

The Daily Tar Heel

95th year of editorial freedom

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Research fraud is a bad apple

The Honor Code may seem like a vague and often unenforceable set of ethics. Many people who cheat are not caught, and the code makes cheating easier for unsupervised students who are tempted by a teacher's turned back. However, the precedent the code sets for later academic work, especially scientific research, is as important as any immediate and tangible results of the system.

At an undergraduate level, one freshman plagiarizing an English 2 paper will not have serious repercussions for the class as a whole. On a professional research level, the published results of one scientist are incorporated into further research by other scientists, and thus a false conclusion could contaminate a whole series of projects. One bad apple will spoil the barrel.

And there are plenty of bad apples. June Price Tangney, a lecturer in psychology at Bryn Mawr College, surveyed 245 scientists at an unnamed major university and discovered that 32 percent suspected a colleague of falsifying data. Of these suspicious scientists, 54 percent had failed to check further or take action to remedy the situation.

Tangney said that researchers fail to point the finger at deceitful colleagues because they are afraid that they will be seen as troublemakers,

board opinion

possibly with an axe to grind. This should sound familiar to anyone who has ever agonized over turning in a fellow student.

The reasons for committing research fraud should also sound familiar to any student. Scientists depend on grants to continue their research, and distribution of grants is largely based on past results. More prominent and successful scientists will naturally be more attractive candidates for a foundation's support. The pressure to "publish or perish" becomes great enough for some to illegally enhance the success of their research. The Damocletian sword of Grading which hangs over the undergraduate's head becomes that of Funding over the scientist's.

Students at UNC and many other universities labor under a formal code of ethics which governs their work, and theoretically this honor system carries over into further academic research. However, in the ethics statement of the American Association of University Professors, there is no specific guideline that encourages professional scholars to take action against possible fraud.

If such a code is needed at the amateur level of undergraduate study, then certainly it is needed at the level of professional research. And with \$105.2 million allocated for research funding at UNC, the professional community would do well to investigate the validity of research findings.

Football fans sacked for a loss

The 1987 National Football League season may have ended Monday night with the New York Jets 43-24 drubbing of the New England Patriots. The NFL Players Association, as threatened, went on strike immediately after the game.

The issues involved are numerous, and those on both sides are steadfast in their views. The players' grievances center on the issue of free agency. They demand the liberalization of a free agent policy that has produced only one free agent move in the last decade. The familiar specters of roster size, drug testing, minimum salaries and guaranteed contracts also haunt the proceedings.

The players' case is strongest on the question of free agency. The recently expired collective bargaining agreement allowed teams who lost free agents compensation in the form of draft choices. The NFLPA proposed that compensation not apply to free agents with more than four years of NFL experience. The players claim they are restricted in choosing their place of employment, unlike other professions.

The players' reasoning is correct. Owners argue that free agency would harm competition, as the richest franchises would garner the majority of the talent. The argument is weakened substantially because the bulk of owners' revenue comes from the NFL's network television contract, which is equally divided among all 28 teams. The players, although paid handsomely — the average annual salary is \$230,000 — are effectively prohibited from seeking to improve their working conditions. The players' affluence does not mitigate their right to unrestricted movement.

Regardless of the differences in negotiating stances, both the players and the owners have a common stake in resolving the issues swiftly. Both parties stand to lose huge amounts of revenue — an average of \$15,000 per game for the players and millions in TV profits for the owners. They also risk endangering the good will of a football-crazed public. If reason prevails, the players and owners will quickly end the deafening silence now filling NFL stadiums. — Chris Chapman

The Daily Tar Heel

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Readers' Forum

Love and courtship, American style

Pierre Tristam

Post Impressions

It was a scene George Sand or Frederic Chopin could have immortalized in a poem or a prelude. We were atop Mount Jefferson. The sun was about to set. Several feet away from us, Caroline and Mrs. Worth, her mother, chatted as women do so seductively well, though with visible secrecy. On a cliff-hanging rock of our own, Mr. Worth and I exchanged a pair of binoculars and peered into the immensity of the country stretched below, mountain after plain after mountain interspersed with modern-looking towns and highways. Here lay North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee and — with a little imagination, its aging television antenna piercing through the haze way to the northeast — the Empire State Building.

Fortunately, Sand and his effusive Chopin died long ago. This was no time for poems or songs so much as for diplomacy. A girl was introducing me to her parents for the first time in that ageless ritual that still cannot be mastered or avoided. The lyrical setting made things a little easy, although the drive up to Ashe County had been nothing but nervous expectations. Hiding in patriotism, Caroline and I played Aaron Copland's "Appalachian Spring" on the car stereo, followed by some silly melodramatic tidbits of the baroque and the 70s, but nothing, not even a heated argument over the merits of "The Magic Flute" could relax us.

Courtship is a dangerous business in America. It is looked at with much suspicion since it remains a habit of the Old World never quite understood in the pragmatic New World. Like a Roman army on a rampage the tendency for

couples here is to go from A (first contact) to Z (bed) without minding the 24 steps between, let alone creating the 1,001 steps beyond.

Caroline and I, if only for nostalgia's sake, could not neglect certain revelries like a dinner, declarations inspired from Pavarotti's Neapolitan arias, excruciating separations of an hour or two and inevitably, the blessing of parents, omnipresent no matter where they are. Courtly propriety has its place. And in this case it led straight to the heart of Jefferson.

Far from the suspicious looks of city folks, far from the characteristic coolness of Protestants of the plains, far from the condescending stares of college-town academics, I was welcomed with hospitality comparable only to that of an Arab sheikh, though good Turkish coffee was not available.

I almost thought such hospitality peculiar to North Carolina's mountains, and more especially to Ashe County. The sight from Mount Jefferson was convincing enough. Everything, including those staples of American architectural inelegance — malls — looked serene and perfect in a way that justified Mr. Worth's ("Allen," I now could say) having never lived anywhere else.

Even more appealing was Ashe County's distance from the so-called realities of everyday life, let them be the demise of

the Persian Gulf or the designs of Judge Robert Bork, the temper of the economy or that of a roommate, the presumptions of a boss or of a professor, the overblown consequences of a grade or of a job interview . . . Ashe County seemed safe.

True, the secluded landing strip in the distance, Allen pointed out, was occasionally used by traffickers as an ideal drop-off for Colombian dust. Wealthy Floridians were buying up land in sweeps, upsetting the county's calm with their greedy real estate ventures. Crime was slowly becoming part of the norm, or at least trying to. Ashe County residents might even have to start locking their doors at night.

But none of those ills, microscopic compared to those of the surreal world beyond, mattered to me at all. For I was now convinced that the pleasures of courtship and majesty of the mountains were created together on the Seventh (not the Third) Day as the safest refuges from the pains and sorrows caused by the faulty creations of the other six.

As evening came and with it the end of our Seventh Day, Caroline and I saw that it was not so good, especially since we could not live a one-day week. With Chapel Hill waiting in the wings, however, there was yet the pleasure of a few dinners at Cracovia and the expectancy of another trip to Jefferson, probably before the turning of the leaves.

Pierre Tristam is a graduate student in history from Carrboro.

Bork's assets numerous

To the editor: Mike Mackay's editorial "Bork nomination is injustice" of Sept. 21 was unfair and totally inaccurate. It totally ignored Judge Robert Bork's excellent qualifications for the Supreme Court and, instead, chose to portray him as an extremist.

This is clearly not true. During the time in which Bork has served on the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals, not one of his decisions has been overturned by the Supreme Court. Furthermore, we should remember that for this position Bork was given the unanimous approval of the Senate.

While Bork was teaching at Yale, he did what law professors are encouraged to do. He proposed new and different ways of interpreting the law and the Constitution. This is designed to open up fresh debates of uncertain points. Many of Bork's critics, however, are describing these ideas as being an indication of his extremist views.

Bork is one of the most respected legal scholars in America. He was a professor at Yale for a number of years and has most recently served as a federal appeals court judge for the District of Columbia. In both positions he has followed the philosophy of judicial restraint.

It is for this philosophy that he is now being opposed. Judicial restraint is the belief that judges should interpret the law, not make it. Today, too many judges are stepping outside of their constitutionally appointed area of responsibility — that of interpreting. Instead, many activist judges are using the law to advance their own agendas.

I do not find it ironic at all that the Bork nomination coincides with the 200th anniversary of the Constitution. I find it quite appropriate. It is time to respect the Constitution, and place justices on the Supreme Court who accept the fact that their responsibility is limited to interpreting the law as made by the legislative branch. Bork



would be such a justice.

EDWARD YEAGER
 Senior
 International Studies

Biden deserves absolutism

To the editor: Up till now we only had to worry about James Surowiecki butchering sports articles, but thanks to his editorial "Fine words do double duty," (Sept. 18), we now have to read his pompous, overwritten tripe in such areas as politics.

Jim, it's really intriguing of you to pass judgment on something you know nothing about. If you had listened to Sen. Joe Biden's explanation of the plagiarism incident, that, by the way, occurred 22 years ago in law school, you would have found that it was a stupid mistake, not the "willingness to pass off another's work as his own," as you stated. Biden said that he did not properly note the source of his quote in his law paper, but he did give credit to the author in his paper. He did not malevolently misrepresent anything, he just did not use proper notation. It should have been obvious, even to certain garden vegetables, that if he had deliberately plagiarized five pages of his paper, he would have been thrown out of school instead of just being

chastised by the dean of the law school. Obviously, the dean was satisfied with his explanation.

Also, if Biden did inadvertently plagiarize his paper, that event was so long ago that it shouldn't in any way preclude his becoming president. Just think, Jim, if people hold your mistakes against you for your whole life, you'll never get a job working for any newspaper in this country after some of your articles. Your editorial was not all bad; you did get to show off some of your vast writing skills. You even used the word "penumbra." Hey, new thesaurus, Jim?

From now on stick to covering your beloved Big East, and please, whatever you do, don't cover Student Congress or town council meetings.

ROB FRIEDMAN
 Senior
 Political Science/Economics

Cradle concert misjudged

To the editor: After reading Rob Sherman's article on the Sonic Youth concert ("Playing with confidence, Sonic Youth blows 'em out at Cat's Cradle," Sept. 17), I came up with one outstanding question: Did Sherman attend the same concert I did on Sept. 15?

Sherman not only bored us with his socio-economic analysis of Chapel Hill's pseudo-deprived, leather-clad youth (which not only is a drawn-out topic but totally misplaced and pointless in this article), but made a major issue of describing the crowd at the Cradle as a herd of pretentious, misled adolescents, which they were not. This show was atypical in that it could boast of a genuinely enthusiastic, mixed audience.

Sherman blindly overlooked that the Cradle could not have been "bursting with high school students outfitted with eyeliner and bad attitudes" simply because the age requirement was 18 (which made his question of "how these kids get their parents to let them stay up so late on a school night" equally ridiculous).

Also, Kim Gordon did not sing the majority of the vocals. And the vocals were only unintelligible if you were totally unfamiliar with Sonic Youth's music. And the music was only unintelligible if you didn't appreciate it to begin with, as Sherman clearly didn't.

What then, pray tell, was he doing reviewing a concert he obviously didn't like or understand, and obviously wasn't paying attention to?

BELISA VRANICH
 Senior
 Psychology

Open your eyes before criticizing editorials

To the editor: I am writing in response to the letters "GOP loves education, too" (Sept. 17) by Ken Costner and "Mrs. Dole bows to no one" (Sept. 18) by Steve Long and Angela Sigmon.

In the first letter, Costner justifies the Reagan Administration's educational cuts with the Constitution. State governments may be technically responsible for paying for education, but federal support is also needed. Since the states have received support at a certain level over an extended period of time, they are caught unprepared when the support is quickly and drastically cut. Since most states, including North Carolina, have a constitutionally balanced budget, they cannot magically come up with the money to replace federal support. Therefore, when the federal government cuts support to a state like North Carolina, it is not an act of "merely returning the responsibility of education to the state."

It is an act which creates a void; either taxes go up, education gets cut, or something else gets cut. Another ludicrous policy enacted by the current administration is the taxing of student financial aid, grants and scholarships as income. What was the reasoning on this gem? Let's see, to help soothe the loss of revenue from huge tax breaks to the rich, let's start taxing poor college students receiving financial aid. Yeah, that's the ticket! That's the Republican ticket.

In their letter, Long and Sigmon claim that Mrs. Dole's resignation from the post of secretary of transportation was not a Republican mandate but an urging from "some of Bob's major supporters." Well, exactly who are Bob's major supporters? Could they be Republicans? Can you not read between the lines? What did you expect Mrs. Dole to say? "Yes, I have been told to step down by members of the campaign." Ultimately, the point is that

she was seriously pressured to step down, especially when airline traffic and service is a mess. Would you expect Sen. Dole to resign his seat if his wife decided to run for that office? He isn't even resigning his position for his own campaign. I think it is obvious whose career is first priority with the Dole family and that some of President Reagan's appointments of women to high-level positions are viewed by the Republican Party as tokens that can be withdrawn at any expedient time.

I do believe that Jill Gerber and the DTH editorial staff have thought about these matters before writing. I think it is time for you to begin to think and quit blindly accepting what Ronnie and Co. hand down from Washington.

ANDREW MARTIN
 Senior
 Mathematics