

Back to our American Customs

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Elliott Warnock, Editor

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Justice loses in Khartoum

The entire world is an onion. And sometimes it stinks... stinks really bad.

For those of you out there on the other side of the printed page who don't know about onions, the heart of the translucent vegetables often stinks the worst.

So it goes in the world. The birthplaces of humanity and civilization become the most decadent and disgusting.

Greece, the foundation of western democracy, exists in the nether realm of a fascist government; Italy, birthplace of republics that spot the globe, runs rampant with absurd government officials and insane economics; and worst of all, Africa, the continent that was the cradle of life of earth, the land that gave birth to the first civilization, now lays between the Indian and Atlantic Oceans crippled like a doldrum enshrouded ship.

Starvation grips the northern and central parts of Africa surrounding the Sahara Desert, political upheaval still grips the western coast while the apartheid system has wrapped its tail around the Cape of Good Hope and run up into Rhodesia.

Perhaps the worst example which typifies the disorder covering the continent is the recent showcase trial of murderers who had killed

American statesmen Cleo Noel and George Curtis Moore in the Sudan city of Khartoum.

Khartoum, the city where members of the British empire's army had fallen in battle against Moslem forces during the 19th century, now marks the spot where United States statesmen were held hostage and later murdered by eight members of the Black September organization.

When brought to trial, the terrorists were convicted then given seven year sentences. To make sure justice was complete, the Sudanese turned the murderers over to the Palestinian Liberation Organization to carry out the sentence, much in the same way the Americans used to ask they be allowed to mete out punishment to whites who had killed Indians.

It doesn't take a history major to remember what sort of justice was served in the days of the old west, and it doesn't take much intelligence to figure out what sort of justice will be delivered by an organization that advocates its members to kill for political gain.

One has to wonder if it would have better to not sentence the terrorists at all instead of prostituting justice.

Like we said, sometimes the world stinks.

Ark of Genesis: a hopeful omen

Tom Crotser of Frankfort, Texas has reportedly found the remains of one of the most celebrated voyages of all time.

He says that on the lonely, windswept mountainside of Mount Ararat near the Soviet border of Turkey sits the 625 foot long wooden remnant of Noah's Ark.

Over the years men have made a bundle of cash selling pieces of the sacred cross, Christ's manger, staff of St. Patrick and other various holy relics, but Crotser had a little more scientific purpose in mind and took some fragments to the University of Madrid where carbon testing dated the wood as 4,000 to 5,000 years old.

A 1916 Russian expedition supposedly took some relics from inside the ice-embedded structure

but the valuable artifacts were reported to be destroyed during the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Moscow.

As long as I've been alive (less than a quarter of a century), I've always been fascinated by the rumored discovery of ancient treasures. I suppose there's a little Cortez in all of us, but more than that, it's nice in these times when everything seems settled into a state of deterioration and mayhem to find a symbol of tranquility and... yes, even... religious significance.

We can only hope that in this age of Patty Hearsts, Black Septembers and Clifford Irvings that maybe this really is Noah's Ark.

And maybe the world doesn't stink so bad after all.

After nine months in France with the UNC Year at Lyon program, I stepped off the SS France and approached the American passport officer.

"Next passport, please. Well, miss, so you're from Charlotte, city of fast women and good slow beer. And you've been in France, huh? So what's a young girl like you doing travelling alone like this? Welcome back to America, and have a nice trip home to Carolina."

I walked on to customs rather stunned by the friendly slap on the back and let-me-tell-you-a-cute-joke routine which I'd forgotten while in France. I found myself at a loss for reaction. I was as confused as I had been when speaking French with vicious red tape bureaucrats on the other side of the sea.

Alas, the infamous customs official was looming ahead, and I knew that I must slither past him with my well-over \$100 gift and souvenir collection, my bottles of fine wine and liqueur and illegal Havana cigars.

The customs man greeted me and asked if

I were a student. I replied, yes.

"Yep. Can always tell. Ma'am, I'm gonna check your things here, if I may. Do you have any drugs stashed in your backpack?"

"Oh, no." I thought hastily about the cigars which were in my guitar case and wished I hadn't bothered to buy them.

"What are you studying, dear?" I answered that I was studying English and religion which pleased the official immensely.

"Religion. And I see you're from North Carolina. Billy Graham, isn't he from North Carolina, too?"

"Yes, sir, he is. As a matter of fact we study Billy Graham in college." Suddenly I felt better about the cigars.

The official explained that New Yorkers loved Billy and followed his crusades closely. He then returned to business:

"Let's see. Please open your canvas bag. Now do you have any alcoholic beverages in here?"

I felt vibes suggesting not to push my luck, so I replied that, yes, I had a mere four bottles of vintage variety ranging from blackberry liqueur to sangria to white champagne. The official smiled and said that since he liked the Bible and I knew about Billy Graham he'd give me a reduction on duty. He charged me the modest sum of 96c.

We chatted as he sorted through my belongings. I kept a careful eye on him as he destroyed my packing job. I worried that he might find something he shouldn't. Mercifully he ignored private-looking cases and notebooks that could be diaries or information for the CIA. I reminded him that I was delighted to be back in the old country where a cold Coke costs only 20c. He corrected me and said, "Thirty in New York, sweetie, and telephones are 20 now."

Moving along quickly we came to the guitar case, that well-known storage bin for uppers and downers that are trying to get across the border. I held my breath: I think he sensed it after his years of experience on

his side of the counter. "Now, do you have anything in your case here besides a guitar?"

I clenched my fist behind my back and replied that, yes; indeed, I had inside it a tuning fork and a capo.

"Wonderful," he said. "Keep practicing. Oh, yes, about your purchases abroad. Looks like you bought, let's see—\$97 worth while you were there. That about right?"

"Why almost exactly, sir. How did you know?"

He told me he'd been working this job too long to make mistakes. He added, "Glad to have you in the home of the brave, honey. So long and take care with all that liquor." I breathed deeply, pleased with my results, as the stevedore loaded up my baggage. Then I remembered that once when I was 12 and at my grandmother's church I had seen Billy Graham and shaken his hand. The thrill was mild, but it proved to be quite a way through customs.

Murray Fogler

National student lobby—money well spent

Student Government recently shelled out \$150 to join the National Student Lobby (NSL). It is the only national organization to which our student government belongs — but \$150? Is it worth it?

First let me tell you a little about NSL. As its name implies, it is a

registered lobbying group with full-time offices in Washington. Created in 1971, the organization ostensibly represents all students in an attempt to influence congressional legislation that affects students.

For example, minimum wage bills that contained provisions that would

have allowed employers to pay students only 80 per cent of the minimum wage were strongly opposed by NSL, and they scored a minor victory when some of the provisions were defeated.

Another issue was the reinstatement of the youth air-fare discounts (NSL testified in Senate sub-committees in favor of the bill — it subsequently passed in the Senate, but awaits Committee hearings in the House).

By far the most salient legislation that arises annually is that dealing with student financial aid. Our entire higher education system — both public and private institutions — is in the throes of a serious financial crisis as the cost of providing quality education skyrockets.

NSL, among numerous other groups, is lobbying to keep tuition low so that college costs will be within the range of most income brackets. Accompanying this action is the push for more direct aid to students. The situation is infinitely complicated and highly political, but since bills that are related to these problems are of vital importance to students, it is encouraging to know that there are professional lobbyists who have the students' interests in mind.

Students government at UNC has been traditionally an internal affair — concerned solely with matters peculiar to UNC (the one exception that comes to mind, of course, is the student activism of the late 60's, but even this activism was not the arm of student government as such). But today, for a couple of reasons, we can ill afford such a parochial view.

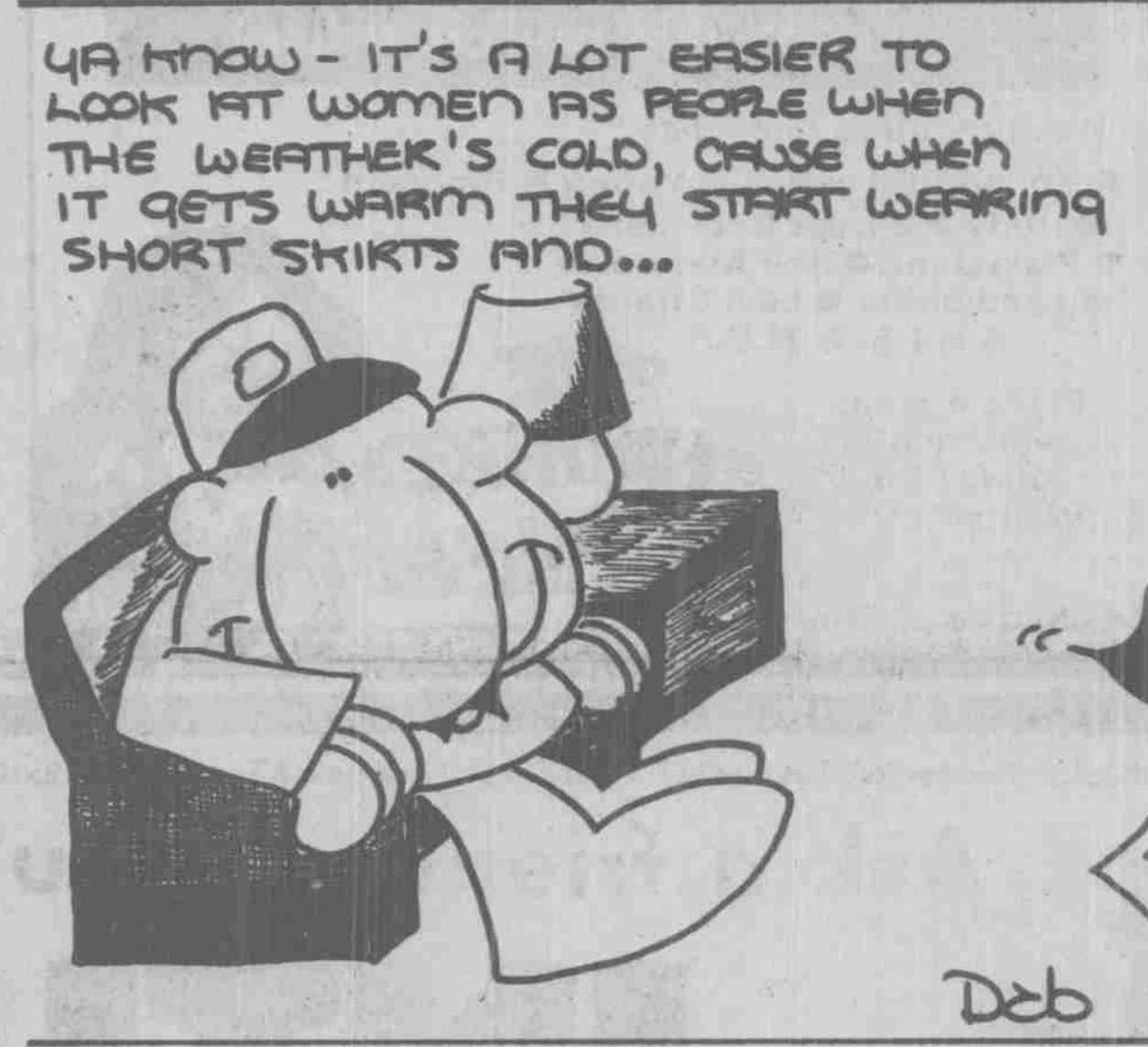
For one thing, students now have a

vote: this certainly doesn't automatically guarantee a heightened interest in all levels of politics or government, to be sure, but it does mean that we ought to be more concerned (or at least informed) about issues that affect us. And it also means that when we approach our legislators, our opinions have much more credence than before. It is the purpose of NSL to provide organization and cogence to the fragmented but large mass to students so that the power of the numbers of students may be utilized to its best advantage.

Another reason we must climb out of our shell is that there are no longer matters "peculiar to UNC." The University at Chapel Hill is not only one of the 16 constituent institutions supported by the state, it is also part of the larger society of institutions of higher learning around the country. Most of the issues confronting UNC are also national concerns, and it stands to reason that by working together with other schools we can better solve our problems.

In view of all this, the \$150 investment in NSL seems to be a prescription for corrective lenses for student government's myopia. As Marcus Williams, student body president, states: "They can give us the perspective for progressive legislation."

Whether student government will actively participate in NSL or whether it will be able to exploit this perspective of which Marcus speaks remains to be seen, but at least it's a step in the right direction.



Laura Toler

Can a mediocre person make it today?

Can the mediocre, average Joe make it in the new society? Special knowledge and expertise are what success is made of, now to a greater extent than ever before. Likewise, success in the social world depends on Joe's ability to shine

— to be different and be noticed. Can we be individuals in the mad stampede to variety? And must Joe go crazy trying to create a role for himself? Or is it normal to be weird?

To all those named Joe, I apologize for symbolizing you as my "common person." Take comfort in the idea that even he who writes his reports, pinches his secretary, consumes his T.V. dinner and settles unblinkingly before John Chancellor plus nightly encores is destined to be different if every other soul follows the trend of conforming to diversity.

The accumulation of information, we are told, is astounding. Libraries cannot keep pace. Accordingly, there is need of specialists to research every aspect of every area and report their findings to our neutral decision makers, who are too busy ingeniously staying alive in the political arena to worry about being informed.

Such progress may lead to automation which takes Joe's job. We

will soon know enough to create computers — that accomplish such routinely boring endeavors as writing obituaries about the culmination of someone's attempt at meaning... or diversity.

Anyway, maybe the technocrats will be smart enough to find a new means of livelihood for Joe, such as oiling the computer. Or perhaps he too must find the money and the time to become a specialist — a sort of professional, ideological money-maker whose distinctive employment creates spillovers into his social role.

Even the distinguished specialist often adopts hobbies and ways of joking, speaking and dressing that follow the stereotype of his field. We are political activists. We grow our hair and read "Doonesbury" and laugh. We are biologists, and we keep a garden and a whole zoo of pets and cry in vain for the salvation of the ecosystem.

Yet we find — or found — differences within specialization. One Joe likes classical music, another likes jazz; one never plays the second side of an album, one plays guitar and one makes candles. All these novel pursuits are

completely voluntary, we say, and are used for time not spent on keeping up with the afore-mentioned rush of information. We triumph in our abilities to get a rise out of a Joe who discovers our pet boa constrictor or our amazing talent for resurrecting trivia.

Perhaps we naturally are all qualitatively different. But must we not admit that we are all quantitatively identical (as Thomas Jefferson would insist) in our attempts to force ourselves into unusual roles?

All I know is I've been mastered in the Arb trying to write this masterpiece, feeding the squirrels and, except for the presence of 15 other kids sprawled in the Arb, feeling much more unique and creative than all the Joes inside writing at their desks.

And here come not one but two of those grass-eating instruments of technology, the riding kind that save us all that time in which to play golf for exercise... or all that cholesterol for our heart attacks. I must leave now in the populous charge over the mediocre Joes, for I do not wish to be left behind in the widespread attempt to become unique.

The summer Tar Heel not only welcomes, but urges the expression of all points of view on the editorial page through the letters to the editor. Although the newspaper reserves the right to edit all letters for libelous statements and good taste, we urge you to write us, whatever your problem, point of view or comment. Letters should be limited to 300 words and must include the name, address and phone number of the writer. We will not print a letter without knowing the writer's name. Type letters on a 60 space line. Submit them to the Tar Heel office in the Student Union.



Early morning fishing at a local pond

The Tar Heel

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