# The Baily Tar Heel

93rd year of editorial freedom

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### Ridding the menace

On Nov. 5, residents of Oak Park, Ill., will have a chance to rid themselves of a dangerous presence. On that day, they will vote whether to uphold a ban on the ownership and sale of handguns that was imposed by the village council in 1984. This Chicago suburb can protect itself from needless loss of life by outlawing a weapon with dubious benefits and may set a precedent for other communities.

Oak Park is an appropriate place for such a test: an affleuent suburb bordering a high crime area of Chicago, its residents have a legitimate concern for the protection of their family and property. But what the founders of the committee to ban handguns realized is that although handguns are almost completely ineffectual in defending a home, they pose more dangers than the safety they provide.

The problem with handguns is that they are created to kill humans, and them alone. They do so with chillling efficiency: they are easily concealed, small enough to be wielded by a child, deadly accurate and easily obtained. When its murderous capacity is combined with a near ubiquitous presence, handgun misuse becomes a national epidemic. Handguns caused more than 22,000 deaths in 1984. Almost half were homicides, and in the overwhelming majority of these cases, the murderers were related to or knew their victims. Arguments that could have ended with a blow were too often resolved by the

permanence of the bullet. The availability and effectiveness of

handguns are factors in some 12,000 deaths. The accuracy of the pistol dispels any hope for intervention or failure. The most unfortunate of all victims of handgun misuse are the accidental ones, mostly children who are wounded or killed by an instrument they took to be a harmless toy. A handgun is not too bulky for a child to handle, and its trigger is too easily pulled in jest or even with an accidental knock. The loss of handguns further endangers the innocent person. The domestic homeowner is a ready arsenal for the criminal.

Such dangers might be seen as a necessary sacrifice for peace of mind and a feeling of security. Yet handguns have been proved ineffective as means of selfdefense. A recent study in Detroit showed that more homeowners were killed in accidents with firearms in one year than intruders were in 41/2 years. The usual arguments against gun control have been raised — that it is a violation of Constitutional rights, it is unenforcable, etc. These are easily dismissed by various court decisions and relevant statistics, yet the legitimation of a gun control bill must not rest in such trivial points. It must be seen that a weapon that is more dangerous to its owners than its target has no place in our society.

Oak Park's efforts to eliminate the carnage of the handgun ought to be not only lauded but imitated. Remarkably, it is only the third community in the nation to attempt to restrict the violence of an indiscriminate killer. In a society where either handguns or people must be eliminated, the choice is obvious.

# An international bully pulpit

Today is the 40th anniversary of the United Nations. Since the organization's chartering in San Francisco, once-high hopes of world peace and freedom for all have faded and died. But despite the criticisms of isolationists and the disillusioned, the UN continues to serve an invaluable role as a forum for nations of all sizes and statures to swap views.

Because the UN has no security forces of its own, international law remains largely rhetoric. Much of the rhetoric has attacked U.S. foreign policy. Conservatives in this country have responded by questioning the United States' paying a quarter of the costs of speeches by ingrates. The crowning injuries have been the UNESCO proposals for a New International Economic Order and a New Information Order. The NIEO has irritated Western capitalists with its call for a global redistribution of wealth through the action of governments rather than markets. The NIO, a proposal to certify and thereby partially control foreign correspondents, would tend to suppress free speech around the

world — a bitter irony for the world's premier platform for sounding off on world events.

But the chatter at the United Nations also has improved the lot of many around the world. Smaller nations in particular have cherished opportunities to denounce very loudly and very publicly any aggression. General Assembly and Security Council debates have brought together numerous angry countries, and perhaps encouraged them to vent their frustration with diplomatic salvos instead of artillery barrages. Conferences on subjects from North-South hemisphere relations to population control have put a media spotlight on long-term world problems which otherwise go forgotten.

Teddy Roosevelt once called the presidency a "bully pulpit," a position powerful only because of the exposure offered to its occupant's views. Today the term, with all the strengths and limitations it implies, better describes the United Nations.

### Applause for apples

We get off on the funniest things. Think of us traveling around in a car for hours during Fall Break. Twelve

hours to be exact, Northern ways. To watch a quarter of a million prep schoolers and college students watching crew on the Charles in Cambridge. (Wind-blown faces complemented by beautiful sweaters and colors and solid letters that stand for their schools and stuff.) To walk through museums at Yale, have drinks with friends of friends while the Whiffenpoofs sing lovely songs that alumni like to hear. And then maybe to pick some apples.

But think of us, traveling around in a car for 12 hours or so during Fall Break. I mean, traveling's a bit of a pain.

See, she won't drive unless the person riding shotgun is going to talk. He will, he says. Then he gets sleepy and asks for a jacket to pillow his head. And she says will somebody talk to me!

We all have tape players in our cars now, don't we. Everyone has brought tapes. He's playing this now; you can listen to that when you drive. This is one of the first rules. It is flexible and arguable. Of course, we listen to everything we have. That's part of the selfimposed stay.

Let's play car games . . . No, we're touring the Ivy League (we'll publish our notes some day) so you're sure to know we have good tastes. Museums and all, you know.

We play all the R.E.M. That goes without saying. Try to figure out the words. "'Two-headed cow,' that's it." He compares R.E.M. to the fragmentation of Picasso's works, she to the suggestive Imagiste poets. Someone else mentions Chinese calligraphy and that's so meant-to-be-wrong we change tapes.

Echo and the Bunnymen, the Flat Duo-Jets, some Winton Marsalis ("It's my turn to chose," the driver says), then some Lloyd Cole and the Commotions. How far is Richmond still?

Morale is suddenly sunk. It's been a long drive back. "What tape do you want to hear?" "I don't know." It begins to

Tune in a radio station. "Hey, that's Nightranger." And so we're getting off completely. Nightranger suddenly means something. Oh, and then Madonna. Dreaded commercial music, but we're getting off so. We pass around Bubbleyum and blow bubbles. No more museums or stately university buildings that look like God.

He throws a quarter into the turnpike sink and we cruise past the lights before they turn from red to green. We're so off, and the music holds out and we're back on Franklin Street.

We take our bags out of the car and divide up the apples into the McIntosh and those for cooking. And we look at them. The funniest little things get us

### READER FORUM

# Rosemary Square — visions of backwardness

To the editors:

Regarding the editorial on Rosemary Square ("A square deal?" Oct. 3), I would like to challenge your statement that "increased traffic is likely, but a specially commissioned survey indicates that its effect will be minimal and hardly detrimental." The survey says daily traffic will increase from 9,332 to 12,011 cars per day, an increase of 28.7 percent. This is not minimal. The capacity would rise, according to the report, from an average of 71 percent to 92.4 percent. If this is the average over a 24-hour period, I would assume that at rush hour the streets will be well over capacity. This is detrimental and hazardous. I might add that the official traffic

survey was made before changes were made to the plans increasing the floor space for hotel/condominiums and adding another floor for shops. The current traffic problems downtown already deter local citizens from shopping there.

I am surprised that the student population is willing to condone this increased threat to the safety of pedestrian and bicycle traffic, which consists mostly of students, not to mention the increase in air pollution.

You quoted Mayor Nassif's statement about N.C. small towns being donuts in appearance with nothing in the middle or downtown. The aptness of this comparison with

Chapel Hill escapes me. Chapel Hill's major industry, the University, is downtown; the downtown streets, sidewalks, restaurants, bars, specialty shops and student and University-oriented businesses are thronged year around, far more than they were when I moved here in 1967. I don't see any way Chapel

> Hill could have "nothing in the middle or downtown." NCNB Plaza was intended to have the same kind of shops proposed for Rosemary Square. They all failed. Only entertainment spots, restaurants and student-oriented businesses remain. The Courtyard on West Franklin Street is a charming place to shop. It has convenient

the Mail. Yet the stores there that compete with Mall stores have all failed, although the restaurants and student or University-oriented

shops do well. The point is, why try to set up the downtown as a shopping area designed to attract family shopping in competition with the Mall? It won't work. Who wants to fight that traffic or run from shop to shop in rainy, steamy or freezing weather? Who has the time to go to shops spread out in a downtown area? You call this visionary? I call it plain

> Bonnie Bechard Chapel Hill

#### Editorial dies a sudden death

To the editors:

While reading "Death, be not allowed" (Oct. 16), I was with you all the way until I got to the paragraph about not forbidding execution if it is the prisoner's choice over life imprisonment. What did that paragraph mean? Did it mean that it is OK for the state to commit murder if the victim is willing? Or did you mean there should be "stateenacted euthanasia" for criminals who do not want to suffer in prison?

Would only prisoners that had committed capital crimes be allowed to request to be executed

or could any prisoner? Make up your mind. Either killing is wrong and executing murderers is anathema to your sense of moral values, or it isn't. If you can find a way to compromise your principles, you will never convince your readers — let alone the state.

Jessica Johnson Chapel Hill

#### America wants it both ways

To the editors:

Double standard or what? A couple of examples:

With the hijacking of the Achille Lauro, the United States talked about international law and how Italy and Egypt have not kept international rule. So how come only a few weeks ago the United States left the World Court because of fear of their ruling on the Nicarguans' claim?

Four Marines raped and battered four Peruvian women; when Peru wanted to try them, the United

States took them out of the country, arguing diplomatic immunity. The same United States complained when the Italians and Egyptians let Mohammed Abbas go to another go to another country, even if he had an Iraqi passport and the Italian and Egyptian governments did not have enough proofs according to

Terrorism, double standard or

Victor Lifes Chapel Hill

#### the best is still to come To the editors - and to all that you did more than just

With support from the fans,

Carolina football fans:

parking — more convenient than

First, on behalf of the entire UNC football team, I would like to sincerely thank you for the great support you have given us through the good times and the bad. But most of all, I would like to thank you for really making your presence felt during the games against Wake Forest and N.C. State. On each of the goal-line stands by our defense, you represented the 12th man. You provided an emotional lift. The cheering and noisemaking

pumped our guys up; it caused some distraction for our opponent and served as a means of intimidation as well. I urge you to continue your outstanding

With the tough games we have coming up, you may represent just the edge that we need to make this an outstanding season. Again, thanks and keep up the good

> Kevin Anthony and the UNC football team

#### So what if hundreds die?

Regarding Patrick Vernon's letter "Conservative kick, laws chill an N.C. autumn" (Oct. 9):

resident of Virginia. If I lived in your that! state I would have to buckle my seat belt. I mean, like you say, "What's the deal?" So what if I die because

I wasn't wearing my seat belt. So

what if hundreds die? All it affects is my auto insurance premium. And, hey, college stu-Patrick, I sure am glad I am a dents don't have to worry about

> Mike Beverly Alexandria, Va.



THERE WILL BE AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE 40TH BIRTHDAY PARTY COMMITTEE IN THE DELEGATE'S LOUNGE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING...

# Man's inhumanity to man must end

By ANJETTA McQUEEN

While working late at the paper before fall break, I was approached by a fellow staff member holding a flyer in her hand. The flyer pictured a sickle and hammer with a slash through them read, "Apartheid Yes? Divestment No."

It was signed by members of the "Carolina Club." The reporter said she had seen the flyer upon leaving an anti-apartheid meeting she was covering for a journalism class.

We discussed the issue of the sign. At first I felt disgust over the fact that these people would deem themselves and their views representative of UNC. Then I felt anger. I was angry because once again I had seen the narrow-minded idea that if the United States works toward the demise of apartheid in South Africa, the godless, bigoted Commies will take over the world.

As a Black American, I feel privileged to live in the United States where I can live where I choose, vote for whom I please, and exercise the right of free speech in this column. My peers in South Africa are not so fortunate.

I ask the undersigned of this flyer: Are political ideologies so much more important than allowing blacks the same rights as whites in their own country? Is the demise of communism so much more important than allowing a black child to receive an education equivalent to that of a white child? Is spreading the gospel of Christianity so much more important that allowing black laborers to live with their families?

The Soviet Union is no more solely the blame for the tragedy of apartheid than is the United States. The guilty party is the government of South Africa which is aided by the fierce nationalistic politics of both super powers.

Patriotic fanatics in the United States tend to attribute everthing from atheism to apartheid solely to the Soviets. The facts show the United States and the USSR are not so very different. There are basic ideological doctrines which

make the two countries as different as red and

'The government is there to exercise the laws of society, not to direct the religious behavior of its citizens'

blue. But red and blue share the common denominator of both being colors. Underneath the white skin of a Russian flows blood as red as my own. Thus we are all members of the human race. In our fierce patriotism, we tend

As humans, we err. Communism and capitalism are not any more perfect than other ancient and modern political systems.

Human rights are infringed upon in the Soviet Union. Its citizens can't expect a decent existence unless they pledge loyalty to the Communist party. All media is strictly censored by the government. Behind the Iron Curtain of Eastern Europe, people are literally imprisoned in geographical locations.

In the United States, we have our own form of governmental oppression. While ours is more latent, it is oppression nonetheless.

Our government has tapped the phones of private citizens. Although our media enjoy the privilege of the First Amendment, it wasn't until the 1977 Freedom of Information Act that journalists had access to certain government

Still, we say the Soviets are supremacist. regarding their race superior to all others. In the United States, after 120 years, blacks are still fighting for their rights as citizens. After 500 years, native Americans are still fighting for their rights to their native soil. After 150 years, Hispanics are still fighting for the right to be here. So many others Asians, women, homosexuals, atheists, and this country's youth still feel the binds and infringements this

benevolent government places upon them. White Anglo-Christian males have their coveted place in our society. Are we still so different from the Soviet Union?

The flyer also reminded me of another misconception of these patriots extreme: All Russians are Godless creatures who should be defeated by the God-fearing Christian

Americans. The Godless Russian state happens to be one of the largest members of the Greek Orthodox Church. If I am not mistaken, Christians, there is one God by any number of names. Therefore the Greek Orthodox Church serves him, too.

The Soviet government, on the other hand, is atheistic — a classic example of separation of church and state.

America has had too many difficulties with upholding its doctrine of separation of church and state. Fanatic religious leaders become makeshift diplomats often misrepresenting the American public with their conflicting religious ideologies. Groups like the Moral Majority use political power to infringe their moral religious codes upon the laws of this country.

This country was founded by religious pilgrims who happened to be fleeing an oppressive government. On every dollar are the words, "In God We Trust." In every heart lies a different concept of God's existence. The government is there to exercise the laws of society, not to direct the religious behavoir of its citizens.

Christianity is one facet of religion, just as Capitalism is one facet of the political process. When will we understand that above being Christians, Jews, atheists capitalists, socialists, blacks, whites we are all communists human beings and we must fight to right the wrongs of man's inhumanity to man.

Anjetta McQueen, a sophomore journalism and political science major from Pinebluff, is assistant managing editor of The Daily Tar Heel.