

The Daily Tar Heel

78 Years of Editorial Freedom



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What Criteria Should Elect An Editor?

It's a hard thing to do, having to elect an editor. For the candidates, these trying campaign days are full of mounting pressure, uncertainty, and draining schedules.

For those of us student journalists who just try to keep the paper going and do our jobs, who are

concerned about the race, the Tar Heel and our future, there is increasing tension, worry, and concern.

For the readers, who have become the electorate, there is a desire to elect the right candidate; a concern over the present condition and policy of the Tar Heel; a wish for a good, solidly staffed and editorially respectable student newspaper—and an unavoidable responsibility to vote, and vote intelligently.

I tend to believe that students can vote intelligently on their choice for editor. I also happen to believe—probably because I am a journalist and have been closely involved with the paper for two years—that the Tar Heel Editor's race is the most important horse race going.

No one person, including Student Body President, comes into contact every day with so many people. No other service provides the daily news function of the Tar Heel, nor provides some sort of an editorial policy to inform and influence students, administration, and subscribers across the state.

Of course, the Daily Tar Heel is now undergoing severe criticism for its editorial policies, news coverage, and funding. And today, as there has been in the past, there are substantial and valid complaints.

All the more reason, I feel, for next year's editor to be the most carefully chosen, experienced, capable, and qualified person possible. Next year's newspaper probably couldn't survive a year of mediocrity, nor does it need to.

But, unless students are very careful in their choice of editors, mediocrity is a possibility.

What has been scaring me these last few weeks is the large number of people who quickly and openly admit that "they don't know a thing about voting for an editor." It bothers me because the race for editor has so far been reduced to gross campus politics rather than to a selection of the best all-around journalist for the job.

Fortunately, there still remains a few weeks before election. Hopefully, the Tar Heel will print more candidate information, the candidates will speak out more, and students will have a chance to learn some information. It is still possible to vote intelligently.

Next week, I am probably going to support the candidate for editor I feel is best qualified, but this week, I'd like to suggest a few criteria to consider when you talk to the candidates themselves and when you vote on March 17.

First, how much experience does the candidate have? This is perhaps the most important criterion for editor, because of the tremendous professional know-how that is required of the editor in the way he personally oversees the paper and in the staff he selects.

Because each newspaper is different, with different styles and problems, policies and circumstances, find out how

much experience each candidate has really had on the Tar Heel. Mere writing is not enough, and don't settle for such limited experience. Be leery of campaign experience claims: they're often overinflated. There is a radical difference between an occasional contributing writer and an editor with months, or years, of experience. Find out how much editorial experience the candidate has had?

Secondly, the personal editorial policy of the editor is important, because it is he who will establish whether the paper is activist, liberal, conservative, or dead. Unfortunately, I doubt that students will be able to find out much about the candidates' beliefs from what they say during the campaign. This campaign is politically oriented, candidates need votes, and they will all swerve as much down the middle as possible. Don't get "sold a bill of goods."

Again, to best discover how the candidates think, look at their past records. If their experience is what they claim they will have old editorials or past political behavior to judge from. You don't need a lot of research. What has the guy said before?

The biggest danger in this area of political beliefs is to vote for editor in a mere reaction to this year's paper. Not only is such action unfair to the many editorials and columns that have appeared each day during the past year, but it also opens up the possibility of unbearable over-reaction. Remember, the editor chosen on March 17 has a year to run the paper; we've got to live with his policy. Find out what the candidates really believe, avoiding labelling, and choose the one who best agrees with you.

The third criterion I'd use in picking an editor is the candidate's honesty and integrity. I'm not worried about his religion, his preferences, or his girlfriends. I'd just like to know, is he honest? Is he fair? Has his record shown him to be a responsible journalist and, more importantly, likely to be honest, open, and responsible next year as my editor? Is he a person I can trust? Simple, basic questions—but important, vitally important, to a paper that does have a gap in responsibility. Fourth, does the candidate have time for the job, or can he make time? Perhaps, the simplest criterion of them all, it still is important to

be those candidates who don't realize that being editor is a full-time, all-the-time job.

Finally, what are the candidate's educational backgrounds? I ask this not only because I'd like to know if the candidate is a journalism major with some knowledge of journalism, but also because the guy's major can show a lot about him—his training, his inclinations, the time he will have, not to mention his intelligence.

I haven't ever mentioned personality as a criterion, because it inevitably will be, and also because that, truly, is an individual decision. Image is important, but perhaps the least important. Appearances are deceptive, particularly in a campaign.

Experience, beliefs, education, and integrity are the qualities we'd demand of any professional we'd want to represent and work for us. No less do they matter to the position of DTH Editor.

Be very careful, when you decide who your candidate will be, that he will be the right man for the job.

We owe it to each other.

Administration Backtracks On Project Hinton Policy

The Committee on University Residential Life (CURL) has, in its rejection of a proposal for a liberalized open house policy for Project Hinton, hit a new and growing program below the belt.

The idea behind Project Hinton was that it might serve as a testing ground for some ideas still foreign to this University, yet experimental, fresh, and worthwhile. It was hoped that by giving at least some students a chance to live and learn together, with a slice of the environment of the real world, then the outcome of such an experiment might provide telling evidence and example for the University.

The primary factor in the experiment was the concept of co-education. Coupled with that idea was the theory that by providing an atmosphere for both living and learning, role of the residence college might grow.

But the living-learning phase of the experiment can not really take root unless the proper environment is provided. That environment is, by definition, one which will permit the members of the project to live in a microcosm which closely conforms to the world outside.

The residence college concept at this University has failed miserably. The best evidence to that effect is the decision of the University to require students to live in dormitories an extra year because not enough students live on campus.

Why? Because, perhaps, campus housing provides nothing more than a room in which to sleep and study. There are very few activities, not to mention exciting activities, which might attract students to the residence halls.

The trend today in university

education is towards a residence college program, or something similar, which is a vital part of the college experience. Some universities have developed residence colleges which are actually small colleges in themselves.

The University of North Carolina is not going to do much in keeping up in the education field unless some decisions are made to experiment, to at least try to discover on its own what might work; or if not to create its own programs, to at least try to benefit from the experience of others who have made even partial successes.

The people in Project Hinton claim to have benefitted and to be benefitting greatly from some of the ideas which they have been introduced to. But if CURL and similar administrative groups continue to deny students here the right to experiment with education and with their lives, then this University is going to fail its students by not providing them the very best of which it is capable.

John Schnorrenberg, the chairman of CURL, stated that one of the reasons that Project Hinton has not been allowed a liberalization of their visitation policy has been their failure to provide convincing evidence of the particular needs of the project.

Schnorrenberg might consider the possibility that because Project Hinton is just that—a project, an experiment in education—it is enough to merit a liberalized policy of visitation.

Or are we to assume that Schnorrenberg is of the belief that you can never take a chance that you might be right, and that being right might lead you to some kind of a better place?

'Student Body President'

Student body presidents here don't tend to be overly impressive as dynamic, innovative, creative, progressive characters. Each spring a slew of candidates goes knocking on doors with a handshake and smile and a lot of mealy-mouthed promises.

And each year one of them manages to get elected. But by the time election time comes around again the next year, people have forgotten who the present president is. What has he done?

And even if some do remember who the president is, what does it really matter? Student presidents are little more than figureheads. They are rarely in touch with student opinion on a comprehensive level, and even if they do manage to reflect their constituency, there is little they can do to change things in the University.

The students are caught because they are powerless to effect change. They can suggest certain ideas to the powers that be, but the hope of convincing those powers to take a chance with the students, as opposed to the trustees, is dim. The only way the student body president is going to get anything done (if that) is to bend the administration's way of doing things.

If the students did elect a president who had the integrity and interest to try to do something other than being mealy-mouthed, the chances are he would fail to impress the real people with the power in the University—the

administration and the trustees. In any event, given the practical impossibility of elected a student body president who is going to be effective for the students, we are again faced with an election, coming up on March 17.

Perhaps the least anyone can do, if he even cares, is to read the statements of the candidates as they appear in the Tar Heel, or on bulletin boards.

Give a sucker an even break.

Campus Radio

Student Legislature will receive a request Thursday, endorsed by the Finance Committee, that WCAR be given \$5485. One stipulation, as suggested by Gene Yates and Charlie Dean, two members of the Finance Committee, would be that WCAR come under the authority of the Publications Board.

What we have here are the first rumblings of a new controversy. WCAR wants to get money which is going to have to come out of student fees. Therefore the Legislature is going to want to have some hand on that money and on how it is used.

Campus radio has come a long way in the past few years. WCAR now boasts an impressive listening audience. But regardless of the popularity of the station, and its possible benefits to he students, there is going to have to be a lot of careful, rational thought—as to whether students are going to be required to pay for WCAR

Rick Allen

Will U.S. Reformers Meet The Fate Of 'Z'?

If you have not seen the movie "Z" yet, let me strongly urge that you go as soon as you can. It concerns the recent military takeover in Greece, but its value lies in the broad comparisons that can be made with the state of American politics today.

In the last two years or so, there has been a slow but definite swing to the right in this country. To a large extent, this has been a reaction to the cries of "Revolution!" and the scare tactics of the New Left.

Instead of creating an atmosphere of reform and change, the New Left has provoked the anger of middle America.

Instead of new legislation, we are faced with the vituperation of the Spiro Agnews and John Mitchells.

Why do the young want to get out of Vietnam? Obviously, they think the war is wrong, that we have spent too much already to secure a dubious position, that the money and lives could be better spent in improving this country.

But to listen to Agnew, the young are a pack of rabid communists, undermining the fabric of our great American heritage.

Mitchell has decided that protests must stop. He has tried to halt the critical voices by making "an example" of the Chicago Seven.

Mississippi's venerable Senator John Stennis has suggested that we deny trials to any defendants who disrupt courtroom procedure.

The Chicago police are indulging in

racial warfare in an effort to eliminate the Black Panthers.

This whole tactic of political retribution is the basis of "Z". The military elite in Greece decides that the best way to defend its country is to destroy all opposition through harassment and assassination. They assume that anyone who opposes them is a communist. This same fatal assumption is being made today by the rulers of this country.

It just simply is not true that the young in the U.S. are influenced by communism or any other foreign ideology.

The young want to improve the country, and to presume otherwise is to head for disaster. The minute the leaders of a country decide that the best way to combat their competition is through elimination, we are in grave trouble.

It is my sincerest hope that it is not too late in this country. We are in desperate need of changes; we must rebuild the cities, clean up our environment, integrate our schools, reform the military, and feed the hungry. Obviously, there are many different ideas for solutions to these problems. But clearly, the worst solution is to sling mud on those who disagree. We must unite in a common effort to save the country.

To call the young "communists" and "Un-Americans" is to undermine one of the greatest sources of change.

We are Americans. We are loyal to this country. We want to improve things. Listen to us. We must not be thrown in jail and we must not be undermined. It is both our right and our duty to try to effect change, and if we are given our chance, we will succeed.

Ben Singletary

They Shoot Flunkies, Don't They

Well, it's March again and in just a few weeks we'll be electing another of those Presidents and Student Legislatures who, like the wind, come in like a lion and go out like a lamb.

Boy, I just can't wait for campus elections this year! I love to listen to all those guys running for office talk about all they're going to do if they're elected. About how they're going to fight South Building for student rights and re-involve the students in student government. Real go-getters.

And then they win the election and somehow you just never hear from them again. It brings back memories of the old student council in P.S. 007. Ah, I remember just like it was yesterday. . . .

"Good morning, class."

"Good morning, Miss Ada Minnie Stration."

"Today we're going to be very busy, class. Busy, busy, busy! Just like the busy little bees. Now I have a big surprise for everyone. As you all know, your mothers paid one dollar for your milk this month. Well, that was 20 cents too much, so the class has six dollars to spend as it wishes!"

"Oh, whee, whee!"

"Now are there any suggestions as to how we spend our money? Yes, Bennie Benevolent?"

"Well, there's a march against hunger next Saturday for all the poor little kids in the world. Why don't we give some of it to them?"

"No, No, Mis Ada Minnie Stration! We can't do that! We have to use all our money for school functions. We have to spend it on ourselves!"

"You're absolutely right, Harold Hang-On-To-Everything-You've-Got. I'm ashamed of you, Bennie Benevolent, for (Shudder) suggesting that we GIVE our money away to other people. This is America! We must learn to be selfish and cold-hearted if we want to grow up rich like Daddy Warbucks, Dennie."

"We couldn't give the money away, anyhow, Miss Ada Minnie Stration. First, it has to go through a committee and, besides, the class constitution says we can't spend our money on anything except school affairs."

"That's correct, Ted Technically. I'm appointing you to head a committee to investigate the possibilities of spending this money."

"Oh, come on, Miss Ada Minnie Stration. That's a big waste of time!"

"You're speaking out of turn again, Lenny Let's-Get-On-With-It. I'm afraid I'll have to paddle you and call your father."

"Oh please don't call my father, Miss Ada Minnie Stration. If you do, I'll get a spanking here and one at home, too. That's not fair."

(Chorus) "That's just not fair."

"Shut up, class. I don't care what you think. I'm running the show here and don't you ever forget it! Now that's about all of our time for today. Next week we'll elect our officers and legislators. So, for our next class, be thinking about who you want to represent you."

"Our three candidates are Carl Conservative, running on the platform that the only change around here will be the kind that jingles in your pocket; Randy Radical, whose slogan is 'The desks belong to the people'; and Nick 'No-Label' Nice Guy, whose platform is '4 X 8'."

"But, Miss Ada Minnie Stration, what's the purpose of having a President and a Student Legislature if they don't have any real power? The only decisions they can make are those that you approve of. If they pass anything you don't agree with (anybody here remembers double-jeopardy?) you simply over rule them. They just do your busy work."

Now you know that's not true, Sammy See-Through-Your-Scheme. Your President and Legislature perform valuable services. They do much more than my busy work! Why, they. . . uh, they. . . uh, they look real nice and impressive in the yearbook!"

Readers Forum

Letters to the editor must be typed and double-spaced, not exceeding 300 words. The letter writer must indicate his willingness for his opinion to be expressed in print. All printed letters must carry the name and address of the writer(s).

Letters should be addressed to the Associate Editor, care of The Daily Tar Heel, Student Union.

The Daily Tar Heel is published by the University of North Carolina Student Publication's Board, daily except Monday, examination periods and vacations and during summer periods.

Offices are at the Student Union Bldg., Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514. Telephone numbers: editorial, sports, news-933-1011; business, circulation, advertising-933-1163. Address: Carolina Union, Chapel Hill, N.C. 27514.

Second class postage paid at U.S. Post Office in Chapel Hill, N.C.

