

THE TAR HEEL

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Safety first

Last week Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole announced that the administration would require automakers to equip passenger cars with air bags or automatic seat belts unless states pass mandatory seat belt laws. The decision met with immediate criticism from those who see it as a blatant example of governmental paternalism; but, even conceding its paternalistic overtones, the decision is a sound and wise approach to the tremendous problem of highway safety.

A seat belt law will strike many as an overly intrusive instance of the government trying to protect people from a danger they already consciously face. As was the case with the motorcycle helmet law, many people feel the government has no right to regulate their lives so closely. "If I want to ride around without a seat belt and risk my own life, that's my choice."

However, this logic disregards the overall benefits that laws protecting people from themselves can bring. If a law were established today requiring seat belts, millions of people who normally never think of wearing a seat belt would start and eventually develop a habit which saves lives every day.

We hope the states will take this cue from the federal government and enact a seat belt law before federally imposed punishments force the issue. Whatever happens, critics of this "paternalism" should step back and consider the sheer good sense of a law that can mean the difference between certain death and surviving an accident with nothing more than a sore neck.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

No self-incrimination in ruling

To the editor:

Regarding your editorial "Register or else" (*The Tar Heel*, July 12, 1984), I do not see how the Supreme Court ruling "compels self-incrimination."

To cite an analogy, I must

certify each year that I have registered a property tax form with Orange County or I am not eligible to renew my automobile license tags. No one "compels" me to incriminate myself by falsely certifying that I have done so.

What's the difference? The difference is that some clerk in the State government probably decided the issue in the latter case, without bothering the Supreme Court.

John L.S. Hickey
Chapel Hill



Letters?

The *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. Contributions must be submitted by noon each Monday.

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

Ziggie looks back on that crazy first year

By ZIGGIE TARDUST

Incoming freshmen are flooded with a barrage of information the first few days of the fall semester. There are handouts telling the floored frosh what to, how to, where to, why to, when to and who to see about almost everything you would want to know about UNC. But there is nothing like looking back on the experience to see what you would do differently if you could relive your good ole' freshman year.

So, return with me now to those golden days of yesteryear as I recall my first days at UNC. For those who are yet to become college students, or for those brave enough to wake up tomorrow morning and start again, pop a beer and gather 'round.

I spent the first few hours driving around Carboro looking for a major university. I found a beauty college—and the Art-School, but I couldn't shake the strange feeling that something was missing.

I eventually found UNC and parked my station wagon and trailer packed full of the bare essentials in front of my dorm. I brought a load in and came back, but my car was gone. The policeman wouldn't give it back, either, when I told him to give me a break because I was only a freshman.

I hooked up my \$2,000 stereo and cranked out the soundtrack to *Footloose* while I unpacked my Izods and old

Goodbye, Mom and Dad, hello self-flagellation and chemically-induced public humiliation!

Raggedy Ann and Andy bedsheets. A few guys from the hall came in and introduced themselves. I thought I would show them I could be a pretty funny guy by telling a few racist jokes, and a short Polish homosexual black Jew from New Jersey came in and put down his suitcase.

There were a few meetings that day with advisers, etc., that I blew off to check out the awesome college babes around the Granville pool. From what I understood, you could figure out drop-add once you got there and you could pick up a bunch of slides first semester and worry about General College later—hell, you have four years, right?

Then it happened. On my way back from Granville, I saw him. A basketball player! Here was part of the myth—the legend—the power of Carolina, in the flesh. I had been following Carolina basketball for years, so that was reason enough to make UNC the only place I applied. I heard once, I think, that the academics were OK, too. I guess I made a pretty big scene out there in the parking lot, passing out after Timo signed my arm. It was killer.

The sun finally set over Fowler's and it was time to hit Franklin Street. My first

night at college! Goodbye, Mom and Dad, hello self-flagellation and chemically-induced public humiliation! I borrowed a shirt from my roommate, who surely wouldn't mind, splashed on some Polo cologne, pulled the ends of my boxers past the legs of my shorts, removed my socks and wrote "The Kid is bustin loose" on my Garfield notepad.

I'd tell you about what I did that night, but I don't remember it too well. I know it had something to do with vomiting on the car of my future English professor and asking the bartender at Purdy's to wrap me up 110 pounds of grade-A choice USDA-inspected prime blonde to go. My fake ID did get me one thing—back into my room when I realized I forgot my keys.

The next day I heard that all of the awesome college babes were at drop-add, so I thought I would go check it out.

I picked up a few classes someone told me were slides—econ, chemistry and physics with a lab. I kinda wish someone had told me that I had to pay tuition before I could register—the Woollen Gym floor makes a hard bed.

I emerged a few days later and decided that I would think a step ahead of everyone else at UNC and would beat the crowds

at the Student Stores and buy my books later, when I was sure which ones I needed. I also thought to bring a No. 2 pencil to class on the first day to fill out forms. Pretty smart, huh? Hell, I got into Carolina.

I didn't bother setting my alarm clock the next morning, because I knew I could wake up whenever I wanted to. No, really, I did it all the time at home. Nothing ever happens on the first day of class anyway. I stumbled in to class, a lecture with about 500 students, and the only seat left was in the exact geometric center of the room. While everybody was staring at me, I victoriously pulled out my No. 2 pencil. Everyone else opened their textbooks to page 762.

I spent the rest of that first official day standing around in the Pit. This was Carolina! Beer! Awesome college babes! Beer! Fraternities! Beer! Basketball! Beer! Those "nostalgic college buddies"! Beer! Road trips! Beer! Yes, those freshman days were something else again. I've earned my Tar Heel sweatshirt. Wouldn't change a thing.

Ziggie Tardust, a graduate of Country Day School in Charlotte who is majoring in "undecided," is entering his seventh year as a Carolina undergraduate. He was interviewed by Arts & Features Editor Allen Michie.