

# The right to drop

Our editorial eye has wandered too far from home. We commented smugly yesterday on the N.C. State Faculty Senate's proposal to reduce the school's period for dropping courses to four weeks, only to learn that a similar proposal will go before the Faculty Council here on Friday, April 23.

The contexts of the proposals at the two schools are significantly different. The State plan is designed to combat light course loads, which have apparently become commonplace. Last semester the average course load for upperclassmen at the school was 12.9 hours. This indicates that many, if not most, State students are taking more than eight semesters to graduate. As a result, freshman enrollment must be decreased, and the children of taxpayers must be turned away.

In Chapel Hill, the extended drop period has not had the same effect. The average student's course load is still approximately 15 hours, according to James Gaskin, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Very few students take more than eight semesters to graduate.

The recommendations of the Special Committee on the Grading System to decrease the drop period comes as part of a package proposal dealing with the problem of grade inflation. The Committee apparently feels that after four weeks of classes, students drop the courses they are doing poorly in, and thereby increase their grade point averages. By limiting the drop period to four weeks, the Committee hopes to discourage this inflationary practice.

We labeled the N.C. State proposal myopic. Considering the circumstances, the proposal going before the Faculty Council here is even more so.

Students should have the freedom to drop courses during the year when various pressures become too great, or when circumstances prevent them from performing as well as they would like. In these situations, it is only natural that they drop the courses giving them the most trouble. Such courses tend to be nonproductive as well as cumbersome.

The statistics show that Chapel Hill students have not abused the extended drop period. Students are not, as an editorial in the *Chapel Hill Newspaper* suggests, "wasting the taxpayer's money and the professor's time." They deserve the right to make responsible choices concerning their academic careers, and the aborted drop period denies them this right.

Furthermore, the problem of grade inflation cannot and will not be solved by such mechanical restraints. Rather, it requires total change in attitude by faculty and students.

The other proposals outlined in the Committee's report seem to recognize this fact. The report suggests that plus and minus grades be recorded on a student's record, but not affect his grade point average. It provides new definitions for letter grades and suggests that academic departments have regular faculty meetings to discuss the manner in which student's work should be evaluated. The Committee also proposed that a complete study be made of the pass/fail system to determine how it contributes to grade inflation.

The change in the drop period seems to be the Committee's one attempt to make an immediately tangible change in the grading system. It is a misguided effort, and we hope the Faculty Council will amend the report and extend the drop period.

## letters

### Revitalize honor system

To the editor:  
I commend your interest in editorializing the efforts of concerned students, faculty and administrators in reaffirming and revitalizing the tenets of the honor system.

If the basic premises upon which the honor code was established no longer exist, namely, the intellectual integrity of this community, the honesty of students and their capability to responsibly govern their own lives, I would unhesitatingly recommend that the system be changed.

It is unfortunate, though, that you assume the Undergraduate Court discharges its responsibilities so capriciously. Although there are infamous examples of the miscarriage of reasons by the court retold as if they occur with great regularity, these are most definitely infrequent exceptions to the usual treatment accorded an individual case. Due to the present framework of confidentiality and privacy which surrounds the proceedings, I acknowledge the difficulty for faculty and students to be apprised of the conscientiousness of the student participants. Perhaps the open hearings suggestion may provide a meaningful deterrent to cheating, and accurate information about the functioning of the court and the Attorney General's office.

We administrators recognize there is more we can do to educate faculty and students about the operation of the honor system. Orientation efforts for students as well as faculty must be upgraded. There is a growing awareness among faculty that there is more they can do mechanically and by their attitudes to respond to the increased incidence of cheating among students. And there is more students can do to discourage cheating at Carolina.

Student Affairs will soon be receiving data from a survey sent to over 1000 faculty members and students concerning the extent of cheating on this campus and attitudes about all facets of the honor system. The recent amendments to the *Instrument of Student Judicial Governance* should improve the effectiveness of the judiciary. Before the DTH

prematurely sounds the death knell on the honor system at UNC, I would hope that you will allow all the efforts presently being made a change to restore its former viability on this campus.

Douglas S. Coppola  
Assistant Dean  
Office of Student Affairs

#### Beer drinkers deluded

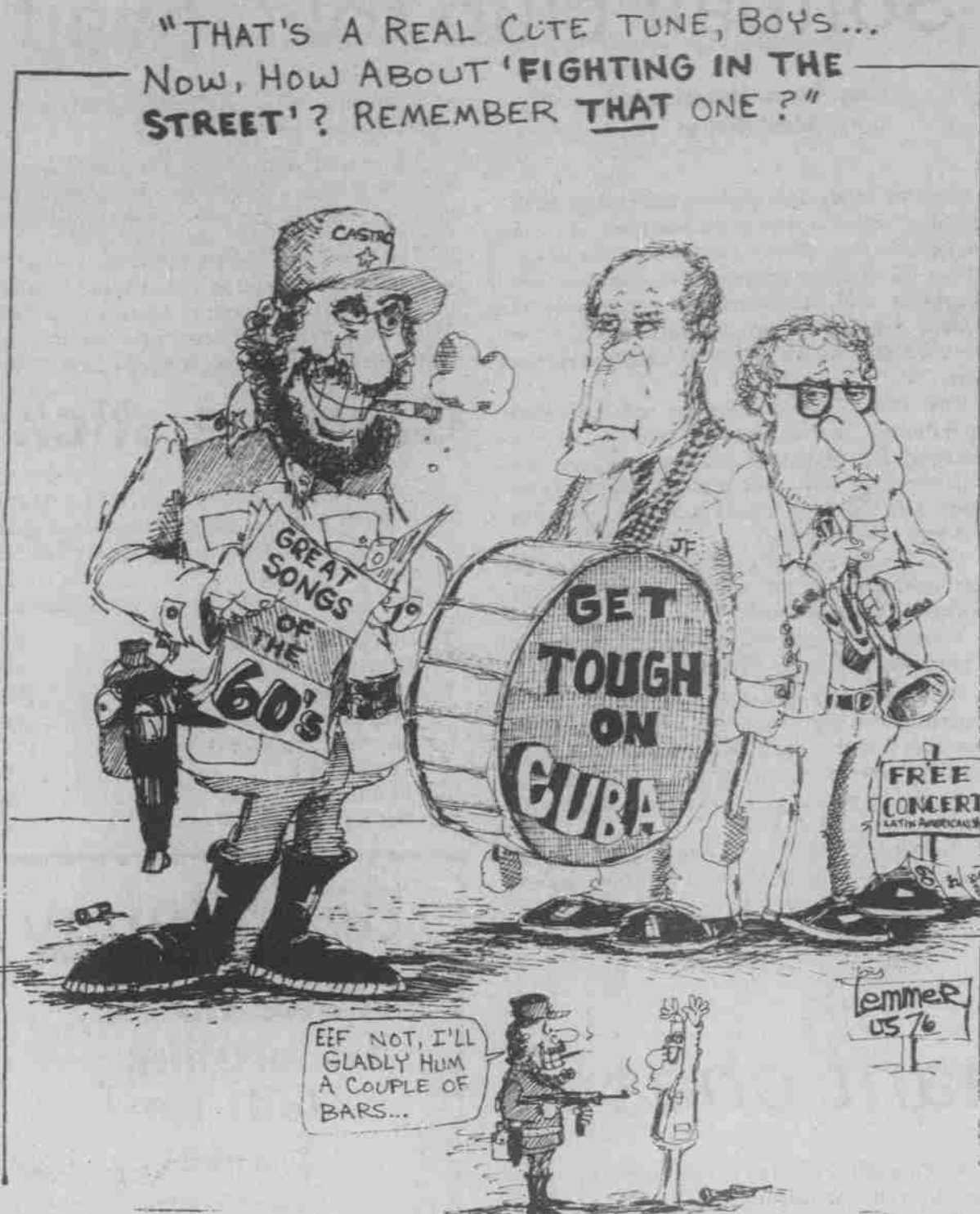
To the editor:

The article on 3.2 beer prompted me to write this letter because of the mistaken beliefs concerning alcohol in beer contained in it (the article, not the beer.) The reason some beer is marked 3.2 per cent alcohol content and some is marked 6.4 per cent or 6.2 per cent can be explained solely by the way in which the percentages are computed. In states, like Colorado, where both kinds of beer are sold, (with the "weaker stuff" being reserved for younger drinkers,) one notices that the 3.2 per cent is "by volume" and that the 6.4 per cent figure is "by weight." If one converts a 6.4 per cent figure for a liquid denser than water into a volume percentage, it can be seen that 6.4 per cent beer is at the most 3.6 or 3.8 per cent by volume.

An official at the Coors plant in Golden, Colorado, once explained this to me stating that breweries exaggerate the difference between the two beers because it encourages sales to people over 21 and helps delude the anti-alcohol forces that the beer the 18 year olds are allowed to drink is harmless.

Thus, the difference between the alcohol content of any beer (sold in this country at any rate), is trivial. Driving to Virginia to buy beer because of taste is a question of personal taste. Doing so because of alcohol content alone is wasteful at best, stupid at worst.

Joseph Lowman  
Department of Psychology



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### DTH Classifieds

#### FOR SALE

FOR SALE: Oriental Mandoline, superb condition \$85. Sheepskin suede jacket, white brown \$125. Riding boots, handmade long black, \$55. Persian jewelry, silver and turquoise. Raymond - 929-3425.

74 Cutlass Supreme, excellent condition and performance. See it and drive it. 35,000 miles. \$3,500 and firm. Call "Gus" 929-7011. Must sell.

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Wanted: male roommate: 12x60 mobile home, a/c, 4 miles from campus. Rent negotiable. Available May 8. Call 933-0067, 123 Nature Tr. Dr.

I need summer roommate May-Aug; 2 bedroom fully furnished, comfortable apt. at University Gardens. Excellent location for walker; N-bus route. \$85, & 1/2 utilities. Call Mark Triplett, 942-2358 anytime.

Rooms for summer rent, short walk to campus, \$65/session, \$13/week, contact Brian Stalon or Robert Dawkins, Delta Tau Delta Fraternity, 968-9049, 968-9063.

Summer sublet May-Aug. Odum Village. Married students only. Walk or ride bus to campus. Call 933-6605 after 6 p.m.

#### HELP WANTED

Live-in babysitter for boys 6 and 11 while mother works rotating shifts. Pleasant home. \$100/month & room/board May-August (possibly longer). 929-7282.

Students interested in fall semester employment with Student Stores should apply at Daniels Bldg. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Help elect a Lt. Governor with the courage to speak out on controversial issues. Attend meeting of Students for Howard Lee, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Graham Lounge, Union, or call 929-8865.

Lost: a gold lady's Hamilton watch between 3rd floor Carroll and 2nd floor Hanes, April 8, 11 a.m. Phone: 968-9301, 929-3318. Bonnie Howard. Has sentimental value.

Sky-diving instruction daily, 10 a.m., except Monday. You must be 18. \$40 includes instruction, equipment & 1st jump. FRANKLIN COUNTY'S SPORT PARACHUTE CENTER, LOUISBURG, 496-9223.

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