

The Daily Tar Heel

93rd year of editorial freedom

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Editorialists' columns

What Grass and Bellow said

Literary rivalries — like rivalries in politics and warfare — take root in the untranslatable heart of the ego, dripping from there that brackish haughtiness which tinges even the clearest sight. Not so many years ago, Norman Mailer and Gore Vidal adulterated themselves upon one another, unleashing malicious verbal attacks — and even a blow or two at a private party — which in the upshot succeeded more in promoting a market for professional wrestling than in enhancing the public's enjoyment of books like *Armies of the Night* and *The Season of Comfort*.

It comes as a greater surprise that the distinguished American author Saul Bellow would get into a harangue with the equally distinguished, though admittedly volatile West German novelist Gunther Grass — all of this happening at the International PEN Congress in New York. But, so it goes, eh?

Bellow, a panelist for Tuesday afternoon's session, followed up on themes that had been raised earlier by Toni Morrison (*Song of Solomon* and *Tar Baby*) by speaking on alienation in the American democracy. But Grass, who challenged Bellow afterwards, was notably displeased both with Bellow's scorn for the "fatuous attachment" of American writers to alienation and with his somewhat flippant attitude toward lower and middle class America. Bellow had referred to the middle class as being preoccupied with "common sense desires," unable to concern itself with

"the higher life of the country." Challenging this, Grass said, "Three years ago when I was here, I was in the South Bronx. I would like to hear the echo of your words in the South Bronx where people don't have shelter, don't have food, and no possibility to live the freedom you have..."

Grass came to a head by criticizing the emphasis upon elitist virtues in U.S. social and intellectual life — the "closing out" of the lower and middle classes. But Bellow refused Grass's invitation to explore the political extensions of his own address, saying, "I did not say there are no pockets of poverty. I did not say this is a land full of justice." Allen Ginsberg and South African novelist Nadine Gordimer then chimed in with their own views, but by then the tiff had ended.

It is in literature as it is in politics. The greatest illusion is to live and work without guilt — to be pang-free in an age of accusational fingers. So I am saddened to hear of an encounter such as this, feeling that — unlike in the case of the hotheads, Mailer and Vidal — two men grappling with very real and burdensome guilt have failed to communicate that deep and personal part of themselves. And when writers of the caliber of Bellow and Grass see fit to attack rather than to understand, then the stars have shut their eyes, the sky is falling somewhere.

— ARNE RICKERT

From here to saliva

There is something to be said for closing Davis Library early. In fact, it will save many people from a lot of discomfort.

As those of you who have ever tried to study in the library until that final, five-minute warning well know, that nagging voice almost invariably wakes you from a good sound sleep. There is nothing more embarrassing than having to casually wipe the saliva from the corner of your mouth and from the pages of your book, knowing full well that the girl across from you is watching everything that you are doing.

People have good intentions, but the fact of the matter is that library use is a very tentative thing. The need to study does not dictate the habits of library users as much as does day-to-day life and the moods that accompany it.

The same is true all over. Note the pattern of behavior that exists in the New York subways. On Monday morning, people fresh from Connecticut and Long Island are happy and brown. They talk pleasantly to strangers, give directions to tourists and laugh at being jostled a bit.

On Tuesday, they are sullen, conscious of the long week still ahead of them.

On Wednesday, they are irritable,

complaining loudly to anyone near and glaring at girls who look like they are going shopping.

On Thursday, they are volatile. When someone bumps into them, they shove back. Fights start all over, and briefcases start to fly.

On Friday, there is a dead silence throughout the entire subway system. Everyone is a dull ashen grey with deep circles under their eyes. Standing stock still, it is obvious that they are ready for the weekend.

The pattern is the same in Davis Library. On Sunday night, business is booming; there is standing room only for the Humanities Room. The week progresses through the same moods as in the New York subway system until Thursday, mixer night, when a dead silence reigns. The only people left in the library are Chi Psis and editorial writers.

What would seem logical would be a staggered schedule for the library's closing hour, which would begin with midnight on Sunday night and close at about noon on Friday. Saturday is of no consequence. An end must come to snoring, sleep-creased cheeks and saliva.

— SALLY PONT

A bum deal of the cards

By ROBERT J. ALPHIN

What is the deal with the administration at this school? They have actually succeeded in taking the most basic and simple concept of college life and turning it into a nightmare.

Of course, I'm talking about the student I.D. At first, I wasn't so chapped. The new little plastic "carrying packet" served a purpose. It prevented that little sticker from falling off. O.K., nice going guys, you done good.

Then the CAA case hit the fan. Athletic pass fellas, you forgot about the athletic pass! The athletic pass is absolutely the most inconvenient size an athletic pass could be. Why didn't you make it the same size as that damn piece of plastic? Imagine the I.D. and athletic pass, together at last. The athletic pass is the one which really needs the plastic anyway. The thing gets mangled and torn so much by the end of a

semester that you have to piece it together to get into the last home football game. And all this because it's too big for a wallet and certainly for that plastic. But I've only just begun.

It started off to be a regular old game of rackets. My opponent unsuspectingly approached the desk in Fetzer Gym to check a ball. Then it happened.

"I'm sorry, I can't give you a ball."

"Why not, I've got my I.D., and it's valid."

"Yes, but it's not in the plastic."

I pinched myself to make sure I wasn't dreaming. Was this guy for real? Could it be possible that a piece of plastic can deny you your student rights?

It seemed so. My opponent carried his I.D. and card in his wallet without (gasp!) his plastic. And silly me, I plain forgot, but it is impossible to hang an I.D. on those little hooks when it's not in the plastic.

Can you guys really be serious? Is it that much trouble to set the card somewhere else? Could

you dig down to the bottom of your soul and give a guy another piece of plastic? I didn't know, and maybe it was just me, but something has got to change.

The whole thing boils down to this: instead of having one wallet that handily carries everything you could possibly need, you carry a wallet, an I.D., and an athletic pass, creating possibly the greatest conceivable pocket confusion known to man.

"May I see your I.D.?"

"Sure, just a second... oops, that's not it... nope, that's not it either... wait a second..."

By then, of course, you've dropped one of the three and are feeling like a clumsy dolt. But don't worry, you're not the idiot.

And you know who is.

Robert J. Alphin is a senior journalism major from Charlotte.

READER FORUM

Inadequate drop/add not a joke

To the editors:

I am an English major currently enrolled in no English courses. This is not because I would rather forego literature this semester; it is because I can't get into any of these classes. Failing to get an English course in preregistration, I am now rapidly becoming a fixture in the halls and stairwells of Greenlaw. And I am not alone.

Something is wrong here. I find it particularly ironic that every semester, students must fight to be enrolled in literature courses,

designed to teach them about values and truths. Fellow English majors commiserate with one another in their attempts to get classes, knowing at the same time that they are each other's competition, each other's enemy.

And the problem is not restricted to the English department, though it is perhaps most glaring here. Econ majors cannot get econ courses, and the difficulty in fulfilling the upper level philosophical perspective remains.

Why do we congratulate one another on getting all of our

preregistered courses? To me, it seems ludicrous. We have become so accustomed to hours spent in drop/add that it is now a campus-wide joke, an appropriate subject for the cartoons of the DTH. It's time we realized that the joke is not funny anymore.

Perhaps fewer students should be accepted here. Maybe more professors need to be hired. Whatever the appropriate solution, action must be taken to stop this fundamental weakness in our University. We, as students, should not accept hours and days of waiting in drop/add for

classes. Nor should we accept denial of admittance into course after course.

We do without many things at UNC — guaranteed campus housing and parking, for example. But it is ridiculous that we do without this. As elections approach and candidates begin their wave of complaints, I have one to add: Students are not guaranteed classes, and they ought to be.

Sophie Sartain
Hinton James

Locking dorms leaves Rape Escort office empty

To the editors:

Last night at 10 p.m., I called the Rape Escort service and allowed the phone to ring at least ten times. There was no answer. After being frustrated with waiting and because I needed to go home, I reluctantly walked from the Undergraduate Library to my car at St. Thomas More Church. Fortunately I made it there.

As soon as I returned home I redialed the Rape Escort service number thinking that I might have

previously dialed the wrong number. I found out that the Rape Escort service officer had the responsibility to lock all the doors in the dorm every night at 10 p.m., which is a 20 minute process.

As a concerned student of the security of the campus and its students, I would like to know the answers to the following:

1) Why do Rape Escort officers (or volunteers) have to lock these doors every night since they take such a substantial amount of time

when a student could be attempting to reach this service operation?

2) Why had the public not been notified of the 20 minute time lapse? Isn't the Rape Escort service a 7 p.m.-1 a.m. operation?

3) Why are R.A.s not responsible for locking these doors since the Rape Escort service should be a service for rape escorting only?

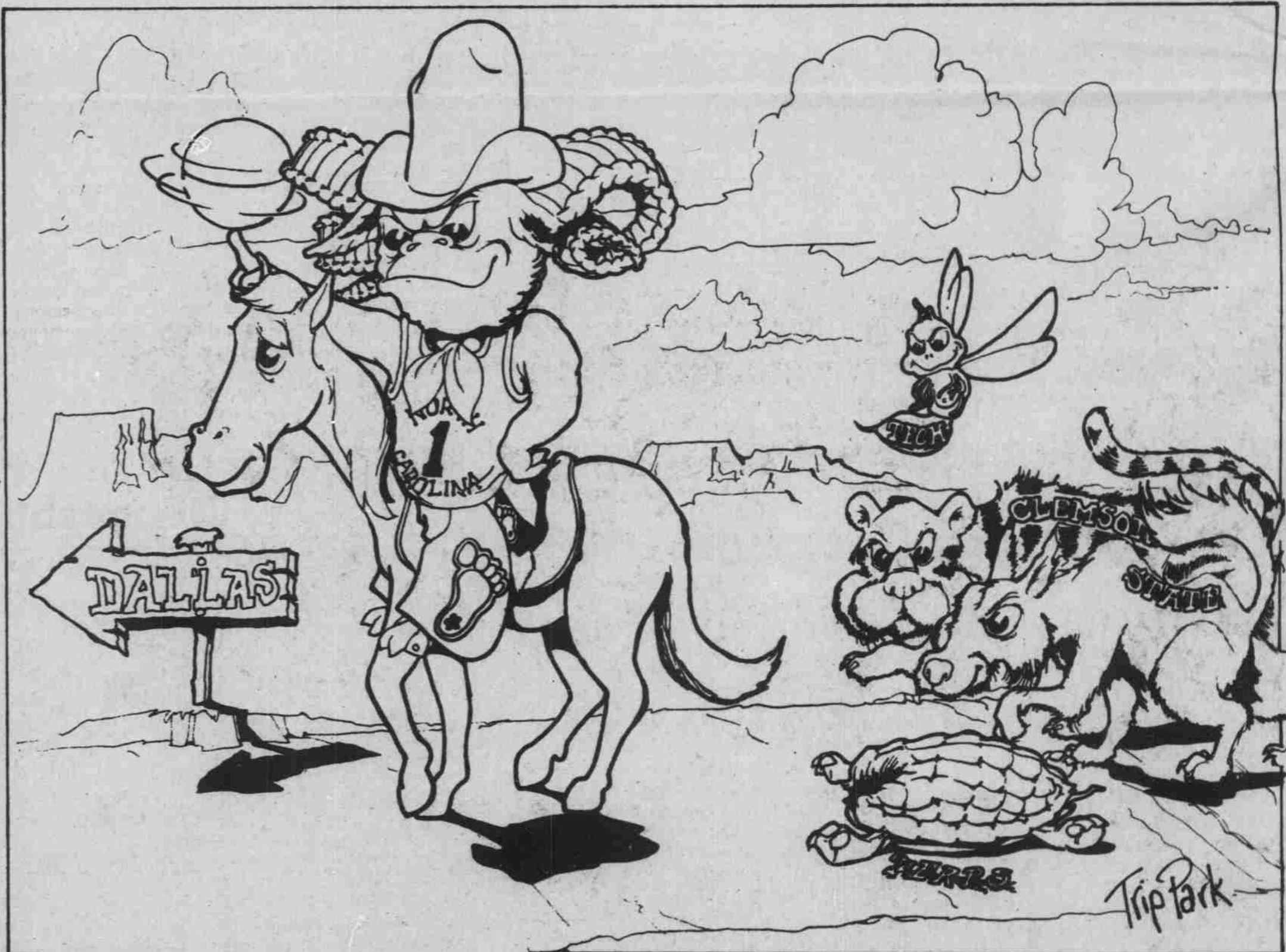
Leah Kim
Durham

CORRECTION

The third paragraph in Thursday's column "Conservatives distort Robinson's image" should have stated:

It is people like Taylor who tend to confuse the issue by completely disregarding facts which don't agree with what they believe in. The result is a policy like constructive engagement, which only hurts the blacks. Taylor himself believes that constructive engagement should be stepped up — to send more companies to South Africa.

The Daily Tar Heel regrets the editing error.



Handicapped overlooked in SAC plans

By CINDY NEVILLE

I can hardly wait for the big game on Saturday. But since Wednesday afternoon, my excitement has diminished in a big way. Let me go back to six weeks ago, the week prior to the long awaited Duke game ticket distribution. Just as any normal student might have done, some friends of mine called up the ticket office to find out the scoop on ticket distribution. But instead of wanting to find out what time the doors would open, my friends, because they are a special type of full-time student, only wanted to know when they could pick their tickets up. My friends happen to be in wheelchairs, you see, so they also wanted to inform the ticket office that they were planning to attend. The nice lady on the phone said to call back next week — things were a bit hectic due to the opening of the new SAC. When they called back the following week, the lady said she was sorry, but could they call back the next week? No problem; but when they called back, guess what she said? Subsequent calls inquiring about the problem with tickets (or handicapped students) yielded the fact that they still had not planned for handicapped seating. Finally, this Monday, six weeks and two ticket distributions later, the nice lady said that my friends could pick their tickets up. We were ecstatic! Wednesday, after we picked up their

This wouldn't be so bad, except for the fact that you can't see the entire court, you can't see the scoreboard, and if the crowd stands, you can't see anything.

tickets for all three games, we went to the open-house at the SAC to check it out. (This is where the story gets rough.) To our dismay, our "seats" were located in the corner, immediately behind the last row of seats on the lower level. This wouldn't be so bad, except for the fact that you can't see the entire court, you can't see the scoreboard, and if the crowd stands up, you can't see anything! (Not to mention that there will be thousands of people shuffling back and forth around us.) It simply amazes me that in the height of construction on this campus to make buildings more accessible, consideration of

adequate seating for handicapped students in the SAC would be so blatantly disregarded.

Other sources have informed us that in construction, only the minimum standards required by law were installed for wheelchairs; which obviously confines these students to sections where they are unable to see the game anyway. We did notice the pretty pressboxes which encircle the entire coliseum and we knew that from inside of them, a person in a wheelchair would be able to see the game just fine. We also noticed a few feet of space on the floor in the corners where the view might be adequate. Unfortunately, it seems that both of these areas are not available for students.

Is this fair? Our gracious alumni donated millions of dollars more than was required to build the SAC and yet the people in charge did not spend a few of those extra dollars to ensure a good view for students and alumni who are confined to wheelchairs (unless of course, they own a pressbox). As a hopeful candidate for the School of Physical Therapy at our great University, perhaps I am more aware than many students of the obstacles faced by handicapped people. Yet I had no doubt that equal consideration would be taken for all students. I guess I was wrong.

Cindy Neville is a junior biology major from Chapel Hill.

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