

The Daily Tar Heel

94th year of editorial freedom

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Editorials

Taxpayers losing Stealth

In this era of high technology espionage, it's improbable that the KGB, the Soviet intelligence agency, would remain in the dark for very long about any U.S. defense project. The Stealth fighter project is no exception. And unfortunately for the United States, the Stealth project exemplifies a dangerously careless treatment of classified information by the press and defense contractors.

The Stealth fighter and bomber are designed to elude the enemy by absorbing radar waves rather than reflecting them. The planes are part of a new technology, one which has thus far cost an estimated \$5 billion for the fighters alone. A hypothetical mission would involve the planes sneaking into enemy territory, striking targets with nuclear or conventional arms, then flying home undetected. Pilots are presumably training in the Nevada desert to handle just such a mission.

While taxpayers have a right to know how defense dollars are spent, the public should remember that disclosures of highly sensitive material keep not only keep the citizenry informed but the KGB as well.

Few people can say whether the KGB knew the location of the fighter base before The Washington Post and other newspapers exposed the site. Chances are that in this case the KGB

not only knew the location, but has had detailed photographs of the area for weeks, thanks to satellite surveillance.

To a degree, what the Soviets know is not as important as how they gain their knowledge, and from whom. Again, it is doubtful that the media frequently relinquish national secrets, but when the information concerns billions of dollars, can the United States afford to take the chance?

The media are not the only party involved in this general loosening of security surrounding the Stealth project. Leaking classified data (some of which usually reaches the Soviets) puts defense contractors in a league of their own. For example, Lockheed Corp., which built the Stealth fighters, has admitted to having "lost" 1,460 secret documents about the planes. A House subcommittee investigation revealed that one employee even had the gumption to show the fighter's blueprints to a friend.

Such lunacy is tantamount to treason, and the taxpayers deserve better protection for their investment. Whether the American citizens unanimously agree on the need for the Stealth fighter is not the question. Taxpayers have bought 50 of these planes at \$100 million each. The United States can't afford to give that technology away.

Silkwood — justice at last?

Kerr-McGee Corporation's recent \$1.38 million settlement with the estate of Karen Silkwood at first seems to indicate that the big industry does have a heart. But Kerr-McGee is getting off easy compared to what would have happened if Silkwood had lived.

On Nov. 13, 1974, Silkwood left a meeting with fellow union members in Oklahoma City to meet a New York Times reporter and an official of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union. She was carrying a brown manila folder and a large notebook containing damaging evidence of Kerr-McGee's health and safety conditions, including plutonium poisoning Silkwood sustained. Within the next 30 minutes, a life ended and a 12-year legal battle began.

No one has a definitive explanation as to how Silkwood's fatal car accident occurred. The Oklahoma Highway Patrol and A.P. Pipkin, Jr., a private investigator hired by the union, reached completely different conclusions about the accident's cause. The Highway Patrol said that Silkwood fell asleep at the wheel; Pipkin concluded that Silkwood's car was forced off the

road by another car. Pipkin's evidence: a dent in the side of Silkwood's car and three track marks indicating that she was forced off the road.

The Highway Patrol maintained that the dent was created when the car scraped against a concrete wall while being towed, but further investigation revealed no fragments of concrete in the dent. Most importantly, the manila folder and notebook containing all of Silkwood's evidence was never found.

The \$570,000 awarded to Silkwood's three children and father (the total award minus legal fees), combined with Kerr-McGee's statement that they "in no way accepted blame for Silkwood's alleged plutonium contamination" constitute a lack of caring for Silkwood and the causes for which she fought to the end.

Had Silkwood lived, the evidence she had compiled against Kerr-McGee would have led to investigations that would have been embarrassing and expensive for the corporation. As it is, \$1.38 million is of little consequence to Kerr-McGee. But it should be hoped that Karen Silkwood's was not a lost cause.

Moses vs. the FP-3002: No contest

In all the rush to send out warning notices to new and returning students regarding the once-critical drought, University officials forgot to warn, er, inform us of some new visitors in selected campus libraries. They're Panasonic FP-3002s, the latest thing in vending copy machines. And like all "latest things," the copiers pay homage to plastic money.

Yes, no longer do ardent xerographers have to spend precious study time trying to coax nickel after nickel out of tight miniskirts, Guess jeans and Levi's 501s. And yes, no longer do study hounds have to endure the incessant "clink!" of the change machine as they try desperately to memorize the Magna Charta.

That's right, to use the machines, you just insert a nifty, magnetized card in the right slot and copy to your heart's content (or until your coded allotment of copies runs out, whichever comes first). There's a rub, though: You must first purchase a card, and learn how to use it. Moses probably had an easier time parting the Red Sea.

If that's not enough, first-time users must decipher the meaning of Instruction No. 5 on each copier: "Position your original according to the guide marks on the platen." We always thought a platen was the rolling-pin gizmo on typewriters, until a trip to

The Bottom Line

Webster's assured us it's also "a flat plate (as of metal); esp. one that exerts or receives pressure." Whew.

Goodbye institutional, hello cucumber

For centuries, it seems, students at elementary, junior and senior high schools everywhere have endured the among the cruelest punishments in academia — namely, having to stare at vomit-inducing, "institutional green" walls and ceilings. Sometimes, if the school's "decorators" were in a sufficiently sadistic mood, they'd splash the hideous color on the school's floors, even.

No more, say educators in Pittsburgh, who're selecting other, more vibrant colors for the city's schools. Colors such as "cucumber," "hint of lime," "Colorado sandstone" and "whisper gold."

It's about time someone considered the welfare of America's school-age youth. We've got just one bit of advice for the Pittsburgh schools: stay away from "squash yellow" and "essence of eggplant."

Tar Heel Forum

Drugs in sports — the Bias legacy

John Gibbs

Guest Writer

In life he was the model of a superbly conditioned athlete. In death he is a painful reminder of the sometimes fatal consequences of drug use. As the twisted plot of the Len Bias story unfolds, we are left with a sense of despair.

Larry Bird called his death "the cruelest thing I ever heard." His tremendous physical condition failed to prevent a fatal heart attack. His strong moral convictions seemingly gave way during a moment of weakness on his proudest day. After being drafted by the Boston Celtics, Bias claimed he was living a "dream within a dream." Forty hours later, the dream became a nightmare as Bias lay dead, the victim of a cocaine overdose.

Now we are left with the question of how to deal with the memory of Len Bias. Should we simply dismiss his death as a tragedy and a waste, and go on remembering him as he lived, not as he died? Or should we hold Bias up as an example, using him to show the possible consequences of drug abuse?

The fact that Bias was a nationally known sports figure ensured that his death would bring an avalanche of publicity. Nonetheless, now that he is dead and buried, and now that the media's focus has shifted from this one player to possible improprieties at the University of Maryland, a case can be made that Bias should be allowed to rest in peace.

In the first place, doing so would spare Bias' friends and family the anguish of seeing his name raked over in the press every time the subject of drug abuse comes up. The media is often accused of belaboring the negative too much as it is, and condemning Bias as a drug user while ignoring all that was good about him would be another example of this negativism. The most merciful way to handle Bias from the standpoint of his family and friends would be for the media to simply refrain from using him as its scapegoat on drugs.

A second argument in favor of letting Bias rest in peace is that it will allow the public to remember him as he lived, not as he died. Bias became famous as a basketball player, not as a cocaine user. Constantly linking his name with drugs will only tarnish the image he created — that of a great athlete. It will also make the public skeptical of sports figures, and undermine the type of hero worship that stars such as Bias inspire — especially among children.

A final argument against making an example of Bias contends that he should be held to no higher standard than the rest of us. Simply because he was a famous athlete does not mean that he should be used as exhibit A in any argument against drug abuse. Most of us live secure in the knowledge that whatever vice we choose, whether it be drugs, alcohol or smoking, it will be ours alone. The public and the media are not privy to knowledge of our personal habits.

Yet Bias, as a star, was forced to endure a great deal of scrutiny about his private life. He was judged on much more than just his basketball skills. Many believe that this is wrong, and that he should be treated solely on the basis of these abilities. His personal life ought to be a thing apart, and should be granted the same privacy as our own.

Unfortunately, these arguments are not entirely convincing. In the first place, they are unrealistic. Bias was a very famous person. His death would have been big news regardless of how he died, but the fact that it was drug-induced made it a major news story.

That is really the bottom line. The

combination of an all-American killed by cocaine is too big a story to ignore or gloss over. The press has bombarded us with items from the Bias case because it is newsworthy, it sells papers. In the future it can be expected to continue linking Bias' name with drugs. Even if it hurts his family, his friends and those who admired him, Len Bias will be included along with the likes of Don Rogers, John Belushi, David Kennedy and the other victims of drug abuse. It is sad, but Bias may one day be remembered more for how he died than how he lived. Though unfortunate, the manner in which he died ensures that this be the case.

Another reason Bias deserves to be condemned is that he *should* be held to a higher standard than the rest of us. As a superstar athlete, Bias was in the unique position of being able to influence people who only knew him through their TV screens or their local sports pages. The things he said and did had meaning. He was a symbol of the lofty goals that can be accomplished through talent and dedication. By becoming a celebrity, Bias had taken on the weighty responsibility of being admired and emulated — especially by children. He had a responsibility to those who looked up to him, and he failed it.

Now he is a symbol of another sort. He is a symbol of our weakness. He is a symbol of the vulnerability that we all must endure. And by exposing this side of Bias, if even one person can be saved from the same fate, if even one deprived kid in a slum or one rich kid in a mansion can have his nightmare exchanged for a dream, then it is worth dragging Len Bias' name through the mud. Ignoring his death will serve only to render it meaningless. And then it will be as wasted as his life.

John Gibbs is a senior history major from Lynchburg, Va.

Give blood

To the editor:

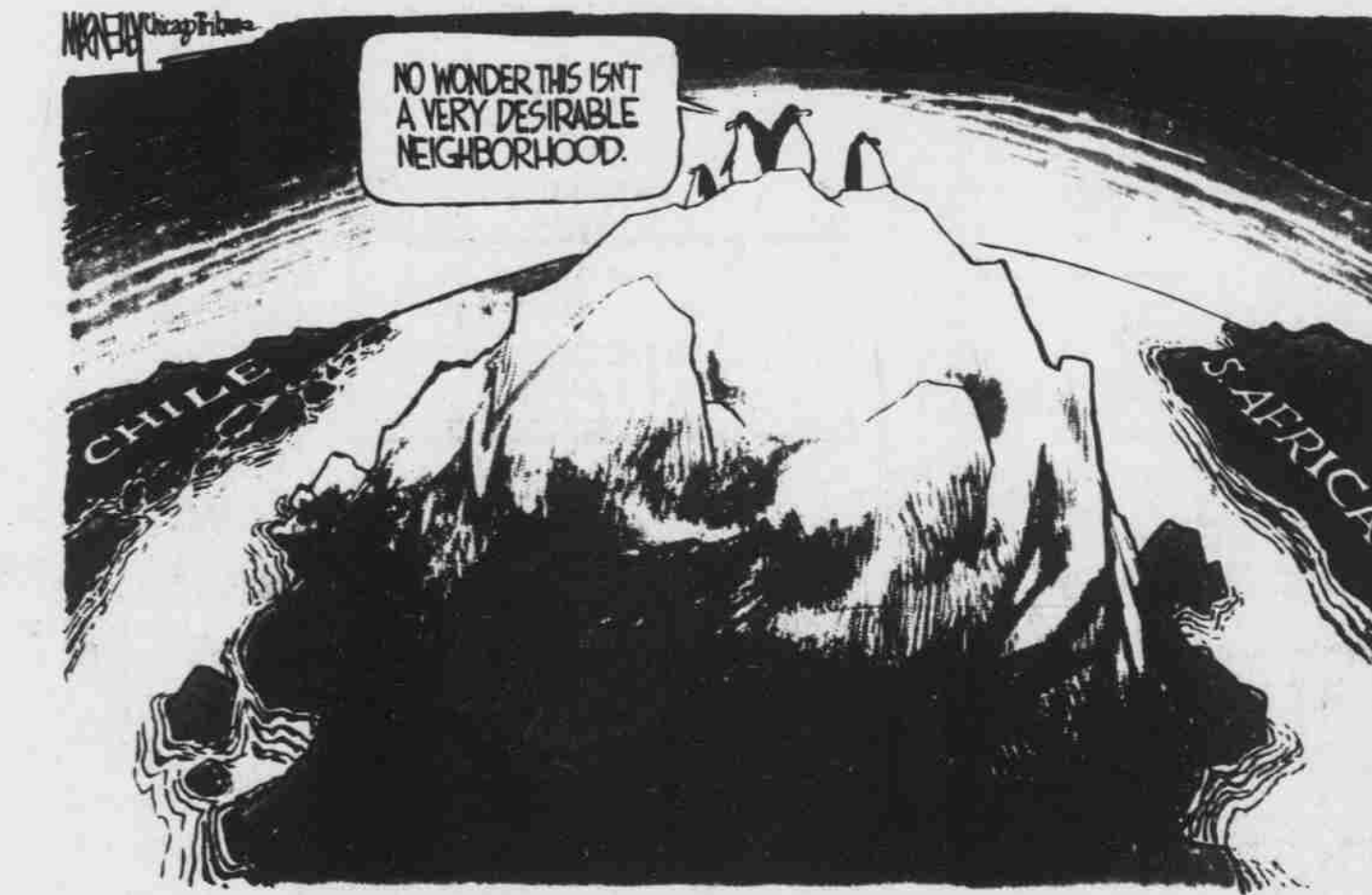
As some students know, the Red Cross Bloodmobile returns Wednesday to the Great Hall in the Student Union. What most students do not know is that this is an emergency bloodmobile. For various reasons the Red Cross usually runs low on blood during the summer months. However, this summer the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Red Cross has been particularly low. For this reason it is especially important that donors turn out on Wednesday between 10 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

The process of giving blood only takes 30 minutes to an hour of your time and it is painless. I do not like needles, but my dislike is offset by remembering that I may be saving the life of a kidney patient, someone having surgery or an accident victim. Also, as has been pointed out before, you cannot get acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) by donating blood. Please donate on Wednesday. Someone is counting on you.

CURTIS HEDGEPEETH
 Sophomore
 Psychology

Letters? Columns?

This section of the editorial page has traditionally been reserved for comments from the



Letters

student body on current issues, as well as feedback regarding the newspaper or its policies. However, we have suffered from a notable dearth of such insightful observations and we've been forced to run this letters policy — AGAIN.

So get off your duffs and let us know what you think! When you write, we ask that you observe the following guidelines:

■ All letters and columns must be signed by the author(s).

We maintain a limit of two signatures per letter or column.

■ Students who submit letters or columns should include their name, year in school, major and phone number. Professors and other University employees should include their title and department. If the writer holds a position in an organization relevant to the content of the piece, that position should be indicated.

■ All letters and columns must be typed. We ask that you double space, using a 60-space

line. ■ In general, letters to the editor are shorter (fewer than 800 words) and aren't as argumentative as columns.

■ The Daily Tar Heel reserves the right to edit for style, taste, grammar and accuracy.

Please place letters or columns in the green box located in front of The Daily Tar Heel office — Room 105 of the Student Union. Deadline is 12 noon.

Robertson: Religion on the move

Ed Brackett

Associate Editor

"The emergence of Pat Robertson as a presidential hopeful has given many commentators the opportunity to take lascivious notice of such things as, well, God, about whom we are supposed to hear only outside the earshot of Norman Lear."

— William F. Buckley

Everyone from Roy Rogers to William F. Buckley seems to have drafted Pat Robertson as a presidential candidate, so — what the hey, damn the torpedoes — let's call him "Pat Robertson, presidential candidate."

Why not? It'd be, well, different if we had a well-known preacher running for the White House for preaching's sake.

A prominent preacher has run before, of course, and recently — Jesse Jackson in the 1984 race. Unlike Robertson, though, Jackson represented many different things in the eyes of voters. He was the black candidate, the results-minded foreign policy envoy, champion of the poor, gadfly of the Democratic Party, oratorical dynamo. His credentials as preacher occupied more of a background position.

With Robertson, it's a different story. The Almighty and Robertson are an almost inseparable pair; in fact, he openly claims a direct line to Him, replete with conversations including a language only the two understand. God, says Robertson, told him to build his Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN), the Virginia Beach, Va.,

empire that brings in \$230 million a year. The Almighty even acted as real estate counselor for the complex ("Buy the land, buy it all," Robertson reports he heard) and suggested a particular brand of transmitter (RCA) for Robertson's inaugural television venture, which, in 1961, became the country's first Christian TV station.

Robertson's desire to become commander in chief has divine origins as well. Last year, as Hurricane Gloria skirted the Carolinas coast, headed for CBN and its affiliated university, Robertson ordered the storm to change course "in the name of Jesus." It did, unfortunately for some Long Island residents, who received the storm's waning wrath.

Robertson said that, had Gloria not cooperated, he wouldn't have considered the presidency. "If I couldn't move a hurricane," he told a CBN reporter, "I could hardly move a nation."

Would Robertson move a nation by similar, biblical means if elected? No doubt. But to what degree, and for what issues? That's another question entirely, one not easily answered by Robertson's ambiguous remarks, a compendium of which appears

in a recent issue of New York magazine.

He's "a great believer in personal freedom and the non-intervention of government in people's lives." "Don't call me a television evangelist," he said, "I run a network, I'm a businessman, an economist, a lawyer."

Yet "The minute you turn (the Constitution) into the hands of non-Christian people, . . . they can use it to destroy the very foundation of our society." And "a Supreme Court ruling is not the law of the land."

There's a place, even in the secular world, for a religious leader, whether the leader's "religion" is a balanced budget, social reform, Christianity or even atheism. Robertson's near-certain candidacy, which is an attempt to place Christianity within the earshot of voters, is a useful reminder of this.

Besides, the genteel Robertson's far-reaching ambition adds spark to the stale debate of how involved a church should be in government affairs. A Robertson candidacy is guaranteed to set the atheists on fire and may even have Christians squabbling amongst themselves. And since we're talking about an aspirant leader of the free world here, intellectuals — the guardians of that world — are bound to get into the act also.

And we get to watch, without having to pay an admission charge or anything.

Ed Brackett is a senior journalism major from Hendersonville.