

The Daily Tar Heel

93rd year of editorial freedom

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Extremely disturbing

Extremist philosophy on either end of the spectrum historically has not prevailed for extended periods in our democratic society. Refusal to compromise has been the tragic flaw of many extremists, like Joseph McCarthy, because such ideologies have not blended into the collection of viewpoints that constitute this democracy.

Statements made by the Rev. Jerry Falwell during his five-day trip to South Africa last week show that the Fundamentalist preacher might be overstepping his bounds. Many Republicans, including staunch conservatives, are urging President Reagan to distance himself from the Moral Majority leader, advice the president would be wise to heed.

Falwell pulled a proverbial stick-your-foot-in-your-mouth move when he called Nobel Peace Prize-winner Bishop Desmond Tutu a "phony" for playing the role of spokesman for the South African black population. As if that wasn't enough, he followed the statement by becoming the self-proclaimed spokesman for the oppressed blacks.

White House aides state that Reagan will veto the bill calling for economic sanctions against South Africa, a move Falwell supports, when the bill comes up in the Senate. But the issue has caused many ardent conservatives — including Jack Kemp, the most resolute right-winger in the House — to cross party lines and vote for the sanctions. Regardless of whether their motivation is political or based on personal principle, it seems that these conservatives

cannot support "a fundamentally racist government," as one Republican representative called it.

Falwell offered praise for the "reform" movements instituted by South African President P.W. Botha and said apartheid had been "repudiated." When was the last time Falwell read a newspaper not published by the Moral Majority or the Conservative Caucus? The civil unrest and bloodshed is a rather strong indication that all is not well and that apartheid has not been adequately "repudiated."

The doctrine Falwell preaches is nothing more than a compilation of contradictions. One of the biggest misnomers in the Falwell empire is the school he founded, Liberty University. Espousing freedom of choice in its name, the school forbids freshman and sophomore dating, tobacco, alcohol, unauthorized demonstrations, rock and even country and western music. But 3,500 freshmen enrolled for the fall term to have 17th-century, *Scarlet Letter*-era mentality drummed into their head as preparation for survival in the 20th century.

Reagan's continued support of Falwell is going to cost the president precious votes from conservatives in the Senate, where the balance between Republican and Democratic superiority is delicate indeed. We urge Falwell to stop spewing Fundamentalist doctrine about American principles long enough to consider the meaning of one of the foremost American ideals — the separation of church and state.

Portentous times ahead

President Reagan came down from his mountaintop ranch Monday to face yet another mountain — this one promising a political struggle to test and decide much more than just the 74-year-old's recuperative powers.

Reagan will be forced to make decisions in the next few months that could change large sections of our country's tax laws, the focus of government spending for the next several years, the fate of many of our nation's farmers and, most importantly, the whole future of our arms race with the Soviets.

In fact, Reagan will be moving his "fall offensive" on tax-overhaul measures through the Triangle this week when he speaks at N.C. State. His battle over tax revision will continue throughout the month with speeches across the nation.

Reagan hopes he can encourage enough public support for his tax revision ideas to ensure easy sailing through Congress. However, chances for this probably depend much more on his ability to achieve bipartisan support in the Democratic-controlled House.

Not only will this support necessitate Reagan's willingness to compromise on taxes (potentially to the tune of some sort of revenue hike) but also his willingness to compromise on some budget items. Too many veto threats in this area could make for a less than cooperative Congress and spoil any chances for real progress in either taxes or the budget.

A longtime political adviser predicts that Reagan has "developed his own personal relationship with the American people" that will enable him to score at least a public relations triumph in his summit with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. But even if Reagan does score a "public relations triumph" at the summit, how much have we actually won?

Not very much, if it comes at the cost of missing such a crucial chance to reach substantive agreements on arms limitations.

Of course, accompanying each battle is a tremendous opportunity. We hope Reagan realizes his chances for real triumphs and leaves those of public relations back in his first term.

To the dth degree

Letter rip

Welcome back, everyone. And to everyone not here yet, well, come back.

Today's column deals with a certain sort of libel, which means that it's liable to cause a bit of confusion — not that it's full of lies and bull. But if that's how you want to label it, then that's fine, too.

We journalists, so often warned to guard against libeling others, sometimes forget that reporters, too, are vulnerable to statements in print that can damage their reputations without substantiation. Though realizing our responsibility to print a correction, for instance, we first check with the reporter or editor to see whether notes or recollection can refute the correction before running a "for the record."

But because we want the back page to remain an open forum — restrained only by space, time, fairness-in-media and a modicum of taste — for readers, we haven't been so careful with letters that maintain an error was made in a story.

Take last week. We received a letter that said a story, for which the letter-writer was a source, had contained an inaccuracy about a statement made in the interview. The letter was edited for print and all ready to go — until it raised a policy question; unlike an "ltr," because the back page has been so open to students, the letter was about to go to print before anybody contacted the reporter to hear her response.

If we printed it and then the reporter maintained that the original statement was

correct, in effect we would have libeled the reporter by damaging her credibility based on an unsubstantiated allegation. It's unsubstantiated because if a source and a reporter conflict over the validity of information in a story, we stand by the reporter and assume he or she is being accurate.

In the case last week, the letter-writer deleted a reference to "inaccuracy" and used the letter to clarify the statement in question. It was merely a convenient way — an easy way out, I suppose — for us to avoid the issue. We then could deal — in reflection rather than reaction — with the friction between *laissez-faire* and being fair regarding criticism, however indirect, of reporters in "Reader Forum."

Though I still like to refer to it as the "Tell 'em What's Good Forum" ("em" means you tell us), we will not print a correction that is denied by the reporter, even if it comes in a letter that sounds less formal than a "for the record." This implies that reporters will have to be contacted before such a letter is considered for print, as well. If the letter's complaint is warranted, we will run both it and a "for the record."

And we'll follow these rules, well, to the letter.

(Then again, it might be much a-dth about nothing.)

— DAVE SCHMIDT

Identify threats, don't be vindictive

By JOHN PATRICK GRACE

As August yields to September, as the hurly-burly of the first days of classes gives way to the rhythmic routine of a new semester, our university community finds itself in shock and in mourning. Though most of us did not know Sharon Stewart personally, her name and her photographic likeness are now engraved on our hearts. Collectively, we want to reach out and embrace her parents and join them in their deep sense of loss and anger.

Along with the Stewarts, Sharon's colleagues in the Division of Speech and Hearing Services in the UNC School of Medicine, and her fellow congregants at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, we experience a grief that fills our beings, and our campus. Why? is the short, and unanswerable, question on thousands of lips. Why Sharon? Why this unthinkable end?

Sharon's kidnapping and murder were a grim welcome to the 3,350 freshmen whose summers were spent in anticipation of a new life in a gentle, enchanting college town of big oaks, poplars and low stone walls. What place does mayhem have in such a setting? the freshmen may wonder.

For the rest of us, however, this brutal slaying follows all too closely upon a series of three chilling homicides that occurred in southern Orange County between late January and early March of this year. Indeed, we have barely finished witnessing the trial of the Sanders brothers for the shooting death of Perry Zimmerman, a UNC student, and of George Richard Fisher for the murder of Jean Fewel,

a native of Hong Kong adopted by Tom Fewel and Joy Wood of Chapel Hill. We still await the trial of Alton Eugene Harris Jr. for the knifing death of Freshteh Gokho, a UNC student.

The spate of killings has muted the traditionally casual and carefree mood of our overgrown academic village. Many UNC women have reportedly signed up for self-defense classes, a worthwhile endeavor. It is hoped, however, that purchases of handguns, as a protective measure, do not soar. (At one point amid rising street violence in Detroit a decade ago, it was said that one of every two housewives in that metropolis kept a pistol at home.)

And now what? No amount of second-guessing nor hand-wringing can restore Sharon to her family and friends, and to a promising career in speech and hearing therapy. Nor is vindictiveness the answer. When we find our anger and our fear so powerful that we join a movement to demand the death penalty for 16-year-olds, then we shall know that, in Pogo's words, "we have met the enemy, and he is us."

However, we must search for viable solutions for the sake of little children, such as Jean Fewel, for the sake of students, such as Perry Zimmerman, Freshteh Gokho and Sharon Stewart, and for all of us, really, because mature age or physical strength will never be a match for a .32 or for a six-inch hunting knife. University faculty, staff and students, and all who make up the population of southern Orange County, must energetically brainstorm for ways to identify prospective threats in our midst and for ways to protect ourselves from an armed assailant who emerges from the shadows.

John Patrick Grace, a native of Chicago, is a doctoral candidate in Italian/medieval studies.

'Why Sharon? Why this unthinkable end?'

Chapel Hill was never expected to turn into a town of random violence and terror, a miniature of such areas as Needle Park on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Here, we thought, we could stroll across the campus in the twilight or amble Franklin Street after a movie, and remain unmolested. Here we might encounter youthful drunks fresh from a beer blast, a gypsy-like bag lady or two, or a clutch of punk rockers — but a man who would kill a child or kidnap a young woman at knife-point? That just is not the Chapel Hill that so many of us have known and loved.

Meanwhile, a boy of 16 whom classmates and teachers at Orange County High School thought

Learning from an unjust, terrible world

By EDWIN FOUNTAIN

This peaceful college town has been shattered by four acts of violence in the past year: the senseless killing of Perry Zimmerman; the brutal stabbing of Freshteh Gokho; the hanging of 8-year-old Jean Fewel, an act that goes far beyond brutality and into the darkest realms of inhuman savagery; and now the kidnapping and murder of Sharon Stewart.

To me at least, the latter case has invoked unusual personal involvement. In the first three instances, the murder was revealed as a *fait accompli* — a tragic and jarring dissonance in one day's news, soon swept away by the quotidian trivia of our lives.

But Sharon Stewart was seized into our consciousness, not to be dismissed so easily. The circumstances of her abduction are so

much more relevant to our lives. We have all walked, secure in the belief in our safety, across campus after a late movie. That the abduction occurred on an oft-traveled path, so close to home, is still more personally unsettling. The details of an eyewitness account render it so much more vividly in our minds. And finally, her attractive face, smiling at us daily from the newspaper page — instead of being swept away by our daily life, she became a part of it.

Sharon Stewart was still alive when we began to follow her story — at least, she was still alive in our memories and imaginations. But the passage of one day, and then another, brought the sickening realization that she was probably dead — even if we were too frightened to admit the probability, as if by not giving it voice we could make it not so.

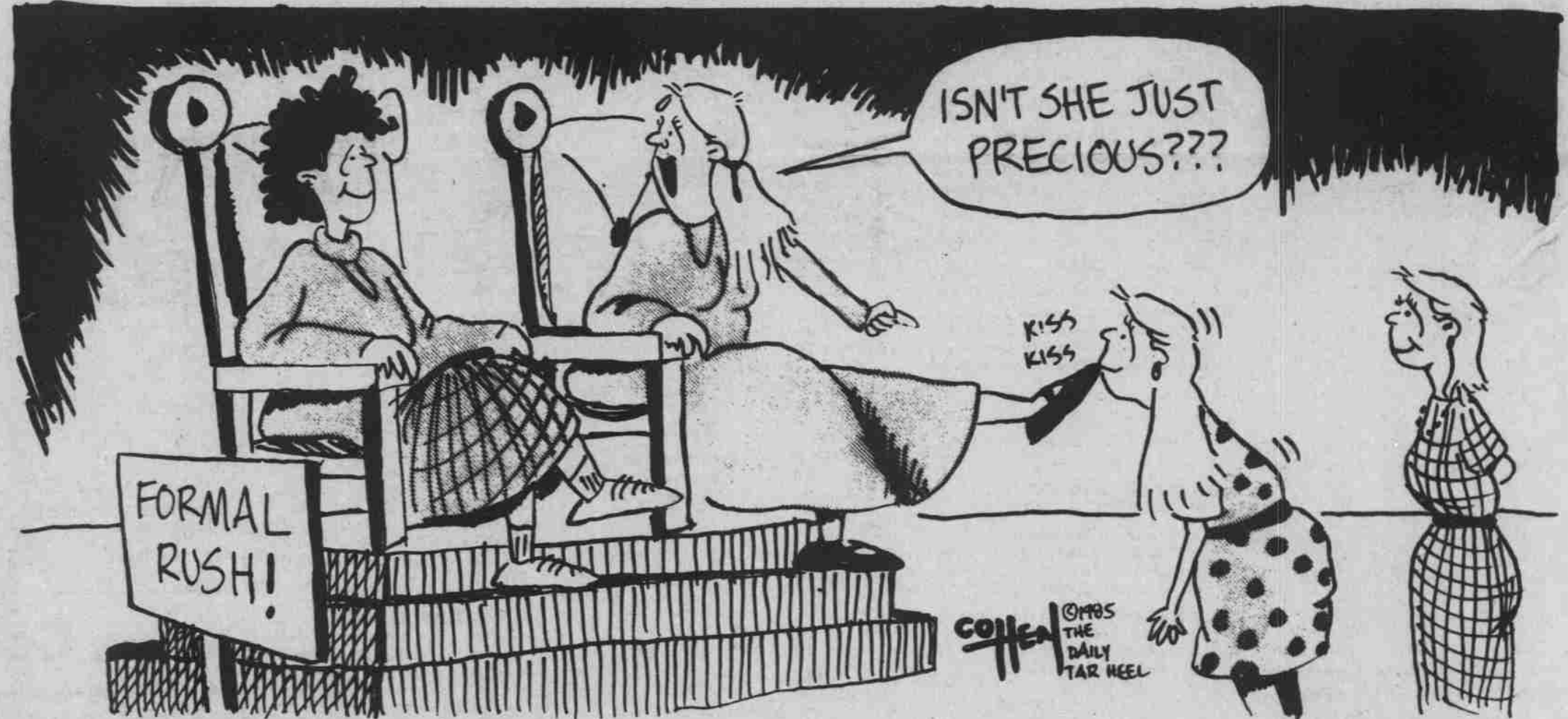
After visualizing her alive, we had then to visualize her dead; and hardest of all, to

visualize her dying. Then the bitter shock and horror came crashing, and the tears.

I do not know what good can come from this, what lessons we can take. The occasional concerns for our safety have been made dominant by the particular nature of this tragedy, they have become daily concerns in the forefront of our minds.

But just as Freshteh Gokho and Jean Fewel faded in our memory, so will Sharon Stewart — it will simply take longer. Yet the lesson that the world is so terribly imperfect and unjust will be engraved for a very long time, long enough for us to realize that we are at this university to learn how to change the world. Sharon Stewart will remind us that we have a duty to do so.

Edwin Fountain is a senior Russian studies major from Alexandria, Va.



READER FORUM

Rush editorial like, an oh-so-subtle putdown

To the editors:
Call me sensitive, call me paranoid, call me Muffy, call me whatever you feel, but please don't go calling me Suzy Sorority. Your editorial on Formal Rush ("For those about to rush . . ." Aug. 29) seemed, to say the least, to be putting all us "sisters" down (though in your oh-so-subtle, creative way). Comparing rush to a "farm system," "Rushing Roulette" (come on guys, it's not *that* bad) and

making references to a new wardrobe and the proverbial "Daddy" just isn't helping the sorority scene — not that your intentions were along those lines anyway.

Well, believe it or not, all sorority girls are not created equal. I will gladly cite myself as an example. I maintain, roughly, a 3.2 average. I am not a home ec major. I work for our fair campus radio station as a disc jockey. I even play —

harmless social and service clubs. You are right about one thing, though: Not everyone can join a sorority because there's just not enough of them to go around — sad, but true. Gosh darn guys, like fer real and fer shure, we would love to see you go through rush yourselves, but like you said, you "were born that way." Tough luck.

Mary Schenk
Carrboro

We'll all cope in our own way

By JOEL KATZENSTEIN

There isn't anything that we can say to make us feel better after the Sharon Stewart case came to a tragic close last week. That Saturday night, when two UNC students were kidnapped — one released physically unharmed and the other brutally murdered — was a night that no member of civilized society could condone or ever hope to explain to our satisfaction. At every conceivable level it strikes us hard in our hearts and in our guts as hideous, insane and senseless.

We are angry — that our community is no longer the safe haven it once was. Our faces are red with fury and frustration and our hands are folded tightly into fists. This boy/man has taken from our town a sacred sense of security and yet there will be people who choose to protect and even defend him. Meanwhile we are angry — thirsty for revenge.

We are sorry. There is no good age for dying — this or any other

way — and we feel a deep sense of loss for a woman who was robbed of so much life. We ache for her family and friends. For them the tragedy goes deeper than anything we could feel. And they, in a way far greater than us, will know this pain always. Some of us are sorry for the murderer's family and friends. We know they have had and will continue to have a horrible time of it, too.

We are afraid. We do not feel safe venturing out at night anymore. We cry because what has happened could happen again to any one of us. Our appetites have decreased. Our minds wander as we walk to class, watch television, make love. Why did this happen? When will it happen again? Who will be next? It makes sleeping through the night a losing battle rather than a fact of nature.

We are anxious. We want to see stepped up foot patrols on and around campus. We want the culprit of this heinous crime brought to justice. We want this to be a sad thing that happened a long time ago.

We want to get on with life, to put it all behind us.

We are speechless. What has happened is too sad to talk about, to horrible to try and face. What more could be said than we've already heard from news reporters, law enforcement officers, school administrators and numerous UNC faces on the six and 11 o'clock news? We know anything we could say to whoever we could say it to would be inadequate.

We are resilient. We try to regain our bearings. This won't happen again. We have stronger police security now. Everyone will be safer. And as we reassure our parents this was a one time tragedy, we tell ourselves these words we speak are true. This won't happen again.

And we are human. Some remember and some forget. And we all do the best we can to cope. In our own way.

Joel Katzenstein is a senior English major and member of the DTH board of directors from Gastonia.

Trash ration?

To the editors:
This is an orientation into dorm life. Freshmen, especially, should find this letter helpful in adjusting to their new residency.

Let's face it, folks: Trash is a thing of the past! As this University progresses into the future we have found a need to eliminate garbage. In order to meet our goals we have decided to eliminate trash cans in dorm rooms. This will greatly enhance fire safety across campus. In past years trash cans were removed from suites. Present plans include ignoring trash removal on the weekends. In the future you simply will not produce trash! Rumor indicates that even the large dumpsters are being removed. It seems residents should be responsible enough to take their trash to the town dump.

This is just a subtle reminder that housing understands the needs of its residents. So folks, kindly stop producing garbage. There's nowhere to put it.

Sam Lewis
Teague