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# The Daily Tar Heel

92nd year of editorial freedom

## Of blue moods and black clouds

I have a friend on the West Coast who is worried. She is afraid that someone she knows will commit suicide. When she called me recently and shared her fears with me, I was perplexed. But after listening to her reasons and later thinking about what she had told me, I came to see how valid, how compelling her concern is.

The root of her concern was a magazine article about the suicide of a college student attending a rather distinguished university. Although she couldn't remember some of the most seemingly pertinent details — his name and age, for example — she recalled other information about him, the kind of information that inevitably interests us much more than biostatistics: the kind of car he drove, his father's profession, his academic standing, the nature of his romantic life, what he did with his spare time, what he liked to eat. My friend managed to glean even the most obscure of details from the article she read, but that's not so surprising. As any of us might be, she was concerned — for herself, for those she knew — about what type of person would sink into a depression so deep that he would contemplate, and execute, his own suicide.

What my friend concluded was that this young man was not much different from her, or from me, or from any number of college students. And if he was different at all, it was in that he seemed to boast greater advantage and distinction than most college students. Why, then, his suicide? It is the question that undoubtedly plagues his parents and friends, and it is a question that now plagues me. I, like my friend, am scared by the news of the student's suicide. I am forced to wonder if there are people close to me, people who maintain a facade of contentment and fulfillment, who might be teetering on the edge of the kind of hopelessness and sadness that triggers self-destruction. I am forced to wonder where, among the often formidable frustrations of everyday living, the line between coping and giving in exists, and I wonder how easily that line is traversed.

Perhaps most intriguing is the nature of depression itself. We all suffer from it, some of us more frequently than others. And while depression is sometimes rooted in an incident as traceable as the end of a friendship or the failure to achieve a very specific goal, it is usually less easily comprehended. The most seemingly trivial of things can cause it: a

### Frank Bruni

The Ferret's Wheel

stuffed toe, clouds.

We expect depression much as we expect rain. We know it will come, although we don't know when. And when it does arrive, we simply try to ignore it, to work around it. Usually, the formula works. Sometimes, it doesn't.

It hasn't for a young man I know who now occupies a room in the mental health ward of a Massachusetts hospital. It hasn't for a former schoolmate and family friend who suffers from agoraphobia, a psychological illness involving fear of open places and, in her case, a fear of leaving her home. And it didn't for the student whose profile came under the scrutiny of my friend on the West Coast.

In each of these three cases, the root of depression remains buried. Friends and doctors offer possible explanations — emotionally charged home atmospheres, low self-esteem — but these are elements to which at least half of us have fallen or continue to fall prey. So why did they drive these people to, or over, the edge?

We can't really know why. That's what scared my friend, what prompted her to call me and many of her other close friends. That's what scares me. Like anyone else, I occasionally find myself in depressions that last days, depressions that cannot be cured by a pint of ice cream, hours of rigorous exercise, or a day in bed. Without fail, the sadness lifts, as unpredictably and incomprehensibly as it first settled. But what if, I must ask myself, it didn't lift when it did? What if it lasted two more days, even two more hours? Would the feelings of futility and frustration that accompany such depressions grow powerful enough in that extra time to overwhelm the will to live? Could my firm belief in the impending end of my depression evaporate?

These are questions almost all of us could honestly ask of ourselves. Each of us knows what it means to be depressed and how difficult living in a depressed state can be. We can only imagine, then, the impossibility of life for the person who is



perpetually depressed. We can only imagine the grim life of the young man who committed suicide.

We say that his is the most unlikely of suicides, but that is a lie, and we all know it. His is the most typical of suicides — baffling, senseless. Like a great many of the people who commit suicide each year, he "had everything." He had blue eyes, blond hair, height, nice clothing, a high grade point average, a roommate he liked, a favorite study spot in the campus library. His suicide is incomprehensible to us because he had the strength of reason — the reason that applies to the world of the emotionally healthy — rooting for his happiness. His suicide is terrifying because he could be any one of us.

Frank Bruni, a sophomore English major from Avon, Conn., is associate editor of The Daily Tar Heel.

## The day of reckoning (Part 1)

For a week now, the Finance Committee has been whittling on the budget proposals from campus organizations; those groups include, for example, *The Phoenix*, The Black Student Movement, WXYC and the Carolina Athletic Association. As is usual, the groups want more money than the committee has to give them, so the committee has had to carefully examine every line of every budget proposal, discuss and trim those requests that seem unnecessary, and recommend how much each group should get.

This year, though, there's a twist. With more than a week and a dozen organizations to go, the committee is out of money. Unless something drastic happens, many groups — some of them so established that they're taken for granted — will for the first time ever get no money from student government.

A fixed student fee rate, excessive Campus Governing Council allocations and a financially disastrous Carolina Concert for the Children last year — all combined to put the Finance Committee in its present predicament, making it extremely difficult for the committee to fund every organization adequately. This year's budget of approximately \$210,000 will only cover 61 percent of all the organizations' and publications' budget requests (about \$340,000).

Despite an absence of funds to allocate

the budget hearings will continue as scheduled until next Tuesday. Then the committee must, in a sense, go through the entire process once again, appraising which groups deserve money most.

There's room for innovation, however. CGC member Tim Newman, who somehow finds himself chairing the Finance Committee, has said that rather than hold an unappropriated balance (\$15,000) to be allocated during the coming year, the committee may elect to allocate some or all of that balance now. Another "innovation," perhaps the most ticklish the committee could examine, is whether to fund all groups (despite the fact that with so little money to distribute, many groups would be reduced to mediocrity), or whether to fund adequately those organizations deemed most essential while eliminating those deemed important, but superfluous in comparison.

As the available funds dwindle, a great debate is taking shape in the CGC. There are those who will argue that every group must get some funding, regardless of the amount and the result. Others will argue that, this year, it is inevitable that some programs must be dropped. But when the smoke clears, and some organizations are gone, one truth will emerge: There isn't enough money to go around, and the students will hurt because of it.

## The foul winds of war

The carnage that bullets and bombs can create is appalling, but much more gruesome are the effects of gas warfare. In recent months blinded, blistered and dying Iranian soldiers have arrived in Western European hospitals for treatment following Iraqi mustard gas attacks in the 43-month-old Iran-Iraq war. Iranian troops still at the front increasingly have to fear nerve gas attacks. By vigorously and outspokenly striving to end the use of poison gas in the Persian Gulf war, the Reagan administration is looking beyond immediate national security interests to pursue a wise and moral policy.

Understanding the Iraqi use of chemical warfare requires a glance at the evolution of the war. Iraq started toward its present fix when in 1980 it invaded an Iran weakened and divided by the Shah's removal. Under pressure from an invading army, Iran united behind the Ayatollah Khomeini and fought back with such fury that the Iranian army now occupies some Iraqi territory and has reportedly massed a million troops. In desperation Iraq has resorted to weapons banned by the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and not used in large battles between modern equipped armies since World War I. The probable kind of nerve gas that Iraq is developing can be used on civilian populations and produces vomiting, temporary blindness, tremors,

convulsions, and, in fairly small doses, fatal paralysis of the lungs.

A U.S. tilt now toward Iraq could be justified strictly on the basis of power politics. Support or even outright aid to Iraq could check the military advance of Iran's brand of radical Shiite fundamentalism and prevent Iran from diverting resources to the overthrow of moderate Arab states.

But to side with Iraq would be to associate with a ruthless, totalitarian regime, the crimes of which extend beyond the use of universally abhorred weapons. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein runs one of the world's most brutal police states — some of the hundreds of political prisoners are executed on mere suspicion of opposition. Numerous techniques of torture are employed on citizens.

The Reagan administration cannot cure all of the war's ills, but it can and is taking concrete steps to try to curb the Iraqi use of poison gas. By banning the export of five chemical components used to make nerve gas, by releasing U.S. intelligence data on the Iraqi construction of nerve gas production and storage facilities, and by successively denouncing the Iraqi use of mustard and nerve gas, the United States pursues moral diplomacy. When it comes to chemical weapons, half measures and weak stands cannot be tolerated.

To the editor:

Because we live in a complex and at times confusing world, it is often easy to disassociate ourselves when we should be working to affect positive change.

It is convenient to concern ourselves only with that which we immediately see — planning class

schedules and weekend parties — and to leave the resolution of "greater issues" to those who we think really make the decisions. We know this isn't right. We have social consciences. But, for whatever reasons we have, we do it anyway.

Sadly, we end up making a different kind of decision — an indeci-

### Needed: SCAU editors

To the editor:

The Student Consumer Action Union is now choosing editors for four of its publications:

- *The Franklin Street Gourmet* gives information and reviews on every restaurant and bar in Chapel Hill. Get a group of reviewer — friends together and hit the town! It's a fun publication for which the editor will have to recruit good writers and graphics personnel.

- *The Carolina Underground Course Guide* is a new guide to classes that will give information and critiques on selected courses and professors. The review will be an older-brother guide written by advanced undergraduate students about their major departments. The editor will be responsible for the creative shaping of a completely new publication.

- *The Southern Part of Heaven* gives information on apartment rentals in and around Chapel Hill. It also contains ratings of services and

managers. The editor will select a small staff to help compile the booklet from survey responses and to assist in writing an introductory section on off-campus living. The SCAU computer will be used for data analysis.

- *CASH* provides information on all banks, savings and loans and credit unions in Chapel Hill and Carrboro. It compares the interest rates, account benefits and locations of institutions. The editor needs to do a little leg work (visit approximately 10 banks) and write the pamphlet in chart form by the end of April.

Applications are available at the Carolina Union desk and SCAU. The positions are open to all freshmen, sophomores and juniors. Any questions? Come by Suite B in the Union. The application deadline is April 6.

Kevin Wolf  
SCAU director of publications

## Going through the motions

By ASHLEY OSMENT

The March 25 election in El Salvador has given the Reagan administration a new equation in its pursuit for increased military aid to El Salvador: Elections equal democracy. Unfortunately, democracy in El Salvador is traditionally reserved for the tiny ruling oligarchy and its protective military, and there is no indication that the election will disrupt this tradition. However, in the United States the impact of the Salvadoran election may prove to be more meaningful, as public opinion is swayed by a fantasized image of Reagan administration democracy promoted by the American media.

The obvious purpose of the election was to give the Salvadoran government an aura of legitimacy, thereby increasing its chances for U.S. military aid. The obvious audience was the American people, or more specifically, Congress. The strategy may be working.

After joining an official team of U.S. observers sent to El Salvador for the election, House Majority Leader Jim Wright described the election as "impressive." Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering called it "a striking display of Salvadoran determination." And President Reagan issued one of his typically distortive, yet wonderfully glossy, statements at a White House luncheon, calling the election turnout "another victory for freedom, of liberty over repression and courage over intimidat-

tion." Of course, the president did not clarify where a main source of repression and intimidation originates in El Salvador — the Salvadoran government.

Voting is required by law in El Salvador and a major concern to Salvadorans is getting their national identity cards stamped to prove they voted, thereby escaping customary government repression against those who fail to vote. As one Salvadoran was quoted in the March 27 *New York Times*, "People here (in El Salvador) are very well-trained to vote."

Years of state terror have hardly induced an atmosphere of democracy in El Salvador, but have entrenched a climate of fear incompatible with free elections. But when U.S. military officials drop in on the election-day scene in El Salvador and find long lines of dedicated voters at each poll, rumors of Salvadoran democracy inevitably circulate among North Americans, who are either unaware of or indifferent to the reality of institutionalized terror in El Salvador.

Perhaps with the exception of tumultuous Guatemala, El Salvador suffers from the most extreme government violence in Central America. Salvadoran armed forces and death squads — equipped with U.S. weapons — deny through terror freedom of speech, assembly or press. For example, since 1979, over 30 journalists have been murdered by army death squads and the two independent newspapers have been closed by state violence. Concerning freedom of speech, 1,090 Salvadoran students and 224 Salvadoran teachers have been murdered by Salvadoran armed forces since 1979. If the same percentage of students and teachers were murdered in the

United States, 49,050 American students and 10,080 American teachers would be dead. In addition to students, teachers and journalists, political leaders from center to left, labor leaders, human rights workers, religious leaders are all distinctly targeted by the Salvadoran army and death squads.

The election in El Salvador cannot alone put an end to the death squads and government repression by the armed forces. As long as 1 percent of the population owns over half the land in El Salvador and as long as that extremely cohesive oligarchy controls the Salvadoran armed forces, students and others who demand economic reform will be violently repressed. Further U.S. military aid will simply accelerate that repression and strengthen the oligarchic grip on El Salvador's economy.

The U.S. must realize that instability — yes, revolution — is inevitable in El Salvador. If the goal is enduring stability and real democracy for El Salvador, the oligarchy will have to fall.

As a result of the March 25 election, Jose Napoleon Duarte, the U.S.-backed Christian Democrat, is favored to defeat Arena's Roberto D'Aubisson in the May run-off, but it is unlikely that Duarte can control the Salvadoran armed forces that historically are accustomed to ruling El Salvador. D'Aubisson, known to be a leader of the Salvadoran death squads, has been called a "pathological killer" by former U.S. Ambassador Robert White. It is likely that D'Aubisson and the death squads will continue to terrorize El Salvador even if Duarte wins. Some ever fear a D'Aubisson coup in the event of a Duarte victory, a particular fear of the Reagan administration because it

knows Congress will not appropriate military aid to a bloodstained D'Aubisson government. Whether Duarte or D'Aubisson, U.S. military aid can do nothing but protect the interests of the oligarchy until the oligarchy is dissolved and no longer controls the Salvadoran military.

Frankly, the picture is grim. The "stability" that the U.S. backs in El Salvador is the violently repressive oligarchy. It is "stability" that allows no free debate; the guerrillas did not win "sour grapes" and boycott the last election, Salvadorans politically left of center are murdered in El Salvador. Opposition groups cannot participate safely in negotiations or elections.

The March 25 election did not produce 1.2 million happy Salvadoran voters, it summoned 1.2 million Salvadorans — most of them landless, hungry and war-weary — and requested that they walk through the motions of democracy for an American audience. It was a mockery of democracy, designed and paid for by the United States. It was a stage set to guarantee increased military aid to an undemocratic, violently repressive Central American country.

If the United States is truly concerned with democracy, it will deny military aid to El Salvador. It will recognize that the Salvadoran peasant has been stripped of social, economic and political justice. It will change its foreign policy to sincerely promote democracy by actively promoting social, economic and political reform in El Salvador. Until then, elections in El Salvador will mean nothing.

Ashley Osmont is a junior peace, war and defense major from Sylva.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Take the risk for equality

By focusing narrowly on our own more tangible concerns we have in effect decided to let others shape our future and run our lives.

Now is the time to make a new decision — to decide that we alone shape our future that it is up to us to determine what kind of world is right for us. This can be done by broadening our perspectives and concerns and by deciding right now that it is time to do something.

We can do something today by actively supporting and encouraging the tireless efforts of those who strive for racial and human equality.

On this 16th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King, a man who was willing

to take risks and make differences, a host of campus organizations are sponsoring the Martin Luther King Dream Day. The day at UNC will include speakers in the Pit, workshops, a panel discussion and a speech by Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young. Each event will focus on the status and future of race relations in America.

The pain and injustice that racism — even in its most minute forms — confronts us on a daily basis.

It is time for us to make a decision together — to stop, listen and think. See you in the Pit.

Paul Parker  
Student body president

### Defense spending

To the editor:

I am writing in response to the letter submitted by Wayne Boyette ("Hunt's Beliefs," *DTH*, March 27) concerning the alleged confusion over Sen. Jesse Helms' campaign commercial. I must have missed the point of confusion: All I see is a relentless effort on the part of the N.C. senator to lower the election strategies to a mere mudslinging campaign.

Perhaps if Boyette had been more aware of the facts concerning this issue of "hypocrisy," he would have been able to more clearly understand Gov. Jim Hunt's position. At the beginning of the campaign, the governor sent a letter to the senator inquiring as to whether or not they would accept donations from out-of-state, believing both campaigns should have equal access to funds. However, when Helms failed to reply and continued having out-of-state fundraisers while also receiving out-of-state donations, Hunt realized that he would need to accept these out-of-state contributions as well, in order to compete with the vast resources available to Helms.

The Hunt for Senate Committee has had only four or five out-of-state fundraisers. It is merely that people from outside North Carolina are so supportive of Hunt's campaign that they continue to send donations. Should the Hunt for Senate Committee turn away these funds? I do not think this would be a viable option in

regard to the tactics Helms has adopted.

Why can Helms not have a positive campaign? Because he does not have a positive career and is therefore using Hunt as his target of a vicious political attack in a desperate attempt to remain in office. None of Helms' campaign aids reveal any positive aspects of the senator. Rather, they reveal only his perspective of Hunt's supposed weaknesses.

I am afraid one does not need to "look for fault in the Senator." The issue is rather that one must look (search, in fact) to find some justification in Helms' repeatedly negative and issue-avoiding statements. A now-famous question posed by Helms is, "Where do you stand, Jim?" There can be no doubt regarding his insinuation that Hunt should not be soliciting funds from out-of-state, yet Helms could surely account for the majority of his approximately \$15 million campaign budget from states other than North Carolina.

I would therefore dispute the claim by Boyette that Hunt has adopted a "pious, holier-than-thou attitude" but rather point instead to the defensive posture that Hunt has been forced to take.

Sandra Boyd  
Staff volunteer  
Hunt for Senate Committee

To the editor,

Wayne Boyette and Sen. Jesse Helms misunderstand the criticism that Gov. Jim Hunt has made regarding out-of-state campaign funding ("Hunt's Beliefs," *DTH*, March 27). There are two points to be made on Hunt's behalf. First, the governor would prefer not to have to depend upon out-of-state contributions to finance his campaign. Helms' tremendous out-of-state resources have forced Hunt to increase his own fundraising efforts outside of North Carolina in order to offset Helms' monetary advantage.

Second, Hunt is committed to

represent North Carolina interests first and foremost and therefore has limited out-of-state contributions to no more than 40 percent of his total campaign funding. Helms has no such commitment. So far around 75 percent of his support has come from outside our state. While Jesse leads in total fundraising, the governor leads in N.C. fundraising. Hunt's criticism is not hypocrisy. He wants the citizens of North Carolina to ask Helms where his primary interests lie and whom he represents.

Alan T. Houck  
Chapel Hill