

Opinion

Take notes from teachers

"Teaching is a grueling, thankless job." So concludes an 85-page survey titled "Report Card on School Reform: The Teachers Speak."

That sums up the much-heralded reforms at the beginning of the decade, as teachers continue to suffer the burdens of low salaries, long hours, and extra time-consuming duties, even while student achievement improves.

Seven of 10 teachers in the survey gave school reform a grade of "C" or less, and five of ten reported that teacher morale continues to decline.

Many governmental agencies have paid lip service to reforms, and many of them mean it — eventually. But when teachers report such low morale, it should be a strong signal to the agencies and politicians that that "eventually" needs to change to "immediately."

Teachers are, to be sure, continually frustrated by the increased bureaucracy and paperwork that has accompanied the reforms in curriculum — their students' performances increase in direct proportion to the decrease in morale.

Teachers are also saddled with non-teaching duties that should never have been assigned to them in the first place: lunchroom duty, bus duty, hall duty. These extras

take away from the time teachers have to interact with each other, a badly needed break from the mentalities of 10-year-olds, and give them one more reason to leave the profession. It is these extra duties that show how little respect society continues to have for teaching — "real" professions would never saddle their employees with these mindless but time-consuming jobs.

Some changes, most notably in South Carolina but also in this state, have begun to change the attitude toward teaching. South Carolina has pumped incredible amounts of money into education, and their teachers responded much more favorably in the survey.

North Carolina's Legislature passed the Basic Education Plan and established teaching fellowships of up to \$20,000 for students who agree to teach in North Carolina schools when they graduate. These sincere efforts to change the status of education in the state are a good start.

But this survey should alert legislators to continuing problems within the profession that demand attention. The short session of the state legislature begins in a week. Although there are plenty of other issues to confront, education should continue to occupy the front burner, especially in the budget process.

Stand firm in drug wars

Last Thursday, a Columbian revolutionary who helped found the world's largest cocaine cartel was convicted of running a sophisticated drug-smuggling conspiracy. He faces a maximum sentence of 150 years plus life in prison.

In the last two weeks, ships have been seized under the U.S. government's new "zero tolerance" policy for having minute amounts of marijuana aboard.

With that as a backdrop, President Reagan's envoy to Panama continues to hold negotiations with Panamanian leader Manuel Antonio Noriega to find ways for Noriega to give up his power. Those talks reportedly include an offer to drop the drug-smuggling indictments awaiting Noriega in Florida if he agrees to step down.

Once again, Reagan seems confused over what his own policies are. Zero tolerance, a terrific idea, should prove useful (although even the seized ships were returned without penalty) if it can scare people away from bringing even tiny amounts of drugs to the United States.

But 100 percent tolerance appears to be in effect for Noriega.

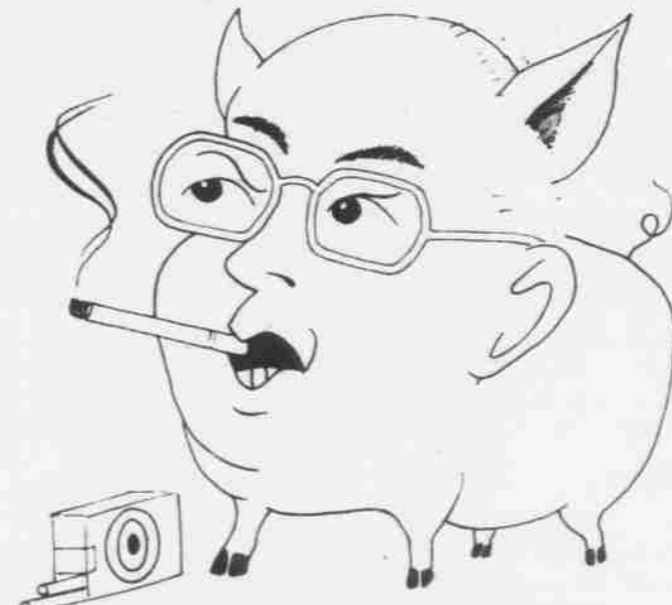
That negotiators would even consider the charges as a bargaining chip is ridiculous, especially knowing how much work went into obtaining the indictments.

In addition, there is no guarantee that getting Noriega out of power would put him out for good. The chances that he would leave now, only to return in a year and retake power, appear quite strong. By then the indictments would be long gone (along with one of the case's prosecutors, who has said he will resign if the charges are dropped), but the main problem would still be around. Why leave that for the next president to grapple with? He'll have enough else of the famed "Reagan legacy" to occupy his time.

Reagan needs to get his act, and his policies, together immediately. There is no excuse for this kind of waffling on such an important matter (and one that he and his wife appeared to be devoted to). Certainly Noriega needs to be ousted, and certainly our government never expected it to take this long. But that does not give it the excuse to ease up on its much-touted tough policies.

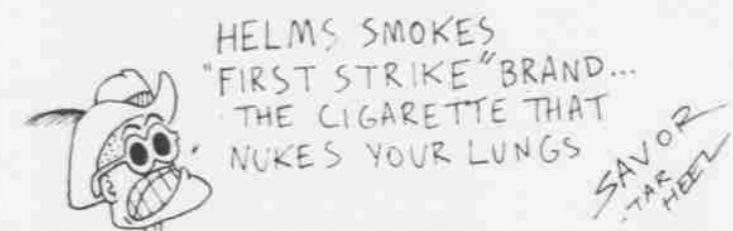


NORIEGA
A FANTASTICALLY UGLY BUT
CHARISMATIC RIGHT WING
POLITICIAN WHO FUNDS HIS
POWER BASE BY PUSHING
LETHAL ADDICTIVE DRUGS.



HELMS

DITTO.



Summer lessons in independence

Bill Hildebolt
Staff Columnist

I opened the door and was assaulted by a harsh odor. I choked back a gag and groped for a light switch. I found a switch, but no light accompanied it. I stumbled through the darkness and found a sink. No water. My eyes slowly adjusted to the dark, and I peered around the kitchen. A large creamy puddle surrounded the refrigerator.

College is the point in life where you break the binding ties and start to forge your own life as your own person — or so they told me.

But even though coming to Chapel Hill last fall was a change that uprooted my whole lifestyle and caused me to re-evaluate everything I believed and believed in, somehow I didn't have any new sense of independence. I reasoned that any change would likely be gradual, not something I'd feel all at once.

If, however, a flood of independence was what I wanted, well, then I have been rewarded. Nothing could have prepared me for the wave of fear that struck me two weeks ago about a block from my parents' house in Winston-Salem. As the setting sun shone through the car, the question, "What the hell am I doing?" suddenly had a relevance that rivaled some of the most bizarre (and often embarrassing) moments of my life. A summer

plan that had seemed so logical suddenly seemed so absurd that I nearly turned around.

Slowly, I realized what was happening. Last fall, I went away to college — but so did all my friends. My parents expected me to; they would have been upset if I hadn't.

But now I was coming to Chapel Hill for the summer. I was doing something that wasn't expected, much less required. And my parents were surprised, and maybe even a little hurt.

I was always what you could call home-oriented. If that's still so, then Chapel Hill is my home, and for my parents I've gone from an omnipresent entity to a long-distance child who has never been home when the dorms were open. My schedule is always too full to leave (yet somehow I made it to Boston and Washington during the semester). Summer promises the same.

The reasons I give people for staying in Chapel Hill all summer are legitimate and many. I want to get ahead in classes, I want to get to know Chapel Hill better, I want to get a

job that has fall semester potential, I want to stay involved on campus.

But when I'm totally honest with myself, I realize that I just don't want to move back to my old lifestyle. Not for more than a week at a time, anyway. High school was incredible, but I'm in college now, and going to my other "home" feels so strange.

It's not the city, though. It's me, and I've found that the people I know here this summer are surprisingly the same. Stephanie speaks about the need to break out of a feeling of living in her parent's world, and David says he just can't get anything done at home. The list goes on, but the idea is the same — summer school seems to afford the opportunity to really be that independent person, to gain a little control over a fate that often appears to be slightly pre-destined.

I was faced with a crisis. The dead phone in my hand taunted me with its silence. In Winston-Salem I'd have wondered what my parents were going to do about it. But no mother was there to call out to. Facing the puddle, I realized suddenly just what I'd gotten myself into.

Then, I smiled.

Bill Hildebolt is (finally) a sophomore economics/political science major from Winston-Salem.

The
Tar Heel

Editors — Sharon Kebschull and Nicki Weisensee
News Editor — Julia Coon
Photography Editor — David Minton
Design Editor — Mandy Spence
Assistant Editor — James Benton

Editorial Writers — Bill Hildebolt and Randy Basinger
Staff — Francine Allen, Allison Baker, Kari Barlow, Frank Bragg, Bill Brown, Beth Buffington, Scott Cooper, Jeff Eckard, Shelley Erbland, Mark Evans, Nancy Fister, Robert Genadio, Dawn Gibson, Susan Holdscaw, Anne Isenhower, James Mills, Michael Phillips, Angelia Poteat, Chris Sellers, Chris Sontchi, Mary Turner.