

# The Daily Tar Heel

93rd year of editorial freedom

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## Not UN-like executive branch

Such a festive atmosphere that prevails over Manhattan this week. As the United Nations hits mid-life crisis, dignitaries from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe celebrate 40 years of rhetoric and diplomatic exchange that has fallen on very few ears.

It is somehow ironic that the UNC system's UN, the Association of Student Governments, this week made the biggest headline of its relatively short existence. This figurehead association does not currently include its flagship institution among members with full voting rights.

Big deal. OK, so maybe it's not the most earth-shattering event of this millennium. But it is a disgrace that the governing organization of the student body of America's oldest state university can't even get someone to two lousy meetings. Too much time is spent on really important issues, like trash-can policies.

## Chalk one up for tradition

Okay class, throw out your notebooks. And feel free to make funny little shapes out of those springs in your ballpoints. Do whatever the hell you please. This is the end of education as we know it.

What? you ask. Is the federal government re-instituting the military draft? Is Chancellor Fordham calling off classes? Is daylight savings time going to rear its ugly head and cast us all into an alternate universe where clocks are a thing of the past and it's eternally Sunday morning?

Hey, get a grip. It's nothing quite so drastic as that. It's just another one of those issues that purists like to harp on all the time.

For example — no more blackboards. And no more greenboards either. You see, Technology is seeking to advance its big toe into yet another of the world's sacred sectors. First it tries to pass these compact discs off on us; now it's planning to computerize blackboards so that students don't have to take notes.

Picture the weasel-eyed demon that planted this idea into the minds of a few of those Xerox execs who never get out into the sun — to create a cross between a blackboard and a Xerox machine. "Just grab your notes as they come off the press at the end of class." Why this is an outrage to those of us who have spent so many years diligently taking notes. Oh, the sweat, the agony! The endurance! What do these Xerox guys do when they're trying to get less tense — play computer games? No, they pester us in our little worlds with new technologies. And just when we were

The UN, albeit a veritably powerless organization, provides a valuable exchange of ideas and opinions among world leaders. The ASG can have a greater impact within its realm because, unlike the UN, program ideas picked up through exchange between member institutions can be immediately taken back to the campus as possible ways to better serve the student bodies. Any such ideas gained in the UN's General Assembly would go through months of red tape before implementation could even be considered. Plus, as representatives of the 16 student bodies in the state, students speak on behalf of their fellow students on issues addressed by the ASG.

So why does our executive branch lose its voting rights? Student Body President Patricia Wallace chalked up another one for Murphy and his proverbial adage on life's problems. Sorry, but Murphy can't take the rap for someone else's disorganization.

getting used to the feel of a number-two pencil in our grubby little hands.

Paint this scene in your mind. Somewhere in the dark and dreary recesses of the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center, a "meeting room of the future" called Colab contains one central structure — a 6-by-4½ foot panel. Its name: Liveboard. Its destiny in time: to rule the world.

Around the master screen are the many desks and consoles that constitute the full Liveboard system. A person seated at any desk can type or draw something on the small screen and have it appear on the large screen. And a person standing at the master board can type or draw whatever he pleases and have it appear on each of the smaller screens. Gag... what will happen to our vocal chords when we have no need to speak? Are they doomed to go the way of pops and hisses on albums? — you know, the human voice is an imperfect instrument, so by all means let's outmode it. Ah, horror of horrors.

They claim that you can even draw on this Liveboard with your finger — no more messy chalk. (Mark Stefik of Xerox, getting a little too cute, says, "The nice thing about your finger is that you don't have to look for it." A fine defense if ever there was one.) But if you use your finger on this Liveboard, aren't there going to be those among us who will put their long fingernails to evil use? Screechings and scratchings... Aaaaaarrrrrrh!

Now there's something those junior whizzes didn't foresee, we bet.

## The Daily Tar Heel

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## READER FORUM

### U.S. calling the kettle black on terrorism

To the editors:

With many Americans continuing to become victims of international violence, the Reagan Administration has begun a war against terrorism. A specific policy has been drawn up to govern our reactions in the future. We shall not negotiate with terrorists, Reagan says. If we allow terrorists to exhort, they will continue to display their violence. Reagan also threatens to use our military, when necessary, to retaliate against these "bullies." The unsuccessful attempt to prosecute the hijackers of the cruise ship Achille Lauro has shown that, indeed, or leaders are determined to follow through with this plan.

Terrorism is defined as the use of terror and violence to intimidate, especially involving a political policy. There are many groups that fall into this category, including the ones that Reagan points out. Certain actions of our own government, however, are terroristic by definition. The Reagan Administration

uses the term to set up opposites, its own acts of justified violence and the unjustified violence of the "terrorist." This manipulation of language is an unfair tool of propaganda. We are in no position to condemn others for an action that we are guilty of as well.

The United States recently sent troops to Grenada to halt a military buildup believed to be aided by communists. American troops bombed suspected sites of storage facilities and intelligence-gathering bases. We were basically successful in curtailing the growth of this potentially menacing base; however, the manner in which we achieved this success was terroristic. We used violence to intimidate an opposing political power. The people of Grenada certainly look upon us in the same way that we perceive those who killed the American on board the Achille Lauro. In our attempt to gain politically, we had little regard for the innocent. It has recently been discovered

that the CIA has supplied money and training to rebels in Nicaragua who are fighting against the communist government there. These rebels are terrorists, just as those in the Irish Republican Army are terrorists. Their goal is to gain political power, and they kill in their attempt to achieve it. We support them in their acts of terror because they are anti-communist and term them "freedom fighters" instead of terrorists.

After the car-bombing of the U.S. Marine camp in Lebanon, the U.S. battleship New Jersey began shelling the mountainside somewhat randomly. In this show of strength, many homes were left destroyed. Again, I must draw similarities between the innocent victims of violence here and the Americans who are being preyed upon now while abroad. The United States became terrorists in their attempt to retaliate against terrorists.

Many are against terrorism but believe that violence is necessary in

some cases. When a group chooses to commit violence in order to intimidate, they must feel that it is necessary. The United States or anyone else cannot judge when the violence of others is justified or to be condemned. We have been terrorists, although we may have felt it necessary. But those innocent who receive our violence do not see it as necessary, just as we feel it unnecessary that Americans have been killed abroad.

Terrorism is very prevalent in the waxing and waning of international politics. Those groups who harm Americans or who are against our ideals are not the only terrorists. Our government has been a terrorist and supports them in Central America. The Reagan Administration cannot condemn others for being terrorists when we are terrorists as well.

Mark M. Harrison  
Ehringhaus



## Walking with compassion

To the editors:

Pete Austin ("Conservatives want religious monopoly," Oct. 23) has a point with which I fully agree. And that is that Christians are on dangerous ground when they confuse conservative/liberal categorizations with Biblical/anti-Biblical positions. It is OK for religious conservatives to be active politically, promoting their interests as any other liberal interest group would do. There is even a place for Christians to debate amongst themselves the Biblical merits of different political positions. Yet to label the conservative position as "Christian" without maintaining open communication with liberal Christians — remember, Christians are defined as such by salvation and not by political view — would be presumptuous.

Yet there is one point on which Austin is completely mistaken. He agrees that abortion is morally wrong. He even uses the word "murder" (this is a little too strong for me — I would prefer the label "manslaughter"). Yet he sees no inconsistency with defending "freedom of choice" for anyone else to choose abortion. Pete has confused the valid separation of church and state with the invalid separation of secular law from universal moral

law. (God's moral law says that the murder and rape that Alton Harris committed was wrong and must be punished. There was no "freedom of choice" available to Harris, nor should there be. It would be inconsistent to argue otherwise.)

By logical extension, philosophic argument or any other means of making an academically valid inference, if you believe abortion to be the wrongful taking of innocent life, then you cannot support "freedom of choice" for anyone at all. It simply doesn't work. That is why both conservative and liberal Christians who understand that God does indeed preclude the choice for abortion (according to his words in the Bible) need to oppose abortion for all of society, because of their common belief that certain moral principles are universal.

Where the Christian of any political persuasion can show his or her compassion, however, is by giving encouragement and help to women with crisis pregnancies. Because if we're going to close the door on what many of them see as their only way through, then we'd better walk with them to enable them to make it their way. Certainly Jesus would do no less.

David Payne  
Durham

## Science, not religion, answers life's mysteries

To the editors:

In his Oct. 23 column "Conservatives want religious monopoly," Pete Austin claims the position that abortion is murder is a "personal religious one." As one who has come to a position on abortion not based on religion I would like to correct that error. It is a biological fact that human life is present in the womb from the moment of conception. If the unborn child is not alive then why does he or she grow? Does Austin know that the human heart begins to beat 17 days after conception? Every abortion stops a

beating heart. If this is not killing, then I would like Austin to supply us all with a new definition of killing.

The massive amount of information coming out of the burgeoning field of fetology only demonstrates more and more convincingly the liveliness of the unborn child. By six weeks the unborn child begins to move and brain waves are measurable. By eight weeks all body systems are present, according to *The Prenatal Origin of Behavior*. Thumb sucking is often seen in real-time ultrasound studies of unborn

children as young as eight weeks after conception. According to M. Rosen in *Learning Before Birth*, a tapping stimulus will cause an eight-week-old child to move his or her arms. The brain receives the stimulus, selects the response and transmits the response to the arms. According to Dr. William Liley, the founder of the science of fetology, the unborn child "gets bored with repetitive signals but can be taught to be alerted by a first signal for a second different one." Unborn children can even dream. Using ultrasound, S. Levi reports in the

American Medical Association News that rapid eye movement is characteristic of active dream states.

All of the above information came not from The Bible, but from science and medicine. A few final questions for Austin: If the unborn child is not alive, then why is he growing? If he is not a human being, then he must belong to some other species — what species does he belong to?

Elizabeth Little  
Dept. of physics

## New laws don't respect personal rights

By ERIC STEM

Historically speaking, this country was founded on the ideals of democracy. Such ideals are prevalent in renowned legal documents such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. Granted, our system of government is considered to be a republic. However, even a republic can be defined as a representative democracy. This form of government allows individuals to elect representatives to enact legislation for the entire populace while retaining the right for the individual to make personal choices. Until recently, our government upheld a democratic doctrine that basically allowed freedom of thought and action, provided such choices do not infringe upon another individual's rights. Recently, though, our government has been enacting laws that restrict these freedoms. The raised drinking age law and the mandatory seat belt law restrict freedom of action, while the new pornography law attempts to restrict both thought and action. Since it is not within congressional power to regulate matters of personal preference, these laws should be nullified.

Last year, a new attempt was made to raise the drinking age to 21 nationally for all types of consumable alcohol. The attempt was successful and, in addition, a clause was included in the law that forced states to either abide by

the new law or forfeit certain allotments of highway funds. While the elevated drinking age has many predicted attributes, such as a decrease in Driving While Impaired offenses and traffic fatalities involving alcohol, it still restricts freedom of action. At the age of 18 an individual is considered to be a legal adult and should be allowed to make the decision to drink or not. In addition, an individual will not necessarily endanger someone simply because he has been drinking. It is only when an intoxicated person chooses to drive that the danger occurs. If drunk driving incidents are to be decreased, legislation should be passed that would strengthen drunk driving penalties.

The more recent mandatory seat belt law also fails to measure up to the democratic doctrine. This law requires all front seat passengers in an automobile to wear seat belts. However, this law also infringes on an individual's freedom of action. Advocates of the law believe it will decrease traffic fatalities. Nonetheless, it does not allow a person the choice of whether to buckle up. Furthermore, the failure of an individual to wear his seat belt has the potential to endanger only that individual.

The revised pornography law in North Carolina not only restricts freedom of action but freedom of thought as well. The law allows the government to define obscenity and restrict individuals from the public or private viewing of materials determined obscene. By endowing

### 'These laws should be nullified'

government with the power to define obscenity, this law infringes on a person's freedom of thought because it does not allow an individual to determine for himself what is obscene. Governmental authority to prohibit viewing of such materials prevents a person's freedom to choose whether to view "obscene" materials. Anti-pornography supporters believe that this law will decrease sexually related crimes. However, pornography is not the cause of these crimes. Such crimes are the product of the criminal's personality and mental state. If these crimes are to be prevented, laws should be directed toward the criminals and not toward pornographic materials.

Each of these laws fails to respect the democratic ideals inherent in our governmental system. Since the laws restrict personal freedoms, they should be deemed unconstitutional and repealed. Moreover, the problems of drunken driving, traffic fatalities and sexual crimes should be addressed directly by legislation and not indirectly by restrictions of personal freedom.

Eric Stem is a freshman chemistry major from Wilson