

The Daily Tar Heel

93rd year of editorial freedom

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A rush of indignation

The women in last week's *DTH* cartoon on sorority rush projected one completely justified stereotype, so far ignored in the many letters of protest.

All of the women were white. The continued racial discrimination in sororities is an outrage, leaving us particularly aghast when sisters publicly claim that "what they see is me, just for the person I am" and oppose "the prejudices of narrow-minded individuals."

There are no justifiable reasons for segregation. And most fraternities are just as guilty.

There probably are many excuses. It's not that the sisters and brothers themselves are prejudiced. It just so happened that blacks who rushed didn't have the right personality — you know, didn't fit in. Or the generous alumni would refuse to contribute if blacks were admitted. Or it's just that parents wouldn't pay

the house bill if blacks were admitted.

Such garbage is a thinly veiled rationalization for those who prefer the system as it is. And if sisters and brothers sincerely want to welcome blacks into sororities and fraternities yet resort to such excuses, they're only admitting how easy it is for someone else to hold their consciences hostage.

This is by no means a blanket condemnation of everyone in the system, because we realize that there must be some who are struggling to change the status quo. If it bothers you, as a member you're obligated to keep trying.

Last year's discussions and mixers between black and white fraternities and sororities were a start. Let's hope they continue. But the need for desegregation still exists. Until it reaches their house, sorority women and fraternity men have no grounds to complain about all of the stereotypes.

Aiming for the dean's list

Twenty-eight years ago this week, seven black students were denied entrance to Little Rock Central High School. Those students were looking for greater educational opportunities offered at Central. But on the opening day of classes, instead of teachers looking for "what I did on my summer vacation" essays, the students were met by the Arkansas National Guard. The confrontation that ensued between Little Rock's black and white communities seemed to typify to Yankee outsiders all that was Southern education — ignorant people who will always be last in the class.

That stereotype has prevailed for the last three decades or so, but Southern governors are implementing programs to alleviate the stigma once and for all. The projected explosion of business in the Sun Belt states will need a skilled labor force to support it. Despite cries of opposition from teacher's unions outraged by many such reform movements, Southern governors have declared war on inferior education and are raising the standards expected of not only students, but teachers. And the governors are winning.

Novel ideas in public education, such as merit-pay plans and competency testing for all teachers, are getting their trial runs in the South despite teacher protests. Plans for increasing the number of credits required for high school graduation and generous across-the-board raises are being instituted.

The "crisis at Central High" now a legend in his state, Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton announced this summer the results of the first teacher competency testing program in the country: 90 percent of the teachers passed.

Clinton, a Rhodes Scholar and graduate of Yale Law School, called it a great day for the state. But the state media noted that one of every 10 teachers did not pass all three sections of the exam, which covered the three R's. Undaunted, Clinton has defended his entire educational reform package, which included an approved 1-cent sales tax, on "Face the Nation," "Donahue" and a host of other national talk shows.

But the plan formulated by South Carolina Gov. Richard Riley has been recognized as being the toughest and most comprehensive of them all. It involves a 16 percent teacher pay hike, merit-pay program, the largest basic-skills program in the country, minimum standards for all school districts — with the possible withdrawal of state funds if they fall short. The difference in South Carolina is that the state teacher's union is involved in the implementation, taking an "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" approach.

After being the butt of numerous jokes about Bobby Joe, the illiterate farm hand from Podunk, the South is on the rise. The initiative of such leaders as Clinton and Riley, and in our own state of former Gov. Jim Hunt, is going to rebuild a crumbling educational system into the envy of the rest of the country.

Oh, by the way, have you heard about the current teachers' strikes, giving more than 150,000 Northern students an extension to their summer vacation? Teachers are on strike in Philadelphia; Pawtucket and Newport, R.I.; Toronto, Ohio; four school districts in Michigan; several districts in Pennsylvania; and one in Illinois. A strike of teachers in Chicago was resolved Wednesday.

Looks like the South might get the last laugh.

To the editors:

Remember the wonderful closing scene from *Revenge of the Nerds* where everyone decided to stand up and be counted? Well, I've decided to do some standing up of my own. My name is Jane, and I'm (gasp!) a sorority woman. I have one problem, though — nobody seems to know it except for me and "my kind," namely, my sisters. In fact, when people finally find out (I don't talk about my sorority 24 hours a day) they always ask me again, just to be sure. And you know what else is strange? Most sorority women have the same problem.

For some strange reason — could it perhaps be a *DTH* cartoon (Sept. 3) by the illustrious Adam Cohen?

Existentialist quote worthy of front page

To the editors:

Allow me to show my support for your choice of Wednesday's quote, "God is dead," from Nietzsche. Scott Carlson, whose letter ("DTH" scrapes the bottom of the quote barrel," Sept. 5) objected to it, by no means represents the only thoughtful opinion on Nietzsche or the importance of the quotation.

As Carlson points out, some use was made of Nietzsche's ideas in the Third Reich. But it is obviously fallacious to hold Nietzsche himself responsible for these distortions; one might as well blame the Crusades or the Inquisition on Christ.

The quotation not only represents an atheistic perspective but also a profound turn in the course of western intellectual culture. While the Middle Ages presupposed an absolute metaphysical basis for objective values, this cannot be taken for granted in our own era. This is what the "death of God" refers to.

The existentialists, among whom Nietzsche is usually numbered, developed a philosophical literature articulating an anguished attempt to ground values in subjective human choice instead. For Sartre and other atheists the death of God metaphor was especially appropriate, but for others (notably Kierkegaard) existentialism included belief of a God. Surely Carlson can best take Augustine's advice to "hear the other side" by recognizing the legitimacy of the existentialist problematic. Perhaps it is even worth a quotation in the *DTH* every once in a while.

James Coley
Dept. of Philosophy

people seem to have the preconceived notion that all sorority women are spoiled little snots who have nothing better to do than emblazon Greek letters on our foreheads and sit upon our patterned China plates with daddy's checkbook in hand, waiting for rushees to kiss our feet. My dear Cohen, you are sadly misinformed.

It appears to me that sororities have become a favorite target for recent *DTH* potshots — whether they be the opinions of the editors or not. However, what really disturbed me was the stereotypical nature of Cohen's cartoon. Not only was it unflattering, but it was unfair and irresponsible as well. This kind of stereotype can be likened to those

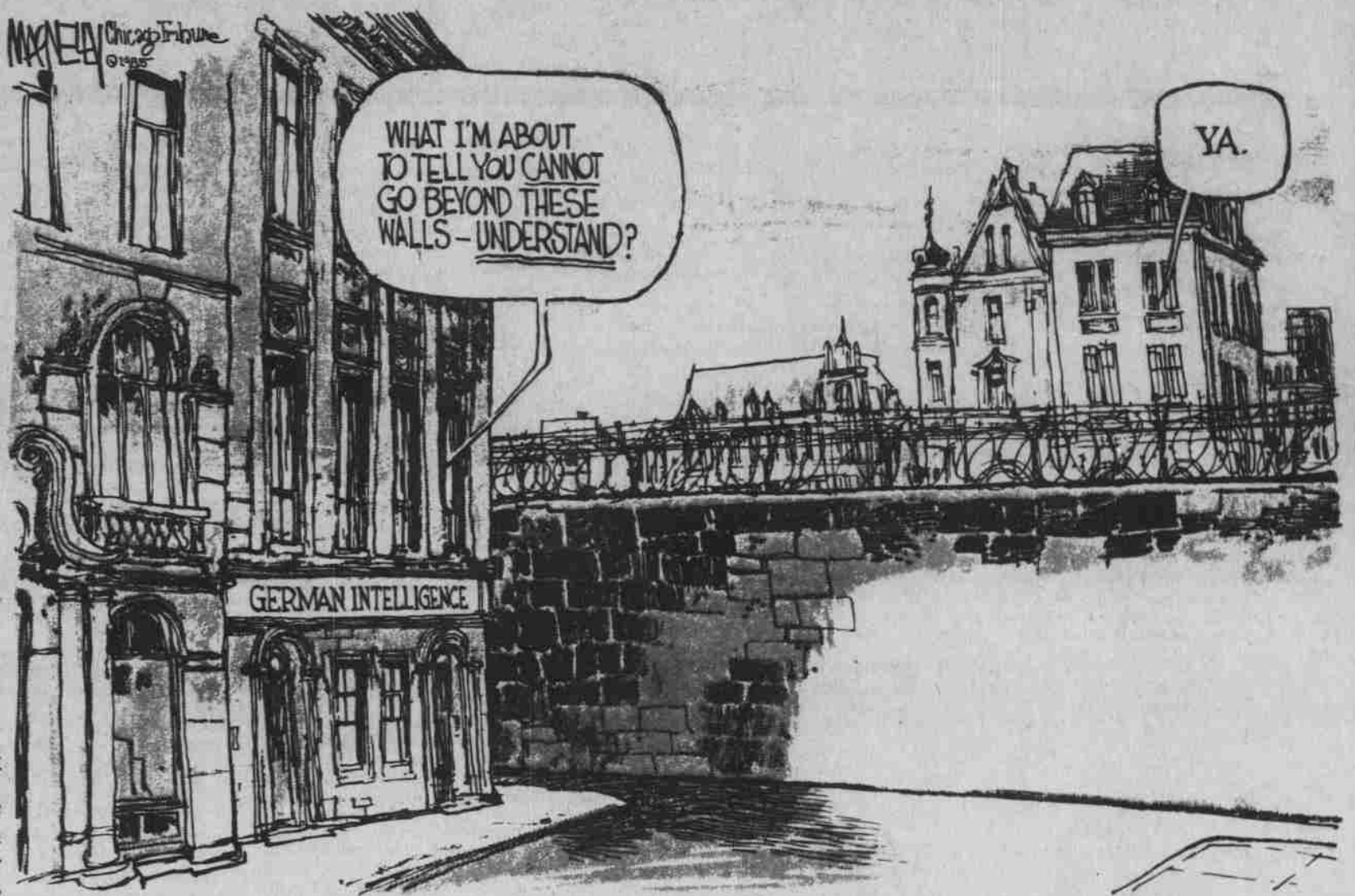
that portray all athletes as "dumb jocks," all UNC women as MRS majors, all Black Student Movement members as Malcolm X disciples, the Interfraternity Council as animals from *National Lampoon's Animal House*, all Carolina Gay and Lesbian Association members as having limp wrists, all graduate students as zoo keepers for Davis Library, and for that matter, all newspaper people as uncaring individuals whose only purpose in life is to write up the dirty laundry. Ridiculous, isn't it? C'mon, guys, we want some enlightenment from our student newspaper, not just the same old stereotypical garbage that prevents interaction between students and faculty!

I, for one, am tired of this

constitutionally-funded publication being utilized for attacks on organizations and individuals by writers or cartoonists who are too cowardly to have an open mind. I expect my student funds to be spent on a publication to "Serve the students and the University community," not to further the prejudices of narrow-minded individuals.

Mr. Cohen, I don't know where you're coming from with regard to your artwork, but I would hope you'd take more time to research and understand before you label. "My kind" and I would be happy to help you with your research — if you've got the guts to learn.

Jane Drenkhahn
Chapel Hill



A little punk, a lotta brains and savoir faire

To the editors:

I am writing in response to Richard Chisholm's letter, "CHHS more spike than spunk" (Sept. 4). I am a 1985 graduate of Chapel Hill High School and the picture of it that I have gotten from the *DTH* in no way resembles the school that I remember. The punks that have caused such a stir constitute a highly visible, but small, group. Most students at CHHS do not dress this way. In all fairness, however, the students of Chapel Hill High do take their individuality and liberty very seriously. Chisholm stated "it is a wonder that liberal students at CHHS have enough time to think,

much less do anything liberal." Well, with all that effort spent on being individual of course the other areas must suffer. Alas, all that Chapel Hill High School had to boast of last year was 85 percent of the students going off to post-secondary education, the highest standardized test scores in the state, the most National Merit Finalists in the state, two Morehead Scholars, one Presidential Scholar, the top-ranked foreign language department in the state, and one of the top-ranked math teams in the country. It's too bad that CHHS students don't spend more time thinking instead of trying to be

individual.

Jonathan Parker
Chapel Hill

To the editors:
Many Chapel Hill High School students have more savoir faire than UNC students. Your Aug. 26 cartoon would have been funny if it had reversed the caption and had Chapel Hill teenagers watching the return of UNC students to "prowl" Franklin Street.

Carolyn Christman
Chapel Hill

Is there no room at the Inn for the house of God?

To the editors:

I attended a church service last week, an act that has been commonplace in this nation since before it was a nation. The service was held in one of the meeting rooms at the Carolina Inn. The room, for which a substantial sum of money was paid, had been reserved by a local church for a few weeks' use. Yet, earlier in the day in a management meeting it was decided that there would be no more meetings after this night, because the Inn, like the University, is owned by the state. Therefore, there can be no religious meetings of any kind there.

Now, the communists in the name of Marx could meet there, and the gays to the tunes of Village People could eat there, even the Klan embracing racism could wear sheets there — yet Christians can't worship God there.

They say they're just protecting our freedoms and that they have nothing against our meetings, but they also want us to have them off in a corner somewhere. Well, we won't go off into a corner and we won't go away. We are the church and we are growing numerically and spiritually. The media ignores us and the Supreme Court restricts us,

and this only serves to make us more determined to further our goals.

If that night the doors had been kicked open and some men dressed in green had come in and said, "President Castro said no more meetings," then I could have possibly digested this thing more easily. But this is America, the land of the free, the land of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Well, that night I was to believe that one is free to pursue happiness unless he or she happens to be a Christian pursuing it in state-owned facilities. Furthermore, our government wasn't establishing religion that

night by virtue of us being allowed to rent a room in a state-owned inn, no more so than it would be establishing communism by allowing the Communist Worker's Party to use the facilities for a convention. Isn't it ironic that religious freedom was one of the foundational elements upon which our nation was built, yet these are the very freedoms that are being taken away? America is chipping away her foundations; she is certain that she can withstand the loss.

Rick Spargo
College Republicans

'Liberal' view smacks of American piety

By JOHN DEVILLE

Steve Epstein, in his *DTH* column "Liberals — a better style of patriotism" (Aug. 26), presented what he termed a "liberal, Democratic view" of patriotic foreign policy and defense spending. What was actually presented was the Gary Hart view on foreign policy and the James Fallows view on defense spending.

Epstein has engaged in good ol' American piety. His philosophy is not unlike the "New Coke" — same basic formula of placing the American government on a pedestal to exercise its politically centric views (read capitalism) on the rest of the world, with added sugar to give a veneer of more palatable moderation.

Epstein has attempted to balance his critique of left-wing governments by denouncing the twisted police-state regimes of Guatemala, South Korea, South Africa and others. While I am in full agreement with Epstein that the United States is in a position to effect change in said countries, possibly through economic leverage, I am somewhat suspicious, though, because of his disparagement of the Nicaraguan government. For some reason Epstein equates patriotism with "acting tough" on left-wing governments.

Epstein says we distanced ourselves from Cuba in 1959 when it became communist. Perhaps he has not yet learned of his hero's (John Kennedy) ill-fated Bay of Pigs invasion. More importantly Epstein forgot to mention Kennedy's disastrous failure to "distance" U.S. forces from Vietnam.

'Epstein's philosophy is not unlike the New Coke — same formula, added sugar'

Unfortunately the Democratic-controlled House has stood on the sidelines hoping for the Reagan-backed *contras* to fail — all in the name of political gain. Instead they should confront Reagan's inhumane policies and provide constructive alternatives. In any case, they do not need to show their "patriotism" by playing tough with the Sandinistas.

The issue of Afghanistan has served as a platform for anti-communist, populist-oriented presentation of gibberish for both parties. While noting that I am not an apologist for Soviet tanks in Kabul, there is nothing more sickening than the opportunistic bipartisan support of the so-called "freedom fighters" whose fundamentalist, Khomeini philosophy the same bipartisans would generally eschew as being backward.

By the way, Epstein, since when is Ernest Hollings one of the "most liberal Democratic senators"? I guess you saw him standing with Strom Thurmond and the contrast confused you.

Implicit in Epstein's column is the current Yuppie view of defense spending; that is, we want a "bigger bang for the buck." In other words defense spending would fail to become an ethical issue for Epstein if cost overruns, waste, fraud, etc., were eliminated and we didn't have to worry about an increasing deficit. Never mind the ethics

of building weapons of mass destruction and engaging in overseas adventurism such as in Lebanon and Grenada.

The liberal politicians that Epstein gleefully speaks of go to jail for an afternoon after protesting apartheid at the South African embassy yet often ignore the blacks that populate American ghettos. The same liberals that sport Polish "Solidarnosc" buttons, largely because of their anti-Soviet appeal, denounce American labor unions.

Patriotism is the caring and respect of your fellow citizen in order to create a spiritually healthy country. It is not healthily manifested, as Epstein proposed, in the form of nationalistic zeal to dominate other nations politics, especially when its "moral highground" is rooted in economic utilitarianism.

Epstein, with your demonstrated erudite undergraduate ability to toss around adverbs at will, you may want to consider switching your major to advertising. Clip your column, attach it to your resume. There are senators in Colorado, Kansas, Tennessee and Massachusetts that are looking for men like you in '88.

John Deville is a junior philosophy major from Highlands.

The Daily Tar Heel

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Letters . . .

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