

The Tar Heel

82nd Year Of Editorial Freedom

All unsigned editorials are the opinion of the editor. Letters and columns represent the opinions of others.

Elliott Warnock, Editor

Friday, July 19, 1974

General election: the right choice

You might think that it's a little early to be worrying about the fall general election, but it will be one of the most important North Carolina elections in recent history and merits early consideration.

Most important of the many decisions North Carolina voters will have to make will be the choice between Robert Morgan and Bill Stevens for the United States Senate seat to be vacated by Sam Ervin.

If you're one of the people who votes strictly down party lines, let me save you a lot of time and trouble: Morgan is a Democrat and Stevens is a Republican. But this election is too important for voters to follow strict party lines. North Carolinians voted down party lines in 1972 and got Jesse Helms a nice office in Washington, D.C.

In the old days, there was only one party in the state of North Carolina that had any political punch at all, the Democratic Party. From 1900 to 1972 there was a solid lineage of democratic governors, James Holhouser being the first Republican governor in the twentieth century.

While Democrats have produced

some fine legislators over the past 72 years, Ervin for example, they have also created an atmosphere in this state that suppresses individuals and forces them to channel their intelligence through the filters of the Democratic Party.

The Democrats have also produced Robert Morgan, who as Attorney General of North Carolina promised to lower the state's crime rate, while in fact crime in North Carolina has continued to increase; Robert Morgan, who as a state senator was a defender of segregation; Robert Morgan, who now wants to be the United States Senator from North Carolina.

Try to visualize Jesse Helms and Robert Morgan, side by side in the senate.

It's an eerie picture.

Bill Stevens has retained his individuality during his campaign for senator; he has listened to citizens in this state and recorded their feelings and attitudes.

North Carolinians have some time to think the choice over, and one can only hope they make the right decision.

Letters to the editor

The plight of 'hamburger' labor

To the editor:

Jim Grimsley's article on hamburger joints was offensive, partly because it seemed fabricated—not what I'd like to read in a newspaper. Starting off by admitting that he took the opportunity to look over the woman ("girl") at the counter, he then took the opportunity to leer at her rather than the sad conditions of her workplace. Never have I met so enthusiastic a menial worker; we're an apathetic bunch, drained by insensitive managers and customers. Your writer, a boy with privileges, should be ashamed that he can't analyze the situation of the woman who waited on him. The business tycoons who operate these chains make it seem as though bad service is the fault of their workers, not of themselves and their systems.

Allison Benson

(Editor's note: Jim Grimsley, assistant managing editor of the Tar Heel, moonlights as one of those "menial workers" at MacDonald's when he finishes his work on the paper, and definitely is not "a boy with privileges.")

Convict wants female friends

To the editor:

29 year-old convict needs gentle love and affection

Support Nation Love a Convict Week!! At least one of you sweet little ladies anyway...

I've been down for a long time and it sure would be out a hand to get a letter from a woman if you know what I mean. Really. I like good boogie music, motorcycles, outdoors, the woods or the mountains, like

soft gentle girls with open-minded attitudes. Can you help!!?

Tom Hunter #34789 Box 1000 Stielacoom, Wash. 98388

Editorial slights Soviet athletes

To the editor:

You said in your last issue that you wanted feedback. O.K. I was incensed by your editorial "Yay US, Boo THEM." (USA-USSR). I certainly don't want to defend the Stalinist Soviet regime, which by definition is just as capitalistic (based on the creation of capital through the oppression of both industrial and agricultural workers) as we are, though in a different way. On the other

hand, the tone of your editorial was incredibly patronizing toward the Russians, just because the Russians seemed to be enjoying their visit here. Poor bastards, they don't have it as good as lucky us. It's probably true that American athletes are generally unable to enjoy themselves in the Soviet Union, feeling like Romans exiled temporarily to the most primitive of provinces; all the worse for them. The attachment and love I feel for my own land and culture, in spite of its brutality and oppressiveness, makes it particularly painful to realize how easily this emotion transmutes to the desire to downgrade other ways of life. P.S. A friend who was one of the interpreters for the games said the Russians were amazed by the violence of American movies and t.v.

Amey Miller 208 Purefoy Road

(Editor's note: I never referred to American athletes in Russia. The last lines of my editorial were not meant to be patronizing to

the Russian athletes; they were directed to a cousin of mine who lives in Minsk, and as of the present, has not been allowed to leave Russia. WEW)

Ford contest for 'air-heads'

To the editor:

The air-head who has the Tar Heel sponsoring the Gerald Ford joke contest is surely not representative of the talent I know is on your staff.

Grow up. I don't like his politics or policies any more than you do, but give the man a break. He is not a buffoon, but probably very much like your father and mine. Would you sponsor such a contest on his behalf?

Donald Guthrie

Editor's notebook

Nothing new in the Hill

With the great wave of nostalgia sweeping the country, I think it's only fair to allow me a comment or two on the past glories of wonderful Chapel Hill.

No, no...For God's sake, don't stop reading now. Read on. I'm not trying to build Chapel Hill up to the sky; I'm simply giving a glimpse of the old days, which for some reason, people seem to like much more than the new days. As Harry Reasoner said recently, the old times were something that his generation tried hard to get rid of; they didn't like the old days when they were the new days any more than the younger generations of Americans seem to like the present.

Reasoner's generation worked hard to move towards the future, which we all know now to be the present. With that move came slow changes, some for the better, and some for the worse.

It was the same in Chapel Hill.

People—more often than not it is the local populace—like to glorify Chapel Hill as some sort of Southern citadel of knowledge and change. Chapel Hill hosted the first great Southern university in the early part of America's history; Chapel Hill was a center for the civil rights movement during the sixties; and, son-of-a-gun, Chapel Hill was the childhood home of James Taylor.

Well, being a Chapel Hill native (the proverbial Tar Heel born-and-bred), I thought that was all really swell as a child, and I suppose I still do.

As a matter of fact, I thought there were a lot of swell things in Chapel Hill: UNC and its campus, Franklin Street, the Fourth of July on Fetzer Field (before the big move to Kenan Stadium, and in general, all the things that make a small village of 9,000 people or so a nice place to live.

But, as we all know, it seems like nothing can stay the same, mostly due to the fact that people, short-sighted people, greedy people and foolish people, always think they can improve on anything. I don't care if we're talking about the *Pieta*, somebody always wants to fool around with something they had no part in originating.

Example: in 1964, right in back of Sloan's Drug Store (which has bitten the dust recently) was the Scoreboard Bar and Grill, and right in back of that was a parking lot. In the building, inside the small, cube-like building sat a nice old man, gray hair, wrinkles and all. When you drove past, the man would invariably remember your name, smile, ask how your mother's operation went and once all the important issues of the day were settled, would wave as you went in to park.

Then, one day, the small, grey, cube-like building disappeared, as did the nice old man.

People said that he was too slow and they had an idea that would improve the situation; they would put up nice, new, shiny parking meters. Those parking meters would whirr and click and take your money, but they would never ask how your mother's recent operation went.

The metered lots weren't enough, so people allowed NCNB to by-pass the town's zoning ordinance and build a nice new semi-skyscraper of a parking deck.

You'll never guess what the people did just this month. They got rid of the shiny new parking meters and put in a small cube-like building at the entrance; they may even get a nice old man to take the money.

But they made sure they changed it, though, by God. This time they painted the building red.



Jim Pate

Continuing trip in Mideast

This is the second in a series of six articles. The one fact I noted above everything else in the Arab countries was the warm friendliness and helpfulness extended to us as Americans, no matter what the circumstances. In modern Lebanon, with its lush, fertile farm valleys, this was not difficult to understand. Relative peace in Beirut made hospitality an easier act. However, wartorn Syria was that very day recouping territory that was ceded by Israel in the recent Kissinger peace. Syrians had just withstood seven months of full-scale war that had gone almost to the very door of her capital, all financed with American

dollars. They seemed a lot less likely to send out the "welcome wagon" for us.

Our trip from Beirut to Damascus was a 50 mile drive from peace into the life of war afflicted people. With our guide and friend, Alefari El-Daye, our group left the Lebanese seaport, the "Paris of the East." We drove westward into the hot upland farm valleys. Snowcapped mountains in the distance made the 95 degree sunshine seem somewhat eerie.

Helicopter gunships buzzed up and down the farm valleys where Israeli and Arab jets had clouded the clear skies in dogfights four weeks earlier. The cone of Mt. Hermon hunkered over the hills to our far right. Hidden behind her slope lay the Golan Heights.

After passing the 5500-foot mark and several checkpoints, we finally reached the border. A liberal cluttering of machine guns, anti-tank weapons, and very eager-beaver, obedient I say trigger-happy, soldiers made it obvious that there would be no funny business. Two reporters were turned away at the border because of Israeli visa stamps in their passports. The order of the day: No photographs from here to Damascus.

These were all real guns with real bullets, huh? And real soldiers in a real war. We had arrived! . . . My stomach felt funny. The road beyond unrolled through a rocky valley strewn with barbed wire and concrete, overlooked by tanks and heavy artillery looming on the hillsides. Army camps were numerous along the roadside. Truck and tank corpses rusted away in the blurry distances. This was Syria's first line of defense behind the front.

My first taste of war came at a small Syrian settlement where we stopped to rest. After a half-assed attempt to speak French with a small Arab boy, I took his picture next to a tank. So over comes the guard, smiling, politely confiscating my film and crushing it underfoot . . . No funny business, see. And meanwhile, 20 miles south, four Austrian soldiers were blown to little bits after driving over a land mine some thoughtless person forgot to pick up. Oh yeah! Now I remember! No pictures. So I gave the Arab kid a candy bar anyway.

The closer we got to Damascus, the more bomb craters and rubble homes we saw. People were busy everywhere, cleaning up and rebuilding. Evidence of shelling ended in the suburbs and we reached the limits of the oldest still inhabited city in the world.

Ours was one of the first groups of Americans to enter Syria since 1967. Had we arrived five days earlier, we could have stood and cheered our very own President. I noticed that when visiting other countries,

Americans are quite proud of Nixon, despite you-know-what.

A huge billboard on the city limits greeted us heartily in both English and Arabic. Four policemen on motorcycles stopped our bus. After one minute of gabbling with our driver, we began to follow them—a police escort, no less.

Streets were crowded with busy people who gave us only quick glances. Veiled women, according to Arab custom, followed dutifully behind their husbands at a respectable distance. In contrast to this, all the young people we saw were clad in khaki army uniforms. All young Syrians, men and women alike, are required to served in the army.

After passing the residence where President Nixon spent the night (not under the huge palm tree, as I had heard), we were led to the palace where Nixon had been entertained at a state dinner. Before touring, we were told, we would be the guests of the Syrian government and a local guide agency for a luncheon.

I have to say that it was one of the finest feasts I have ever sat down to. They really tried to outdo themselves with a ten-course meal that could not be topped. No one knew for sure what most of the food was, but I saw no one who seemed as if they cared.

Damascus lived up to its name. The sights were right out of *Arabian Nights*. Ox-carts and donkeys were the rule on the narrow, jammed streets and camels were not infrequent sights. Open fruit markets and spice bazaars abounded. On Strait Street, we entered a five-block area of nothing but spice shops. There were shops with the most beautiful ivory, silk, and jewelry to be found anywhere.

But the soldiers were everywhere. The uniformed pedestrians, the armored patrol jeeps, and the ever-present policemen. Underneath the current of shuffling, busy people, the war was still there. How could these people seem so oblivious to it?

The Tar Heel

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Mike Rierson

Old-timer talks of leather and life

We were driving in from whatever is on the far side of Pittsboro when I spotted the tanned saddle hanging from the front of what looked to be a store.

"The Barn and Saddlery." Sitting right there in downtown Pittsboro between an appliance store and a hamburger takeout. It was summertime and hot, exams were coming soon and this looked to be the perfect diversion.

The stout wooden steps lead up into the chest of the building. Greasy and a bit rusted, the bannister is actually a tacked-on pipe, the kind you find leading into a sink. The steps stop under a single light bulb that dangles from the ceiling, throwing a bare light onto the weight and pulley that operate the tin warehouse door.

There is an eerie quality about this place, and before entering I look down and notice the lantern perched inside a harness that hangs midway up the stairs. The horse and leather smells carry me into the room.

The figure that is humped over an English saddle sports a bolo tie that swings around his neck and sways gently back and forth, humming. There are saddles scattered over the floor, spread out on sawhorses, and some even hang from the ceiling.

Regardless of all the craft shows that seem to crop up in this area, I never fail to be amazed at what one man can do with his hands, and how few do it. A commercial pops into my head—the "hand-crafted quality" television. Damn commercializing.

Between the moment that the man was still not aware of me standing in the room and the

next when we were comfortably sitting in his workshop, I drank in the room's aroma. Broken wooden matches were strewn in the ashtrays and pictures of weathered Indians hung from the walls. Tacked to the wall there was a letter from a leather supplier in Ohio saying that prices were going up.

It's hard to explain how you begin talking to someone, become interested, enticed, and then the next thing you know, you're watching him demonstrate how to stitch together two pieces of leather on a Singer sewing machine. It just happens and you're tugged along by the smells—tanning oil, old leather, horsehide—and the talk—retired from Phoenix 15 years ago, been here since 1959, worked four nights until 10 p.m. last week, everybody wants it done NOW, and few people say thank you.

There's some laughing about a pipe captured from a German general trapped in the Black Forest, and he wants to show me the holsters, the show box full of silver pieces, and the telegraph key made by Erickson and Sons in Stockholm that he put back together. He wants to talk and yet he wants to go. We stay and the sun goes down as the virtues of being your own boss are kicked around, in what turns out to be the attic of the old telephone company building in Pittsboro.

The saddles seem to range from old English types that look sturdy enough, to the most ostentatious ones imaginable. "You know," I drawl, "some of these look to be rather gaudy and bulky, what with all the silver and all."

"Yeah, I know. Ridiculous things, hell to put together, but they're the ones that sell the quickest."

"I see."
Years ago he had bought a model of a stagecoach, one-twentieth original size, at one of the dime stores. Took a look at it and then during the weekends he put together the real thing. "Just enlarged on the plastic one" he says. He showed it for a while, then began to tire of it and finally swapped it even for a '68 Chevy.

We sniffed around the littered work shop, stepping over the saddle soap and leather scraps and trying to figure out how he ever got those old sewing machines to run.

While we are talking he somehow edges into the conversation that he doesn't want to make a fortune, nor does he want to be famous, or anything else. He would just like to slow down, to take it a little easier. Yet he can't because people keep coming in trying to get him to repair saddles and tack that should have been thrown away miles ago.

And I suppose that he can't even keep from talking late into the night with fools like me because he realizes that people are curious, they want to know, and some of them even care about what he did in his lifetime.

After I shake his dry, calloused hand and descend the pipe-railed steps, I realize that we had forgotten to exchange names. As I stand in the darkness at the bottom of the steps I can hear him up there running the Singer machine. I decide not to bother him.

