

The weather today will be clear with no chance of rain. The low last night was in the 40s, and the high today will be in the 70s.

The Daily Tar Heel

UNC's soccer team opens its ACC season today against Virginia at 4 p.m. on Fetzer Field. For details, see page 5.

Sob stories

by Katharine Beasley
Staff Writer

What do you do when you are unprepared for a test or cannot finish a term paper on time?

Most students will advise you to make up an excuse—any excuse. Chances are, if you can fabricate a decent story, your professor will accept it. Except for final exams, UNC has no policy regarding excuses from classes or assignments. The decision is left up to the teacher and, as one instructor says, "We really don't have much choice."

Most teachers will believe a student who says he is sick or claims to have other exams on the same day. Some teachers, though, require a medical excuse from the Student Health Service.

Faculty members interviewed said that sicknesses, deaths in the family, sports events and oversleeping are the most prevalent excuses. Trips abroad, weddings or extracurricular activities are also common ploys.

But some students create more unusual or elaborate stories. One professor told the story of a girl who went to class for her boyfriend, claiming that he had a terrible sunburn and couldn't move.

One English professor recalled a student who missed two weeks of school because her fiance's

grandmother died in Oklahoma.

Another professor said that a teacher may discover through his colleagues that a student's grandparent has died several times during a semester.

The best feat, though, was not at UNC, but at Princeton, where one boy's father died and later became sick.

Teacher reactions to sob stories vary from skepticism and disapproval to complete trust. One teacher flatly refused to discuss excuses, saying that she considers them to be "personal problems not for publication."

The English professor said he bases his trust on whether a student has regularly attended and prepared for class.

Most teachers do not see student's excuses as a serious problem. Many even seem to enjoy them.

Another English professor said he accepts excuses on the basis of their "originality and presentation."

He explained that, though a common cold may suffice, he would rather hear about "stomach pains shooting up throughout the body."

There are, of course, variations of the straight sob story. One professor told of a "D" student who wrote a short note on her final exam that stated,

Grandparents can die several times during a semester

"Gee, this is the best class I've ever taken! By the way, I need an 'A' in this course."

Many teachers said that students prefer younger faculty members because they find them more vulnerable than older, more experienced members.

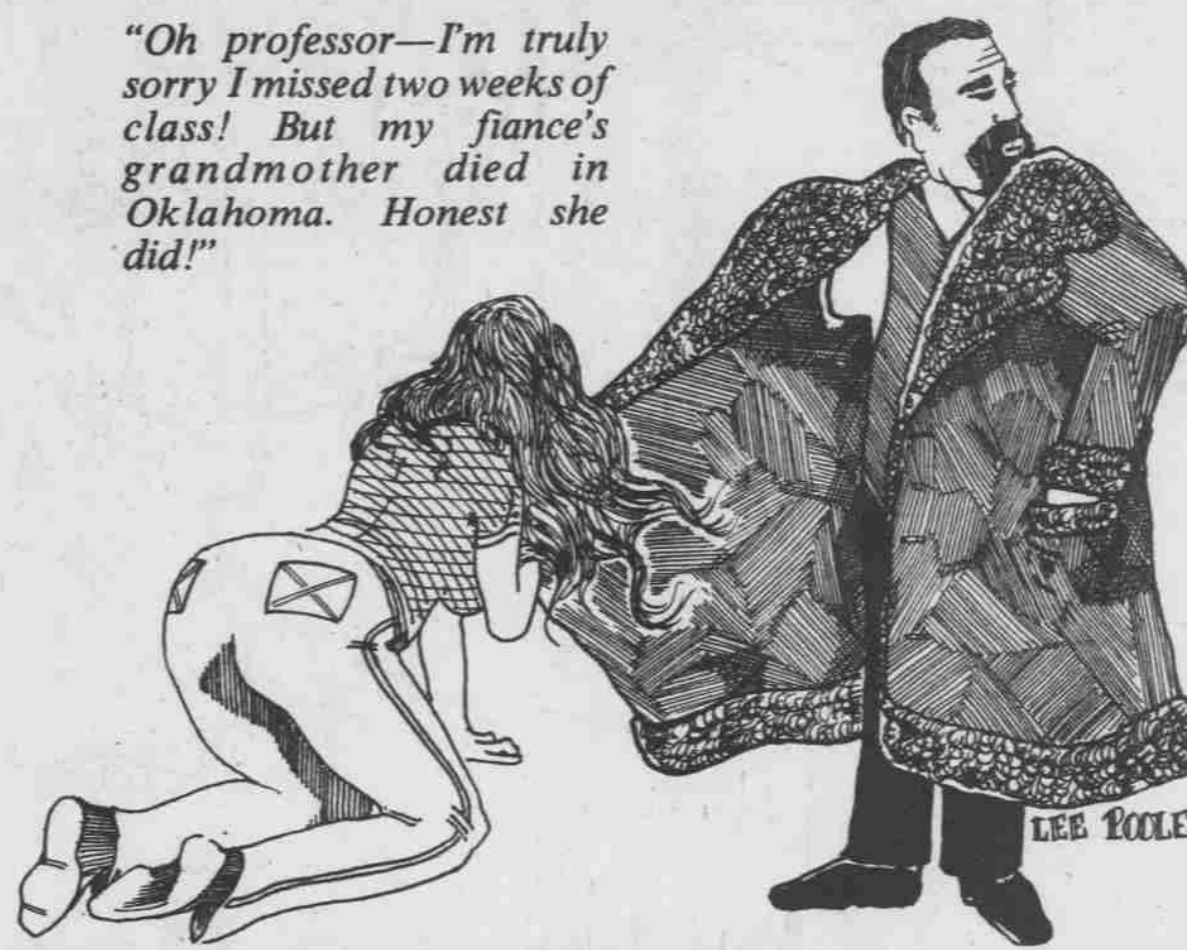
Some teachers said that students, especially females, will play up to a teacher of the opposite sex. One male professor said, "A girl will flirt with you when her test is late, then won't look at you on the street."

He added that students frequently will abuse a teacher's compassion, acting, as he put it, "as if you have a heart, whereas other teachers are machines."

While most teachers can easily cite at least one example of a sob story, most maintain that they seldom, if ever, used excuses as students. One teacher said succinctly, "I never needed one."

Thomas H. Jerdee of the School of Business Administration said he gets fewer excuses from graduate students than from undergraduates, and gave two reasons: graduate students are usually more serious about their studies, and they also must rely on continuing relationships with their professors. Professor-student relationships for undergraduates, he said, are often one-shot deals.

"Oh professor—I'm truly sorry I missed two weeks of class! But my fiance's grandmother died in Oklahoma. Honest she did!"



Rainwater knocks out telephones

Approximately 1,600 telephones in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area were knocked out of commission Sunday night when rainwater caused an electrical short in a telephone cable.

Grey Culbreth, UNC utilities director, said that rainwater in a flood manhole in Carrboro leaked into a cracked cable insulator sheath at the intersection of Old N.C. 86 and Poplar Street.

The telephone failure was noticed about 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Culbreth said. He said that 99 per cent of the inoperative phones were working by 5 a.m. Monday.

Paul Sexton, telephone plant director, said that all phones were operating by 10 a.m. Monday.

"The problem was remedied within a couple of hours," Sexton said. He said that an additional 2,000 customers were unable to get a dial tone Sunday.



Democratic gubernatorial candidate Jim Hunt campaigned in Chapel Hill Monday. While on Franklin Street, a young non-voter presented him with a stuffed donkey, the symbol of the party that Hunt hopes to return to the Governor's Mansion.

Rubber checks create student woes

by Merton Vance
Staff Writer

Bad checks are common in a college town where much of the population is mobile and depends on a limited income from parents or a part-time job.

Merchants say only a small number of checks they receive bounce, but a bad check can cause problems for merchants as well as the people who write rubber checks.

The paper chase caused by a bad check can be a minor headache or a major problem which could end up in court and damage a person's credit rating—depending on how a person handles the matter.

Bank officials and merchants say that most people who receive notice of a bad check settle the matter immediately and cause little trouble. But they say the problem can be more serious, if the check writer cannot be contacted, is uncooperative, or in rare cases, tries to defraud a merchant.

Most people who write a bad check do so accidentally and settle the matter quickly. UNC students write about half of the bad checks in the Chapel Hill-Carrboro area, but because they account for half the population, most merchants, bankers and collection agency officials do not regard students as special problems.

"We've found that students are not really as bad a risk as some people think," said Charles

Brummitt, operations officer for North Carolina National Bank in Chapel Hill.

Brummitt said most problems with students occur at the end of the school year when students sometimes make errors in closing out checking accounts.

David Phillips, assistant vice president of Northwestern Bank in Chapel Hill, stressed the importance of reconciling bank and individual records.

"The balance we have may not be the actual balance because the person might still have an outstanding check. You'd be surprised at the number of people who do not keep a check book and check their balance," Phillips said.

Errors of this type are the most frequent causes of bad checks, bank officials say.

When a bank receives a bad check, a notice is mailed to the check writer asking him to immediately deposit money to cover the check. If the person does so within 24 hours, no further action is taken. The bank, by law, cannot hold a check for more than 24 hours, so if the money does not arrive within that time, the check is returned to the last endorser—the merchant.

The merchant then has the responsibility of taking action to recover the losses from the bad check. He can drop the matter, try to collect it himself, turn it over to a collection agency or take legal action by going to the magistrate and swearing out a warrant.

Most merchants make some attempt to collect

on their own before resorting to legal action. The merchant sends out a notice to the check writer and either pursues the matter himself or contacts a collection agency.

The Chapel-Hill Carrboro Merchants Association operates a check recovery program, as do several private collection agencies.

Under the Merchants Association program, the merchants send out a notice stating that if the person pays within 72 hours there will be no penalty. After that the merchant charges a \$9 recovery fee, which goes to pay the cost of the recovery unit's attempt to collect the money.

Andy Landes, who is in charge of the check recovery program for the Merchants Association, said that it costs him approximately \$12 per check to track down the offender and get the payment, so the recovery fee does not pay the full cost. If the check is not paid within a reasonable time—after three or four contacts—Landes said the record of the bad check can be entered on the person's credit record. Since the Merchants Association is the credit bureau for Chapel Hill and Carrboro, this record can affect a person's future credit rating.

Landes said he spends much of his time locating offenders. He said students cause special problems because of frequent changes of addresses.

"We put pressure within the limits of being ethical and legal," Landes said.

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A little before noon in a primeval forest...

by Alan Murray
Editor

The times were turbulent. The world had just watched the United States struggle free from domination by England, and was now seeing those democratic passions reenacted in France.

In North Carolina, the Raleigh State House was a year from completion. Four hundred thousand inhabitants, one quarter of which were slaves, were spread about the state connected only by a meager network of dirt roads and paths. Chapel Hill was a primeval forest, split by a single, narrow road that is today called Cameron Avenue.

A little before noon on Oct. 12, 1793, a large procession originating in Hillsborough marched down that road. Most of the men in the procession wore the insignia of the Masonic Fraternity, and they were led by the tall, elegant Col. William Richardson Davie, grandmaster of the Masons. Included in the group were virtually all of the state's important men.

They stopped a few hundred yards from the young tree that later acquired Davie's name, and stood around the foundation of Old East, the first building of the University of North Carolina. Davie, with the assistance of six other Masonic officers, lifted the cornerstone into place, along with a bronze plate commemorating the occasion:

The
Right Worshipful
William Richardson Davie
Grand Master
of
The Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity
Of Free Masons, in the state of North Carolina;
One of the Trustees of the University
of said State
And a commissioner of the same,
assisted by
The other Commissioners, and the Brethren
Of the Eagle and Independence Lodges,
On the 12th day of October, In the year of Masonry, 1793,
And in 18th year of American Independence

Laid the corner stone,
Of this edifice.

Dr. Samuel E. McCorkle, a sturdy Scotch-Irish professor, orator and preacher, stood in the wooded area that now bears his name and gave the dedication speech.

"The happiness of a nation depends on national wealth and national glory," the wise doctor said, "and cannot be gained without them. They in a manner depend on liberty and good laws. Liberty and good laws call for general knowledge in the people and extensive knowledge in matters of the State, and these in turn demand public places of education.

"Knowledge is liberty and law. When the clouds of ignorance have been dispelled by the radiance of knowledge, power trembles, but the authority of the laws remain inviolable; and how this knowledge productive of so many advantages to mankind can be acquired without public places of education I know not."

Thus began the first state-supported university, 183 years ago.

The first student to the University arrived on February 12, 1795, in a manner not at all presaging recent opening-day swarms of students. His name was Hinton James, and he came alone from the banks of lower Cape Fear. For two weeks he was the student body of the University.

Other students slowly trickled in from New Hanover, Granville, Wilmington and other small North Carolina towns, and enrollment reached 41 by the end of the term.

From these modest beginnings, the University has grown as steadily and surely as the Davie Poplar. Its Board of Governors now says with confidence that the University at Chapel Hill is "the leading educational institution in the southeastern United States, and its accomplishments and its recognition have clearly extended beyond this regional boundary. It is recognized as a major national and international institution.

"Its long history has endowed it with qualities of excellence, of experience, of tradition and of method which simply cannot be duplicated by any other process than the passage of time and the acquisition of knowledge through experience."

This brief tribute to the University's beginnings was compiled with information from the History of the University of North Carolina by Kemp P. Battle, A Documentary History of the University of North Carolina by R. D. W. Connor and a 1976 report from the UNC-CH Planning Council to the Board of Governors.

Hunt comes to town, lauds N.C. 54 plan

by Merton Vance
Staff Writer

Lt. Gov. Jim Hunt came to Chapel Hill Monday in a dark blue sedan with a license plate that reads "North Carolina 2." Hunt wants to ride in the car with the "North Carolina 1" license plate—the governor's car.

Hunt walked along Franklin Street greeting voters, making his way toward Orange County Democratic party headquarters a few blocks away where a crowd was waiting to hear the Democratic candidate for governor.

"I want to commend you for your participation in government here," he told the crowd of approximately 100 persons as he outlined the county's active participation in past elections.

"I believe very deeply in home rule,

and home rule works when people are willing to rule themselves," he said.

"I want us to do everything at the local level that we can possibly do, and when we have to make a decision at the state level that affects you, we ought to go to the communities and ask for their ideas and ask for their input," he said.

"We have been drifting. We have had weak and indecisive leadership, and it is time for this state to move forward again."

Hunt stressed that he advocates strong state support of the University system and said he would work for better reading programs in the elementary schools.

But a local comment prompted the biggest applause.

"I am glad that state government has finally realized that it is imperative for the safety and the lives of our people that we do something about N.C. 54 highway. Now the announcement of that has been made. The doing of it is going to come under the Jim Hunt administration," he said.

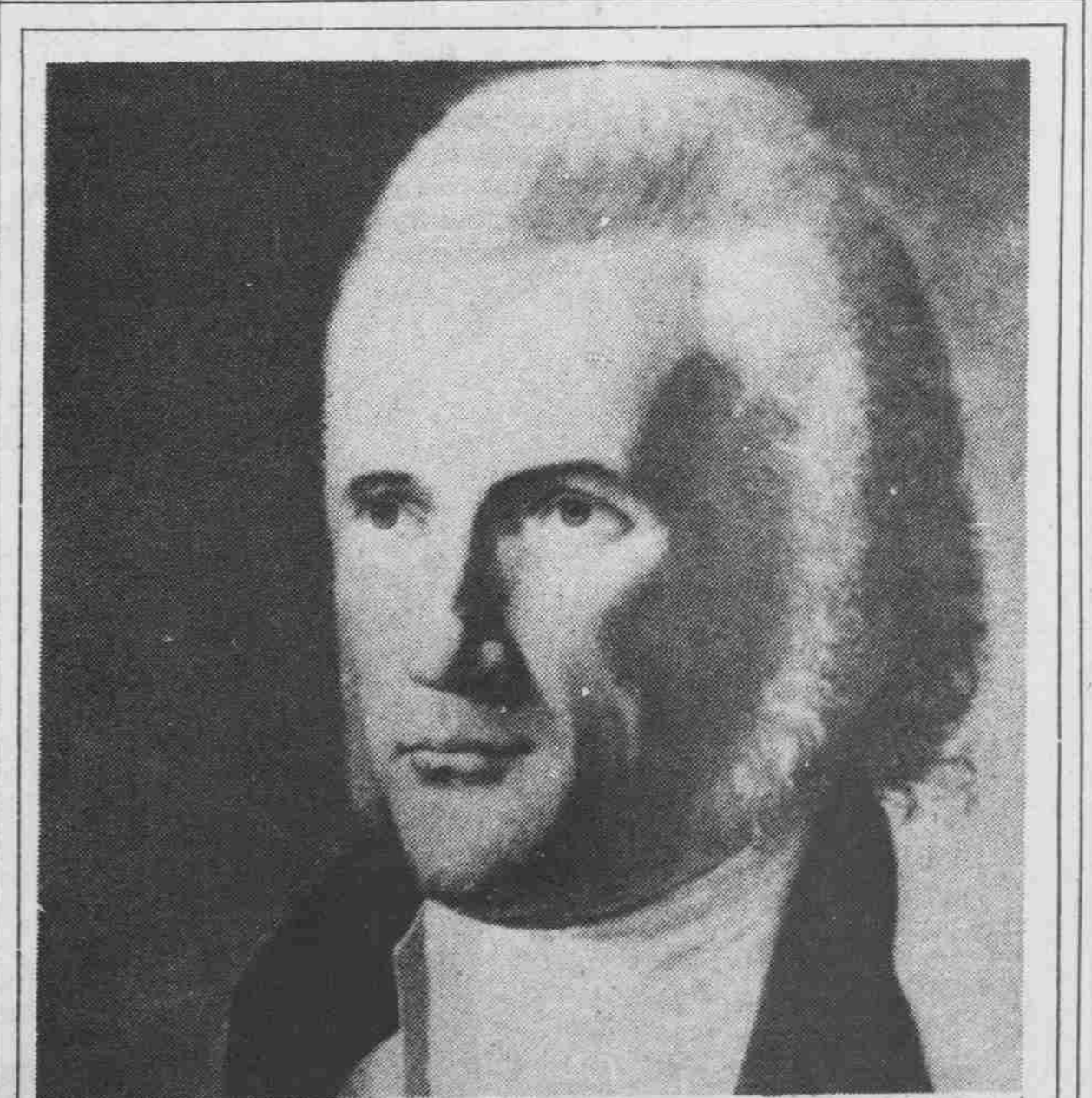
In an interview with the Daily Tar Heel, Hunt said he is still campaigning hard despite polls showing a substantial lead over Republican opponent David Flaherty. He said he is taking nothing for granted, but that his campaign has changed since the August primary when he campaigned for the Democratic nomination.

"I'm running with the party now. I'm not out as much in the factories and the shopping centers, but I'm still out there a good bit. I'm doing a lot of party things in which you get groups together and get them revved up." But he said he is still spending the same number of hours each week campaigning. "I don't assume anything."

Hunt said the N.C. Utilities Commission needs to be reorganized. "I'm not promising to lower anybody's rates, but the regulation isn't tight enough; the people on the commission aren't rigorous enough and devoted to the consumer's interest. The staff doesn't work for the rate payers," he said, adding that there are nine lawyers, 11 economists, 21 accountants and 23 engineers on the commission staff. These are statistics he recalls easily, statistics on what has become one of his major campaign issues.

"The power companies come up there with all their lawyers, all their high-paid experts. And who's over there representing you and me? One or two lonely lawyers from the attorney general's office," Hunt said.

Hunt recommends that the Utilities Commission be reorganized, with all of the staff members under an executive director appointed by the governor to serve a four-year term and that the commissioner should sit as judges, and "let the staff represent us."



William Richardson Davie

...for whom Davie Hall and the Davie Poplar are named, introduced the bill chartering the University in 1789 and laid the cornerstone for Old East on Oct. 12, 1793.