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# The Daily Tar Heel

89th year of editorial freedom

## Grouping plan

When the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system began its fall semester in August, it took a bold step — for the first time since integration in 1970, students in its 10 high schools were grouped in classes according to academic achievement.

A committee, sensitive to the problems that could result from such achievement grouping, was set up last spring by system Superintendent Jay Robinson. With parents complaining that their children were being held back by slower students, and instructors finding it impossible to teach students of differing abilities in the same class, such grouping seemed to be the solution.

While such a major step is admirable for Charlotte — a city that has been used as a model for desegregation in the past — the possibility that students may be segregated into basic, average and advanced classes according to race, has aroused criticism. Separating blacks into basic classes and whites into advanced classes is a likely consequence of the program, according to critics.

But Robinson defends the program, saying it could be discontinued if it were leading to resegregation. "We are so committed to running an integrative school system that we will not start anything detrimental to that end."

However, critics of the program say high school is too late to begin such separation according to achievement. It should be done at lower levels where classification would more likely be made according to ability rather than race.

Critics also argue such grouping undermines the purpose of busing. Why bus black or white students across town just to be resegregated in classes according to skill with those of the same race? But Robinson made clear he was not willing to support the program if it put a large portion of one race in all the same classes.

N.C. Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction Jerome Melton argues some grouping has to be done in order to make the curriculum meaningful. But he admitted if grouping was too rigid or forced upon the students, it would either resegregate students or result in poorer students being placed in some classes and middle-to-upper income students being placed in other classes.

While some grouping may be essential to ensure that achievement-oriented students are not slowed down by the system, it should not be used as an excuse to segregate students. Robinson, school administrators and principals, should monitor the program closely to keep it from reaching such a point. In that way, a truly integrated and fair system for every student would continue.

## Hollow support

President Ronald Reagan, proclaiming the right to vote as the "crown jewel of American liberties," last week voiced his support for a 10-year extension of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. But his support, though eloquently stated, seemed paradoxical. While advocating the extension of the act, he called for two provisions that could render it ineffective.

When the Voting Rights Act first gained approval, it was adopted as a means of protecting blacks from having their voting rights whittled away by literacy tests and poll taxes. The act helped to increase minority voter participation nationwide. In 1970 and 1975, the act was expanded to include Hispanics and American Indians in parts of New York, California and 14 other states.

But today, Reagan is calling for a halt to this expansion. Instead, he has advocated a way for states to evade their legal obligations of clearing changes in their election processes with the Justice Department. The House has adopted stringent guidelines for states that would exempt them from these obligations. But Reagan has said that these guidelines were too harsh, calling for what he describes as more reasonable restrictions.

Reagan said he also would support a provision requiring the government in violation cases to prove that a state not only had denied the right to vote, but had done so intentionally. Unfortunately, gauging the intent of a law could at times prove difficult, possibly providing states with a way to dodge the act's restrictions.

Reagan has said he recognized the need for a voting rights act. But at question is the length to which this recognition would provide actual protection for a citizen if his right to vote is denied. In reality, Reagan has shown vocal support for the law, but at the same time has provided means for states to dodge it.

## Legal advice

### Use teller cards with care

*Editor's Note: This advice is prepared by Student Legal Services, which has an office in Suite A of the Carolina Union. UNC students have prepaid for this service and may obtain advice at no additional charge.*

It's date night USA, or else you need food to survive a weekend term paper. You reach into your wallet and pull out nothing more valuable than the ticket stub from last week's game. You need CASH, and you need it now. No problem — you can always use your bank card in the robot teller at your friendly neighborhood bank.

Electronic funds transfer systems are not always painless. Federal and state law does offer the consumer some protection but the careless user may suffer loss.

If a thief steals your card and also gets your secret access number, he may take money from your account. To seek protection of these laws which may limit the

consumer's loss to a total of \$50, the consumer must report loss to the bank immediately upon discovery. The customer may be penalized for negligence in restricting access to the card and code. Erroneous subtractions from your account may be next to impossible to trace, as are empty money envelopes.

Keep the receipts put out by the machine, and be sure to subtract all transactions from your record of your accounts. Although banking machines are very convenient, they don't balance your checkbook for you.

**ADVICE FOR THE DAY:** (1) Memorize your access code and either destroy it or keep it in a safe place entirely separate from your car. (2) If you lose your card, notify the bank immediately. (3) Be sure to keep accurate records of all transactions and notify the bank immediately if you receive an empty envelope.

# Impact of TV violence updated by report

By SHAILENDRA GHORPADE

"Violence depicted on television can induce mimicking or copying by children. Under certain circumstances television violence can instigate an increase in aggressive acts." — Report of the Surgeon General on TV violence, Jan. 1972.

Ten years after the \$1.8 million report confirming the positive causal effects of TV violence on aggression in kids, an update from the Surgeon General argues that children who watch television could also get a skewed view of the world. Among other things, television is seen as portraying the elderly as senile and pitiable, women as subservient, and crime as more prevalent than it actually is.

"New research clearly demonstrates that the question of TV viewing goes significantly beyond violence. Almost every act of a child is influenced by watching television," said Eli A. Rubinstein, coordinator of the update to be published soon, and vice chairman of the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee (1972) on TV violence.

Rubinstein, an adjunct professor at UNC's School of Journalism, said the update would summarize a plethora of scientific papers on the subject, published since the first Surgeon General's report on TV violence 10 years ago.

"The most important impact of the first report was to spawn a whole new generation of TV researchers," Rubinstein said. "There has been as much research on television from 1975 to 1980 as had been done in all the years before that."

The updated report will summarize hundreds of studies, many of which show that TV viewing by kids affects them in several areas — their learning of the world around them, their social moorings and intellectual development. It will also confirm findings of the earlier report that violence depicted in TV programs does cause aggressive behavior in impressionable children.

"Scientific evidence indicates that television affects the viewer in more ways than one..." Rubinstein said. "The original smoking-and-health study was limited to the lungs, and later it was learned how smoking affects the heart and other parts of the body. In the same way we now know that the original emphasis on TV violence was too narrow. Television affects not only a predisposition toward violence, but the whole range of social and psychological development of the younger generation."

Exposure to television in this country, where 96 percent of the homes have direct access to TV sets, is significant. Rubinstein points out that children watch an average of 25 hours of television a week, and by the time they are out of high school, kids have spent more time in front of the television than in the classroom.

A Nielsen poll computes that the average American watches television for four hours and 30 seconds a day with women averaging four hours and 47 minutes; men four hours and six minutes; children

age two to 11 three hours and 52 minutes; and kids age 12 to 17 three hours and 17 minutes per day.

Research has shown that the behavior of characters on TV shows (even cartoon and fantasy figures like Batman) is mimicked by children and also instigates similar behavior by kids. The American Medical Association reported that two kids imitating Batman jumped off a roof in juvenile imitative fantasy, and another set fire to a house after watching a similar incident on television.

glory of appearances on television.

Dr. Leonard Berkowitz, University of Wisconsin, reported that the amount of television viewed by kids age nine is "one of the best predictors of whether a person will be found to be aggressive in later life."

"Many people will do almost anything to get on television. Some will even kill," Daniel Schorr, a former CBS correspondent and now senior correspondent of Cable News Network, said in a recent article on TV violence.

...we now know that the original emphasis on TV violence was too narrow. Television affects not only a predisposition toward violence, but the whole range of social and psychological development of the younger generation —

Eli A. Rubinstein

Adults are not exempt from this causal pattern. Several acts of arson, theft, and even murder, have been reported to have been committed using plots from television programs. There has been a disturbing increase in the incidence of terrorists and other violent demonstrators or law breakers demanding TV coverage of their antics in recent years. Prison rioters, suicide victims and kidnapers have all soaked themselves in the questionable

It might seem strange, but cartoons on television have more acts of violence per se per hour than other programs. The National Coalition on Television Violence reported that between February and May 1981, Sunday morning cartoons had more acts of violence per hour of transmission time than prime-time shows.

"Thundart the Barbarian" had 64 acts of violence per hour, "Daffy Duck" 52, "Bugs Bunny and Roadrunner" 51,

"Superfriends" 38 and "Richie Rich" and "Scooby Doo" each had 30 acts of violence per hour.

In contrast, prime-time shows chalked up the following scores: "Walking Tall" 25, "Vegas," "Lobo," and "Greatest American Hero" 18 and "Incredible Hulk" 14. Between 1967 and 1969 the rate of violence averaged eight acts per hour, but a smaller proportion of characters was involved in 1969 and the violence less lethal than that of 1967.

While the networks argue that most of their programs are "pro-social" because the good guys always win in the end, Rubinstein said children seldom make the connection, particularly if they are less than nine years old. "They do not recognize the moral," he said.

Rubinstein also discounts the myth that cartoons cannot influence behavior in kids because children "know" the characters are not real. "Kids do imitate cartoons," Rubinstein asserts. Scientific research supports that argument.

The 1972 Surgeon General's report titled "Television and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence" states that violence on television increased in cartoons and comedies from 1967 to 1969. In fact, cartoons were cited as the most violent type of program for acts of violence per hour in those years. However, the agents of violence in non-cartoon shows were human beings 78 percent of the time, while in cartoons humans were the perpetrators of violence only 23 percent of the time.

"There is also evidence that years high in violence also tend to be years high in overall ratings," the report says, adding, "the frequency of violent programs in a year is related to the popularity of this type of program the previous year."

"I was disappointed that over the past 10 years there has not been a significant change in the level of TV violence as rated by an annual survey conducted by the School of Communication at the University of Pennsylvania," Rubinstein said.

Rubinstein persuaded the Surgeon General in 1980, Dr. Julius Richmond, to update the 1972 report on the impact of TV violence on kids. State-of-the-art papers were written by 25 prominent researchers summarizing research in this field during the past ten years. The report is now ready, but bureaucratic lethargy and indecision has delayed publication. Rubinstein said he expected the report to be published by the end of the year.

Not only will the report confirm the negative effects of television violence on kids, but it will tread fresh ground identifying ill effects of TV viewing on special populations like those in mental institutions, reform schools and prisons. The networks will face another round of concentrated criticism for their questionable influence on clean-cut American children. The rapidly expanding cable system will also face censure for the first time.

The report is unlikely to result in mandatory warnings on TV that prepare children for the dangers of excessive viewing, but it will bring increasing pressure on the purveyors of TV content to turn a new leaf.

Shailendra Ghorpade is a graduate student in journalism from Bombay, India.



## Letters to the editor

### Breaking lines shows 'degenerating morals'

To the editor:

I was one of those poor fools who camped out last week for a ticket to the Clemson game. Yes, I willingly admit to being a fool. This is not due to the fact that after having waited in line since 8 p.m. the night before the only seats left to offer us were end zone or row A or B anywhere in the stadium. We chose to stay at the end of the line knowing that we would not get excellent tickets.

The line had atmosphere; it was like going to a party that stretched from Carmichael to the Bell Tower. Those people who waited in line are the true Carolina fans. They are the people with incurable Carolina fever, the true spirit of the University.

What leads me to feel foolish and very angry are those people who did not wait in line to get tickets but butted in line when the doors were opened. Rumor has it that those people hid in the cemetery and then made a mad rush for the door at 6 a.m. with the rest of the people who had spent the night on the pavement. These people slept in warm beds while we slept on bricks.

Is this justification? These people thought they were really clever and went home and had a good laugh. I think you ought to be ashamed of yourselves. You didn't deserve those tickets. You people have a severe case of degenerating morals.

Deborah Mall  
231 Cobb Dorm

### Oil the chain saws

To the editor:

I would like to commend the University on the selection of the site for a new dorm — that is, right next to Teague Dorm. This area is one of the few forested areas, excepting the grounds of Kenan Stadium, that are left on campus — and I'm so glad to see that the University certainly doesn't hesitate to build on it.

I propose a campuswide movement to remove all campus trees — an end, I believe, to which we will eventually arrive anyway, but I would like to see the pace accelerated. I don't think people realize the enormous disadvantage trees pose to students and faculty at universities. It's about time we followed in North Carolina State's footsteps to do something about the situation.

In the fall, trees coat sidewalks with their leaves, causing slippery surfaces for hurrying students. Trees house birds and squirrels, both of which like to drop a va-

riety of substances from leafy branches above. Trees also have the annoying habit of obstructing views of the beautiful, expensive buildings on campus, as well as having their roots confound sidewalks. In the spring, many of the trees produce flowers that aggravate hay fever sufferers. And just after a rain, when you want to put your umbrella away, trees continue to drip on you if you are forced to walk beneath them.

We can always appease soft-hearted environmentalists with a commemorative statue of a tree — with metallic composition, of course. I believe a new campus organization should be founded: Wipe Out Campus Trees (WOCT). If we can get enough students motivated, we can finish what the administration started. Get those chain saws oiled up!

Marguerite C. Moore  
Scott Residence College

### Access

To the editor:

In addition to Friday's article on building accessibility, I would like to make the

following points.

The state legislature's cancellation of barrier removal funds to the UNC system is most inopportune. The International Year of Disabled Persons will end in January and it is unfortunate that in our state its ending will be marred by such a lack of support. However, it is a great consolation to hear that the state legislature will not totally abandon its commitment to barrier removal in the UNC system, and especially at UNC.

Building accessibility at UNC has increased dramatically and the changes made in the last five years are very significant. Specifically, the new ramped entrance into Steele Building now provides the mobility-impaired with more freedom in consulting the Coordinator for Handicapped Services. In light of the completed past projects and plans the University has for barrier removal, we feel that UNC has maintained a policy of consistent adherence to 504 Regulations and has supported its disabled students despite any lack of funding.

As January approaches we hope support for the International Year of Disabled Persons will continue to increase.

The Town of Carrboro deserves much praise for its efforts to assemble its own IYDP committee. Chapel Hill Mayor, Joe Nassif, who has refused to acknowledge the local support behind the International Year of Disabled Persons would do well in joining Carrboro's efforts.

Michael Dixon  
President, N.E.E.D.S.

## Letters?

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes letters to the editor and contributions of columns to the editorial pages. All 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. Unsigned letters will not be printed.

