

# The Daily Tar Heel

91st year of editorial freedom

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## Pulpit politics

When the religious right wing of the Senate began its campaign to win support for school prayer, it did so with the fervor that typically accompanies the issue, substituting moral standards for constitutional questions. Using an eloquence more suited to the pulpit, they ignored the fundamental reasoning of both the Constitution and the U.S. Supreme Court in upholding the separation of church and state: that the state has no role in the organization and advocacy of a religion.

Throughout the debate, the amendment's supporters attributed the merits of school prayer to the importance of religion in contemporary American society. An estimated 65 percent of the American public now belongs to some type of religious organization. Many supporters have argued that to be anti-amendment is equal to being anti-God. And President Reagan has commented that it is time to bring God back into the classroom.

By depicting God as the expelled pupil, Reagan and the rest ignored the simple fact that God is not banned from school. As it now stands, no child is prohibited from engaging in silent prayer. The Supreme Court in 1962 and 1963, when it considered the issue of religion in the school, did not try to divorce God from the classroom or deny religion's importance in American society. The justices stated that, while the Constitution clearly "prohibits the use of state action to deny the rights of free exercise to anyone, it has never meant that a majority could use the machinery of the State to practice its beliefs."

In answer to this mandate, the sponsors of this year's bill used terms such as "voluntary" and "neutral," stating that all religious sects could be recognized at one particular time. Students could leave the classroom if they objected to a doctrine. Or they could go pray their own prayer alone. A second bill being deliberated has called for a "silent" moment of prayer at the beginning of each day.

The situations described by the supporters were unrealistic and assumed that every child needed to pray or believed in a God to pray to. They failed to address important questions, such as: Will the prayers aimed at representing the majority be neutral, perhaps beginning with Dear Sir? Will a Jewish child have equal time on the same day as the Christian prayer? Who will choose what God will be addressed what day?

If the Senators climbed down from their pulpits long enough to consider these questions, they would realize the inadequacy of their amendment and its violation of the Constitution. Neither the Supreme Court justices nor the framers of the Constitution tried to expel God from the classroom. They simply protected the public from a state-controlled and state-run religion. As such, their actions should be upheld, not thwarted in the pursuit of some type of divine order.

## Hart attack

Walter Mondale was, for some months, the virtually unchallenged leader in the race for the Democratic nomination. But American politics — and popular opinion — is harshly fickle. Early in the 1976 presidential race, few thought Jimmy Carter able to "get it together." And so it was for Gary Hart, the senator from Colorado who until two weeks ago was lost in a pack of Askews and Hollingses. New Hampshire, that "magical" political state, may have changed everything. Already, Hart has won majority votes in New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont and on Saturday, Wyoming, trouncing Mondale and winning large amounts of media coverage.

So far, Hart has garnered a scant 38 delegates to July's San Francisco convention. Compared with Mondale's 137 delegates, accrued mostly in the early Iowa caucuses, Hart's present standing still leaves him far from front-runner status. Astro-presidential hopeful John Glenn, of Ohio, once considered the only challenge to Mondale, has fallen abysmally behind, capturing only 17 delegates so far.

So what does Hart have that Mondale and Glenn don't? Hart is touting himself as a new breed of Democratic leadership, clearly reminiscent of John Kennedy's style in 1960. He is also considered the more "cerebral" of the two leaders, more concerned with the separate issues than with holding the party line. His record as a 12-year senator shows that during the Reagan presidency he disagreed with Reagan more times than any of the other candidates, yet he also supported Reagan more times — barring Glenn — than the others. The youthful image and his moderate stances have endeared him to young, urban professionals and others who are tired of the staid liberal Democratic image. There is also some feeling that Hart is the only Democratic candidate able to defeat Reagan in November because he mirrors more closely the president's demeanor.

Hart's real tests come tomorrow, Super Tuesday, when nine states comprising 13 percent of the delegates will be selected in primaries and caucuses in the South and Northeast. Hart has virtually won Massachusetts, and in Florida, the state with the most delegates to be decided Tuesday, Hart has made large gains since New Hampshire. Alabama and Georgia, however, are still uncommitted, and Mondale, Glenn and Jackson hope to pull out wins in those states.

Whatever the outcome, the Democratic race has finally sparked to life, which may give President Reagan something to ponder in the coming months before November. That is, if the budget deficits and negative balance of trade don't catch up with him first.



THAT'S FUNNY.. MONDALE PROMISED ME THE AMBASSADORSHIP TO THE COURT OF ST. JAMES, TOO...

## Society's injustice

By BILL POPPER

Hundreds of people across the state will attempt to save a life this week. Many will hand out literature or stand silently in vigils. A few of them, attorneys, will shuttle from court to court in search of a judge willing to prevent this death. The efforts of all these individuals will likely fail, though, meaning that on Friday James Hutchins will be the first person executed by the state of North Carolina in many years.

His death will be tragic to both Hutchins and his family. What makes this upcoming tragedy absurd is that it is not only preventable but pointless. Taking the life of Hutchins cannot bring back the life of his victims and will not stop other murders from taking place. If his execution provides a whiff of satisfaction to the families of Hutchins' victims, that whiff will not erase the pain they've suffered and will always suffer.

There is no doubt that Hutchins killed three law enforcement officials. While there is some question as to his sanity at the time of the murders, his crime remains horrifying. Most of the other death row prisoners across the country are guilty of similar atrocities. Some of their victims were children; some victims were raped and then killed. Many murders were conducted in savage, brutal ways that numb one with outrage. It is easy and proper to feel compassion for the victims and those who loved them. It is extremely difficult to be compassionate toward their assailants. Such criminals must be isolated from the rest of society as long as they pose a threat to others.

That is why we have prisons.

Our system of justice is less than perfect, of course, reflecting the inherent fallibility of humans. Persons guilty of crimes are often found innocent or, if convicted, set free too soon. Others who are indeed innocent are occasionally found guilty and imprisoned until the truth is known, if ever. If a person wrongly charged with a capital offense is put to death, then the injustice can never be reversed. As long as individuals are capable of mistakes, there is no guarantee that such wrongful executions will not occur.

Even if all persons convicted of murder were in fact guilty, there is still room for injustice. Not all persons convicted of murder get sentenced to death. In Georgia, for example, a black person who kills a white person is 3.7 times more likely to be sentenced to death than a white person who kills a white person. Though 54 percent of murder victims are black, only 13 percent of the people currently on death row had black victims. Forty-two percent of death row inmates in the United States are black, three times the proportion of blacks in the general population. Sixty-three percent of the nearly 1,300 death row inmates in the United States are found in the 12 Southern states. Each of these statistics suggests that the death sentence is unevenly handed out; taken together, these figures are simply damning. Juries and judges are not above being influenced by the race of the murderer and his victim. This racial inequity is clearly intolerable.

Also problematic is the belief that the death penalty will deter other homicides. There has never been a study that successfully demonstrates the deterrent ef-

fect. The U.S. Supreme Court reviewed the matter in 1976 and described the evidence as "inconclusive." The lack of a deterrent effect is not surprising when one considers that the vast majority of capital crimes are committed during a moment of great emotional stress, in fear or under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Nearly three-quarters of all murders involve members of a family or acquaintances. The possibility of deterrence is virtually nil in such cases.

The most cynical proponents of the death penalty seek to justify it on the grounds that it is less expensive to kill the murderer than to keep him in prison for the rest of his life at taxpayers' expense. As it happens, the legal costs for a capital case are so great that any savings are negated. The money spent on public defenders, district attorneys, judges, court paperwork and the segregation of prisoners on death row would cover the cost of life imprisonment.

But this last argument is of interest only to the cynical. The rest of us realize that human life is priceless, even the life of greatly flawed humans. Two wrongs still do not make a right, and a murder ordered by the state is as barbaric as any other murder. Senseless murders will plague society as long as human nature remains what it is—imperfect and easily swayed by emotions. It may well be too late to save James Hutchins. It is not too late to save the hundreds of others on death row. Most of them have violated the Golden Rule; there is no justice in society's doing likewise.

Bill Popper is a junior psychology major from Chapel Hill.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Sign up for SG committees

To the editor:

Welcome back from what we hope was a fun and safe Spring Break. While you were gone Student Government was busy preparing for the new administration, and we'd like to tell you what we have accomplished so far.

In an effort to make Student Government more efficient and more productive, we have developed a new structure for the Executive Branch. It's one we feel will enable you to more easily get involved. Once involved, you will find that getting things accomplished won't be as difficult or as frustrating as they have before. We are confident that after you take a closer look, you will see what we mean.

We are now accepting applications for Executive Branch Project chairs, Project committees and Chancellor's committees. The deadline for the EB Project chairs will be Mar. 14 and the committee deadlines will be Mar. 23.

No longer will there be a host of stagnant committees that have in the past

given SG the reputation of being ineffective. There will be just as great a need for student involvement, though, and SG will be more accessible than ever. If you have an interest in a specific project, you will find people receptive to your input and anxious to work with you.

By getting involved, you will not automatically commit yourself to tedious office hours, lengthy meetings and wasted time. Because we plan to view each task as a short- or long-term project, you will have the option of picking an area of concern and seeing it through to its completion. This will enable you to give quality time and leave feeling you have truly accomplished something.

We know how hard it is to find time to get involved in extracurricular activities, but you probably see an area or two on campus which could stand some improvement. By contributing your creativity, your enthusiasm and a small amount of your time, you could help make those improvements.

If you have any questions or suggestions throughout the year, please come by Room 217 in the Union and talk to us. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Paul Parker  
Student Body President



CBS NEWS IS NOW PROJECTING GEORGE CUSTER THE EASY WINNER HERE AT THE LITTLE BIG HORN.. BACK TO YOU, DAN...

## Deficit: Let's worry

To the editor:

Professor Arthur Benavie suggests in his article "Deficit debate obscures real issues" (DTH, Feb. 24) that the public debate over budget proposals and monetary policy is disgraceful. He believes "the only people who need worry about the deficit are professional economists."

I am hopeful that the public does not share this view. Great danger exists, not even our government can continue to spend more than it earns without creating a problem. To borrow \$150 billion our government competes against the private sector for available funds. This is inflationary and will cause higher interest rates. Another \$15 billion will have to be added to next year's budget just to pay interest on the newly borrowed funds. (Already 20 cents out of every tax dollar goes for interest on the national debt.) Thus, the problem compounds itself.

Sooner or later the debt must be repaid, and the longer and the larger the debt becomes, the more unmanageable it

becomes. One day people will lose confidence. Crisis and panic will follow, and the terrible tragedy that follows may be equal to or worse than that occurring during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The situation is already critical (if it is not already too late) and all of us should be concerned about the impending monetary crisis in Brazil, Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina and Poland (just to name a few). While the stock market may not crash as in 1929, other things will happen. Money may not be worth much, especially if inflation becomes the only means by which our government can pay its indebtedness.

Let us not be complacent or delude ourselves. The United States must either reduce expenditures, raise taxes or both. Without strong measures, the day of reckoning is not too far off. One does not have to be an economist to see this danger vividly.

Philip F. Hirsch  
Professor of Pharmacology

## Excuse me

To the editor:

Ken, your highness, may I bother you and your white horse for just a minute. In your editorial "No" voters on fee increase stupid and contemptible" (Ken Wilson, DTH, March 1), you placed yourself on a pedestal perhaps even equal to that of the infamous Mary Richards and her Davis Library death squad. Who the hell do you think you are?

I voted "no" for the increase for the god-knows-how-many-th time because I don't want an increase in my student fees. Why should I pay a student fee to turn over the DTH one day and find myself labeled "stupid and contemptible." Obviously, the majority of students at this university, the "no" voters and the abstainers, do not want an increase. You're in a minority King Wilson; you and the other "yes" voters lost in the vote. That's how an election works.

I, too, am an out-of-state student. And I, too, am paying for my own education. If you're so hot to trot to give up on \$3.00, listen, I could use it. That will just about pay for my lunch today.

I have no objection to your letting the world know how excited you are to give another \$3.00 to the university system. I don't mind you telling me that you feel that your reasons for voting "yes" are better than my reasons for voting "no." But I'll be damned if I'm going to let you call me "stupid and contemptible" because of my opinion. Perhaps those people at that "certain university in Raleigh" are right in saying that Chapel Hill has some "uppity and snobbish" people, if you know what I mean, Ken.

David Leff  
Chapel Hill

## 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.

To the editor:

In response to Nancy Dartnall's "Sound reasoning" (DTH, Feb. 29), we would like to comment that, although we play on the beach and throw Frisbee and she studies in Davis, we do know how to spell C-O-N-N-O-R. Since we have

become quiet, maybe Ninny can study her spelling in peace. Thank you!

Mike Beverly  
Rick Lane  
Connor

## Noisy spelling bee

## A special kind of break

By JOEL KATZENSTEIN

Unlike a seemingly large number of UNC sun-chasers, I didn't go to the Keys, the Bahamas or Fort Lauderdale for Spring Break. I heard the Keys aren't all they're cracked up to be, I couldn't afford a cruise to the Bahamas, and Fort Lauderdale sounded too crowded.

Since I was feeling gyped out of a legitimate school-closing snowstorm, I decided to be a snow-chaser instead. Of course I could have gone to Killington or Vail, but that would have been too easy. "Where else," I thought, "but in New York City could I get a guarantee of 'bad' winter weather?" Soon after my last class on Friday I was on board New York "Croissant" Air for NYC.

My determination to be different has led me down some interesting paths in my 21 years. When I was nine I realized and accepted the fact that I was not like the other kids (I was very short, Jewish and considered weird) and that I was and always would be (as my friends mercifully termed) different.

From that time on I marched (in my case — meandered) to the beat of a different drummer (actually it was the hum of a different violinist, but I think you get the idea).

Now, like a large handful of college students, I am not, nor do I wish to be, a (Master) card-carrying member of the status quo. Those of us who have protested everything from wearing monograms to using a new-wave vocabulary have our reasons for seeking out the unique. Mine primarily include my ethnic background and my childhood environment (a small Southern town that I like to tell people is a suburb of Charlotte). When both are combined, a unique if not

somewhat interesting scenario is created.

A week in the city with my 87-year-old grandmother would be incomparable to a week sunning on the beach with my fellow Tar Heels, but it certainly wasn't like a week at Shady Lawn Retirement Haven either.

I really enjoyed my visit, and not just because of an occasional triumph at the Scrabble board (I told you I was weird) or a nightly meal that in New York costs more than I usually spend in a month for groceries. I loved it because I was privy to my grandmother's well-seasoned, albeit outspoken, opinions on politics, religion and life before the Walkman.

I must admit, though, that a significant highlight of my break came not in New York, but in a town where the homes have names and the cars have their own zip codes — Greenwich, Connecticut. I not only saw plenty of white precipitation, but I also was fortunate enough to get snowed in with a Carolina friend and her family.

To respect her privacy and impending embarrassment, I've changed her name to protect her. I'll call her Jane Eyre.

Even with the threat of a 10-inch snowfall (which we know would immobilize Chapel Hill), I convinced my very protective grandmother to let me out of her sight long enough to visit Jane in Connecticut.

I, along with the Jeffs (a couple from Southern California), was met by Jane in a 4-wheel-drive "prep mobile," a.k.a. a navy blue, wood paneled Jeep Wagoneer, and was driven to the family compound (shades of Hyannisport). There I was greeted with big, yet searching smiles (they were looking for my face) and bowed heads. I was a good (what's so good about it?) foot and a half shorter than everyone in the house, including the Jeffs and Jane's almost-7-foot-tall, 13-year-old brother. Bogie was the only exception, but being the

family dog, he didn't count. No need telling any of you well-under-six-footers how relieved I was when we all sat down.

After being met at the train station by a car prominently listed in the Preppy Handbook, taken to a house right out of *Architectural Digest* and greeted by giants and Amazons, I was well on my way to feeling completely out of my element. What was I doing? Surely I hadn't traded one group of status quo for that of Greenwich "Who's Who of Wealthy Towns in America," Connecticut. No, I hadn't.

For the next 18 hours, I was treated to hospitality easily rivaling that of the South, conversation in stiff competition with a Campus Y dinner discussion and one of the prettiest snowfalls I've ever seen.

The family with whom I was snowbound consisted of Jane, her aspiring landscape-designer mother, her Berkeley-graduate father, a computer-whiz brother and, of course, a brother who plays basketball (one of them had to). The Jeffs, who were determined to return to New York that night, did so, but not before contributing warmth and a terrible joke about carrots (a carrot walking down the road gets hit by a car and he gets rushed to the hospital where the doctor tells the carrot he'd live, but he'd be a vegetable the rest of his life).

With the roads clear the next day, I was free to return to New York and then to North Carolina. (I didn't want to leave). I didn't return to Chapel Hill with a native tan or a well-earned hangover, but I did come back with something pretty special. I came back with a feeling of accomplishment (I saw snow) and some very special memories of the North.

Joel Katzenstein is a junior English and journalism major from Gastonia.