

# Animal



Sarah Leer/Old Gold and Black

**By Phil Glynn**  
**Perspectives**  
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# House

WHAT SOME STUDENTS CONSIDER THEIR RIGHT HAS BECOME ONE OF RLH'S PET PEEVES...

**T**onight Patrick Baron and Steve Evans, two sophomore residents of Efrid Residence Hall, will be saying goodbye to their third roommate.

The three have been together since the beginning of their freshman year.

And as the being who shared a year and a half of college with Baron and Evans is shown the door, the remaining roommates are disappointed and upset.

Though they may not agree with Residence Life and Housing's dismissal of their friend, they can understand the reason.

Their third roommate was an Iguana.

They need look no further than page 39 of the Guide To Community Living to find the reason why Mariguana will be moving back to Charlotte to live with Baron's family:

"Animals are not permitted in the residence halls unless approved by the director of residence life and housing or designate. Violations will result in a \$60 per animal fee, and the animal(s) will be removed from campus immediately."

But Baron says that doesn't make it right.

"I think we should be able to have pets as long as we keep them up and take care of them," he said.

Other students feel the same way.

Keeping a pet on campus means keeping it a secret.

But some students feel the gamble against a \$60 fine and dismissal of the animal is a good one.

Residence Life and Housing Director Connie Carson knows a lot of students go against regulations to house a pet.

"I'm not naive," she said.

Despite the regulation, which Carson says is based on health and safety concerns, Baron believes strongly that he and his roommate have done all they can to keep Mariguana's living standards high and his effect on the facility minimal.

"His cage is ten times cleaner than our room," he said.

## On the books

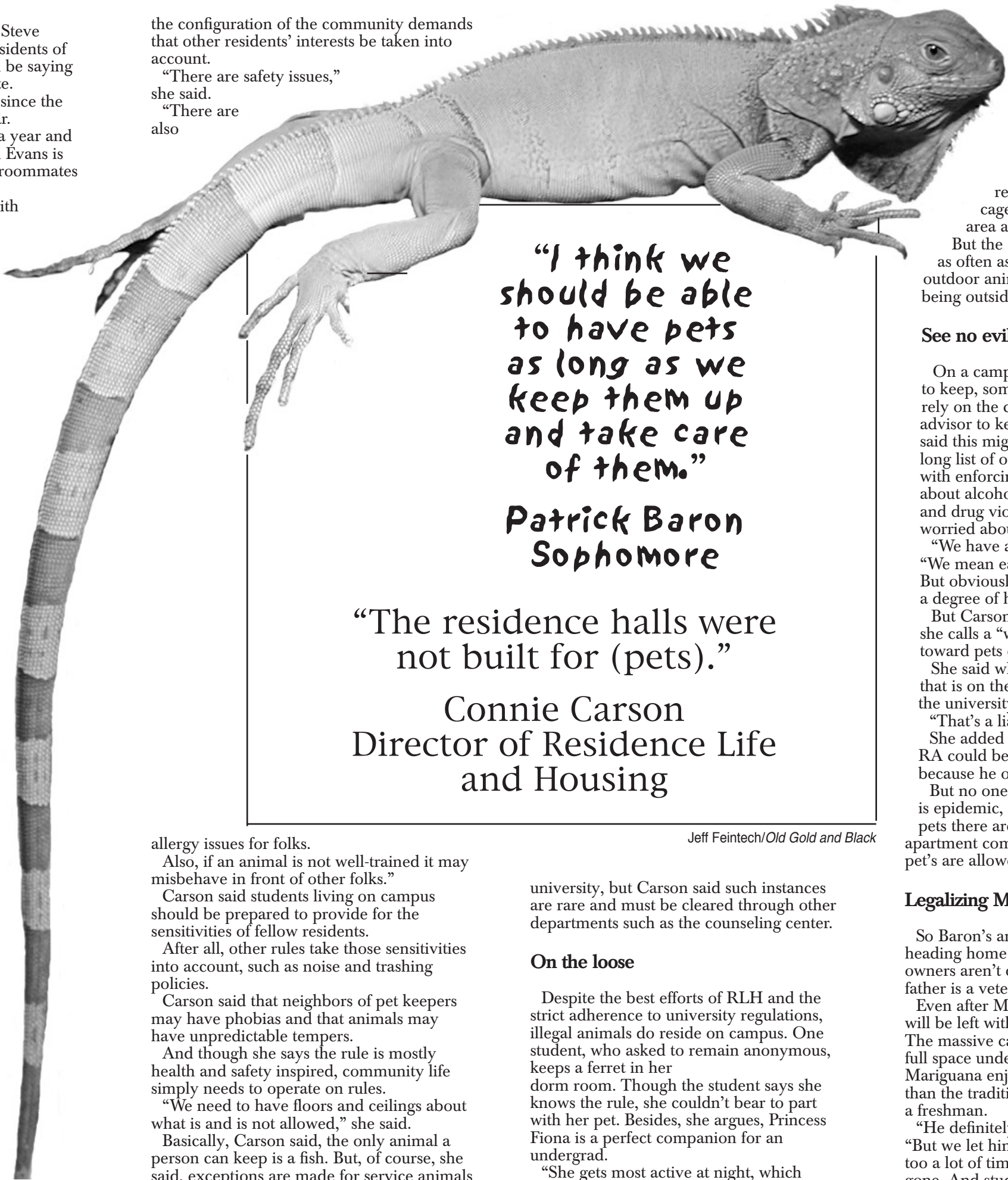
But Carson said it doesn't matter how well an animal is kept. Having a pet still puts an undue strain on the community. Dorm rooms aren't built for pets, she said, and

the configuration of the community demands that other residents' interests be taken into account.

"There are safety issues," she said.

"There are also

also



inspection can be a hair-raising event for both pet and keeper.

"I normally put her in my backpack," the student said of fire alarms.

But just as the outgoing Mariguana, The Princess leads a charmed life. She resides in a posh two-story cage complete with a sleeping area and a room to lounge around.

But the student said she lets her out as often as she can since ferrets are outdoor animals who enjoy digging and being outside.

## See no evil...

On a campus where secrets are hard to keep, sometimes students' pets must rely on the complicity of the resident advisor to keep their lodgings. Carson said this might happen because of the long list of other rules RAs are charged with enforcing. With having to worry about alcohol abuse, noise, vandalism and drug violations, RAs may not be too worried about the pet next door.

"We have a lot of policies," Carson said. "We mean each and every one of them. But obviously, some things cause more of a degree of harm than others."

But Carson warned RAs against what she calls a "wink-wink, nod-nod" attitude toward pets on their halls.

She said when RAs don't enforce policy that is on the books, the department and the university is in a tough spot.

"That's a liability," she said. She added that in some cases, the RA could be subject to personal liability because he or she looks the other way.

But no one is saying that the problem is epidemic, and after all, if students want pets there are a number of houses and apartment complexes around town where pet's are allowed.

## Legalizing Mariguana

So Baron's and Evans' Iguana will be heading home for now. But his on-campus owners aren't one bit worried. Baron's father is a veterinarian.

Even after Mariguana's departure, they will be left with a reminder of him. The massive cage they built takes up the full space under a lofted bed. They said Mariguana enjoyed it a great deal more than the traditional cage where he lived as a freshman.

"He definitely likes it better," Baron said. "But we let him roam around the room too a lot of times." But those days are now gone. And students whose pets are still on campus continue to try to give them the attention and freedom that they need, while struggling to keep them under wraps. And Carson said students shouldn't hold their breath if they are waiting for the rule to change.

"Not in our environment," she said. "The residence halls were not built for that."

*"I think we should be able to have pets as long as we keep them up and take care of them."*

**Patrick Baron**  
**Sophomore**

*"The residence halls were not built for (pets)."*

**Connie Carson**  
**Director of Residence Life and Housing**

allergy issues for folks.

Also, if an animal is not well-trained it may misbehave in front of other folks."

Carson said students living on campus should be prepared to provide for the sensitivities of fellow residents.

After all, other rules take those sensitivities into account, such as noise and trashing policies.

Carson said that neighbors of pet keepers may have phobias and that animals may have unpredictable tempers.

And though she says the rule is mostly health and safety inspired, community life simply needs to operate on rules.

"We need to have floors and ceilings about what is and is not allowed," she said.

Basically, Carson said, the only animal a person can keep is a fish. But, of course, she said, exceptions are made for service animals such as seeing eye dogs.

Seeing eye dogs are the most prominent service animals and the only ones currently permitted by RLH.

But Carson said the department was once asked to allow a "therapy animal."

The student who made the request eventually decided not to return to the

university, but Carson said such instances are rare and must be cleared through other departments such as the counseling center.

## On the loose

Despite the best efforts of RLH and the strict adherence to university regulations, illegal animals do reside on campus. One student, who asked to remain anonymous, keeps a ferret in her dorm room. Though the student says she knows the rule, she couldn't bear to part with her pet. Besides, she argues, Princess Fiona is a perfect companion for an undergrad.

"She gets most active at night, which works for a college student's schedule," she said.

The resident said she was looking for something more interesting than a fish, though keeping the ferret a secret is no easy task. It's a good thing ferrets sleep about 20 hours a day, she said.

But the occasional fire drill or room

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