

Housekeepers Need Everyone's Support

Days before his assassination, in the heat of a strike by sanitation workers in Memphis, Tenn., Martin Luther King claimed that the true concern was what would happen to the sanitation workers "if I do not stop to help them." Twenty-five years later, UNC students, faculty and staff are called to consider the same issue.

The UNC Housekeepers' Association charges the University with paying sub-poverty wages, failing to offer realistic opportunities for training and advancement and giving tacit approval to patronizing and insulting supervisory attitudes.

Most of us hustle to our classes and offices, barely noticing the skimpy news accounts of the struggle or looking past people handing out leaflets on the housekeepers' behalf. But if you do not stop to help the UNC housekeepers, what will happen to them?

The typical salary of a UNC housekeeper is \$13,500 per year, while the federal definition of poverty for a family of four is \$15,000 per year. (Judge the accuracy of this federal figure by your own experience. Can you imagine how a family of four would live in Chapel Hill's rental market on this salary?) It would take a housekeeper 750 years of raises at the \$25 per year received in 1993 to get from starting salary to the poverty line. What will happen to them if you do not stop to help?

It is true that UNC offers its staff computer literacy courses. But housekeepers who have tried to take advantage of this have said the courses usually require some basic computer experience. They are designed for those who already use comput-

ers on their job. Housekeepers also are allowed to take courses at community colleges and receive reimbursement for tuition, but with the stipulation that the course must be job-related. It is hard to find courses at Durham Tech that have a direct relationship to housekeeping.

Some housekeepers say that they want opportunities to move into more challenging and responsible positions within the University system, and the emphasis on job-related courses makes this impossible.

Some charge that being a housekeeper puts them at a disadvantage when applying for jobs within the system. They claim that interviewers are more likely to favor candidates from outside the UNC system than housekeepers. What will happen to them if you do not stop to help?

If you feel that what will happen to the housekeepers is not your responsibility, that your only obligation is to yourself, let me quote Dr. King again. "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." Or as an old labor rallying cry has it, "an injury to one is an injury to all."

Everyone on this campus who occupies a niche in our hierarchical structure now faces a very real threat to their own liberty. Our University is drawing on a rich tradition of oppression by intimidation in its firing of Eric Browning.

The formula, as any union-busting CEO can tell you, is simple: fire an outspoken leader in the movement and you nurture fear. Immediately make small, meaning-

GEORGE LOVELAND
GUEST COLUMNIST

less concessions so that you can tell outsiders that you really are trying to change things, and that only a small group of "agitators" were making all the noise. The movement's fire is extinguished and those outside who had become interested are reassured that things are really OK.

But the housekeepers see through the ruse. They are more determined than ever to press their case, and have stood in solidarity behind their co-worker Eric Browning in his suit against the University.

If you can imagine the injury the housekeepers feel, then you have been injured, too. It could, in fact, be you next time. Please join the fight against institutional racism. Write ranking members of the N.C. House and Senate, the chairman of Budget Appropriations and your own state senators and representatives. Ask them to support the housekeepers' demands for a living wage and opportunities for job advancement. Keep the issue of equality of opportunity alive in your classroom discussions and casual conversations.

Do not let yourself echo Pastor Niemuller's anguished regrets after his German homeland had been ripped apart by advocates of racial and ethnic "purity." "When they came for the Jews, I did not speak out because I was not a Jew.... When they came for the homosexuals, I did not speak out because I was not a homosexual.... When they came for the Communists, I did not speak out because I was not a Communist.... When they came for me, there was no one left to speak out."

George W. Loveland is a 1986 UNC graduate.



Three Vital Issues Will Decide Political Future for Clinton

Almost every city is endowed with a unique dynamic. Take Chapel Hill. Thousands of students whip this place out of its summer stupor at the end of August. The Tar Heels and final exams furnish variations on the basic college-town theme of classes and parties. Life here has direction, or at least a syllabus or two.

Pity poor Washington, D.C. Its dynamic resembles a garden hose with the water on full blast and no one to hold on to. It flails about endlessly and knows no master. Presidents and Congresses can sometimes control it. If they do so well, it's called "leadership." If they're on the right track, pundits speak of "focus" or "message control."

This Labor Day the taps were opened. Last year, Labor Day was the unofficial start of a campaign between a challenger who didn't inhale and an incumbent who didn't win. Now our half-hearted toker of a president wants to grab the hose. He has three very important plants to water. Many people would like to see his green thumb shrivel up and fall off.

Bill Clinton's first hard sell will be NAFTA. This free trade pact with Mexico and Canada has an impressive array of enemies, most of whom fear the migration of jobs south of the Rio Grande. "AFTA NAFTA THE SHAFTA!" they charge hysterically. Despite a major revolt within his own party, the president has a chance. Many Republicans support it, which was negotiated by the Bush administration.

The loudest, if not the smartest, opponent will be Ross Perot, who will emphasize the jobs issue. No one knows for certain if the accord will create or kill jobs, so Clinton's task will be to convince the Congress it will help the economy. In politics, perception is key. If he succeeds, the dynamo of power will sling the president into the next two battles with what George Bush called "the big mo." "Mo" apparently means momentum in Washington.

Health care reformers want to whip into shape more than \$1 trillion worth of economic activity, give 29 million Americans the health insurance they've never had and hold down surging costs of treatment. Clinton reformers hold the moral high ground: going to the doctor should be a medical decision, not a financial one. Another asset is the superb intellect and disci-

pline of Hillary Rodham Clinton, who chairs the health care task force. Stick out your tongue and say "Aah," Washington.

But in this mind-bogglingly complex issue, one finds villains lurking everywhere. Three come to mind. The American Medical Association dedicates itself to making known the opinions of doctors and lining their pockets. The insurance industry — which funnels our money to doctors and hospitals for a fee — will throw up a few roadblocks as well.

If reformers even breathe on the privileges of senior citizens, the American Association of Retired Persons will bring down the wrath of the Genit Generation. Even if this reform plan fails, it'll make lots of lobbyists stinking rich.

A presidential success here would be like finding a teetotaler at He's Not Here — a miracle. If Congress passes his basic reforms reasonably unscathed, his face should go on a new seven-dollar bill. He'd be a bruised but standing political giant.

Viewed against this backdrop, the third big battle would be an anticlimax. It's vesp Al Gore's plan called "Reinventing Government." Gore wants to cut government waste. It's a desire that has lived and died about 100 times in D.C. Modest success could save money, but utter failure would be a blip on the political screen because no one expects the government to change.

The scenario outlined above is optimistic. It's at least likely that Clinton will step on a political banana and become a prisoner of events. The garden hose will whip him about in a ruthless display of the power dynamic in our nation's capital. Opponents like Sen. Bob Dole, who vacations in New Hampshire, will steal the initiative and the headlines. Journalists will write his political obituary. Voters will kick dirt on his political grave.

But Bill Clinton is smart, and he can learn from past mistakes. He's president until defeat, resignation or 2001, and has smart people at his side. He's armed with a sense of urgency in a country groping for its bearings. He must drive Washington's dynamo — or it will roll him.

Carter Dougherty is a history graduate student.

CARTER DOUGHERTY
GUEST COLUMNIST

Citizens' Correct Reports Help Police Solve Crimes

TO THE EDITOR:

Many people do not know that a majority of all the crimes committed in this country would go unsolved in our law-enforcement agencies without the help and cooperation of law-abiding citizens like you and me.

We have all seen the news media reports on serious crimes in large metropolitan areas that were commissioned in public but were never reported by citizens and witnesses who say they "did not want to get involved" or that "it was not their responsibility to do anything."

It becomes obvious that those who are committing crimes usually have the least to lose in this society, and that the normal deterrents, such as prison sentences, do not prevent them from committing more crimes.

I believe that most students at UNC would report a minor assault occurring on campus — before the situation became worse — but how many people would report a similar situation traveling out-of-state on a major interstate? For new students arriving on campus who may later witness an infraction of the rules, there are always some do's and don'ts that one should know in order to prevent further inconvenience and possible embarrassment for your fellow classmates.

Don't try to take control of the situation, and don't threaten someone with an Honor Code violation unless you personally intend to take them to Honor Court, besides, it is a serious accusation.

Do immediately notify the proper authorities — particularly University Police. An immediate and anonymous tip on a probable infraction is often the best method. Don't urgently plead for help or attempt to give specific details over the phone.

To make a report simply give the type of probable violation, the location, a distinguishing description of the violator and the approximate time of occurrence. If a vehicle is involved, give the model and make, and if possible, the license number. This is all that is usually needed for the authorities to make an investigation, and that is all you probably want unless you are personally involved. Besides, it is the only way to reduce crime.

It doesn't take much responsibility to pull over as a witness to a severe automobile accident, or to pick up the phone if something is suspicious. I am glad to know a few students, some of whom are women, who have made three or more such reports to the police within the past year.

Since security should be everyone's responsibility, the next time you hear someone attempting to advocate gun control, do me a favor and simply ask them if they have ever reported a crime. Usually this is the type of person who forgot to notice a simple assault case last year that just caught the corner of their eye, or if later questioned about a particular crime, could not even give an adequate description of the assailants. More important, ask yourself if that person is someone whom you could feel safe with after witnessing a crime together at night. I've already made my decision. How about you?

Bill Copridge
GRADUATE STUDENT
BUSINESS LAW

Women Should Not Blame Men for Societal Problems

TO THE EDITOR:

This letter regards the increasing frequency of male-bashing that seems to be present on this campus, as well as other universities. I understand that some "females" choose to regard the entire male gender with contempt, but is this fair? I respond with a resounding "NO!"

I would first like to refer to an incident that occurred last year at the University of Maryland. A woman's organization, obviously determined to psychologically damage the men of the Terrapin campus, posted flyers with lists of potential rapists, urging women to beware of these dangerous lunatics. The fliers, which said, "These men could be potential rapists:" proceeded to list random names of male students taken

not intellectually respectable; therefore, blacks are owed nothing by me or other living whites who have not oppressed blacks." Mr. Jennings ignores the Judeo-Christian tradition of communal guilt. The Old Testament contains many references to the "sins of the fathers" being visited on the children. The New Testament modifies this doctrine somewhat (see the passage on the man born blind), but Christianity continues to hold that everyone is, to some degree, responsible for everyone's welfare. Secular liberal social doctrine concurs with Christianity on this point. All must help all develop themselves fully, to realize their full potential. Racial and intergenerational guilt can be seen as variations on this theme of communal responsibility. They are not as serious as personal guilt; we are not expected to solve every problem; nevertheless, we do share guilt. Communal responsibility may be, to Mr. Jennings and others, unappealing and not intellectually respectable; I don't know if this is the case. My argument, like his, rests on unprovable assertions. I can only say that I feel better, believing in it, rather than in some individualistic standard. When something is unprovable, feelings are often the best one has. This is not to say that I disagree with everything Mr. Jennings has written. Certainly, arrogance and inconsistency have been displayed by supporters of the BCC; certainly their proclamations of multiculturalism appear hypocritical, in the light of their refusal to honor other ethnic and racial groups at the BCC. Certainly racial and intergenerational guilt can be exaggerated. Our guilt, our connection, is not the same as those who personally held slaves. But where Mr. Jennings is wrong, crucially wrong, is here: "One and for all, Haughton, I owe you nothing." This is not a world of pure individuals; it is a community. Mr. Jennings and Ms. Haughton both seem to have forgotten this. In this way their views mirror each other strangely. Mr. Jennings should remember that he owes Ms. Haughton something. It is what we all owe each other, as a matter of justice and love. Those who support the BCC should remember that blacks and whites, and the other races and ethnic groups, are not separate species, but one people. Whatever the history of the oppression of blacks, and the record is dark indeed, nothing justifies separation or segregation. Those who reject the truths of community and connection, from either side of the ideological continuum, are equally wrong.

READERS' FORUM

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticism. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 400 words and must be typed, double-spaced, dated and signed by no more than two people. Students should include their year, major and phone number. Faculty and staff should include their title, department and phone number. The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vaguity.

from the phone book. This does not seem to be the most realistic approach to solving the problem. The "rape-free zone" established on campus last year is another instance of a poor problem-solving approach. What exactly does the rape-free zone imply, raping is OK in some areas, but not in others? Does it indicate that our society is so pathetic that we must actually set aside areas in which no raping should take place? It seems to me that if that is the case we might as well declare the whole country a "rape-free zone" and see what happens.

However, the incident that pushed me over the edge and provoked this letter happened Tuesday. While walking past the Union I passed tables for several groups, among them "MEN for Domestic Violence" and "MEN who Think Abuse is Good," none of which I was interested in. Finally, I came to the WAR table, Women Against Rape. Hello? Are we saying that women are against rape, while men are picketing Congress for the constitutional right to rape? Is it possible that any group, male or female, could propose something so completely ludicrous?

I am not saying I am for legalized raping or anything of the sort. But in an age where women repeatedly demand respect, as a man, I demand some too. Of all victims of domestic violence, 5 percent are men. But do I post lists of women's names, announcing that, "These are unlikely, yet potential, rapists." Of course not. In "Die Hard," Bruce Willis screams, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem... quit being part of the... problem." Don't blame men for every major problem in society. And don't rape.

Upon returning from Labor Day, my roommate and I were shocked to find our floor in worse shape than ever, despite the housing department's promise. We have just been notified that in order to fix the floor, we must move out within the next few days. Now the burden of UNC's problem is upon our shoulders. This would not have to be if the housing department had responded properly to our RA's continuous efforts. Hopefully, this will be constructive criticism to the department. In the future, paying attention may save money and hassles.

Terence J. McDewitt
FRESHMAN
COMPUTER SCIENCE

Russell T. Creel
FRESHMAN
MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES

Writers Should Not Forget Importance of Community
TO THE EDITOR:
Mr. James Jennings ("University Doesn't Owe BCC to Black Students," Aug. 26) makes his case logically. However, like any other logical argument, it is no better than the premises it rests upon. If Lorna Haughton's defense of the BCC is truly based on racial guilt and intergenerational guilt, and if racial and intergenerational guilt are not "particularly persuasive" nor are they intellectually respectable, as Mr. Jennings says, then his reasoning seems to hold together.

However, that something is not persuasive or respectable to Mr. Jennings is not sufficient to prove it false. He says that Ms. Haughton's argument runs thus: "Some white people oppress black people; therefore, because you are white, you must share this guilt even though you personally are guilty of no oppression because you share the guilt of your ancestors." Mr. Jennings' argument may with equal fairness be stated thus: "Racial and intergenerational guilt are unpersuasive and

Robert Markham Pace
CLASS OF 1993

