

The Daily Tar Heel

96th year of editorial freedom

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The super body president myth

The student body president isn't a Superman. It's a shame the University administration tends to treat him like one.

The Chancellor Search Committee had one student member: former Student Body President Brian Bailey. Another search committee, this one for a new vice chancellor for business and finance, also has one student member: current Student Body President Kevin Martin.

Since student body presidents are elected by campus, it's reasonable to expect them to represent student concerns. But the make-up of the search committees is a good example of a disturbing tendency among the University powers-that-be to assume that the student body president can represent all student concerns in all situations.

For instance, consider the role of the student body president as an ex officio member of the Board of Trustees. When considering an issue, the trustees can turn to Kevin Martin, ask him what he thinks, listen to his opinion and proceed. Later, if other students happen to complain about a decision, the board can say — in all honesty — that student opinion was solicited.

But one student's opinion — sometimes on an issue he has little knowledge of — is not enough. If University

administrators want to demonstrate a sincere commitment to student involvement, they must do more than place the student body president on every board or search committee.

There are other student organizations, such as Student Congress, the Graduate and Professional Students Federation, the Black Student Movement and the Carolina Athletic Association, which should be used as a source for student representation.

Student Congress Speaker Neil Riemann expressed student frustration well when he said: "From the congress' point of view, the change that needs to happen is that the chancellor has to listen to congress. Any time you rely on one person, you get a very constrained view of what the issues are."

And many student leaders — not just Riemann — have expressed a desire to improve communication between students and administrators. Officials should take advantage of such willingness to get involved in the University's decision-making process.

While the student body president can help student opinions to be heard, only a Superman could be expected to be an authority on all student issues.

And I haven't seen Kevin Martin duck into Suite C, rip off his shirt and display a big red "SBP" on his chest lately. Have you? — Jean Lutes

Look, you can see his lips moving

Just whose lap is President Reagan sitting on today? The question is a valid one to ask of the ventriloquist's dummy who now holds the position of chief executive of the United States. According to a recent book, the Reagan dummy was trotted out of his trunk on several occasions to appear on stage with former press secretary Larry Speakes.

In "Speaking Out," Speakes revealed that he had fabricated statements on his own initiative for release to the press, improperly attributing them to the president.

Only two specific incidents are detailed in Speakes' book: one in 1983, after the crash of KAL Flight 007, and another in 1985 following the Geneva Summit. Speakes passed off his own comments and the comments of other officials to the press as those of the president. This was apparently an effort to keep the president from appearing uninformed or ill-prepared in the eyes of the world community. In the bright spotlight of global attention, no one saw Speakes' lips moving in the background. Reagan was the perfect dummy. Did anyone check to see if Speakes could drink a glass of water during the Washington Summit?

In Reagan's defense, the office of president is extraordinarily complex. Today's political environment requires the president to be superhuman.

Ronald Reagan is not Superman, and delegating authority becomes a necessary part of the job.

This is especially true in today's atmosphere of constant media attention, in which image has become the only reality, style more important than substance. Public officials are expected to give flawless performances on a daily basis. Such performances require prompters — presidential aides and cabinet members are necessary to keep up the act.

However, these prompters must function solely as supporting actors. When the understudies begin to take center stage, unnoticed by the star and the audience, the director has lost control — assuming he had it in the first place.

The American people did not elect Larry Speakes or Oliver North; yet both of these men have written unauthorized news scenes for "President Teddy Ruxpin." The plot has thickened unexpectedly.

The Reagan years are, thankfully, drawing to a close. Soon it will be time to choose a new star. Looking at the current field of presidential aspirants, it would be wise to consider who would best stand on their own — using their aides, but not being controlled by them.

Unless voters ask these questions, they run the risk of becoming the real dummies. — Bill Yelverton

Readers' Forum

It's not trendy to oppose genocide

Dale McKinley
 Guest Writer

Editorials and articles concerning the character and direction of student activism have increasingly appeared in the DTH and other student publications. Not surprisingly, the majority of these have been aimed at a perceived lack of concern for "others' rights and the "trendy" character of the actions and the activists themselves. Both individual students and DTH writers have lashed out at the insensitivity and the "alienating" nature of certain groups' actions on the student body and the community. Furthermore, certain activists have been portrayed as individual automatons running around looking for whatever "cause" they can find, to satisfy a seemingly insatiable desire for publicity and attention. The end result is a picture of campus activism as a non-serious, immature, irresponsible and spontaneous exercise in "playing politics."

Speaking for those who stand accused, we are all relieved that those on the sidelines have such a perceptive insight into our intentions and intellectual capabilities. I, for one, am grateful that my personal involvement in groups such as the CIA Action Committee and Action Against Apartheid has finally been explained to me. Now I can see clearly that my motivations for wanting the CIA disbarred from campus, CIA criminal activities exposed and apartheid and its wars on neighboring countries revealed are nothing more than a combination of self-serving, socially irresponsible and disrupting desires.

Not only are the intentions and motivations of participants in the above mentioned groups attacked, but also the character of the actions they use to express themselves. God forbid that we should "violate" the First Amendment rights of the CIA or disturb the tranquility of campus life with our "noise" and occupation of classroom buildings; nor should we dare to challenge the moral backbone of University officials and other students who

shrug off the genocidal character of apartheid and of CIA covert activities, lest we "alienate" them. We are told our protests must be kept within the bounds of "responsible" action, and that our actions should be aimed at "practicable" solutions to the problems addressed. Keep to these guidelines, and everyone will at least tolerate us; step out of these boundaries in our actions, and we become "terrorists" who have gone way too far. In either case we lose, because even if we keep within the boundaries of "responsible" action, we will be accused of grabbing a "trendy" issue that has little significance beyond the fact that we are engaging in protesting "something."

The essential point behind all of this criticism seems to be that activism should operate within the parameters of the status quo. If this advice is followed, then everyone will be happy, activists will be taken "seriously" and members of the student body and the community won't be disturbed from their all-consuming day-to-day activities. If only we would concentrate our energy and efforts on issues that are "closer to home" and that most people could agree with, tailoring our actions to fit into the broad spectrum of public opinion — then maybe student activism could be given a legitimate place on the mantle of this society. Conciliatory, cooperative, non-ideological; these are the passwords for "responsible" and legitimate activism. Confrontation, challenge; these are the no-nos! Possibly, there is room for a little confrontation and challenge, but we have to be nice about it, something analogous to being allowed to rock the boat but certainly not to put a hole in it.

Confronting the illegitimate activities of a "respected" government institution and the campus's ties with it, or challenging the students and the community to aid in the liberation of a people halfway around the world are not issues that can be approached from a polite, non-disruptive or toothless type of activism. Education on the issues means nothing without concerted direct action aimed at those who, by their idleness or through conscious choice, help to perpetuate the genocidal practices of the CIA and the system of apartheid. If we were to engage in the "responsible" type of activism that we are told is the only way to be "successful," we would be denying the very existence of the system that contributes to those genocidal practices. Indeed, the only thing that would be successful in would be the assurance that our actions and motivations would be accepted by the very people and institutions that are direct or indirect partners of the CIA and the apartheid system. We could then truly say that we are trend followers and self-servers, for what could be more self-serving than to gratify ourselves in the knowledge that our actions and motivations are accepted by the people and institutions that are part and parcel of what we are fighting against? In the process, we would reduce the struggle and suffering of the victims of the CIA and of apartheid to mere appendages of our more noteworthy "responsible" activism, in which we could take great pride.

Despite the name-calling, the harassment, the red-baiting and the charges leveled from all sides, we will continue to challenge and confront through education and direct action. Amandla! Vencera!

Dale McKinley is a doctoral candidate in the political science department from Gweru, Zimbabwe.

Protesters belong on p. 3

To the editor:
 I picked up Thursday's DTH and all I could do was let out a big sigh. I had just seen Dale McKinley's name in the DTH for the millionth time, and there was the 250th front-page photo of our resident professional activist.

While I realize that campus protests are news, why must the DTH play up the myriad protests on campus? Surely on some days there are more newsworthy items that deserve coverage. I hate to see my campus newspaper turn into a vehicle to promote the liberal actions of the Berkeley-esque activists at UNC.

No, I don't like apartheid. Yes, I think the CIA should be permitted to conduct interviews on campus. Obviously, Dale, you don't want to work for the "terrorism-filled" CIA. But why not let those students who do go through the interview process?

I am merely asking for a little news judgment once in a while. At the editor's budget meeting, a little thought might put one of the McKinley stories on an inside page, rather than always assuming that it is automatically page-one material. A weak news day, however, might shoot down that idea.

ANDY TRINCIA
 Senior Journalism



Southerners misunderstood

To the editor:
 In response to Barbara Linn's column "Beaufort, North Carolina is my oyster," (April 11) I would like to express my disappointment in her assessment of Beaufort, an area known by many as a classy town by the sea.

Linn, an international studies major, states in her article that she prides herself in expanding her horizons. It seems to me that doing so would be fairly difficult with a

closed mind. Though Linn, a Northerner from Chalfont, Pa., is big enough to credit Beaufort with the label of a "community," she might as well have called it a Southern "hick-town."

Linn made it quite clear in her article that pick-up trucks and friendly neighbors seemed to her a quite amusing Southern tradition.

It is frustrating for me to see yet another example of Northern disrespect for something (anything) Southern. I, myself, am a native Northerner. When I moved to the South six years ago, I was ridiculed at times just

short of being called a "damn Yankee."

The Civil War is over. People, Northerners as well as Southerners, need to show they've learned from their education — show some respect for people of different backgrounds. I'm sure Linn's friend, an eastern North Carolina native, would appreciate it.

VERONICA GONTRAM
 Sophomore Journalism

■ The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity.

Duke, divestment and dining hauls

Week in Quotes

"I've never known a trace of a scandal coming out of UNC at Chapel Hill, and we Duke fellows watch closely." — Chancellor-designate Paul Hardin discussing his role as UNC's next chancellor. Hardin, a graduate of Duke University, was making an oblique reference to his resignation in 1974 from the presidency of Southern Methodist University, which came about when he blew the whistle on SMU's athletic program.

"The weekend's been a blur. I've had so much fun, but I have no recollection of what I've done." — Sophomore Angela Hall, summing up the weekend triumvirate of Burnout, Springfest and Carolina Beach Blast.

"I think you have it at every campus in the United States. People like to take the most direct way. We like to discourage this." — Eugene Swecker, associate vice chancellor of facilities management, discussing the persistent growth of dirt paths where students cut across the grass instead of using the existing brick paths.

"When I see what happens to kids who are being thrown away by the system, I feel it in my soul and in my heart. I don't think legislators feel it." — Joel Segal, the coordinator of the North Carolina Child Care and Neglect Project, talking about the project's successful fund-raising drive.

"Some of the campus groups have adopted this as their pet issue. Mozambique has replaced South Africa right now." — Jeff House, a spokesman for Kansas Sen. Robert Dole, commenting on student opposition to the Mozambican rebels.

"If either group sees the need to talk about the situation further, they should come through the proper channels. We (the board members) are willing to discuss it with them." — Bob Eubanks, chairman of the board of trustees, on the board's willingness to discuss divestment guidelines with campus anti-apartheid groups.

"Willie M. children are not retarded, but they are anti-social and combative. They could potentially be arsonists." — Attorney Michael Levine on the concerns of Dogwood Acres subdivision residents about the relocation of a center that houses troubled teens — the Janus Tree House — into their neighborhood.

"A number of people who have been sponsored by the 'old boys club' that has

existed in the South Building will slowly be replaced by persons who are more of Mr. Hardin's point of view and have fresh viewpoints on their positions. He's going to be bringing in a new team." — Speech communications professor Paul Brandes, on the appointment of Chancellor Paul Hardin.

"You go through a period of about two weeks where everyone's talking about drug prevention. But after he's buried and everyone has stopped crying, the drug use goes on." — Nevauna Graves, a freshman from Asheville, on how the death of UNC senior David Mantey will affect campus drug use. Mantey may have been on psychedelic mushrooms when he fell from Granville Towers.

"This is our dining hall. Don't push me out of my dining hall. This is police brutality." — Activist Dale McKinley, protesting as University police officers shoved him out of Lenoir dining hall. McKinley and several other students were engaged in a theatrical protest of the CIA.

"I was unhappy with the Klingons and how they were presented. It was like 'Why do they do what they do? Because they're evil.' I cannot believe that humanity is divided up like that, between good and evil." — Gene Roddenberry, creator of "Star Trek," addressing science fiction fans and trekkies in Hanes Art Center Tuesday night.

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