

The Daily Tar Heel

93rd year of editorial freedom

ARNE RICKERT AND DAVID SCHMIDT

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A vote for all believers

A recent vote by the California Board of Education — requesting that evolution theory and human reproduction be treated more thoroughly by the textbook industry — is likely to have an adverse impact upon the nation's censorship movements in months to come. The impact upon California's children, however, should be liberating.

On Friday, California's board unanimously voted to reject a series of seventh- and eighth-grade science textbooks on the grounds that the publishers had included only a "watered down" treatment of both evolution and human reproduction. The board specifically criticized the nation's publishing industry for succumbing to pressure from Christian fundamentalist groups in recent years. This development follows a recent national survey which found that instances of censorship had risen nearly 38 percent in the past year.

Bill Honig, California's elected school superintendent, phrasing the board's intentions in no uncertain terms, said, "We must send a message to the publishing industry that we cannot tiptoe around certain subjects just because they are controversial." Indeed, the message from California should be clear to publishers, especially since California represents 11 percent of the national textbook market.

Early reports indicate that publishers

are likely to comply with at least a portion of the board's votes, merely because of the size of the California market. But it will take a corresponding effort on the part of other states to ensure full compliance by textbook publishers in the future.

Censorship movements threatened by the move are likely to respond with a postured "hue and cry" about educators' insensitivity to the Christian teaching of creationism. It must be recognized, however, that a move to affirm the validity of teaching evolution theory does not correspondingly deny the validity of teaching Christian creationism. Those who would seek to hinder a full presentation of either view would necessarily engage in some form of censorship.

Additionally, those Christian fundamentalists who would seek to confuse the issue by teaching creationism alongside evolution in science classrooms should recognize the differences between theology and the sciences. Creationism may be treated legitimately in theological courses, but it may not be allowed to treat evolution illegitimately in science courses. Given the complex religious makeup of our nation, the teaching of an entirely Christian tenet in required courses would unnecessarily impose upon the rights of children whose religions are in the minority.

Spirit without spirits

UNC football games are a chance to see fine athletes perform and more. Football Saturday afternoons are also the highlight of autumn social life, a chance to show off a new date, bump into old acquaintances, perhaps flaunt new clothes. Unlike bars and private clubs, the spectacle and the companionship alone provide ample entertainment for all. The prime attraction need not be the focus of most students' social life: alcohol.

Saturday's game was officially dry. But from the miker's cheers to the card section's displays to the adulterated contents of a thousand Carolina blue souvenir cups, the emphasis was nonetheless on drink. At halftime, section 17 flipped color cards to spell out "Have a drink," and while the underdog UNC team did its best to overcome an immensely talented LSU team, student sections chanted "Let's get naked." Even clear blue skies and crisp autumn breezes could not dissuade many from resorting to hip flasks to feel happy.

To the dth degree

Racial overtones and understanding

Black.

An interesting word. Like dynamite, subtle shifts to it can trigger an explosive reaction. Commonly denoting a color, it becomes fused when labeling a race. Misused, it detonates with cries of fury against discrimination.

What would capitalizing it, in newspapers (usually so paranoid about interesting words), do?

The question was raised last week by a staff writer who wanted to capitalize "black" in his story, saying the richness of Afro-American culture deserved the notice and respect implied by capitalization. I countered that readers would miss the point and see "Blacks" as emphasizing race with negative connotations.

A column can't do justice to the nuances of our hourlong debate, but I'd like to present some of the points we raised. Remember that as whites, we were handicapped in — though not, I believe, disqualifying from — discussing the issue. I encourage responses.

Many blacks are calling for capitalization as the preferred reference to their race, the reporter said. With a history of progression — from "coloreds" to "Negroes" to "blacks" — he said the next step would show we were sympathetic to the pride blacks took in their heritage. We should acknowledge and promote its differences.

After some discussion, I agreed. Black culture is special. But just as one can be white and proud of, say, a Western heritage, one can be black and proud of a Black heritage. Naming the people themselves — as an individual or group of individuals — is different than naming the culture under which they may unite. The name of the people is based on

the color of their skin, and color isn't capitalized. Blacks aren't really black, of course, but whites aren't really white. It's a convenient way to distinguish between the races, equivalently.

I don't believe this ignores culture and drives readers to think that the races are the same or that people within them are without roots — just that they're all equal.

Capitalization seems to put the cart before the horse. The substance of language — the subject and content of stories — needs to cultivate awareness of the differences before it's safe to make a cosmetic change.

I support capitalizing "black" only when referring to the culture, such as "Black music," though I'd prefer Afro-American, which gives the culture a naturally capitalized geographical foundation. In other cases, I believe, it should be lowercase.

The word is interesting. Its implications — for a newspaper, at least — are unavoidable.

— DAVE SCHMIDT

P.S. Despite an "ftr" on Friday, there still is confusion over the number of students who would have to vote before the referendum sought by the group God Is Alive Now, Today could be approved.

Whether or not a 20 percent turnout will be required is up to interpretation of the referendum's intent. If deemed a student fees issue, 20 percent would be necessary. But that requirement was instituted to ensure a sizeable mandate when dealing with across-the-board changes. Since the GIANT proposal would leave choice up to individuals, such a mandate may be ruled unnecessary. It remains to be seen.

READER FORUM

'DTH': read it, fund it — just for the fun of it

To the editors:

Dexter Mandrake ("A view from The Far Side," Sept. 12) has written the most persuasive letter to date as to why we should reject Ken Throckmorton's proposal ("Christians must fight the good fight, 'DTH,'" Sept. 11) to remove constitutional funding from *The Daily Tar Heel*, but I would like to add that there are plenty of humorous items to be found in the *DTH* apart from *The Far Side*.

For instance, where else could we read an editorial claiming that P.W. Botha's speech had "mollified much of the world" ("He double-Speaks the truth," Aug. 29)? Now there's a paper whose editors have their

fingers on the pulse of world opinion. I know I was completely satisfied by what Botha said, and I'm sure "much of the world" was too.

Where else can you find a front-page article declaring that "Jeans have been the favored apparel of young people in the United States for many years" ("Working-class look spurs second denim revolution," Aug. 29)? Really? Certainly a front page item if true.

Where else can you find a "senior journalism major" extolling the virtues of not being a freshman and fondly remembering the time he lost his libido ("Hey freshmen, drinking isn't everything," Aug. 22)?

Where else can you find such fine examples of English prose style as "The mission confirmed a lot of conclusions about comets made from ground-based observations made by astronomers and aroused new questions about their nature" ("A comet on our age," Sept. 13)? Wow. It's best not even to think about the headline.

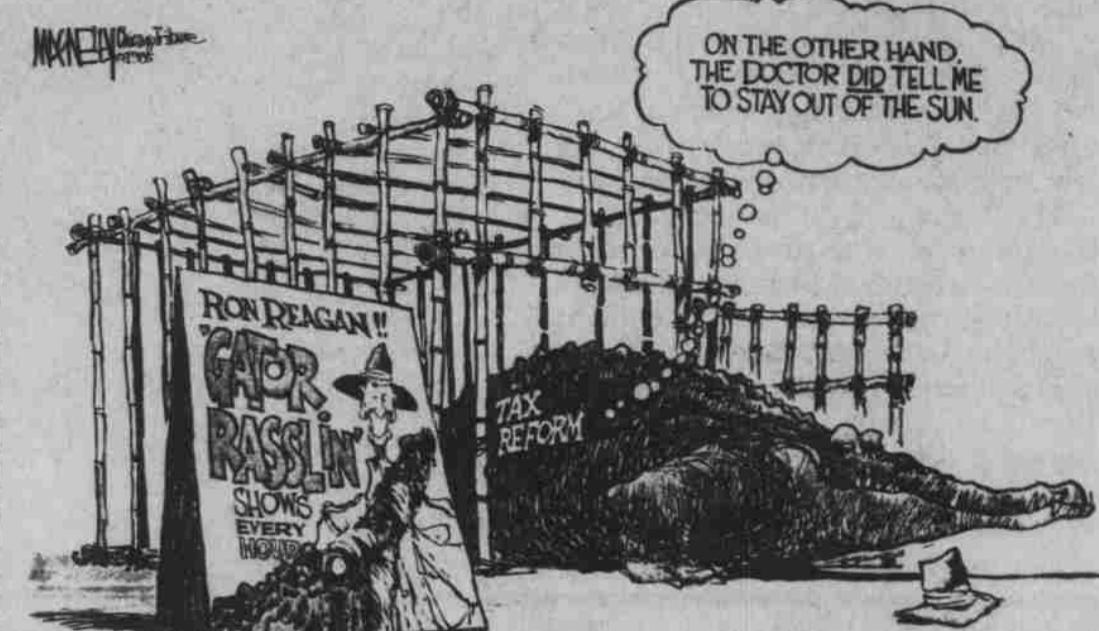
Where else can we find such a diverse assortment of original headline material as "Databases byte libraries" (Sept. 11) and "Growth of databases gives libraries new bite" (Sept. 13)?

Where else can we find an insightful article from another "senior

journalism major" telling us that newspaper editors lead difficult lives ("Confessions of a 'DTH' journalist," Aug. 23)?

Where else can we find Stuart Tonkinson, Constitutional Lawyer and Rocker Extraordinaire? At least he's not a senior journalism major."

All in all, it seems clear to me that not only should we not object to constitutional funding for the *DTH*, but we should be willing to pay more for such fine entertainment.

Scott Carson
Dept. of Classics

Minister where there's need

To the editors:

I suppose there will always be a Ken Throckmorton ("Christians must fight the good fight, 'DTH,'" Sept. 11) and a Kevin Graham Ford ("Quote choice skewed logic," Sept. 12) around to embarrass Christians. But I thank God for Brad Torgan ("Religious totalitarianism," Sept. 12) and other Christians like him who are more mature in their faith in Jesus Christ.

I disagree with the statement the *DTH* quoted from Nietzsche, but then there are many things happening every day that I, as a Christian, disagrees with. I think it has just as much "slapped Jesus Christ in the face" that people like Throckmorton and Ford have expended so much energy over an assertion and remain deaf and dumb (and so condone) active injustices (racism, sexism, etc.) witnessed on campus and in the community daily. Or have you been to busy, Ford, in your

ministry to save young, attractive females and attack the free press, to notice?

Read Galatians 5:19-20. Ford. Your acts of hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition and dissensions are obvious and do provoke such a warning as written there. And while you've got your finger on it, go ahead and read the rest of Galatians 5. And remember the love, the peace, the patience, the self-control . . . that Jesus himself displayed as he was spit upon and provoked before his crucifixion. He knew he was to live forever, and his response was to pity and love those who scorned him. Don't let your conceit and a threat to your pride get in your way of loving, Ford. Find a real reason to stand up for Christ. There are plenty of substantial ones.

Susie Sinclair
Chapel Hill

Grappling for the Bible belt

To the editors:

I am sorry to realize that faith in God is a thing superficial enough to be espoused or abandoned according to a quote in a newspaper. I suggest that members of God

Is Alive Now, Today settle the issue in the good old American way — by setting up a tag-team wrestling match with Nietzsche's descendants.

Angie Smits
Chapel Hill

Get off Throckmorton's back, you buzzards!

To the editors:

That's it. I've had enough. For the past two days I've been reading letters about Ken Throckmorton and his beliefs that God is still alive and that he should not have to pay for a publication that prints otherwise ("Christians must fight the good fight, 'DTH,'" Sept. 11). The quote had no great impact on me. I believe God is alive no matter what anyone says. But these letters I've been reading have really been out for blood. Words like blasphemy,

idiot, stupidity and communist are being used to describe Ken. On Friday, Dave Bernath wrote, "you are obviously a fool" ("Throckmorton has eyes, but he cannot see," Sept. 13).

Well, Dave, if you knew anything about the Bible then you would know that a "fool" is the worst thing you can call a man. And why is he a fool? Because he stood up against something he believed was wrong? Is he a fool because he believes that God is alive today? If he is a fool

for that, then I am a fool, too — along with millions of others in this world. Now I don't mean everyone has to agree with this. In fact, opposition and criticism can be the best way to learn. However, these letters have been attacking Throckmorton personally, instead of his beliefs. That's not the way it should be done, fellas. Throckmorton is not a blasphemer or a communist or an evangelist. He is just a man who had the guts to stand up and be heard on a controversial topic —

which is more than I can say for the buzzards who read the letters every day, waiting to attack someone on their beliefs rather than attack their beliefs only. How would you like to be called an idiot, or a fool, or stupid in a publication read by thousands of people?

Get off Throckmorton's back. If you don't like his ideas, attack his ideas, but if you don't know him then don't attack him.

Bill Thomas
Chapel Hill

Wallace's pleas for moral unity can't be serious

To the editors:

I am writing in response to Patricia Wallace's letter "Dual morality lost on Students For America" (Sept. 10).

A pro-American stance is not impossible, for a pro-American stance simply put is a strong adherence to the principles and values that America was founded on. These values include a belief in God, and the Judeo-Christian principles that Students For America wishes to preserve and protect.

Wallace suggests in her opening paragraph that "the decay of the family, youths selling out to career lives, and the use of ethics as a political football," all have been brought about by Americans losing their sense of moral conviction. I could not agree more with this statement. But that is where our agreement ends. Because what

follows her first paragraph is a string of contradictions, misconceptions and glittering generalities that attempt to confuse the reader, and cloud her true intentions.

Wallace asserts that if we stand up as "people" first, and then as "Americans," we will gain these values that she claims are lost. I ask you, was the "decay of the family," with half of all the marriages today ending in divorce, brought on by too much patriotism and too strong an adherence to historically American values?

And what of youths "selling out" and the misuse of ethics in politics? Was this brought about by people following a moral order of Judeo-Christian principles? Of course not! We see the self-oriented people, the "me" generation, throw all the moral values of our forefathers out the window in exchange for an empty, secular attitude that people

too long while a vocal minority has steadfastly eroded our precious freedom and imposed its own philosophy of socialism, welfare and secular humanism. We must realize our duty to those principles and values I have mentioned above. SFA wishes to uphold the Judeo-Christian teachings, she would realize that homosexuality is a sin and an abomination in the eyes of the living God. By upholding and supporting these groups, such as the Carolina Gay and Lesbian Association, we are inviting not only the further moral decay of the country, but indeed the wrath of God.

No, a pro-American stance is not impossible. We need to wake up! Americans have been silent much

too long while a vocal minority has steadfastly eroded our precious freedom and imposed its own philosophy of socialism, welfare and secular humanism. We must realize our duty to those principles and values I have mentioned above. SFA wishes to uphold the Judeo-Christian values, values our country was founded upon, and values we deem important enough to fight for. In this respect, we are "for America." Our student body president says that SFA does not earn the honor of using "America" in its name. Since one student or officer cannot and, certainly in this case, does not speak for every student at Carolina, maybe Wallace does not deserve the honor of using "student body" in her title.

H. Keith Poston
Executive Board member
Students For America

Clearing up more AIDS misconceptions

By DAVID JOLLY

I want to commend the *DTH* for its recent attention to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. It is a subject that needs rational discussion to counterbalance the AIDS hysteria that is often fanned by sensational media coverage. I was particularly impressed with Helene Hinson's essay ("AIDS misconceptions breed hysteria," Sept. 10). She recognized that AIDS is not a gay disease, but she also realized that the government was slow to respond to this crisis because most people with AIDS have been gay men. She made it clear that the one-to-one punch of hysteria and discrimination can only exacerbate the current situation.

On the other hand, I disagree with a number of statements made in the other articles:

- By far the most disturbing statement appeared in Rachel Orr's article ("No cases of AIDS reported at UNC," Sept. 11). According to Orr, Dr. Stanley Lemon of N.C. Memorial Hospital said it was not known whether saliva transmits the disease. This is extremely misleading and likely to incite unnecessary fear of contact with people who have AIDS and with people in high risk groups (e.g., gay men). It is true that the HTLV-III virus thought to cause AIDS has been cultured in saliva, but that does not mean saliva provides a viable means of transmitting the disease. In fact, with over 12,000 cases of AIDS in the United States there is only one case where it is thought that saliva may have been the primary route of transmission. Blood and semen appear to be the only bodily fluids in which the virus appears in sufficient concentrations for transmission of the disease. Doctors can't say with absolute certainty that AIDS can't be transmitted via saliva, but all the evidence suggests it is a highly unlikely route.

What is important here is that AIDS is not easily transmitted. The clearest evidence of this is the fact that not a single health care worker involved in caring for people with AIDS has contracted the disease from a patient. If this disease were very contagious they'd be the first to contract it; the interactions that health care workers have with AIDS patients are definitely not your garden-variety casual contacts.

- In that same article Orr stated that AIDS has a "100 percent mortality rate." This, too, is misleading. It is true that once persons infected with HTLV-III develop any of the devastating infections associated with AIDS the chances are their immune systems are so compromised that they will not recover. But there are many people with a milder form of the disease known as AIDS-related complex who have not developed the infections that usually signal the end stages of the disease. Their immune systems may yet recover; it is too early to say. Furthermore, there are probably a million people who have been infected with the HTLV-III virus. At this point it appears that most will never get sick at all.

- In the *DTH* editorial "Beating the AIDS" (Sept. 9), the editors opposed making sterile needles available to IV drug users on the grounds that it would encourage drug abuse. At present AIDS is a far greater threat to IV drug users than addiction. The sharing of contaminated needles is a known route of HTLV-III transmission. Making sterile needles available may offend some people's moral sensibilities but it will probably save lives.

• The editorial suggested that all persons refrain from anal intercourse except with "partners trusted absolutely." What is called for is not the prescription of anal intercourse but the use of condoms to prevent the transmission of HTLV-III in semen.

• The editorial also called for free confidential tests at all public hospitals. The fact is that there is no test for AIDS and only one for the presence of antibodies to the HTLV-III virus. And a positive antibody test tells you that at some point you were infected with the virus. It does not indicate that you have AIDS or will develop it in the future. Furthermore, there is no "treatment" for a positive test. All you can do is engage in safe sex practices, refrain from giving blood, and take care of yourself. But if you're in a high risk group, you should be doing those things anyway, even if you test negative. The decision to take the antibody test is a difficult and very personal one. To advocate widespread testing at this time is inappropriate, if not irresponsible.

• Finally, what may seem a minor point is very important to many people with AIDS. All three *DTH* articles constantly referred to AIDS victims. The term "