

The Daily Tar Heel

95th year of editorial freedom

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Editorials

Buyer beware of South Africa

The ingredients label on a Dannon yogurt container tells the customer exactly what he's getting. If he's dissatisfied, he knows where to turn because the Dannon Company Inc. also includes its White Plains, N.Y., address on every package.

board opinion

Knowing where a product comes from is part of being an informed consumer, or a "conscious buyer." The label in a wool sweater becomes important to a person who's allergic to wool. And the origins of a product can be important in other ways. As consumers for the University, the UNC Board of Trustees considered the "conscious buying" issue at a meeting Friday. The result will do nothing to promote the board's purchasing awareness.

In an overwhelming majority, the board defeated a resolution that would restrict "wherever possible" the University's purchases from South African-related companies and publicize a list of the companies nationwide. This proposal would have been a minuscule step in the effort to undermine South Africa's institutional racism. If the University invested in the past without knowledge of company ties to oppressive regimes, the proposal would have ensured

informed decisions in the future. Total divestment of the University's indirect holdings in South Africa would be much more significant than this proposal. And the two actions are not equal, as board member George Ragsdale argued.

If board members were worried about taking too strong a stand on the divestment issue, the resolution's indefinite wording should have placated them. The phrase "wherever possible" would have given them complete license to find excuse for South African-related investments. Even without that slippery phrase, the resolution would have been a moral guideline rather than an absolute policy.

The outcome of the meeting indicates either that board members will give no leeway in their stance on divestment, or that they care little about the issue altogether. The latter seems more accurate; before the proposal even reached the board, a trustee committee eliminated a clause calling for complete divestment.

Maintaining business sense is not much to ask of a body that makes investments for the financial good of a public institution. Students and faculty should work to keep the issue of apartheid foremost in the minds of the University's investors.

Reagan revival unlikely

One-third of all Americans think President Reagan should resign from his job, according to a Newsweek poll released Saturday. Only 40 percent of those questioned in the poll approve of Reagan's leadership of the country, an all-time low for him. Gone are the days of the Teflon presidency when Reagan's enormous personal popularity seemed immune to any criticisms raised against his policies. Another administration bites the dust.

The scathing Tower Commission report released Thursday lays much of the blame for the Iran fiasco at the door of the Oval Office. Investigators are now trying to establish whether Reagan knew more about the Iran-contra affair, including the diversion of funds, than he has acknowledged.

The commission uncovered a memorandum intended for Reagan written by Lt. Col. Oliver North that describes the diversion of profits from the Iran arms sales to the contras. It is not known whether Reagan received the memo, which indicates that North seemed to think Reagan was informed of the deals and approved of them.

Until recently, the question was whether Reagan would be able to put

the arms scandal behind him. His popularity was based principally in the trust the public placed in his honesty and his integrity in the face of opposition.

Reagan's new chief of staff, Howard H. Baker Jr., will try quickly to assemble a new regime in the White House, possibly a more moderate, less trigger-happy crowd than Poindexter, North and their buddies. No doubt, Baker will be more adept working with Congress than his predecessor, yet the task of resurrecting an effective Reagan presidency may call for more than the congenial pragmatist from Tennessee — or anyone else — can offer.

Americans still warning that they do not want another failed presidency are speaking too late. The nails are in the coffin lid, and the investigations will continue, uncovering further evidence of misdoings and incompetence in the White House. Bringing back the Reagan era will take more than a few Republican leaders standing in front of the Oval Office door shouting, "Lazarus, come forth." It will take a true miracle. — J.F.

Readers' Forum

Students can protest budget cuts

Bryan Hassel
 Guest Writer

If you think that Marriott's food service is depleting students' bank accounts, take a look at President Reagan's educational budget for fiscal year 1988. Our president — who once asked, "How can we afford to subsidize intellectual curiosity?" — has asked Congress to cut overall spending on higher education by a whopping 45 percent. Now that's no small potatoes. If this assault on federal financial aid is successful, not thousands, but millions of students will be completely cut out of benefits which now allow them to attend school. For many, that won't mean working a few more hours a week to make ends meet; for the students who need the aid most, these decreases will mean curtains for their educational careers. On UNC's campus the final numbers are not yet in, but it looks like several thousand (students) will be affected.

Now, this is not a good thing. With all the talk in Washington about the importance of economic competitiveness, you'd think that training America's future workforce would be a top priority. With all the rhetoric we hear about national defense, it would seem logical that we would want to maintain and improve the very things that we defend. However, if Secretary of Education William Bennett has his way this year, a severe blow will be dealt to this nation's students. And it is today's students that will be the basis for tomorrow's competitiveness and defense.

But what about the budget deficit? Don't all segments of society need to "tighten their belts" and suffer a few inconveniences? Well, maybe so, but Reagan's recommendations go far beyond "inconveniences for students." Just look at a few of these specifics. I think you'll find that the only belts being tightened around here are around the necks of students:

■ Over one million students would lose their Pell Grants. Pell grants go to the people who need aid the most, not the stereo-buying "cheaters" who are allegedly ripping off the taxpayers.

■ College Work Study, supplemental grants, and State Student Incentive Grants would be eliminated completely. Not cut, trimmed down, but utterly done away with.

■ Students with Guaranteed Student Loans would have to begin paying interest while in school. But, don't worry, they'll be allowed to go into greater debt in order to cover the costs of such interest.

And the list goes on. The bottom line is that federal assistance to students would be gutted; there's really no other word for the proposed cuts. Now, add in a few other factors. Scholarships and grants which exceed tuition and fees are now taxable. So, regardless of your need, a portion of the money you receive for housing or general living expenses is now claimed by Uncle Sam. Furthermore, with grants being taxed and on a decline in general, students are turning more and more to loans. The result: \$9.8 billion owed by five million students. That kind of debt makes a big difference for students making life decisions, such as whether or not to take low-paying public service jobs. And all of this on top of a general attack on education programs by the president.

The impact of such deep cuts is impossible to predict, but it is clear that a reduction in aid of this magnitude will severely restrict access to the educational system at UNC

and across the nation. Ability to pay will supersede ability to learn as the prerequisite for a college degree, to a greater extent than it already has. Our institutions of higher learning will once again become places for the elite few, not the great providers of opportunity to all citizens.

But enough rhetoric. We, as students, have to take action. No one else is going to, because no one else is going to be hit with the cuts like we are. The U.S. Congress may be far away, but there are a couple of simple steps that you as an individual student can take to make a difference.

■ Write a letter to your senator or congressman. It doesn't have to be long or intellectual; it doesn't even have to be typed. Come by the Student Government Office (217 Union); we've got names, addresses, fact sheets, and sample letters you can use. Letters do get read, and they do make a difference. If the cuts will affect you, be sure to say so.

■ Join Students for Educational Access. The key to influencing our leaders in Washington lies not only in individual letter-writing, but in concerted group efforts as well. SEA meets every Monday night at 7 p.m. in the Union and plans student action to fight these cuts. We need your help to make new plans and implement them successfully.

Students across the nation at many colleges and universities are again becoming active on the issue of education. Last year, student activism on a national scale was able to help restore large amounts of educational funding that had been cut. It is again time to renew our efforts.

Bryan Hassel is a junior history major from Nashville, Tenn.

Library snacking not smart

To the editor:
 While I am pleased that The Daily Tar Heel did an article on the food and drink problem in the libraries on this campus ("Food smugglers ignore rules," Feb. 26), I am concerned that it told more about how to smuggle food and drink into them than why the rules are necessary.

The rules were not made lightly. They are the result of long experience both here and at other campuses with the problems that food and drink can cause for libraries and the collections they house. We are not just concerned about the building looking messy. We worry about the insects and rodents that begin by feeding on the leftovers and go on to chew their way through invaluable books and journals, destroying them in the process. We worry about the expense of cleaning up the spills; we worry about the other kinds of damage to library materials, some irreplaceable, which can result from carelessness with food and beverages.

Food and drink is a real concern for libraries and we treat it seriously. I am afraid that your readers were given the impression that the libraries do very little to control food and drink. While it is true that the library staff is not a police force, we will confiscate food and drink. If the situation warrants, we will ask individuals to leave the building and will take measures as necessary.

We are not denying library users their food and drink. We are simply requesting a little cooperation, asking that they take their break at the Student Union or Lenoir, both right next door, and then come into the library to study.

KAREN S. SEIBERT
 Associate University Librarian,
 Public Services
 Davis Library



Fees mean big beefs

To the editor:
 I would like to commend Keith Poston on his stand on the issue of defunding the Carolina Gay and Lesbian Association. His recent letter to Chancellor Christopher Fordham, in which he officially

refused to pay student fees in the future without an assurance that his money will not go to the CGLA, may well set a precedent in the handling of student fees at this University.

In fact, I have been so inspired by his effort that I have put a few letters in the mail myself. For a start, as a strong supporter of animal rights, I am against the purchase of lab specimens for dissection. I feel

a short film strip would suffice to familiarize the students with the arrangement of the anatomy and physiology of the body. Therefore, I have decided to refuse to pay student fees in the future until I receive an official guarantee that my money will not go towards the purchase of such specimens.

Furthermore, as a member of the Flat Earth Society, I do not wish my money to support the classes currently offered in

the curriculum of geography at this University. All of these classes deal with topics based upon the supposition that the Earth is a three-dimensional sphere, while the conception of the Earth as a two-dimensional rectangle is completely ignored.

On a broader level, I am also seriously considering holding back my federal taxes until I have received a few assurances from the federal government. For instance, I want to be guaranteed that my money will not be given to the Contras, for, as Poston so aptly put it, I consider their goals to be "both perverted and immoral." I feel, again in the words of Poston, that this organization not only

"smacks people's religion in the face," but that it smacks the whole "American" way of life in the face. After all, our country is presumably based on freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of expression which

cannot in any way, shape, or form be seen as serious goals of the murderous, power-hungry, old Somoza guard that heads the rebel Contra organization. But let us not stray too far from the issue at hand. I urge all my fellow students to cease payment of student fees

until all our grievances have been rectified.

DAVID McCOLLUM
 Freshman
 Chemistry

Keep humming, 'born-againers'

To the editor:
 In response to "CGLA funds opposed by group letter," (Feb. 24) I am disappointed by people who contend that their personal opinions represent the Christian point of view. If the eight people who signed the letter to Chancellor Christopher Fordham truly believe their stand is Christian, then they would do well to follow what Psalm 1 says about condemning others. If they still think trying to withhold the 0.0002 percent of UNC's budget that the CGLA represents is a good idea, then they should do it. I would like to call their bluff. As for being a born-againer, they will keep on humming about the second coming because they probably missed the first.

MICHAEL BOYLES
 Senior
 Statistics

'Christianity' does not mean 'evangelism'

To the editor:
 I must admit that the Feb. 26 Omnibus magazine cover in the DTH really caught my eye. Right there with the Bible and a crucifix was a TV Guide and a bunch of \$20 bills under an envelope addressed to the Rev. Oral Roberts.

As a Christian, in addition to my curiosity, the article generated my frustration and resentment at being lumped into the money-hungry, fanatical TV evangelist stereotype. The media's coverage of Roberts' death vigil and similarly controversial issues has led many people to make unfair generalizations about the rest of the Christian community. When we try to discuss our beliefs, many immediately throw up defensive walls simply because they are so conditioned to the media's glib, scornful treatment of religious issues.

After a rather sarcastic opening, the story, "Evangelism for a Life," made several objective points via quotes from local clergy. However, the impression of "those crazy Christians" dominated the two-page spread with all the satire of the Doonesbury cartoons. Anyone who might have had any interest in religious fellowship would have been so turned off by the Oral Roberts article that the "roundup" of religious opportunities at UNC on the opposite page lost all its effectiveness.

Granted, Roberts' death vigil is controversial — laughable to some and misguided theology to more serious thinkers. But Roberts is not representative of all Christians. The DTH's treatment of the Roberts story fosters the stereotype of closed-minded, hellfire and brimstone TV evange-

lism where money is the main motivation, and this is both unjust and undeserved.

My challenge to you is to give Christian doctrine the same fair shake that you give to other important issues. To assume that every Christian is some sort of fanatic fundamentalist is to lose the opportunity to be well-informed and to make a fair judgment. As with most groups, Christians are not all alike. Perpetuating an unfair stereotype is a cheap, easy escape from dealing honestly with the very complex issue of Christian belief.

HELEN JONES
 Freshman
 Journalism

The Daily Tar Heel

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