snobbery. In most other respects, however, his years as a Carolina undergraduate (1917-1920) were a storybook chronicle of success and satisfaction.

He edited the *Yackety-Yack* and wrote for the *Carolina Magazine*. He served on the student council and debated actively in the Dialectic Society. He was admitted to the

Order of the Golden Fleece and virtually every other campus honorary society except Phi Beta Kappa.

The Carolina Playmakers staged a production of his one-act "folk play," *The Return of Buck Gavin*, and starred him in the title role.

His reputation as an irreverent practical jokester (he once handed in an English theme, meticulously copied out on a roll of toilet paper) won him almost immediate popularity with the entire student body.

His performance as leader of a mock King Arthur's Round Table during Pi Kappa Phi's rush was legendary: "My Lord, milady waits without." "Without what?" "Without food or clothing." "Feed her and send her in."

As the *Tar Heel's* managing editor (1918-1919) and editor-in-chief (1919-1920), though, Wolfe truly revealed the course of his later career.

"He was the most disorganized student I ever saw," recalled Wolfe's business manager Nathan Gooding.

During late evening staff conferences, he would suddenly remember he had not eaten

a meal all day and stalk out for a snack at a local drugstore.

As editor, he would assign stories to his staff writers, then forget to follow them up. As a result, he usually wound up writing most of the copy (once he wrote all of it) himself.

Normally, on Thursday nights he would personally deliver the *Tar Heel's* proofs to the printers. On the train from Chapel Hill to Durham, he would calculate how much copy and ad space he had, then dash off any filler material needed.

Then, once he got to the printshop, he would pull out all the material, most of which had been wadded in his coat pocket since noon, and lay it out on proof sheets in less than 15 minutes.

Wolfe liked R.J. Seeman, the old man who ran the print shop, and carried on a number of running jokes with him. Invariably, Wolfe would pretend to be impatient, demanding to know if the printing of the *Duke Chronicle* (which he insisted on calling the "Chronic-III") could be put off a week, since there was nothing

worth reading in it anyway.

Once, Seeman, noticing that Wolfe always signed his by-lines "Thomas C. Wolfe," asked him, "Say, Tom, when you get to be a famous writer, are you going to use your middle initial or just sign yourself 'Thomas Wolfe'?"

"Middle initial? Hell, no! How would it look if Shakespeare had signed himself William J. Shakespeare?"

Years later, Seeman still said he could not tell if Wolfe was trying to be flippant or not.

Wolfe's reputation as an editorial writer quickly spread statewide. During the 1920 Democratic primary, his column, "Handbook of Useful Information to Those Gubernatorially Inclined," was reprinted in dozens of papers and even quoted by the contending candidates.

Other features, such as "Ye Who Have Been There Only Know," an impressionistic reminiscence of football junkets to the University of Virginia, presaged his distinctive mature style.

More often, however, Wolfe preferred to satirically skewer recurrent campus

problems.

His regular column, "With Apologies to Mr. Pepsy," recounted the everyday hassles of a student's life in Restoration English: "Thence to dinner, where we had a stew smelling of goat but dessert was good."

Or, "Infinite busy in the afternoon and with eagerness to supper, finding a rubber heel with gravy in side dish at my plate."

Another favorite Wolfean target was the habits of Franklin Street merchants. One sketch pictured a pious druggist preparing to raise the price of his milkshakes:

"John, my boy, have you watered the milk?"

"Yessir."

"Diluted the syrups? Mixed sand with the sugar?"

"Yessir."

"Then John, you have done your duty like a man. Let us now go into the chapel for mid-day blessing. The Lord has been good to us."

Apparently, things don't change much in 50 years.

The Daily Tar Heel

Chapel Hill's Morning Newspaper

Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Tuesday, November 12, 1974

Founded February 23, 1893

Coal strike begins, may cause hardship

by Charles E. Flinner
United Press International

WASHINGTON — Soft coal miners called a strike at midnight Monday, beginning a production stoppage of at least two weeks which appeared likely to worsen the nation's economic plight and produce outright hardship for many industries and public services.

Negotiations for a new contract to replace

the old one that expired at midnight continued through the day Monday without success, and Arnold Miller, president of the United Mine Workers of America, said it was a "virtual certainty" the strike would stretch at least two weeks. Mine owners and operators agreed with that estimate.

The strike, which was foreordained two weeks ago, will be a day longer for each day without a settlement. UMW constitutional rules require contract ratification — a 10 day

to two-week process — before work can be resumed.

With 120,000 miners idled and 70 per cent of the nation's soft coal production disrupted, secondary effects ranging from layoffs to plant closings promised to further weaken the limping economy with higher unemployment and lower productivity.

Government officials kept close watch as talks continued, but intervention seemed unlikely so long as there appeared to be progress, however small. Both sides have shunned government mediation.

The law provides that President Ford can, after inquiry, declare a strike to be a "national emergency" and seek a court-ordered 80-day return to work while the labor dispute is negotiated. But miners traditionally have been unresponsive to injunctions, and there appeared little likelihood Ford would go that route.

"Miners never got anything without a strike," said Harold Lininger of Martin, Pa., a veteran of 23 years in the mines. "Coal miners have to catch up, and the time to get it is right now. We're far behind other industries."

The first worker layoffs in other industries dependant on coal may be made by the railroads.

The Chessie System, largest coal hauler in the country, posted notices last week of immediate layoffs in the event of a coal strike.

"There's still coal in the pipeline, so we can't pinpoint the exact number of layoffs," said a spokesman for the Chessie, which operates 11,000 miles of track throughout the Southeast and Middle Atlantic States.

Pittsburgh area steel companies, big coal users, said they had about two weeks of coal stockpiled but did not plan any layoffs this week.

However, the steel firms had been geared for an immediate cutback in coke production in the event of a coal strike.

"Right now we're going to slow down our coke-making operations — that's all we're going to do," a Republic Steel Corp. spokesman said. "It is essential that we maintain the equipment. If the coke ovens are left to cool, they break up and crumble." Bethlehem Steel Corp. said it would operate "on a day-to-day basis."

The miners, who have no strike fund, had been warned by United Mine Workers leaders to be prepared for a strike of two to three weeks at least.

Gary Edwards of Beaverdale, Pa., a mine welder, was not overly concerned about the length of a strike.

"Now we have the government and the country just where we want them," Edwards said. "If we can't get what we're asking for this time, we never will."

The miners listed sick pay, better pensions and cost-of-living protection as major contract goals.

Ernest Eneedy, 44, of Portage, Pa., who had worked 26 years in the mines and is a former UMW local president, said a miner's "whole life is lived in preparation for no work."

McCarthy to speak

Former Democratic Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy will speak at 4 p.m. today in Memorial Hall.

An outspoken critic of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War and presidential candidate in 1968, McCarthy will appear in conjunction with the Student Government's Colloquium on Individual Rights and Liberties.



Staff photo by Peter Ray

Shoney's restaurant now gives customers only two bags of sugar with coffee

Shoppers cut down on sugar

by Sandra Millers
Staff Writer

At first, most grocery shoppers were outraged, but now they're getting used to it. Watching the price climb on a five-pound bag of sugar has become as much a part of their weekly routine as Monday morning.

What are they doing about it? Area grocers say most shoppers are simply cutting down on the amount of sugar they buy. A recent survey by the Raleigh *News and Observer* indicated a similar trend in Raleigh and also revealed that so far most people are not hoarding sugar to safeguard against possible shortages and even higher prices.

But at least two Chapel Hill grocers disagreed, noting that shoppers are stocking up on sugar.

"We did sell out Friday about noon," said the Eastgate A&P manager. "People did buy more than usual, and we haven't been able to get any more yet." He said A&P's policy on limiting individual sugar sales is dependent on the regional office in Charlotte, and no rationing instructions have been issued yet.

"People have been buying more, trying to stock up," said Ethel Paschal of Big Star, "but we've had no trouble keeping sugar in stock." Paschal said some of the Big Star chain stores have put a limit on individual sugar purchases but the Chapel Hill store has not yet followed this example.

Fowler's Food Store manager Bob Fowler said he has not noticed any trends of sugar hoarding in his store. "People have already quit buying more than they have to have," Fowler said. "And we have no problems keeping sugar in stock."

Fowler said the price of sugar has been rising at least once a week for the past 10 weeks and quoted the most recent price, issued Friday by the Savannah Sugar Refinery, producers of Dixie Crystals, at \$39.48 per 12 five-pound bags, wholesale, or \$3.29 per bag, retail.

"Some grocers are selling it at cost," Fowler said.

While hoarding sugar is just beginning to become an area grocery store trend, it is already a problem for many local restaurant owners. Some have been forced to devise new methods of dispensing sugar to guard against pilferage at tables.

"We had it all on the tables," said Ben Berry, manager of Shoney's, "but now our waitresses carry it in their pockets and pass it out only when people ask for it."

Elvin Clark, manager of Ye Old Waffle Shop, said the hike in sugar prices has affected his business, too.

"It has forced us to increase our prices slightly," he said. "The prices of jelly, sugar and syrup have all gone up."

"But as far as the way we handle sugar, it hasn't changed; we still have packets on the table," Clark said.

Willie Ranes at the Riverview Steakhouse in Eastgate said sugar has been moved from tables to the counter where it is available only in individual packets.

"It seems to have helped," she said. "So many people were taking it before."

Other area restaurant managers admitted sugar prices are affecting business but said they have not changed their method of handling sugar.

"It has affected us, but we haven't changed our policy (of having sugar available on the tables)," said Robert Welch, manager of Golden West. "We don't want to offend our customers by giving them only two packets of sugar when they might want three. Having our girls running back and forth for more sugar would probably be more detrimental than the money we'd save."

Invalidation sought on PIRG results

by Art Eisenstadt
Staff Writer

Campus Governing Council (CGC) representative Dan Besse filed suit with the student attorney general's office Monday to invalidate the results of last Wednesday's campus referendum on the North Carolina Public Interest Research Group (PIRG).

"Basically, we felt the election was not conducted in an honest and fair manner," Besse said.

Besse, PIRG's most vocal advocate on CGC, was an active member of Chapel Hill People for PIRG, a lobbying group supporting the establishment of a PIRG chapter on this campus.

PIRG is a statewide non-profit corporation which researches and lobbies for consumer oriented legislation. Last Wednesday, students voted against establishing a PIRG chapter here — 859 against and 852 for.

Besse and Kay House, another People for PIRG worker, listed themselves as plaintiffs in the suit. Listed as defendants were an anti-PIRG organization, Students for Better Campus Government, a spokesman for that organization, Blake Beam, and Student Government Elections Board chairman Ricky Bryant.

Although the vote was close and the elections board had to count the ballots five times Wednesday night, Besse said he is not challenging the election on procedural grounds.

Besse and House decided to appeal Friday evening on the grounds of a series of anti-PIRG posters which were printed and distributed by the anti-PIRG organization two days before the election.

"We felt the posters were misleading and did not leave time for effective rebuttal," Besse said. "I feel those are effective grounds for a new election."

Beam could not be reached for comment by Monday.

Besse would not say exactly which portions of the poster he would charge as being false. "It would be indiscreet to comment at this time about that," he said.

However, he did say he thought the poster as a whole was misleading.

In the past, Besse has complained about a sentence which referred to PIRG as a non-student organization. "PIRG is a student organization," Besse said Monday. "It is not a UNC organization, but it is a student organization nonetheless."

The state organization, which is headquartered in Durham, has a fulltime professional director and lawyer and several other workers. But pro-PIRG forces regard them as employees of the PIRG state board of directors, which is composed of students from the four North Carolina universities that already have PIRG chapters.



Staff photo by Peter Ray

Nan Bailey, former Socialist Worker's party candidate for mayor of Washington D.C.

Bailey defines issues in Boston race clash

by Bruce Henderson
Staff Writer

"If the buses don't roll in Boston, it will be a victory for the racists," Socialist Worker's party member Nan Bailey said Monday. "If the buses do roll, it will be a victory for the blacks; that's the issue in Boston."

Bailey spoke as part of the UNC Colloquium on Individual Rights and Liberties at 4 p.m. in Memorial Hall. A 21-year-old graduate of Brown University, she was a candidate in November for mayor of the District of Columbia.

The conflict is a product of 20 years of black struggles, she said. The national leaders, she claimed, are trying to split up black and white workers so they will not combine into a powerful force.

"It seems as if time has stood still" in Boston, Bailey said. "This has taken history back 10 years." The unrest is due to the roles of government and press, she said. Boston is the site because of its small black population and ineffective black leadership.

The largely Republican Boston city council, she said, supports the racism of white Bostoners. President Ford and Boston

mayor White are anti-busing advocates and Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., has offered only prayers as a solution, she said.

The issue is not only busing, Bailey said, but one of equal educational and economic opportunities for blacks. The Socialist Worker's party is now crusading to educate the people of the causes of racism and how to fight them.

When important civil rights legislation was passed in the early '60's, Bailey said, a deal was made between black leaders and government officials. This deal put an end to "Jim Crow" but not much else, she said. In spite of the efforts, it didn't work.

The violence in Boston, she said, is a product of national leaders' effort to stir up racism. Those leaders, she claimed, are trying to imply that all the world's problems are caused by non-whites: inflation from Arab states, overpopulation from India.

Bailey predicted the struggle in Boston will continue for a long time. She advocated an overthrow "of a very violent government. It can't happen through the traditional processes of politics, though. We must get rid of the capitalist system and install a socialist one."