

The Daily Tar Heel

91st year of editorial freedom

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Halftime

It's welcome, all right. Spring Break couldn't be more welcome. As if it wouldn't have been anyway, circumstance has rendered it even more desirable. Campus elections, normally decided and forgotten about weeks beforehand, finally crossed the finish line this week. And just as several unexpectedly sunny, mild February days had whetted the appetite for spring in each of us, the shortest and, it now seems, most capricious month of the year turned cruelly on us, summoning forth temperatures and winds more common in January. In Alaska.

But that's okay. Spring Break is just around the corner. And where will it find us? In Florida, soaking up the sun in a hedonistic state of lethargy? In New Orleans, capitalizing on the perfect timing of the Mardi Gras this year? Will the future polar bear club members on campus head for the mountains and, in the name of skiing, masochistically submit themselves to even colder temperatures than the ones currently chilling Chapel Hill? Will the more domestic and thrifty seize the opportunity of a week without academic commitments to catch up with family and old friends?

Maybe. But, then again, maybe not. As it just so happens, Spring Break falls smack in the middle of the two weeks that informally constitute the midterm period. The two weeks in which we all scramble to not simply catch up with the class readings we've missed, but, even more importantly, to finally obtain copies of course syllabi. The weeks that leave us playing the game of catch-up. A game divided into two halves by, you guessed it, Spring Break.

So we feel torn between what we should be doing and what we want to do. It's the old desire vs. responsibility angst, all directed at a mere five short days without classes. We know what a good basketball team does at halftime. It thinks about the next half, prepares for it, comes out of the locker room better than it was in the first half. We start to feel guilty. What if our school's basketball players immersed themselves in frivolous fun during halftime? Where would that leave them on the Associated Press poll? We resolve to bring our book bags along with us on Spring Break, wherever we go.

But we forget one thing. The good basketball team does not really train during halftime. They've long before either seized or let go the chance of physical preparation. They simply use those fleeting, breath-catching moments between first and second halves to psychologically ready themselves for the rest of the game. Which is precisely what we can do. On the beach. In the mountains. Over drinks with old friends.



SOME LADY FROM HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES GAVE HER AN IRRADIATED APPLE...

Editor's note

Why we endorse

In Wednesday's *Daily Tar Heel*, two students wrote of their concern for the paper's policy of endorsing a candidate in the editor's race. Their letter followed by a day that of a former staff member who had quit because of the oppressive nature of such an endorsement. The letters raised valid concerns about *DTH* endorsements, particularly in the potential harm it can have on the staff. However, I believe the newspaper was correct in endorsing in this year's race and should continue to endorse in the future editor elections. To do otherwise would ignore the basic philosophy behind newspaper endorsements and deny *DTH* staff members their only chance to comment on who they believe should be their future boss.

It's important to state from the first that an endorsement is an editorial, much the same as others run on the back page each day. An endorsement has nothing to do with the coverage of elections. For example, we do not run a story of our own endorsements as we do for other groups. The endorsements, therefore, cannot be linked with campaign reporting; one is news, the other an editorial statement. To accuse the paper of biased reporting because it endorsed a candidate on its editorial page is ignoring what I believe is one of a newspaper's fundamental roles: making editorial statements.

In each race, whether on campus or in elections nationwide, the *DTH* endorsements represent the paper's collective statement of whom it believes students should support. It is not a campaign ploy to ensure a favorite's victory. Nor is it a statement of any particular staff member. *DTH* editors interview the candidates before making an endorsement and then vote. The candidate who wins the majority of votes wins the endorsement.

Endorsing in the editor's race is no different from endorsing in student body president elections, except that it is usually a much harder decision since

the candidates are people we have worked with for years. Those who criticize our endorsement have called it a conflict of interest. I disagree. Throughout elections, staff members are restricted from campaigning for any candidate in any race; all talk of the editor's election is prohibited within the office. The endorsement is the only chance for the staff to help choose its next editor — to let the University know how the paper feels about the slate of candidates. If some believe this opinion carries too much weight, I would argue that perhaps it should. Who knows the workings of the paper better than the *DTH* staff? And, based on this experience, who is a better judge of the candidates' goals and ideas?

As I see it, the biggest danger from the paper's endorsing is not a suggested conflict of interest but the potential polarization of the staff into political camps. However, as most staff members realize, the endorsement is not meant to be taken as any particular writer's or editor's endorsement any more than is an editorial calling for missile deployment. Staff members are not commanded to agree with the endorsement, nor are they restricted from stating their own views, as long as they do not actively campaign for any candidate or presume to represent the paper's staff.

The *DTH* endorsement of who should be the next editor is in many ways the final statement of a year-old editorial voice. It is a statement that recognizes the candidate the staff feels will best continue to improve the paper.

The students ultimately will make the decision. But the staff should not be robbed of having an opinion.

Kerry DeRochi
Editor

Rumor has it only three of the last 10 candidates endorsed for editor actually won.

The Soviet view of America

By DAVID ROME



The Soviets have various images of the U.S. which they derive from their media, Marxism, Leninism, films, Michael Jackson records, Pepsi-Cola, American tourists and Russians who have been in the United States. Similarly, we Americans have an image

of the Soviet Union that we get from our media, political leaders, history, Russian immigrants and dissidents, Olympic teams and vodka.

During my four months in Moscow, many of my preconceived notions were changed or confused, and I hope that I was able to change or at least confuse some of the Muscovites I met who had misconceptions about America.

My own background and education had not prepared me for the reality of the influence of Soviet ideology and the media on the people. I had read and heard about dissidents like Andrei Sakharov, Russian nationalism and orthodoxy, and the black-market. I knew the view, "Oh, the people are very nice; it's just the government that's bad, and sooner or later they'll change to a democracy like us." I had heard all the anecdotes criticizing their system and Party view. I still do not know how pervasive and important the ideology is to the Russian people, but it is certainly a reality Americans have to consider in U.S.-Soviet relations.

Fortunately, many Muscovites are very anxious to find out more about America, and American friends (except for spies) are a valuable commodity in Moscow. Therefore, I was constantly answering questions about the United States and myself. I was amazed by some of the perceptions of Americans and America that I encountered.

One of the most horrendous examples came from someone who said that he had read in a magazine that an average of two people die in every U.S. football game. Then I heard a commentator on a radio program who had been to the U.S. make a contrast between Soviet youth who know so much about America and American youth who know so little about the Soviet Union. It is true that many Soviets think they know a lot about the United States, but very often they are misinformed.

The misrepresentation of America that really made me lose my temper I heard in a laundromat. Self-service laundromats are a new and relatively rare phenomenon in the U.S.S.R.; the traditional method is for the grandmother to do the laundry. When I grew tired of doing my laundry in a bathtub in the institute, I decided to try the local laundromat. The one near my institute was closed for repairs, so I took my clothes on the metro a few miles to the nearest one. After waiting two hours for an open washing machine, I was already losing my patience. The machine's extremely hot water proceeded to turn all my clothes an unflattering shade of pink. I clearly was to blame for this mishap, however. A woman nearby decided to help the poor American boy, and I started talking with her. When another machine would not work, she said, "We call that working *po-American* (the American way)." If something does not work, it's *American style!* I was flabber-



OH SURE, COMRADE... SOMEONE'S MAKING FACES AT US IN THE WINDOW...

gasted, and she could tell. She asked me, "Well, isn't this one of 'your' machines?" I quickly responded that the archaic-looking machine was probably made somewhere like Czechoslovakia or Hungary or possibly in France. About an hour later when I was struggling with the dryer, this same woman asked me if my servants did my laundry for me in America. I nearly exploded and told her that in the United States we had better machines that actually worked and were simpler to use.

These kinds of images made me feel that the United States could have tremendous economic growth and social prosperity, but the Soviets might never know about it. They are virtually isolated from the rest of the world.

One older shoeshine man, upon hearing that I was an American, made sure no one was listening nearby and said sincerely, "We don't want war." This was one of the scariest statements I heard. Who wants war? Do they think we want war? Or was he worried that Americans thought the Russians wanted war?

Naturally one learns a great deal about one's country while traveling abroad. I learned some interesting things about America in Moscow: For instance, I learned that Dean Reed was one of the most popular American singers and Theodore Dreiser was the "greatest serious American writer of the 20th century." I had never heard of Dean Reed, and Theodore Dreiser's name was only vaguely familiar. Several Muscovites I met boasted that they had read a lot of Dreiser, and I would see complete bound collections of Dreiser in friends' apartments. Dreiser, author of *Sister Carrie* and *An American Tragedy*, I later found out, had been involved with the

American Communist Party and was outspoken in support of the Soviet Union. I also heard one of Reed's songs on the radio; he apparently was an unsuccessful New York actor who moved to East Berlin and became very popular singing in English in Eastern Europe.

I saw over 30 films in Moscow, ranging from World War II documentaries to comedies satirizing Soviet problems to 3-D movies for children. In several films, Americans were either the villains or were portrayed as absurdly pushy and uncouth. In one film, titled *Izbranniye* or *The Chosen*, a U.S. diplomat in South America ruins the hero's life and rapes the heroine. I was amazed to see a rape scene in the Soviet Union and was appalled that this was the way the Soviets' image of America was formed.

Often the Soviets will project their own situation or practices onto us. For example, it is very difficult for them to believe that *The New York Times* is not an agent of the U.S. federal government. They often believe that the F.B.I. or C.I.A. follows and bugs large numbers of people in the U.S.

Although I met many Muscovites with misconceptions of the United States, I was encouraged by the inquisitiveness of most of them. Young people, in particular, were interested in finding out my perspective on America and impressions of the Soviet Union. I hoped that my discussions with them and my example might indicate that things are not all that bad in America.

David Rome, a junior Russian major from Bloomfield, Conn., spent last fall at the Pushkin Institute of the Russian Language in Moscow. This column is the third in a series on life in the Soviet Union.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'No' voters on fee increase stupid and contemptible

to the editor:

Thank you, again, UNC student body. Once more, you've shown your general ignorance by *not* approving the proposed Student Fee increase. For those of you who did take the time to vote and voted yes, you need not read any further — I thank you for at least giving a damn. But before the rest of you — the majority of you — cuss me under your breath and inundate me with obscene phone calls, think about the following things for awhile.

First of all, because of you there's a really good chance that some organizations on this campus will not get the funding they need. For this, they thank you. Second, the *DTH* is going to continue to shrink in size because they won't get any more money. HEY YOU — the one sitting there thinking that the *DTH* is worthless anyway, what are you doing right now? You're reading it, and probably wasting class time in the process, so it *does* have a purpose for you. Third, the

"Free Flicks" at the Union aren't going to be free like they used to be a few years ago — because they won't get any more money. Fourth, I don't care what a single person says, \$3.00 a year isn't beans.

Don't come crying to me about how expensive school is and that you can't afford the increase. If you're in school here, you *can* afford it. I know — I'm an out-of-state student putting myself through school. Because of that, you won't find a tighter budget anywhere than mine. If you're not willing to give up \$3.00 of your money for things that you use every day, you're just plain cheap. Fifth, and I want to make this very clear — I'm not in Student Government, nor am I in any organizations that the CGC funds. But I realize that there are enough funded things at this school that affect me that I'm willing to part company with a paltry sum.

The last point I'm going to make is aimed directly at those who actively lobbied against the increase, *especially* the

asinine schlep who put up the blue "Vote NO" posters all over campus. You don't have a clue about what you're saying. Those ridiculous posters told us we should stop the runaway spending of our money because the dorm rent and tuition are going up 18 percent. Just WHAT the hell do dorm rent and tuition have to do with the Student Activity Fee? Did this poster's author write his English papers comparing the Marines in Beirut with the price of feminine protection in San Juan? Jeez, you're dense — and dangerous. Demagogues like you who prey only on people's emotions while providing no

reasonable basis for what they're saying do *nothing* but harm.

I hope you've found this letter as entertaining as I'm sure the people who wanted and worked for the increase have. I've said everything I have to say, and look forward to even *one* responsible, informed rebuttal to what I've said. You know — sometimes you can't argue with people at a certain university in Raleigh who say that Chapel Hill is full of uppity, snobbish and stupid people.

Ken Wilson
Winston

We don't want it

To the editor:

Well, the Student Activities Fee increase has failed to pass again. That's the end of that, right? Wrong! Paul Parker plans to put it on the ballot again next fall. I don't believe it. How many times will the fee have to be voted down before the Student Government gives up? Now pay attention guys: We do not want a fee increase! We do not want a fee increase! One more time: WE DO NOT WANT A FEE INCREASE! I forget how many times I have had to vote on the issue in the four years I have been here. The results have always been the same: The resolution failed, our money was wasted, and plans were made to vote on the issue

again. Isn't it clear by now — we do not want a fee increase. CGC, why not make the most of the money available and leave the voters alone. It has become apparent by now, through either lack of voter turnout or lack of voter support, that the students here at the University of North Carolina do not want a fee increase. Bring up the issue again in a few years; maybe by then the students will want an increase. But for now, rest assured — we do not want a fee increase! We do not want a fee increase! Now one more time and pay real close attention: WE DO NOT WANT A FEE INCREASE!!!

Craig Fox
Teague

Take a bong hit

To the editor:

The weather has been really lovely for the past few weeks, and one of the nicest ways to enjoy it is writing frivolous letters to grad students.

Some of us love to blast Def Leppard or a Bach Fugue at 95 decibels to really mellow out after mentally jousting those who have an inflated sense of importance. We chose to do it on Conner Beach.

Believe it or not, the humming of

microfiche readers and shuffling of papers from locked graduate carrels can often disturb those who are practicing the ancient art of "Frisbee Yoga." So would the followers of GRAD please consider sympathy or electric-shock treatment for those of us who need loud music and a napkin.

John deVillie
Arne Rickert
Dave B. Thomas

Letters?

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

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

must be submitted by noon the day before publication.

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



WELCOME TO YET ANOTHER DEMOCRATIC DEBATE... OR BETTER KNOWN AS TV BLOOPERS, PRACTICAL JOKES AND LIVES MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENTS.