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The Daily Tar Heel

89th year of editorial freedom

Trust and consequences

Preliminary analyses by economists on last week's consent decree between the Justice Department and American Telephone and Telegraph suggest that the decision may be the most significant economic reform carried out so far by the Reagan administration. Beyond the overblown and idyllic rhetoric about the free-enterprise system that accompanied the decree, the agreement promises vast changes in one of the nation's most important industries. For that reason, Congress must examine those changes to ensure that they are in the nation's best interests.

The decree ended a seven-year government lawsuit against AT&T. It requires the company to divest itself of its local operating companies, but rescinds an earlier decree preventing AT&T from entering computer, data processing fields and certain other markets.

The immediate effect on consumers will be an increase in local phone rates, which were often kept down by more profitable long distance rates. Now stripped of those funds, local phone companies will undoubtedly seek to replace lost revenue through higher rates. Further, local services will come under sole jurisdiction of the states, which are notorious for their lackadaisical regulation of public utilities.

The most far-reaching reforms from the agreement will come, however, in markets now open to AT&T's competition. The step from communications to information processing in an easy one, and AT&T should be able to provide stiff competition for such giants of the market as IBM, Xerox and ITT.

Because of this, the federal government must start now to determine how it will face the challenge of AT&T's entrance into these new and important markets. Undoubtedly it will accelerate the trend toward the increasing strength of the giants within these fields. While this trend is by no means inevitable and competition will continue, the strength of these conglomerates represents enough of an aberration of the free market to require close government scrutiny.

For too long this nation's antitrust policies have focused on simply reducing firms' sizes and have caused only long and expensive lawsuits like the one against AT&T. Now the government must focus instead on a managerial role that will tap the strengths of the giants while ensuring that the nation's interests do not become overwhelmed by the firms' sizes.

Congress now has 60 days to consider amending the decree. It can provide short-term help to consumers by ensuring that rates do not skyrocket because of dislocation resulting from the decree. But more importantly, long-range policies must establish how AT&T can best serve America's interests in the communications and information fields.

Campus cam-pains

Just when you thought it was safe to venture outside your dorm or apartment, a pervasive force has settled in on the UNC campus, threatening to be with us for the next four weeks.

No, the frigid temperatures that have plagued Chapel Hill this week are not likely to last into February. Rather, campus politicos—armed with an arsenal of posters, brochures and rhetoric—are ready to blanket the student body with carefully-planned platforms designed to snare the vote of prospective constituents.

The fact of the matter is that campus politics at UNC have become increasingly professional over the past several years, as candidates for the major races spend hundreds of dollars, enlist dozens of campaign volunteers and mortgage their grade point averages for one hellacious month so that they can get ulcers and flunk out of school once elected.

It will be impossible for the average student to escape totally from the intensity that surrounds many of the races. By the end of the week, students should be greeted in their classrooms, dorms and bathroom stalls (is nothing sacred?) by the smiling faces of candidates running for such offices as Student Body President, *Daily Tar Heel* Editor, Carolina Athletic Association President and Residence Hall Association President.

And if you're fortunate (or unfortunate, as the case may be) you may even have the pleasure of a candidate paying a personal visit to your door, delivering a well-executed compliment about the color-coordinated bedspread and matching drapes. One poor Granville East resident last year met five candidates on a single evening—the night she was trying to study for a Chemistry 11 midterm.

But don't worry, four weeks can only last so long, even though it will probably seem like an eternity to everyone involved. Our advice is either to turn out the lights and go to bed early or to expect a penetrating gust of hot air to drift your way. Who knows, maybe it will warm things up a bit.

The Daily Tar Heel

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With pen in hand

Controversial cartoonist keeps those letters flowing

By BETH BURRELL

"I fail to see where this man's opinion should cause such uproar. Anyone once exposed to these cartoons should realize that they have all been stolen from late '60s underground newspapers. Only the names are different. I would wager Marlette has every underground paper ever printed. The fact that he spent a year at Harvard merely reinstates that the man's mind is in the cellar. My argument with Marlette is that he is not even a good cartoon artist. I have seen better drawings by four-year-old children. I would think a newspaper as wealthy as *The Observer* could afford better."

From a letter to the editor, *The Charlotte Observer*.

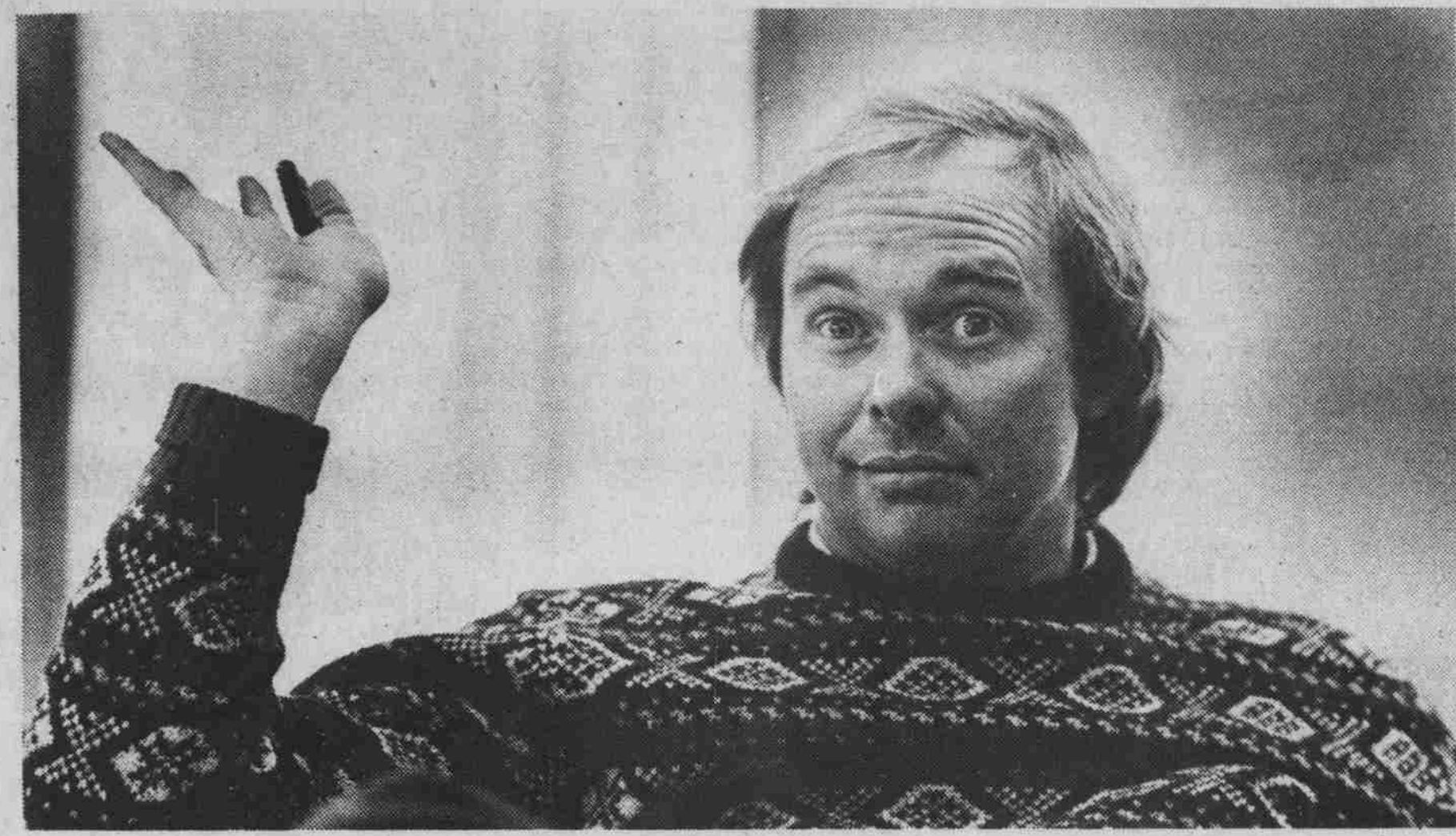
He has been accused of being insensitive, untalented and radically outspoken. He has been described as idealistic, ambitious, dedicated and ahead of his time. But one thing is for certain — nationally-syndicated Doug Marlette is a political cartoonist who arouses a nerve in almost every reader, arousing criticism and adulation, condemnation and praise.

At age 32, Marlette has been at *The Charlotte Observer* 10 years, taking a one-year leave of absence last year to go to Harvard University on a Nieman Fellowship. He is the first editorial cartoonist to be honored with such a fellowship. Although he says the year at Harvard had no direct or tangible effect on his work, he considers the time spent there one of the best years of his life.

Raised in North Carolina, Mississippi and Florida, Marlette attended Florida State University—a haven for the politically conscious at the time. He began drawing editorial cartoons for his college newspaper as a junior and senior. At a time when Watergate and Vietnam were haunting the media, Marlette had plenty to satirize and criticize.

Six months after he graduated from Florida State (where he majored in philosophy—taking 36 hours of it his senior year), he replaced Pulitzer Prize winner Eugene Payne as editorial cartoonist for *The Charlotte Observer*. He was only 22 years old. After two years he had caused so many readers to become impassioned letter writers, his cartoons were transferred to the Viewpoint page where they were given full freedom to poke fun, insult and generally function as a signed column. In this way, readers could no longer assume Marlette's opinion was always the paper's opinion.

In the 10 years Marlette has spent at



Doug Marlette

The Observer, his cartoons have appeared in *Newsweek*, *Time*, *U.S. News and World Report* and other national magazines. They are syndicated to 100 newspapers in the United States and abroad. He draws five cartoons a week (three for the syndicate) and does a comic strip "Kudzu" daily. Though he was spurred to begin drawing in a time of war (he was a conscientious objector), protest and a severe loss of confidence in the government, his cartoon ideas did not die with the politically turbulent times.

Perhaps this is because Marlette has never been short on opinions. Coming up with ideas for cartoons is not a problem—it's putting them in concrete form that sometimes frustrates him. Occasionally, a catchy idea in his head does not have the same meaning when put on paper. However, Marlette's cartoons rarely seem to lose much in the transformation from the abstract to the concrete. They strike directly at the heart of the issue, leaving little for the imagination.

"To create a cartoon that is good, funny, original and realize no one else has done it—that's fun," Marlette said. Not only fun—but the driving force of his work. He is able to transform his ideas into cartoons using insight, perception and creativity—whether the focus be the Reagan administration, the Equal Rights Amendment, the arms race or Sen. Jesse Helms.

Marlette said he thought the function of his cartoons lay in stimulating readers

to think—providing humor—but more importantly in stimulating discussion. He does not sit down to draw a cartoon and consciously try to stir up his readers. If an idea affects and touches him, he expects it to affect readers.

Marlette does not expect his cartoons to sway reader's opinion. "My work confirms what some people think and angers some. Many interpret it to mean what they already think." But if it inspires a reader to think about an issue and occasionally to see it in a different light, then his cartoons have fulfilled a basic function.

Marlette describes himself now as "less obsessively searching for ideas, in other people's work." He admires other cartoonists such as Mike Peters, but feels it is useless to compare himself to other artists.

Some editorial cartoons he sees as lacking in original thought and not saying anything to the reader. To him, many cartoons today look like those drawn by Ophidian or MacNelly and he doesn't see himself in that trend. He finds his own cartoons interesting, lively—setting himself apart from his contemporaries.

As cartoonist, Marlette is independent—he is not told by the paper what cartoons to draw. However, the editorial page editor does have final approval of his work.

While many readers who write letters lambasting Marlette's cartoons may hope to have an effect on him, he remains

undaunted by such response. He feels criticism is expected and natural and considers it more important that he enjoys his work, regardless of irate and insulted readers. "Maybe I should have felt guilty at times, but I haven't," he said.

Although some readers may feel he deals too harshly with issues or portrays them inaccurately, Marlette says the issue is usually much worse than how his cartoon portrays it. One student who worked with Marlette three summers ago said, "He takes it upon himself to show a side ignored by the media."

Perhaps because Marlette attacks an issue with passion, often interpreted as anger, some readers are offended and not amused. When Marlette points out what he sees as hypocrisies and absurdities, often challenging government policies, it may be interpreted as disloyalty or disrespect. But Marlette sees no reason not to tell it like he sees it—if he has something to say, then he says it. If some would rather disagree with his perceptions and criticize Marlette for overstating the issue or being grossly out of step, then Marlette would say that's their right.

"The need to be in tune with the environment is strong in me, but rather regressive," he said. Realizing there is nothing wrong with being out of sync with the environment is something he says he is learning slowly.

Marlette said he had no desire to leave the South for a region that may be more politically progressive and perhaps more receptive to his ideas. Possibly because that place may not exist. Every region has its own sacred cows and taboos and his cartoons would be as likely to offend readers somewhere else, if only for different reasons, he said.

He admits that there is a lot wrong with his work that he would like to correct. He sees himself as needing to become more involved with his editorial cartoons, developing his comic strip more fully and spending his time more efficiently. He said a wise man once told him his goal was not to have any goals. But Marlette said he apparently hadn't become that wise yet because he did have many goals. He hopes to stay at *The Observer*, continue to develop his talent as an artist and perhaps one day be disciplined enough to do some writing.

He considers himself fortunate that his cartoons provide an outlet for his ideas, however unconventional they may seem.

As *Observer* editorial writer Ed Williams says in Marlette's cartoon book *Drawing Blood*: "Marlette is unpredictable as he is talented. His work ranges from zany slapstick to compassion, but there is one constant: it touches people. Readers may love it or hate it, but believe me, they don't ignore it."

Beth Burrell, a senior journalism and political science major from Matthews is associate editor for *The Daily Tar Heel*.



Prophet Elmo propagates prognostications

By TODD DAVIS

January brings predictions for the new year—except in college. Strangely, the academic elite save their predictions for graduation in May. What good are those predictions? By that time half the year is gone and graduating seniors could care less.

So where does the college student turn to gain insight into the future? You could turn the pages of a sleazy grocery store check-out tabloid but that would cost 40 cents and social disgrace.

Anyway, why bother when *The Daily Tar Star Snooper* sent this columnist on an exclusive investigative assignment to interview that Grand Fakir of the Future—Elmo The Prophetic.

I found Elmo The Prophetic in the Bell Tower Parking Lot making sure people had locked their car doors. Checking locked doors was Elmo's sideline when the prediction biz was slow.

With his head swathed in a CAT hat, Elmo had the deep dark eyes of a psychic or maybe a psychopath. It was hard to tell with Elmo wearing 3-D glasses.

Crouching from one car to the other, he refused to answer specific questions concerning the future. Instead, Elmo offered me a package deal.

"So yuh wanna know what the future holds, huh? Well, it's gonna cost yuh," Elmo said.

"How much?" I replied.

"How much yuh got?"

"One dollar," I lied.

"Nope. Now how much yuh really got there som? Member yuh's dealin' with a powerful psychic brain right here." Elmo pointed to his CAT hat.

"OK, you win. I only have 10 bucks. But that's supposed to buy all my textbooks this semester." I wish I was lying.

"Reckon that'll have to do," Elmo said. "Yuh give me 10 bucks I'll give yuh this list of muh top predictions."

"Okay, deal," I said. I handed Elmo the 10 bucks. Maybe I didn't conduct a very investigative interview. I bought Elmo The Prophetic's predictions. However, I was in a rush. I really didn't want to be around Elmo while he checked car locks.

Therefore, risking journalistic integrity and fat libel suits, here are Elmo's Top Predictions for 1982.

FASHION

Tight designer jeans, loose sweatshirts, and cute prep are definitely out in 1982. The Windbreaker Look is in with lots of nylon and polyester, plus hush puppies, and starched flannel pants. Sears will be the fashion label of distinction.

CELEBS

Unfortunately, there will be no more beautiful people. Nationally, *People* magazine will fold. Locally, there will be no more sidewalk lines of students dressed to kill on Franklin Street waiting to get in.

ENVIRONMENT

An earthquake will engulf Carrboro but nobody will notice.

WEATHER

The weather this year might be real rainy but again it might be right sunny. Reckon it just depends. Still, I predict it'll give folks a whole lot to talk about.

ECONOMICS

Despite problems of recession, unemployment and inflation, people will still like money. Consequently, economic advisers will be baffled as to what they did that was right.

SPORTS

Carolina will win. State will lose.

COSMOS

The space shuttle will make many happy landings this year. Meanwhile on Earth it will still be hard to find a good parking place.

THE UNIVERSITY

The UNC administration will increase student fees to only 20 percent of a student's lifetime income.

A joke candidate will win the Student Body President race and for once will represent how students really feel about Student Government.

Well, those are Elmo The Prophetic's predictions for 1982. Somehow I don't think the future's worth paying 10 bucks for. I even tried to get my money back but it was too late. Elmo was arrested for unlocking the car door of a campus cop. The D.A. predicts he'll get five to 10.

Todd Davis, a junior RTVMP major from Around, N.C., has no future worth predicting.