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The Daily Tar Heel

88th year of editorial freedom

Answer that

The transcript of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, though tactfully phrased, is frightening:

Sen. Joseph Biden: Can you tell me who is the Prime Minister of South Africa?

William P. Clark: No, sir, I cannot.

Biden: Can you tell me who the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe is?

Clark: It would be a guess.

Biden: What are the countries in Europe, in NATO, that are most reluctant to go along with theater nuclear-force modernization?

Clark: I am not in a position to categorize them.

Biden: Can you tell us, just from the accounts in the newspapers, what is happening to the British Labor Party these days?

Clark: I don't think I can tell with specificity what is happening in the British Labor Party today.

William P. Clark, who apparently does not read the newspapers, is President Ronald Reagan's nominee for Deputy Secretary of State. He was utterly unable to answer basic questions about foreign relations, but was limply approved by the committee, 10-4, with three members voting "present."

The only qualifications Clark brings to the job are a law degree and a friendship with Reagan, but he will replace Warren Christopher as Deputy Secretary. He has experience as an administrator in California, where he was chief of staff, but seems blissfully ignorant of international affairs. Reagan apparently appointed Clark as a sort of watchdog on Secretary of State Alexander Haig, who has played fast and loose with presidential directives since taking office. While he may be able to handle those responsibilities, we cannot conjecture on his performance otherwise with any degree of specificity.

Beware black cats

Today is Friday the 13th. That might surprise some of you who have been to class twice this week and can't believe it's already the end of the week. It might scare those of you who don't understand the history of this infamous day, but know well its ramifications.

You know black cats should be ignored, ladders avoided and important decisions postponed. There's nothing about this day that you haven't heard, nothing that could make you more wary of undertaking those tasks that could yield long-term results.

Friday the 13th is considered by the superstitious as a day of misfortune. There is a long history behind the day and the number. At the last supper, on Friday, 12 disciples and Jesus sat together for the last time before his Crucifixion. There is a story among Scandinavian legends about 12 gods who feasted together until Luki came and killed Balder, one of the twelve. French Lick Springs, Ind., decreed that all black cats must wear bells on this day and date. Hotel and motel builders rarely if ever, build 13 floors.

Then, again, there are people who think the whole thing a ridiculous hoax. After all, the Titanic didn't sink on Friday the 13th. World War II didn't begin on Friday the 13th. And, perhaps most important, Sen. Jesse Helms didn't get elected on Friday the 13th. So, a group of people, seeing it all for what it is, get together every Friday the 13th to crack mirrors, spill salt and eat 13-course meals. They also open the doors to black cats and walk under any ladder they can find.

We don't see what all the fuss is about. After all, Friday the 13th isn't all that much different from any other day.

For example, the current imbroglio over the campus elections shows that Friday the 13th came three days late for the ever-competent UNC student Elections Board. Judging by the basketball team's woeful performance against Wake Forest Wednesday, it was two days late for them.

Besides, there are hundreds of superstitions that can work against you. Then there are things like biorhythms and karma that nobody really understands anyway. If you, or us, really got down to worrying about all the things that could go wrong, we'd never come out of our holes.

But then, that another day and another superstition altogether.

Letters to the editor

'Carolina Course Review' dead, reader says

To the editor:

After a long, lingering illness, a death occurred on this campus during spring registration week. The obituary did not appear in the *DTH* for several weeks ("Course review suspended," *DTH*, Feb. 11). The article made the victim, the *Carolina Course Review*, sound like a seriously ill patient rather than what it is: a corpse. The *Carolina Course Review* died from a lack of interest and support, and from incompetence.

The lack of interest is obvious. Aside from some faculty members in my department, and apparently some in the sociology department, no one seemed to notice or care that the teaching scores were a little low this time around. Several issues relating to the lack of support were discussed, though superficially, in the *DTH* article. The issue of incompetence was only hinted at by the *DTH*.

Letters?

The *Daily Tar Heel* welcomes letters to the editor and contributions of columns for the editorial page.

Such contributions should be typed, triple-spaced, on a 60-space line, and are subject to editing.

Column writers should include their majors and hometowns; each letter should include the writer's name, address and telephone number.

I realized that something was wrong in the *Carolina Course Review* when I discovered that while my percentile ranking in classroom teaching was 2 percent (that is, out of 100 professors, only two were ranked as being worse teachers), 100 percent of my students would recommend me to majors, non-majors, or both.

Could it be that my students were so sadistic that they would lead other unsuspecting students into a class that was obviously a fate worse than death? I tend to doubt that conclusion.

There is an interesting property of percentile scores. If you took a group of people, scored them on any criterion, and constructed percentiles, you would find that one-half of the people in the group would be above the 50th percentile and one-half would be below the 50th percentile. A quick look through the *Review* reveals that there are virtually no scores above the 50th percentile on any question.

Armed with this information it is relatively safe to conclude, as the *DTH* did, that "incorrect data was evident in the review..." but a safer conclusion is that the errors in the *Review* are of sufficient magnitude and unknown source to make the *Review* entirely useless.

A fatal error occurred somewhere in the processing; after that point all that was left was garbage numbers. To state that "the problem of inaccuracy in the percentile rankings was compounded by professors not responding to the survey" is as ridiculous as stating that the effects of the Mt. St. Helena eruption were com-

Hostages and families held captive by press

By JOHN DRESCHER

From its beginning, the capture of Americans in the U.S. embassy in Iran was a media event. Iranian protestors began their chanting and effigy-burning when the American television cameras clicked on, and stopped when the cameras clicked off. It was exactly what the protestors wanted: packaged, made-for-TV drama, beamed nightly into millions of American homes to insult and infuriate its watchers.

Soon the media were expelled from Iran, but that only changed the focus of coverage. The families of hostages became the focal point. After the return of

the hostages, the omnipresent press was there to record as much raw emotion as it could.

The press became a frighteningly large part of what it covered. It had an influence known by few over many of the events of the crisis. Most newsmen adapted to this power and used it responsibly. CBS and NBC, as well as *The New York Times* and *Washington Post*, did not leak the information it had concerning the six Americans hiding in the Canadian embassy in Tehran until they were back home.

At Large

Some, however, exploited the situation. At the root of the problem was an inva-

sion of privacy caused by a constant race for reactions. Reporters were assigned to families of the hostages from the very beginning and kept a constant watch on them, monitoring each of their hopes and subsequent letdowns of the past 14 months. Some families were so angered by the press' late-night phone calls and probing questions that they refused to cooperate.

One reporter grabbed the telephone from hostage Bruce German's mother moments after her son first called and began asking questions. An NBC correspondent got into a shouting match with hostage James Lopez' mother and demanded an interview. Helicopters landed next to hostage Frederick Kupke in Francesville, Ind., in search of more "emotion."

Reporters weren't above politicking and buying their way into precious interview time, either. They took a hostage's wife to the hairdresser, offered to refurbish a home and just plain offered money for airtime, all for the good of informing the public.

Perhaps the public should share some of the blame for the over-zealousness of the media. Newsmen seek emotion-filled stories because viewers and readers delight in the revelation of private thoughts and feelings. Instead of hard facts, the press is forced to search for the "human element." Said William Tuohy of the *Los Angeles Times*: "Too much press, too little information."

Fortunately, the most intimate incident — the return of the hostages at

West Point, N.Y., and the reunion with their families — was hidden by the government from the press and viewers. Would the hostages have been reunited with their families and friends in private if the press had its way? No, wrote Thomas Griffith in *Time*. "Had the hostages not been government employees... sequestered by the government first in Wiesbaden then at West Point, with the press held at bay by military police, no feeling of ethical restraint or human sympathy would have kept the cameras from zooming in on those first awkward, tense moments of families reunited."

Some reporters, of course, made the best of some awkward situations and still provided good coverage. The closeness and familiarity of reporter-informer situations can be used to an advantage. Says WRAL-TV news reporter Renee Carpenter: "Sometimes it's an asset to be so close," she said. "It gives the reporter a different perspective. Often you can develop a sensitivity and feel that can make for a better story."

Some newsmen retained that sensitivity even under orders to pursue the news beyond the limits of decency. Said one WCBS reporter: "There is a line between coverage and harassment." Too many newsmen crossed that line and forgot that the people they were covering were human beings first, and newsmakers second.

John Drescher, a junior journalism major from Raleigh, is editorial assistant for *The Daily Tar Heel*.



AND HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE A RETURNING? AND WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE ABLE TO TAKE A WALK ALONE? AND WHAT WAS THE FIRST THING YOU SAID TO YOUR RELATIVES? AND HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT IRAN? AND WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO BEING HOME?

Write-ins

Votes for non-candidates can swing election

By GEORGE SHADROUI

What do Snoopy, David Poole, Daffy Duck, Tom Moore, Johnny C. Holmes and Charles Kuralt have in common? Certainly, not education.

In fact, each and every one of them had at least one write-in vote cast for him (it) during Tuesday's election. That in itself is perhaps not so significant. But circumstances can make seemingly small things loom large, particularly when months of hard work and large amounts of money are involved.

At Large

One vote counter said David Poole, *The Daily Tar Heel* columnist, had support "an inch deep and a mile wide." In other words, Poole got votes in virtually every race. That's not to say Poole didn't deserve the support. But he sure didn't want to win. And he sure wouldn't have served, I don't believe, if he had.

It would have been a laughable situation were it not for the fact that write-in votes may have affected the outcome of the election.

Joe Buckner fell a mere .3 percent of the vote short of winning an outright majority in the presidential race. Jim Hummel and Thomas Jessiman were separated by only 79 votes for *DTH* editor. Suddenly, write-in votes became important Tuesday night. Suddenly, no one who cared about the outcome of the election was laughing.

Jessiman has suggested that he lost crucial support at Craige dorm because a poll closed early. He's obtained signatures to that effect. When one adds the write-in votes to Jessiman's, Hummel's majority is only 22 votes.

In past Student Supreme Court history, candidates who have contested elections have lost their cases because they could not prove the irregularities materially affected the outcome of the election. But if Jessiman can show that 22, as opposed to 79 needed to top Hummel, people were disenfranchised, he may have grounds for a runoff.

That is not to suggest that people who want to write in a candidate should not. However, many people do it thinking it won't make any difference when, in fact, as this situation reveals, it could.

The percentage of write-in votes in the student body

president's race was 1.3959. "That's crucial in this kind of race," an elections board spokesman said. It is, particularly when write-in candidates can sway percentages by voiding their votes and reducing the number needed for a majority.

Gregg James, chairman of the elections board, said Wednesday night that he felt write-in candidates should not be able to declare void the votes cast for them. That makes sense. After all, the voter consciously made the decision. It was his right. Allowing a candidate to "void" his votes, as the law does now, puts too much control into the hands of those few students. That power should not be theirs.



Elections Board workers count votes... Hummel, Jessiman, Jessiman, Hummel, Poole

"I think it (not allowing write-in candidates to void votes cast for them) should be looked into," James said.

As the law now stands, he said, "it causes too much of a problem when you're in a close vote like this. That's who the voter wrote down, so the vote should be counted."

The law says any votes can be voided if the student is not considered by the elections board chairman to be a valid candidate. It should be changed so that all votes cast (not including blanks) or those cast for ineligible people should be counted in the totals. Students would be aware then of the impact their votes might have.

One concern is that write-in votes could cause endless runoffs by keeping each candidate from gaining a clear majority. In fact, write-in votes are not allowed in a runoff.

Another aside about ballots and the like. There is some questions about whether the order of names on ballots affects results. The races for *DTH* editor, student body president and CAA president came down to fractions of percentages. If a candidate receives votes simply because he or she is first on the ballot, then the least the elections board can do is ensure that every candidate has an equal chance. That can be done by printing an equal number of ballots with each different candidate listed first. It would not be difficult to do and it might be more equitable.

About 500 write-in votes were cast Tuesday. Many of them were cast with thought, others for fun. *DTH* staffers Tom Moore and Matt Cooper playfully asked students to vote for them for *DTH* editor in an effort to reduce tension in the *DTH* office. It was a well-intentioned ploy, but nine voters took them for their word.

But Cooper and Moore never expected to become a factor in the race. Neither did David Poole, Mickey Mantle, Phyllis Schlafly, or Slim Whitman; all received votes and some of them will count (sorry Slim; as the law now exists you have to be a student for those votes not to be voided).

Had those votes been cast elsewhere, had they not been cast at all, the write-in joke syndrome would not have ceased to be funny so quickly Tuesday night when candidates held their breath, fingers crossed, and watched as every vote became crucial to their chances for success.

George Shadroui, a senior journalism and history major from Salisbury, is editor of *The Daily Tar Heel*.

pounded by an abnormally warm spring. The review suffered from sampling problems and lack of participation by faculty members, but it died when the computer printed out garbage and there was no one there with the technical competence to know what had happened.

Stating that there are errors in the current *Carolina Course Review* is not sufficient. The current edition of the *Review* is nothing less than slander by negligence. A complete retraction should be issued and an apology to all faculty members who participated in the review should be made.

The *Carolina Course Review* is dead and I would argue that it should not be resurrected until the support, the technical expertise and the responsible supervision and control to guarantee quality can be assured.

John F. Stewart
Assistant professor of economics

A pertinent issue

To the editor:

During the recent campus campaign, most of the candidates addressed the same issues: racism, student apathy and the student budget, but most of the candidates failed to address a very real problem which faces more than half of the student body. The issue is the safety of female students walking on campus — especially during the evening.

The University Police have repeatedly advised women to walk in pairs or to call Rape and Assault Prevention Escort,

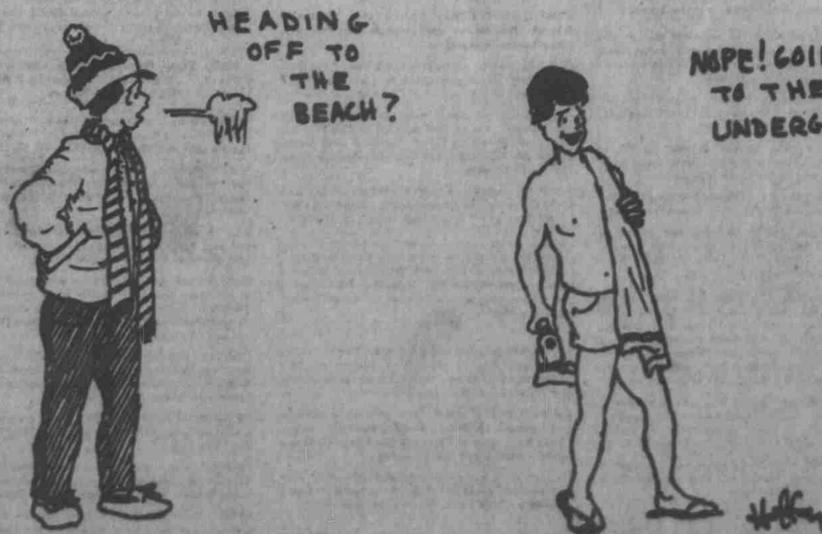
but what are women supposed to think after someone attempts to attack us while walking in pairs?

On Tuesday evening, my roommate and I were walking to Morrison when a man attempted to attack us between the Bell Tower and Kenan Stadium.

We were lucky enough to react quickly and to escape, but what about the unlucky ones who don't escape? There are probably few male students who have experienced a haunting fear when walking home or the terrible nightmares which often follow an attempted attack.

Does this mean women should walk in groups of 10 or call a RAPE escort for three women? I think it's time we seriously address an issue which confronts women every time we walk on campus after dark.

Eleanor Lee
407 Morrison



HEADING OFF TO THE BEACH?

NOPE! GOING TO THE UNDERGRAD!