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The Daily Tar Heel

89th year of editorial freedom

Land of cotton

The Reagan administration caused quite a stir this week in North Carolina by announcing it planned to relax the federal regulations that limit worker exposure to cotton dust in textile mills.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration plans to amend these rules that now protect workers from byssinosis, or brown lung disease. OSHA has also asked the Supreme Court to hold off on a decision in a case that tests the rules.

In the Carolinas lies the center of the controversy — 390,000 workers in the area's huge belt of textile mills. Of approximately 35,000 cotton mill workers in the country who have brown lung disease, 18,000 are in North and South Carolina.

Now the federal government is requiring the cost of devices to limit cotton dust in the mills be weighed against their potential benefits to mill workers.

Obviously, textile officials are jubilant and many workers' groups are outraged. Mill owners and operators say there has been over-regulation in the past, while many workers complain the Reagan administration's action attempts to put a dollar value on the good health of workers.

This instance is by far the most controversial move against industrial regulation the administration has taken and obviously is intended to protect smaller firms from the government.

The Reagan administration also has ordered the destruction of more than 100,000 booklets about cotton dust on the grounds that they are anti-business in nature. The covers of these books, which show a gravely ill worker, are supposedly biased to one side of the brown lung controversy.

Perhaps there is a degree of justification in each of these actions. Some regulations may be too stringent on smaller firms and worker literature may be slanted, but such a blatant defense of business at the expense of workers in the mills is only a slant in the opposite direction by the government.

Cost-benefit analysis should never be an overriding factor when worker health and safety are concerned. Cost should be taken into consideration, but not at the expense of a worker's well-being.

North Carolina is one of 24 states that chose to establish its own OSHA. It is autonomous of the federal OSHA and, supposedly, can set its own safety and health standards as long as they are not less stringent than federal standards. Therefore, its autonomy is greatly limited. N.C. Labor Commissioner John Brooks has said he does not know how he would respond if federal officials tried to alter state standards.

Industry officials have said the OSHA review would not affect standards already in place and there would be no immediate effect on workers. However, the future of the battle against brown lung is at stake in the federal government's attitude.

Surely financial security and increased productivity are desirable for industry in these days of economic trauma, but strides in business should never be made in place of the health and well being of the people who enable the business to function.

Although federal action would not stop efforts already started to follow regulation, there is some possibility the federal decision could cause cotton dust standards in the state to be drastically reduced.

There are about 18,000 good reasons why this should not be done in the Carolinas.

Covington's image change is only cosmetic

By MARK MURRELL

National Nazi leader Harold Covington announced this week that he is leaving the National Socialist Party of America to concentrate his white supremacy activities in the Carolinas.

At first the idea that the Third Reich storm trooper image has been abandoned by Covington brings a sigh of relief from many North Carolinians who have been embarrassed and humiliated by the national media attention this bizarre right-wing activist has attracted to the state.

But Covington's new role and image may be even more troublesome for North Carolinians than having the national Nazi Party leader operating from the state's capital.

Although he has resigned and passed the Nazi leadership onto 29-year-old Michael C. Williams of Chicago, Covington said he planned to stay in North Carolina. As far as anyone can tell he still plans to try to organize a Carolina Free State which would turn the Carolinas into a racist Mecca.

One of the six steps that Covington outlined for the formation of this state in mid-November was the adoption of the name "White Power Party" and a de-emphasis on Third Reich style uniforms — the step he has just taken.

What is even more frightening is that Covington is planning to take his activities "underground." He may abandon the swastikas, the brown shirts and armbands to fade into the crowd, but his purposes and goals are likely to remain as sick and misguided as they ever were.

Back in November, Covington also said his party would take on a semi-underground status in preparation for a time of government persecution. Now he is putting that step of his plan into action as well.

Covington is likely to pose more of a threat now that his outlandish regalia is gone. He will no longer be a visible threat or a source of bizarre copy for the media.

Publicity about him is likely to die as his grotesque visual image fades. This will enable him to blend into crowds and continue to plot his racist schemes without as much interference.

The March 2 indictment of six Nazis in Asheville for allegedly plotting to bomb public areas in Greensboro in the event of a conviction in last year's trial of six Nazis and Ku Klux Klansmen apparently frightened Covington. Now he is saying that the Reagan administration is out to get his party because of those arrests and the arrest of John Warnock Hinckley Jr., 25, on a charge of trying to assassinate the president.

Hinckley was briefly a member of the Nazi Party in 1979 but left because the party was not militant enough, party officials have said.

The State

Covington said this was proof that the government was "going to try to ban the Nazis, then going to try to ban guns. We're coming into a period of intense persecution."

Covington should realize that if his life's philosophy is built on persecuting others he cannot expect to go unopposed. Racism and fascism — though they do exist in the United States through groups such as his — have never been things this country has been particularly proud of.

Covington knows that, and that is the very reason why he is taking his forces underground to stockpile weapons.

"We're not going to do anything illegal," he said this week. "We're just going to urge our members to spend as much money as they can on weapons. We want to be ready."

Ready for what? To shoot people down in the streets and espouse Nazism while dressed in plain clothes or prepare for a coming race war? That seems to be what Covington is suggesting.

As he fades from the headlines now that his uniform



Harold Covington

is discarded, Harold Covington should be watched more closely than ever by the press, the government and citizens who are concerned about the neo-fascist threat of terrorism he will almost certainly continue to pose.

His group is going to "fade into the shadows because of the harassment and infiltration," he said. In the shadows where they are not easily visible, Harold Covington and his white supremacist supporters will pose more of a threat than they ever did with Hitler's swastikas emblazoned on their arms.

Mark Murrell, a junior journalism and English major from Jacksonville, is associate editor of The Daily Tar Heel.

Won't someone please give Melanie a job?

By MELANIE SILL

The clerk at the post office stamped "First Class" firmly on each of the 10 big manila envelopes I had handed him and looked at me over the top of his glasses. "Job applications?" he asked. I nodded. "Yeah, there sure are lots of those going out these days," he said with a smile. "I guess it's that time of year."

Actually, it's been "that time of year" for me for more than three months now. Like several thousand other Carolina students faced with the ugly reality of graduation — we thought it was a nasty rumor — I'm trying to convince employers that they really need me. Really.

Locally

My job hunt, of course, has been limited to journalism and so is easier to handle than that of people with less specific majors. Or so people have told me. But I have a thick sheaf of letters from newspapers all over the country to prove that jobs aren't there for the asking. Or the begging, for that matter.

My two roommates, also journalism majors, have smaller stacks of what we bluntly call "rejection letters" (we know what "we'll keep your application on file" means). I now hold the lead in number of rejections, simply because I've sent out three times as many application envelopes.

I've tried several different approaches in my cover letters to newspaper editors. I've been bold. I've been modest. I've been casually confident, understatedly brilliant, eloquent, terse, businesslike, friendly and aggressive.

Once in a while, in the midst of yet another cover letter, I get a savage urge to go completely free form. What would a staid managing editor do if he got a letter like this:

Dear Editor:
After four years of total nonsense and occasional forays into the world of working journalism, I'm ready to become a real reporter. I'm young, energetic and enthusiastic. Actually, I'm a perfect physical specimen. I'll work from 5 a.m. to 11 p.m.

letters to the editor

'DTH' criticized for right-wing conservatism

To the editor:
To consider yourself along with your DTH associates as "subversive" is not merely laughable but also egotistical ("Where's the fence," DTH, March 27). As Bob Dylan, former "subversive" turned "conservative" would have it, you are men with "big ideas, images and distorted facts." Why but out of your own feeling of insecurity must you necessarily align "liberal" with "subversive?" Indeed, such jargon keynotes you for a closet conservative.

If writing style and mode of expression are any indication of true ideological propensities, you, my friend, are quite far to the right. "Continuing steady trend," "no specific reference" and

"interpret this conservative shift" sound like Ronald Reagan's pearls and not those of a clean-cut kid like yourself. You ring of an economics major rather than an English major.

"Thirty-five percent," "38 per cent," who really cares? I am sure you would pummel Reagan for using inimitable percentages to his own vague advantage. The ultimate absurdity appears in the phrase "traditional radicalism." Did you know that this fact is historically as well as linguistically ridiculous?

Despite all this vapidity, what really irks me is your lauding of homosexuality, pre-marital sex, drugs and general mayhem. Don't twist my words either to make me seem intolerant of others'

lifestyles, because I'm not. However, you seem quite intolerant of those who attempt to "hold fast to their values." I believe you have a fence around your own pseudo-intellectual, pseudo-subversive mind.

Luke Powers
3 Old West

Cube clarified

To the editor:
The Carolina Union regrets the problems experienced by the APO Campus Chest and the many other organizations that have had their notices "amended" on the Cube. Yet, we must also maintain our current position of refusing to sche-

dule and police the Cube and would like to clarify the reasoning behind it.

Several years ago the Union bought the Cube for the purpose of publicizing programs sponsored by the Union. Subsequently, we relinquished sides that weren't being used by the Union to other campus organizations. There are eight sides to the Cube, and the Union currently uses only two of them. It must be asserted that the use of the Cube is a privilege, since theoretically, there are now enough Union programs that need publicity to fill up all eight sides.

In early October, 1980, in response to a request by the Di and Phi Society, guidelines were drawn up concerning Cube etiquette: a copy of these guidelines has been available at the Union information desk since mid-October.

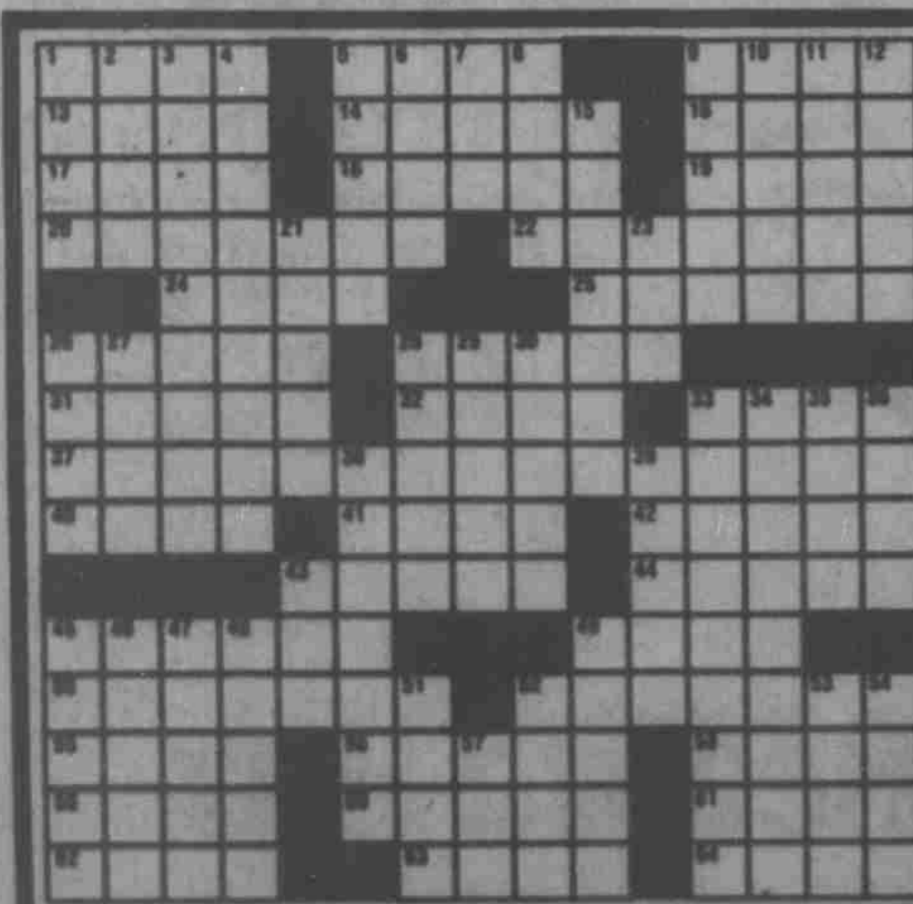
There are two major reasons for not establishing a reservations policy. First, neither the Carolina Union Activities Board, the administration secretary in charge of reservations for obtaining meeting rooms and lecture halls nor the staff of the information desk has time to grapple with allocating Cube space. This may sound like an age-old excuse, but I invite you to spend a day in the Union with an eye out for the operations of the aforementioned personnel, and, *vola!*, you will be convinced. Secondly, even if a sign-up policy were implemented, what would prevent someone from painting over another's officially registered space? It is certainly not the Union's responsibility to chase down and spank offenders.

Cooperation and consideration are the key components of functional Cube operations. If organizations would use the "guidelines of courtesy," the Cube privilege should benefit all.

Bill Ragland
Chairman, Publicity Committee
Carolina Union Activities Board

THE Daily Crossword by Ruth N. Schultz

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DOONESBURY



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by Garry Trudeau