

The Daily Tar Heel

93rd year of editorial freedom

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Editorialists' columns

Hut-one, hut-two — HYPE

"New England's in the Super Bowl! New England's in the Super Bowl..." I keep hearing some chowderhead repeat. A grown man, dressed completely in Chicago blue and orange, pinches himself as he reads the newspaper's sports section.

Unfortunately for both, the ecstasy will end Sunday. Of course, some people are actually looking forward to the end of the football season, but they obviously don't know fun when they see it. For the Bear or Patriot fan, the last two weeks could not have been long enough. Some may criticize the hoopla surrounding just another professional sporting event, but their team didn't make it to the Super Bowl.

It takes at least two weeks to build up the importance and thrill of this game. The Super Bowl is important, because this is it, the big one, for all the marbles, the whole ball of wax.

Who can resist a game with personalities like this one? Chicago's most notorious drunk driver, fiery Mike Ditka leads his Bears against Raymond Berry and the Patriots. Berry is infamous in his own right for his unbearable niceness and his having roomed with Don Shula.

Human interest stories abound here. There hasn't been as much about *derrieres* in the news since President Carter's hemorrhoids. Even the cutlery business is getting a shot in the arm with

Irving Fryar's recent exploits with his wife. One wonders if he's getting a cut of their profits.

There's something for everybody in this year's game. You like music? Choose your video. The Bears struck first with their *Super Bowl Shuffle*, in which the players force as many rhymes as they do fumbles ("I'm not here to feathers ruffle. I'm just doing the Super Bowl shuffle.") The Patriots have their own video, but originality scores points.

For two franchises who have waited so long for success, the opportunity to bask in the warmth of being in the Super Bowl before the reality of defeat is worth any media overexposure. Indeed, in any other year, the Bears would be the Cinderella team, the underdog favorite. But the Patriots have stolen the glass slipper. It's as if the Cubs had finally reached the World Series, only to meet the Cleveland Indians.

So go ahead, brave one more account of William "The You-Know-What" Perry's eating habits. Winters in Chicago and Boston are cold, so there's little to cheer about. The Bear and Patriot fan have only two more days until one of them is a loser. Let them have their day in the sun. Knowing their teams, they won't have another opportunity for a long time.

— JAMES M. TONER

Spawning aborted hacks

The observant reader will have noticed the appeals on the back page in recent days for letters and columns. There are two reasons for these appeals. One, naturally enough, to solicit letters and columns. Two, to fill up space left vacant by the dearth of letters and columns.

We're not looking for pieces about how you spent Christmas Eve driving through Fuquay-Varina, or that the food service is lousy and somebody ought to do something. We're just looking for a few good writers. Between *The Daily Tar Heel* and *The Phoenix*, opportunities abound for showcasing the literate mind.

Sure, there are plenty of capable reporters and features writers and reviewers who can knock out solid 10-inch articles under deadline. That kind of writer is obviously important to a news publication. But between the two papers, there are perhaps a dozen true writers.

By that I mean not the budding journalists looking for experience and clips, but the philosophy and classics students, the English and history double majors who know what a *Weltanschauung* is. The *intelligents* who can look at events and issues at UNC and perceive them in a context of meaning beyond the Chapel Hill city limits. The scholars who by extensive reading and writing have developed a talent for synthetic and analytic thought, who have

an ear for clear language and the right turn of phrase.

Frankly, I'm tired of seeing the *DTH* back page filled with "columns" by scrub-faced freshmen and knee-jerk ideologues who think they have something interesting and original to say, and are wrong on both counts. They might like to think so, but they aren't writers.

As it stands, there is very little competition for space on the *DTH* back page. But there is no reason that the editors shouldn't have the luxury of culling the best works from a greater number of contributions so that the back page would reflect the best that Carolina minds can offer.

Stanford University's newspaper has a program whereby students can take a writing test for columnist positions. Each quarter, about half a dozen students are chosen to regularly publish essays and articles, on topics of their own choosing. The next *DTH* editor(s) should institute such a program, or find another way to recruit the intellectual talent on this campus.

With more than 20,000 students at a university ranked among the 10 best in the nation, I can't believe that there are only a dozen erudite, articulate thinkers with something relevant to say. Don't bury yourselves under your term papers and theses. Let the class of the university's minds be displayed outside the classroom.

— EDWIN FOUNTAIN

The Daily Tar Heel

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READER FORUM

It ain't so pretty in the Big East

To the editors:

James (Big East) Surowiecki, you're right! I would much rather watch an ACC game than a Big East, Big 10 or SEC game, regardless of the teams involved. As one raised on ACC basketball, I feel it necessary to refute your ludicrous argument. Since it's obvious that you're a Big East fan, I'll use that conference as a point of comparison.

You claim that my desire to watch an intersectional ACC game shows regional bias. Of course it does! Ever since I discovered what the big orange ball was for, I've followed not only the Tar Heels but the rest of the conference as well. I have my particular likes and dislikes for each team, and I enjoy watching them play each other. Each game is a determining factor in the ACC standings, which in turn provide the matchups for the ACC Tournament, the most anxiously awaited weekend of the year for basketball buffs in this area. Moreover, in a year like this, when the ACC clearly

has the superior teams, the results of the ACC Tournament will have national ramifications, affecting the pairings and seedings of the NCAA Tournament. That N.C. State-Wake Forest game may seem insignificant now, but its outcome will loom large when the ACC standings are finalized and tournament pairings are announced.

Speaking of that "classic" Wolfpack-Deacon game, surely you saw that N.C. State weathered a furious comeback from Bob Staak's out-manned Demon Deacons to win by a single point. Meanwhile, Louisville was mopping up Orange juice while trouncing Syracuse (sorry about the one, Jimbo). Also, the Clemson-Virginia game that you labeled "vastly inferior" proved to be a close affair, with the Cavaliers holding on for the win.

Now there's no denying that Georgetown-St. John's, the national game, was a matchup of two good teams. But to be truthful, there's probably more pure basketball played in a Wake Forest intrasquad scrimmage than in a

Hooyas-Redmen battle. These two teams are reminiscent of the Sharks and the Jets in *West Side Story*. What I mean, of course, is these guys don't play basketball; they fight. (We've all heard the joke: "I went to a fight the other night and a Georgetown game broke out.")

Big East pregame shows include the projected number of casualties. The "sport" these guys play is ugly, and there is no room in basketball for thugs. The Big East is a disgrace to college basketball, but thankfully Jefferson Pilot-Raycom Sports provides us Saturday couch-loungers with an alternative to brutishness. For pure basketball, unadulterated by petty skirmishes and senseless violence, there's no place like the ACC.

It also strikes me as illogical that a fan of an ACC team should rather watch a Big East game than an ACC game. I wonder if my "regional bias" has anything to do with the fact that, say, as a Carolina fan, watching the Virginia-Clemson game gives me a preview of two teams that the Heels will have to face twice each during

the season and perhaps later in the tournament. The battle between Georgetown and St. John's may feature two Top 20 teams, but Virginia and Clemson will have a much greater effect on the team I care most about — UNC. Therefore, I would like to become better acquainted with "mediocre" conference teams than "good" non-conference teams.

What it comes down to, James, is that you're a Big East fan, and you feel cheated because you can't watch this primitive form of basketball every weekend. If you don't like the way things run down here on Tobacco Road, you should do one of two things: Either go up North and watch good teams like St. John's, Syracuse and Georgetown try to kill each other, or stay here and watch three of the country's best teams, along with a collection of good teams, play the game in a way that would make James Naismith proud.

Ken Essick
Carolina Apartments

Testy, testy

To the editors:

I realize the Tar Heel likes to provoke responses from its readership, but surely this can be done in a manner more responsible than by equating dishonesty and thievery with harmless fun. In "To tell the truth" (1/23/86), James Toner suggests the only problem with lie detector tests is that they effectively spoil this harmless fun by exposing the truth. On the contrary, the problem with lie detectors is that they are not reliable indicators of truthfulness, and the danger of them lies (pun intended) in people's treating them as if they were.

I don't want to spoil Toner's fun, but I think his editorial deliberately tries to confound this important issue.

Bill Smith
Chapel Hill

Let our 'gods' learn from Sweden

To the editors:

I read with amazement and horror Anna Critz's article ("13th anniversary marks horror," Jan. 22) recognizing the 13th anniversary of Roe vs. Wade. On one hand, the numbers given are cause for concern; lives in trauma "every 20 seconds" is no small tragedy. But Critz's misrepresentation of the historic decision and her apparent inflexibility concerning the abortion issue is even more horrifying.

To begin, Roe vs. Wade did not state directly or indirectly that "an unborn... can be killed up until the moment of birth." That is a gross misstatement of fact. The woman bringing the suit, "Jane Roe," had sought an abortion after being raped by two men. She had her baby, because safe abortion was illegal. The Supreme Court eventually threw out the Texas statute barring women from obtaining an abortion. However, only in the first trimester of pregnancy was discretion left solely to the woman; after that, all states were given the right to regulate abortion legislation based on the health of the mother and viability of the fetus. This is far from legalizing abortion on

demand. Thus, if the "anniversary" is going to be observed, let us have the foresight to know what we are observing.

Secondly and more importantly, abortion did not begin with Roe and has not ended with the Hyde Amendments which indigent women Medicaid funds for abortions. I agree that careless and contraceptive abortions are atrocities. Coercive abortions are inhumane. A fetus has life potential from conception and should be called human at some stage before birth. I do not favor third-trimester abortions, but I am "pro-choice" and also a Christian and yet can find no conflict between the two, although Christianity is the shield behind which so many opponents hide. Certainly abortion of convenience for a knowledgeable and healthy female is the ultimate irresponsibility. But for a poor child in Harlem or Appalachia, without knowledge of sex or its consequences and no way of obtaining contraception, abortion in its early stages should not be called a crime. Instead, the ignorance surrounding the issue should be, "God gives life, but it is our society which traps

young women into cycles of poverty, poor health, low self-esteem and few opportunities to help themselves.

I will say prayers for lives affected by abortion. But condemnation and punishment is not prevention! Acknowledging our sexuality — which is not a license for promiscuity — and the dedication to teach women and men from a young age how to reduce the vast minority of unwanted pregnancies and subsequent abortions. Education, counseling and free contraception in the liberal, Catholic country of Sweden, for instance, has dropped the abortion rate among teenagers there to half the rate in the United States.

Finally, there is an issue ignored by Critz but which adds another dimension to the abortion question. Pregnancies which will disable or kill a mother are in a special category. Currently the Hyde Amendments do not prevent abortions; rather, they prevent disadvantaged women from obtaining potentially life-saving operations. Is the tragedy the choice to abort, or is the tragedy the poverty and ignorance which traps a woman into having a baby she can not

afford physically, emotionally or financially? My answer is both, in equal measure. The crime is that in so many cases the situation could be prevented.

It is short-sighted and false to equate abortions in the United States with extermination campaigns in Nazi Germany. Not all women have "selfish decisions," nor do doctors randomly play God. And certainly our government is far from condoning all abortions! Roe vs. Wade and a host of other legislation makes that very clear.

When I "go through my daily routine," I will think of all those involved in abortion decisions. I will pray for lives in trauma. But my loudest, longest prayer will be for Reagan and Falwell and Helms and Hyde. It is these men and their supporters who play God with fates of so many lives by trying to deprive women and girls the resources of prevention, education and counseling, and yes, abortion if necessary. For surely a punitive pregnancy is as heinous a human-rights violation as a convenient abortion.

Marcella Butler
Chapel Hill

Reagan, a 'Rambo' reactionary

By MICHAEL SMITH

A Jan. 20 *New York Times* article revealed that the Reagan administration is considering the abduction of terrorist suspects abroad in its battle against attacks on Americans on foreign soil. Abraham D. Sofa, legal advisor for the State Department, in his condoning this disregard for international law, favored "bending the rules" to apprehend these suspects overseas.

"We have no clear choice if we want to bring this conduct under control," he said. What Mr. Sofa and the administration are saying is that it is now OK to break international law in the name of the United States if those in charge deem it necessary.

What it is, though, is a disgraceful proposal on the part of the government of a country that is supposed to symbolize law and order to the international community, yet finds itself above those values when it sees fit. In the long run, such renegade policy would further endanger Americans abroad by justifying terrorism (kidnapping) to achieve a certain aim — that of serving justice.

This proposal is but one of a series of irrational and illogical policies designed to confront any perceived threat, violence and irrational retaliatory measures.

The examples are many: Four years ago, when the administration felt Nicaragua had begun to move in the wrong direction, a covert war was begun to remove the problem. When the Salvadoran rebels began to gain the advantage over the government, Reagan's war strategists began to advise, train and direct an escalated air war against primarily civilian targets, unparalleled since the Vietnam War. When the Marines were forced out of Lebanon, Reagan ordered indiscriminate shelling of the Beirut

area. When the hijackers of the Achille Lauro were being taken to Egypt for prosecution under that government's custody, Reagan had their plane forced down. The list goes on.

The president's most impressive action by far was his recent retaliation against Libya. Granted, Qaddafi is no angel, to say the least, but to scream for his blood without having any evidence as proof of his responsibility for the airport attacks is somewhat of an overkill. Such things are not apropos from leaders of mature nations. One thing Reagan did succeed in doing was to make a fool out of himself after no ally heeded his call to shut out Libya internationally. One would think, had his accusations been valid, that at the least Italy and Austria would have heeded his call, since the attacks occurred in their countries.

Ironically, Rep. Howard Metzenbaum, the outspoken critic of covert CIA activities, recently advocated a U.S.-sponsored assassination of Qaddafi even at the risk of killing many civilians. Secretary of State George Schultz has demanded military retaliation, and it is his own people who propose the policy in question here. The essence of the matter is that to these reactionaries, values expected from a responsible democracy such as pragmatism and diplomacy are foreign terms.

There is a perverse irony here, which brings one to conclude that it all depends on the way you look at the issue. Was it not Qaddafi's vow to assassinate "enemies" of his regime abroad that got him on Reagan's hit list to begin with? Is it not President Reagan who refuses to allow Margaret Thatcher to extradite IRA suspects from the United States? Is it not the United States that offers refuge to people who flee their own governments even though those countries may well accuse them of being terrorists? I can imagine the president saying, "OK, guys, go get him. Don't mind the cops, just tell them you're G-

men."

Indeed, there is nothing wrong with catching terrorists, but certainly it must be done within the limits of the law. Imagine, if you may, Maggie Thatcher sending a couple of bobbies over to pull a few "suspected IRA terrorists" from the Boston Town Hall. Most assuredly, she would have her own justification for doing so. Yet such vigilante actions, without regard for the laws of either the host country or those of international arena, are worthy only of the mafia, not our own government. They demonstrate the president's "Rambo-esque" approach to world conflict and how its only success can be on the big screen. Indeed, if Reagan's retaliatory strategy worked, the above conflicts would not occur with such frequency today.

Illegal actions such as kidnapping Arab nationals abroad would only succeed in encouraging more terrorism. True, it might assuage the relatives of the American victims of the attacks in question and, more importantly, save face for U.S. politicians unable to control terrorism; but tit for tat as it would be does more harm than good. Instead, the U.S. government would become the vanguard of Reagan's self-labeled federation of terrorist states. Such tactics would be extremely hard to control and would lead to even more dangerous actions.

It might be more effective to treat the cause of the problem rather than the symptoms. Until a compromise is reached on the Palestinian homeland issue, violence will continue. In the meantime, fighting terrorism with terrorism will nullify this country's claim of being a democracy unique to none other, and international trust in the future would be hard to muster.

Michael Smith is a senior Latin American studies major from Raleigh.