

The Daily Tar Heel

90th year of editorial freedom

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The Royall plan

The sales tax plan proposed by Durham Sen. Kenneth C. Royall immediately arouses suspicion. Because it is simple, the plan could never work, critics charge.

But Royall's "Anti-Recession Public Works and Tax Equity Act," which is not quite as simple as it appears, can raise state government revenues and phase out the sales tax on food. Without mirrors. It is a practical measure that should be adopted after some fine-tuning.

The total effect of state taxes is much more regressive compared to federal taxes. Royall's proposal would relieve some of that burden by combining one regressive step with two progressive ones. His bill would raise the 3-cent state sales tax to 4 cents (plus the 1 percent local tax collected in 99 of the 100 counties), almost double the sales tax on new automobiles, airplanes and boats, and gradually eliminate the taxation of food by 1986-87.

Royall has included a distribution plan for the gain in state revenue, which would include new funds for public schools, community colleges, universities, highways and water and sewer projects. Of the net revenue increase, money would go to local governments to replace funds lost in eliminating the local food tax; so those local governments would not be trapped with no choice but to raise property taxes.

The bill would help the state make up revenue lost during recessionary times. To wait for economic conditions to return to "normal" is a strategy of procrastination. The state needs to acquire more revenue — now.

Not only does Royall's proposal finally increase the tax on automobiles, currently limited to just \$120, but it also decreases the discriminatory tax on food. Because of the regressive impact of that tax, it falls most heavily on those least able to pay. North Carolina's poor residents, who devote up to one-third of their income to food, now pay the same sales tax rate as the affluent, who may only spend 15 percent of their income on food. The overall effect of Royall's plan would be to hold taxes down for the state's citizens who are least able to pay, increase taxes for the state's more affluent citizens — and raise millions more in revenue.

Royall also displays some political insight. In a state trying to save the tobacco industry and attract new industry, it is unrealistic to expect legislators to approve a hike in the cigarette tax or corporate income tax. Royall's plan gives the General Assembly a chance to enact equitable reforms in the tax system. It attacks the withering revenue problem directly by offering a solution that is simple, but not simplistic.

Right from wrong

Since John Hinckley was acquitted last year of his 1981 assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan, the insanity defense has been under attack. Last year, the Reagan administration planned to propose a law that would have done away with the defense. That plan was an overreaction, and fortunately, did not come before Congress.

Six months later, the issue still has not been decided, although many people, including the president, still feel that the insanity defense should be abolished. What is needed, however, is not an end to the defense but a few specific modifications that would reduce the number of persons who can be defended by reason of insanity.

As it is worded now, the insanity defense allows a person charged with a crime to plead innocent if he could not judge his actions right or wrong or if he could not control himself, even though he knew his actions were illegal. Both the American Bar Association and the American Psychiatric Association have agreed that a person only should be found innocent if he could not judge whether his actions were legal.

That reasoning is sound. Insanity as a defense should be used only by someone incapable of judging his own actions, not by someone who is anti-social and can't stop himself from committing a crime.

That change would do much to ease the doubts of those who are concerned about guilty persons walking away from a crime after only a short time under psychiatric care. Those persons truly needing treatment would get it. Those who knew right from wrong at the time of the crime would be punished. Narrowing the use of the insanity defense appears to be the most logical reform of a defense that has been overused.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Playboy' ad is not offensive

To the editor:

It boggles my mind how some people will react to a simple ad in a college newspaper. The *Playboy* ad was neither disgusting to me, nor offensive, and I am sure your advertising staff welcomed the additional revenue. I did an impromptu survey of my friends, and no one was offended by the ad. I'll agree with Sarah Lee's comment (*DTH*, Feb. 10) that the "pornography" industry does gross more than \$5 billion annually. I might even agree that pornography serves as a boy's first introduction to sex (although I believe with research, one could find this observation to be patently untrue).

However, to say that *Playboy* is a magazine that shows women "... bound, chained, gagged, assaulted and raped," is absolutely ridiculous. *Playboy* shows women in a very positive light — not only showing their bodies, but also their minds. The magazine features interviews and articles by some of the nation's most renowned scientists, writers and politicians. The women that appear in the nude in *Playboy* are, on the whole, very intelligent, caring and of course, beautiful. I should know. I have met several of them at different promotions. They are no different from you and me, and most are using their exposure in *Playboy* as a means to an end.

There also are very few magazines "... available in every drug store and supermarket" that feature women being molested or attacked in any way. Those types of "pornographic" magazines usually are available only in sex shops and "X-rated" movie theaters. Federal and local legislation has made these magazines unavailable to a mass saturation distribution such as a supermarket. The magazines are priced between \$7 and \$30 and are hardly worth the effort to buy. (I've never

bought one and never will.) To lump these magazines into the same category as *Playboy* (even if one does make the distinction that *Playboy* is "soft-porn") is a biased opinion, and unfair.

If a woman is sure of herself, independent, and wants to pose for *Playboy* (either in the nude or in clothes, as many of the models did in the last *Playboy* college pictorial), I say more power to her. No one, including Sarah Lee, has the right to restrict anyone else's rights.

Each year, when *Playboy* publishes its college issue, it chronicles the ridiculous attempts of organizations to stop its ads. The detractors and agitators get a lot of publicity, and the women who actually pose must feel very agitated by the "hoopla." As I said, a few of Sarah Lee's points are valid and important, but maybe she was just looking for one thing — publicity.

Ashely Tillman
Chapel Hill

AWS attacks unfounded

To the editor:

When I read Friday's article "Playboy ad degrades women" (*DTH*, Feb. 11) I was more than a little angry. The generalizations made me mad, but it is the implications by Susan Roe and Neva Bridges that all women feel as they do that drove me to write this letter.

First of all, by simple definition of the word "exploitation," statements made by Lynne Harris are nonsense. To exploit means "to use unfairly for one's own advantage" (*The Merriam Webster Dictionary*). It is exploitation to force children to perform for pornographic movies. It is

Life at the 'DTH'

An outsider's view of what goes on here and why

By JANE SOMMERS

"I feel as if I have been writing under deadlines all my life," the editor said. Deadlines are only one aspect of life that a *Daily Tar Heel* editor has to get used to. Little or no free time, late nights and unending responsibility are some others.

Working on the *DTH* is not like working for any other student organization. The commitment is a constant one and the results are tangible — 19,000 newspapers every day of the week.

What is it like working for the *DTH*? Three weeks ago Editor John Drescher asked me to do a story on the inner workings of the *DTH* as seen from an outsider's point of view. Having always been interested in but a little intimidated by the constant activity in the *DTH* office, I agreed. For two weeks I had the chance to observe who puts out the *DTH*, and why they do it. It was a whole new world for me; I gained genuine respect for the staff and their product. The office is as much a second home as a workshop for the editors and staff. Among the clutter of desks, chairs and ancient typewriters, there is a constant flow of people and conversation. More than once I heard the amused comment, "This place is a zoo."

The communality of the office initiates communal conversation over the tapping of the typewriters and the clicking of the Associated Press wire machine. "Is Morrison (dorm) spelled with one 's' or two?" asks a reporter, pausing from typing. "Is that art (photo) of Mr. Potatohead ready yet?" "Not yet. Morrison has one 's.' Scott, that was a good lead on your story," said Rachel Perry, the University editor, to one of her reporters, Scott Bolejack. The University desk is the busiest desk.

Only with everybody working together can each paper come out. "We have 40 people to (each day's) team, and if one person doesn't do his job, we really feel it and the paper really shows it," said Al Steele, the photography editor.

What kind of people make up this team? Individuals. Every time they sign their name to an article they set themselves apart from you and me, the readers. With each story they open themselves to criticism, as well as praise.

They're active. Only those who have extra energy and motivation would take on a *DTH* staff position. They're also bright. Perry, under deadline pressure, edited three stories in a matter of minutes, improving each one as she did. She knows what is going on in the University better than some administrators do.

Editorials draw the strongest public response of any section of the paper. Two of the editors responsible for writing editorials, Ken Mingis and Linda Robertson (Drescher also writes editorials), see them as the most important part of their job. They each have to write about three a week, and usually have an afternoon to do them in. "You never can put in as much time as you would like," Robertson said. She saw editorials as "bringing issues to the fore, presenting ideas and providing perspective."

Although they take the job seriously, they don't overestimate the influence of their editorials. During the recent election endorsement interviews, Drescher wryly warned the candidates that "the candidate who gets the endorsement usually loses." The *DTH* endorsed Jon Reckford. He lost.

The editorials receiving the most response were the endorsement of Bill Cobey for Congress and the charge of race discrimination in sorority rush. "Feedback is welcome either way," Robertson said. The staff provides

its own feedback with their comment book in the front office, which can be written in and read by all. These two are typical examples.

"Clinton Weaver, Loved '1942 grad lives for music poetry.' Great profile — Randy Walker" and "Ken and Linda: Good edits (editorials). But Linda — please stop hogging all the space. Your friend, JD." The comment book provides positive feedback which every writer needs but doesn't always get from readers.

"One thing I have learned to deal with is constant criticism. You need to be open to it because a lot of the time they can be right," Drescher said. "The praise, although less frequent, makes you feel that what you're doing is worthwhile."

How do they decide what goes in the paper? Several editors said they strove to put out a paper that was both informative and interesting. Perry, the University editor, said she was trying to have a livelier paper with more unique, in-depth stories. But she found that some dry news must go in. "As boring as CGC (Campus Governing Council) meetings are, they have to be printed," she said. After these, there is very little room left for the more entertaining feature articles. It gives the desk editors a sense of personal satisfaction to get one of their reporters' best stories in the next day's paper.

What articles will go in the next day's *DTH* is decided at the daily budget meeting. At 3:30 p.m., the editors meet and list the articles they have and the length of each one. Drescher and Ann Peters, the managing editor who puts the paper together on paper and remains calm throughout, have to make the difficult decision of what stories are going to run where; the tension of meeting the printing deadline, although nine hours away, already can be felt.

Each desk editor tells the editor and the managing editor what stories they have that are ready to run in the next day's paper. For example, part of Perry's list included stories on a CGC meeting, sewer breakage, exam schedule change, and a lighter story on an old man who plays his tape recorder all over campus. After all the stories have been listed, Drescher and Peters decide which are the most newsworthy and how many will fit in the paper.

The pace picks up speed from there on. The editors hurry back to the office. The next two hours are rushed as they edit their reporters' stories. Deadline is 6 p.m. for articles going inside and 8 p.m. for articles going on the front page.

Each article is first read by the desk editor who assigned it. It then goes to the copy editors, who read each story and are supposed to look up every word that may be misspelled. The copy then goes back to the typesetting room, where a professional staff hired by the *DTH* types the copy into "newspaper" print. The copy editors then edit the article for the third time.

All the typeset pieces of paper come together in the layout room. Articles, pictures, headlines and ads are pasted onto the full-length graphed paste-up sheets. These pages are proof read for the fourth and final time and placed in a long, rectangular, wood carrying case. One of the typesetting staff members drives the pasted-up pages to the printers in Mebane. By 8 a.m. the next day, the *DTH* is being distributed on campus and in Chapel Hill.

Ideally, that is how it should work. Things don't always work that smoothly, however. The first night of campus elections caught the *DTH* at its most feverish pitch, running two hours behind schedule.

The time: 12:03 a.m. There are about 10 or 12 people in the office. Reporters are running in and out, calling, interviewing. "Frank, you only got 8 percent of the votes.



Associate Editor Linda Robertson

How do you feel about that? Deadline writing is rushed and tense. Cursing, Scott Bolejack, working on an elections story, frantically types his story. "Here," he whips his story out of the typewriter and into Perry's waiting hands.

She reads it, shortens a paragraph, strikes out a line and passes it to Laura Seifert, the news editor. Seifert reads over it carefully, looks up "run-off" and two other words and takes it to the back room to be typeset. The time: 12:45.

That night the backshop is more tense than the main office. The typesetters usually get off work about 12:30. They know it's going to be much later tonight. Only Drescher, Peters, Seifert, Karen Koutsky (an assistant managing editor) and the typesetting crew remain.

The story is 20 lines longer than it should be but the paper already is filled. Israel's Sharon is cut for UNC's Reckshun.

The time: 2:13 a.m. Ann Peters is lining up the last headline, as reporter Charlie Ellmaker rushes in. "Guess what? Re-elections are going to have to be held for three offices." The three remaining editors groan. The lead headline and story aren't up to date. It's too late to change. Ann pastes up the last headline, dated, onto the copy.

The six sheets of copy are carefully laid into the box, 12 hours after the process started at the budget meeting.

The three weary editors leave the office, where a reporter is doing his homework, and cross the quiet campus in the morning cold. Drescher, his voice cracking from a cold, talks with Peters about what he wants in the next day's paper. The time: 2:55 a.m.

Why do they devote 40 hours a week to the *DTH*? Why do they choose to miss so many nights out and spend their weekends catching up on reading?

Resumes aren't the reason. There are easier ways to pad a resume than spending eight hours a day putting out a newspaper, and getting little praise for it.

It isn't money either. Drescher, the highest paid editor, was earning 55 cents per hour. That was before the editors voted to forfeit their salaries directly toward the *DTH* budget, so they could have bigger papers.

There are three reasons why these students choose to put so much time and effort into the *DTH*.

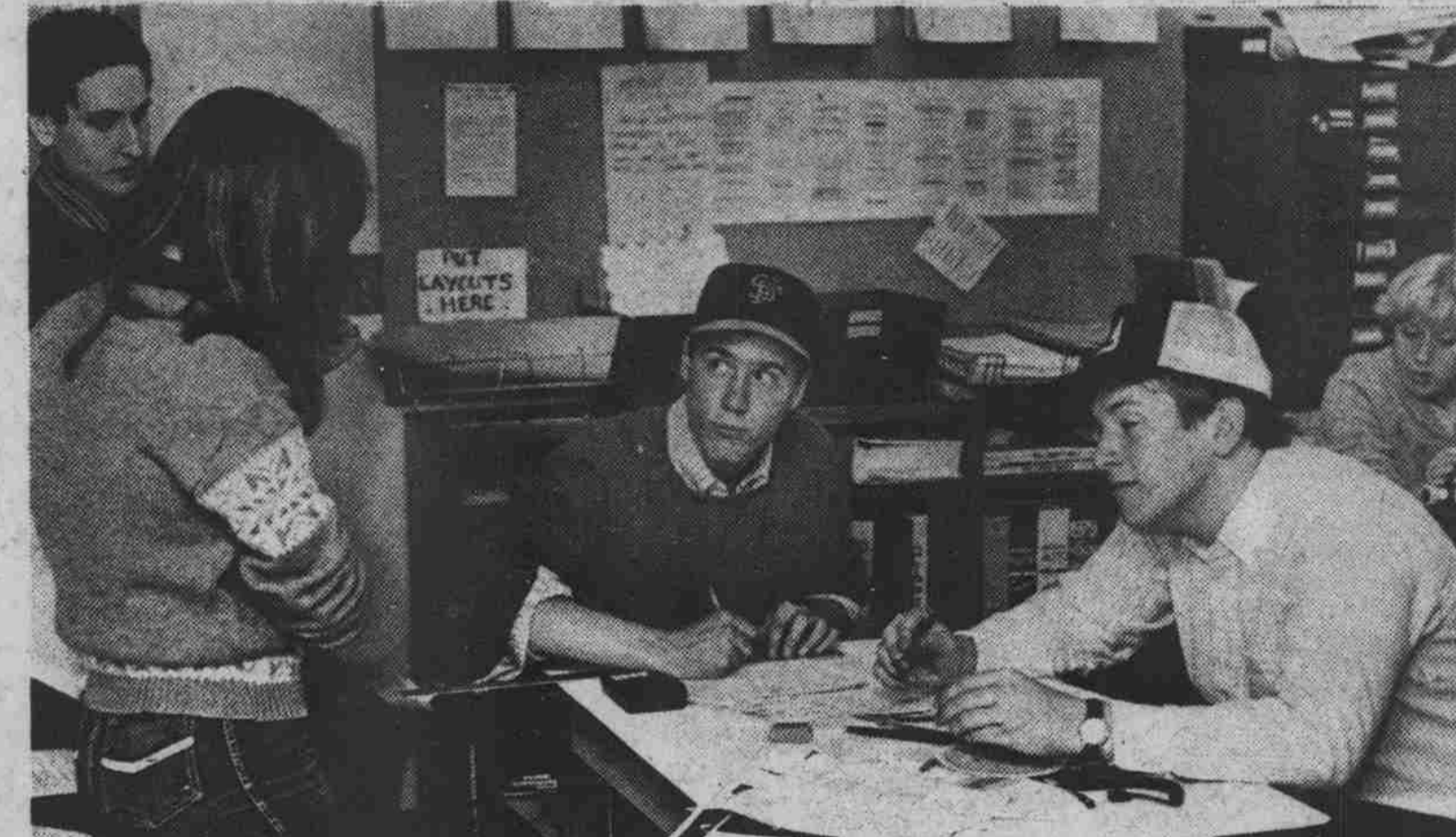
First, they're doing what they're good at. "You get a tremendous sense of accomplishment from working on the paper, mostly because you see your results every day," Drescher said. "It's a real opportunity to improve your writing," said Robertson, the associate editor. "When somebody comes up and says, 'I liked your picture,' that's the greatest feeling in the world," Steele said. He had just caught Jordan's winning dunk against UVA. on film. "I see my job as pleasing the students," he added.

Secondly, they get to take part in interviews and events not open to them otherwise. Steele gets courtside seats at basketball games. Drescher went to a congressional reception in Washington, D.C., for a former *DTH* editor and meets such notables as evangelist Billy Graham and *New York Times* columnist Tom Wicker. Every interview conducted puts staff members in touch with out-of-the-ordinary people. One editor summed it up by saying, "You increase your range of knowledge in general."

The last and most fundamental drawing force of the *DTH* office is the camaraderie felt by the people working there. Pride in their paper, along with a little humor, keeps them motivated.

Differences of opinion with and criticism of *The Daily Tar Heel* always will, and should, continue. At the same time, these criticisms should be made keeping in mind the hours, energy and commitment devoted to *The Daily Tar Heel*.

Jane Sommers is a sophomore international studies major from Washington, D.C.



Editors discuss annual 'DTH' basketball preview

DTH/Charles W. Ledford

Sexism a problem

To the editor:

On behalf of AWS, I would like to thank you for your column "Women in advertising" (*DTH*, Feb. 14). It is the first thoughtful presentation of the *DTH*'s stand on this controversial issue. We are just as concerned with the problem of censorship and First Amendment rights as the *DTH*. However, we find that the fact that sexism in advertising is so prevalent is an inadequate explanation for the refusal of the media to deal with the issue.

It may be true that the *DTH* has printed other questionable ads, but as I said in a discussion with a *DTH* staff member, the campaign against this form of sexism has to have a secure foothold. Were we to randomly object to such representations of women, we would be called "feminist fanatics," and the issue would be lost. The blatant portrayal of female objectification exhibited in the *Playboy* ad thrust itself upon the campus community and forced us to take a stand.

We feel that it is a cop-out on the part of John Drescher to place the burden of change entirely on the consumer. Was there any attempt to discuss the ad layout with *Playboy* representatives? Perhaps change would be facilitated if enough publications like the *Duke Chronicle* expressed their concern. Although they reversed their decision to run the ad, their business manager, Tod Jones, informed me that they are again reconsidering in light of their policy against ads disparaging any groups.

As to the report that you cite concerning the connection to violence against women, may I refer you and any others interested



to a book by Laura Lederer titled *Take Back the Night*. You may change your mind after reading it.

Finally, we urge students to reflect on the representation of women in advertising. The next time you see an offensive ad please take the time to voice your opinion. Write to the company, or simply to your local newspaper. Let others know that sexism in any form is insupportable.

Susan Roe
AWS Vice chairperson

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.