

## Opinion

# Typing letters for the DTH provides rare insights

I should mention, before I am accused of insensitively burdening you with uninformed opinions on stale issues, that for the past two years I have performed a vital function for this page. The title is "editorial assistant," but that's one for the resume, much like "sanitation engineer." My responsibilities, however, are critical, for I am a typist. I am the one who turns your every letter into a computer file, for a little over minimum wage. Is this fulfillment, or even just compensation? I have my opinion, but I do make more money than the editor.

Rarely am I able to get anyone to appreciate the full significance of the job, but detailing the implications might help. Think of all the CGLA articles you never finished, and then remember that I don't have a choice. Think of the times you wondered at the variety of arguments this debate

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produces, and know that we don't run them all. What keeps me going, however, is the fact that there is more to life as a typist than the keyboard. The view of the comptroller, as a typing medium, is something of an outsider's; it can reveal things which transcend the mere argument.

Rhetorical trends are most fascinating. I'm not sure what prompts people to use the word "logic" in their letters, but it would seem that one of the most common phrases I encounter is something like this: "The logic of this argument (or statement) is fallacious." I would expect this from philosophy majors, but it doesn't appear to be the result of any

particular training or background. Hence, by obvious deduction, it must sound good. Unfortunately, issues like the CGLA or Playboy are hardly suitable to empirical debate, and the Reader's Forum isn't quite long enough to allow a treatise to logically conclude an undeniable truth. Besides, most of the responses, even though they do make valid points, are as emotionally inspired as the original letters. Throwing "logic" and syllogism into the fray hardly seems fair.

Psychological responses and the subconscious play an unrecognized and important role in Letter Land. While the AP Stylebook has standards for capitalization and other hotly contested grammatical issues, I get to see the raw letters before they are made to conform, and I am convinced that grammatical mistakes are actually slips of a Freudian finger on a

typewriter. Conservatives, usually responding to campus protests or issues of morality, rarely capitalize terms such as "First Amendment," while liberals, responding to just about anything, insist upon capitalizing everything. Two common misconceptions I would like to address are the Pit, which is capitalized, and homophobe, which isn't even an official word yet, much less deserving of capitalization. Another difficulty not resolved by the almighty Stylebook is the capitalization of races; invariably, a letter calling for an end to racial discrimination will capitalize one race while ignoring the other. It would seem that this would get across the wrong message.

I begin treading dangerous ground now, so let me say that I respect and welcome everyone's right to say anything they please in the newspaper. Still, I have to wonder if people

really expect those Biblical quotes they include to be effective. Yes, I am a practicing Episcopalian, but all that means is that I'm going to view "1 Corinthians 6" in a different light than a Baptist, not to mention a Jew, Moslem or atheist. Have you ever read "1 Corinthians 6" and said, "Gee, that settles my dilemma?" Anyway, as is too often bemoaned, most people probably could care less.

What people couldn't care more about, and is the most easily identifiable aspect of campus thought, is the focus of the tug-of-war between liberals and conservatives. The really "in" thing to do is to prove your political stance by writing about the hot topic. Dale McKinley and the "Trendies," whether or not they deserve such a label, are replacing the CGLA as the center of this struggle. If this is to follow last year's pattern, we will learn much about Dale in the

months to come, perhaps more than you ever wanted to know. On the bright side, this one seems to be growing old quickly, and you can't call for referendums to defund a personality.

Before I truly offend anyone, though, I'd best conclude in as conciliatory a manner as possible. After all, the letters you write are the time and money of my livelihood, and I appreciate your support. Participate in the Reader's Forum as often you wish, and if you're already a veteran of the letter wars, bring a friend. It's your newspaper; make the most of it, and write a letter today.

But please, please remember to type it.

*David Starnes is a sophomore English and history major from Huntsville, Alabama.*

## Free speech a right belonging to all in CGLA debate

Once again, it is time for me, a heterosexual, "bigoted, uninformed" male to verbally attack the "enlightened, informed, holier-than-thou" homosexual community.

I was rather amused by Mark Donahue's reference to Christopher Morgan as a "mental casualty" ("CGLA funding has student support," April 13). I was also struck by the two words "immoral" and "illegal." Morality cannot be used as a criterion here, simply because morality is a creation of today's society and eventually stands on a personal basis, to be determined by the individual. However, legality may be introduced as a topic for discussion, because to my knowledge, homosexuality is a crime in North Carolina. The CGLA did receive their money, however. I wonder if a Cunnilingus and Fellatio Association might be in the creation stage — would it also receive a fair share of student fees if it proved to be a "beneficial" association?

Donahue is correct in stating that 42 percent of the student body feels that funding the CGLA is a just cause. However, this does not nullify Christopher Morgan's belief ("Listen to majority views on CGLA," April 11) that gay support is a minority. Let us clearly define "gay support." The majority of students with whom I have discussed this matter did not support homosexuality, but felt that denying the CGLA their fair share of the dollar would be constitutionally wrong. I think that this falls under that famous quote, "I may disagree with what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it."

The word "homophobe" also caught my rather prejudiced eye. I think this term is also ambiguous. My dictionary defines a phobia as a "strong and unreasonable fear of something." I think "homophobes" are a creation of the CGLA, and possibly an endangered species. I personally do not fear homosexuals; I simply dislike them. I am not afraid

**Jeffrey Grimes**  
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of spiders, but that does not mean I would like to be in a room full of them.

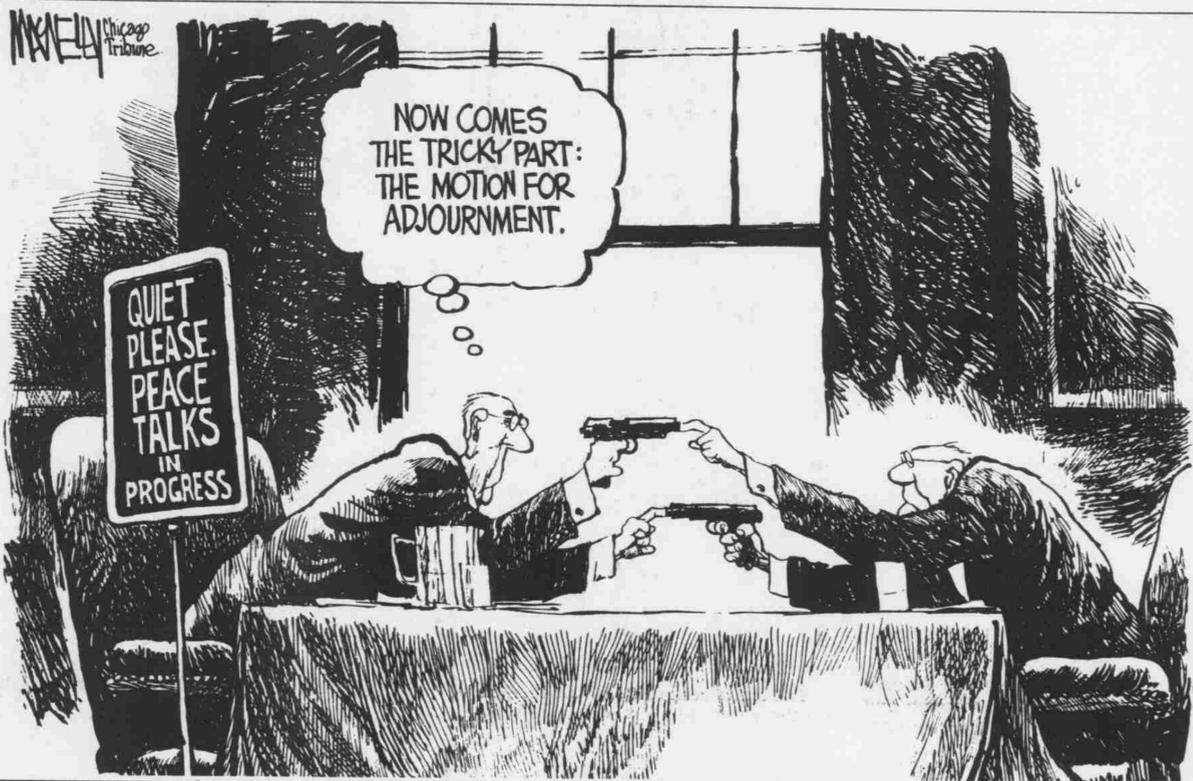
I also find Donahue's belief about the Bible's stance on homosexuality to be a case of grasping at straws. Unless I am mistaken, some of Donahue's "biblical buddies" were consumed by "fire from the heavens" in the twin cities of sin and corruption, because they were leering at Lot and his son outside the city gate. Score one for divine intervention.

*"... the CGLA is a campus group, and people must decide for themselves what to accept or deny."*

Lastly, I agree with Donahue that no beliefs are being forced on anyone. The fact is that the CGLA is a campus group, and people must decide for themselves what to accept or deny. I was myself surprised to find such a large homosexual community in the college I have longed to attend since I was a child. But life is, after all, full of surprises.

I am sorry, as a student and a citizen of the United States, that the group is being persecuted. But to scream "prejudice" at every turn only serves to aggravate the situation, which has already reached a ridiculous level. However, I would hope that Donahue would understand that both Morgan and I are entitled to our free speech and opinion as much as he is. There is no monopoly on democracy, my friend.

*Jeffrey Grimes is a sophomore biology and English major from Tar Heel.*



## Speakes spoke too soon, betraying Reagan

Everybody has been hollering about Larry Speakes lately. The former White House spokesman has gotten the business since the release of his book last week, wherein he claims that he "manufactured" certain quotes for President Reagan.

Marlin Fitzwater, the new White House spokesman, calls it inexcusable. Denison University cancelled a scheduled Speakes lecture, and Merrill Lynch (Speakes' present employer) dropped the hint that it might be time for the quote wizard to take an early retirement. The firm's annual report is titled "A Tradition of Trust."

Speakes says he played Cyrano for President Reagan on two occasions. The first came after the Soviets shot down Korean airliner 007; the other was during the Geneva Accords with

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Reagan and Gorbachev. Some say Speakes was responsible for turning the 007 incident into a "world vs. Soviet" issue. I wouldn't give him that much credit. The moment the world heard of a Soviet MiG ruthlessly downing a passenger plane, the incident was a "world vs. Soviet" issue. You can't keep things like that in the closet.

As for Geneva, President Reagan needed help. Gorbachev had Reagan's public image against the ropes. He came off like a movie star in the eyes of the press, and Reagan appeared to have stage fright. So what did Speakes do? He tried to help

the guy out. He made him sound a bit more intelligent and involved, and in the end, he took the bullet for Reagan.

Granted, making up quotes shouldn't become a habit for presidential PR men, but it's been done before. Washington Post columnist William Raspberry similarly argues that making up quotes isn't unknown — "but the general rule is to clear the quotes first." It's also the general rule to make confessions and expose secrets at a time when people won't be hurt by them.

Novelists usually wait until their parents or friends are dead to write about them in frank terms, but Larry Speakes just couldn't wait. In an age when any Dick or Jane thinks he/she is qualified to lead a talk show, in an age when someone like Jesse Jackson (a man who has never been

elected to an office in his life) thinks he can waltz into the presidency; in an age when every ex-federal aide, secretary or janitor writes a book about the VIP he once served, Larry Speakes' book is a cliché. That's where he is open to criticism: Reagan is still in office, and what Speakes says now could compromise national security and foreign relations.

Critics claim Larry Speakes altered the course of history by speaking out of turn at Geneva and after the Korean airliner tragedy. The fact is, there would have been little to write about if Speakes had left President Reagan on his own. As a rule, quote-making is best left to the quoted himself; but what's a PR man supposed to do when his boss goes mute?

*Dan Morrison is a junior American studies major from Detroit.*

## Right history

### Defunding is new, slick discrimination for the '80s

It has really become quite sickening to see letter after letter decry the Carolina Gay and Lesbian Association.

No, you're probably wondering, I'm not gay, and I'm not a closet gay, and I'm not bisexual. I'm heterosexual, just like the majority of you are. I also never chose my heterosexuality. Let's think about it. Do you, the heterosexuals, wake up every morning and choose the opposite sex as your preference, like you choose the color of shirt you're going to wear? Of course not. It's just kind of there, isn't it?

And if it were a choice, why in the world would you choose to be homosexual? You'd have to be crazy to do so, considering the way this campus treats homosexuals. The tremendous debate over whether homosexuality stems from hereditary or environmental influences is absolutely irrelevant. The point is, you didn't choose it; external forces (nature or nurture) rather unfairly did. You were either genetically predisposed or socialized by the environment. If you still believe it's a free choice, then, if you're a heterosexual, for one day try and choose to be attracted to the same sex. See if you can actually choose your sexual preference, and then start

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to wonder how much of a free choice homosexuals have.

So, from that, we can make the simple deduction that homosexuals are a minority that had no say in the single factor that made them a minority. Isn't this beginning to sound a lot like the situation many other minorities, such as blacks, are in? Blacks certainly didn't choose their skin color, and their skin color is the only reason they're a minority.

But it's the 1980s now, and it isn't hip for the majority to humiliate blacks anymore. No, now we've got a new minority to drag through the mud: homosexuals. Up until the mid-1960s, the majority down South didn't seem to mind pushing blacks to the back of the bus. And in the 1930s in Nazi Germany, that same darned majority was convinced the Jews were the source of all their problems.

But it's the '80s now, and it's hip for the majority to insult someone else. No, you can't throw them to the lions, like you did to the Christians. No, you can't burn them to death in

ovens, like you did to the Jews. No, you can't separate their public facilities, like buses, restrooms and universities, like you did to the blacks. No, this is the '80s; you're too sophisticated for that. You've got a new and improved way of denigrating the minority. You defund them.

Some claim their religion can't be reconciled with homosexuality. That's perfectly all right; every individual is entitled to his beliefs, but let's not forget something vitally important here. Our legal system distinctly and deliberately separates church from state. It has done so for the past two centuries, and it always will. And let's not kid each other; the reason we do this is to prevent the religious majority from creating laws that could impinge on the inalienable rights of any minority. No one has to like, agree with or condone homosexuality. But if you live in this country, then you must live by its law, and that law accords a fundamental respect for the worth and dignity of all peoples, including minorities.

The point is, why must we insist on persecuting the minority now, only to look back on these civil days in the future and say things like, "Gosh, what a blemish on our great nation's history; I wish we'd have treated blacks right from the beginning"?

Well folks, this is the chance we've always wanted. We can, in a sense, rewrite the disgraceful portions of our country's history by refraining from adding the next chapter of shame. That chapter is certainly there, ready to be irrevocably inscribed in the annals of American history. But it does not have to happen. We can, thankfully, alter our future by simply avoiding repeating the mistakes of the past. We've got the chance to do it right the first time, by simply refraining from discriminating against homosexuals, as we've at last begun to do with blacks.

And do you know how much it's going to cost you to do just that? Ten cents. That's how much your student fees contribute to the CGLA. Ten measly cents for an entire year. Most of you spend 10 times that every day for a Coke and a bag of popcorn for the daily Pit sit.

Come on, Carolina, let's not let history teach us the same, tired old lesson all over again. We've got a chance; for humanity's sake, let's do it right this time.

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## And now, the top 25 list

After attending this University for nearly two years, I have watched liberals and conservatives ruthlessly shoot each other down, in both confidence and desperation (with the conservatives usually winning, but that is beside the point). In an attempt to provide a respite in this battle, I present now 25 questions about this school and town that have puzzled me for some time. I hope they will momentarily divert your attention from the annoying bickering that frequents the editorial pages:

Who were the madmen who designed Phillips and Venable halls? Are there any art majors living on the top floor of Hinton James? Why are two perpendicular towers at Granville named "East" and "West"? Is there any logic to the location of Whitehead and Spencer dorms? Is anything going to be done with the abandoned fraternity house in big frat court? Are some of the sororities and fraternities cloning factories for generic students? Has anyone met a Kappa Delta who wasn't incredibly gorgeous and incredibly stuck-up? Has anybody ever lit firecrackers by Silent Sam when a group of girls walked by? What percent of the student body are virgins? Has anyone spent the night in Davis Library? Has anybody had sex in Davis Library? Is anybody really serious about the Pittsboro Street extension? What was life like before Columbia Street was one-way? How many murders have

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been committed on campus? Why do I pick up Greensboro and Fayetteville television channels better than channels from Durham and Raleigh? How much money does Fowler's make in alcohol sales on an average weekend night during the semester? Does Time-Out get any business between noon and midnight? Are physics and chemistry labs intentionally written to thoroughly confuse students? Does anyone know anything about Gimghoul Castle? What is torn off the top of student basketball tickets? Just how many lower level student seats to basketball games are available during regular distribution on Sundays? Will either the varsity football or basketball teams win an ACC championship while I'm here? If U2 wasn't allowed to play in the Smith Center during exams, why was there a home basketball game during exams last semester? Does Dean Smith really smoke? Can the letters CIA, CGLA or BSM be mentioned in the DTH without some sort of controversy surrounding them?

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