

Opinion

Now that the education is over, let the action begin

Dedication and deeds make a difference

Lectures, seminars kick off future education

Never do so many campus and community groups unite in such a collaboration of interest and concern as with Human Rights Week each year. A large professional staff working all year long would be lucky to even hold a candle to the bonfire this event has become.

Contrary to popular opinion, Human Rights Week is not solely the product of the Campus Y. It is the product of many diverse campus and community organizations which create programs that are coordinated by a Campus Y committee. Human Rights Week can only remain a truly effective instrument of education and awareness if it continues to be a shared product of these groups. Limiting the input and activity of any of these groups would greatly restrict the effectiveness of the week.

As stated on the back of the Human Rights Week brochure, the committee "shows no preference of opinion and covers the broadest area possible given our knowledge, resources and support." The committee itself will not present any program that in its knowledge directly or indirectly violates the human rights of any person. For example, as this year's keynote speaker the committee considered Oliver Tambo, a leader in the outlawed African National Con-

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gress, a group that advocates violence as a means to freedom from oppression. Although Tambo's actions are in the fight for human rights, they directly violate the rights of other people in South Africa. The committee decided that it could not sponsor Tambo under such circumstances, but if an outside group had wanted to, it could have.

Many issues in human rights have more than one side. Abortion, for example, raises two concerns: a woman's right to her own body and the unborn baby's right to his or her life. With this understanding, the Human Rights Week committee and the Campus Y recognize that it is not always possible to present all sides of an issue. Thus, it will not exclude an organization from presenting just one side of an issue. It does, however, encourage other groups with a different perspective to address the same issue.

Leaving the week's events indiscriminately open for programming by any group places the responsibility in the hands of the public. If a group of people feel strongly enough about

an issue, that issue is included in the week's programming. If an issue doesn't have enough support, it will not be presented. A possible solution to make sure that all sides are represented may be to better publicize the events that are to be included in Human Rights Week before the week's programming is set. That way, if another group was concerned that the full issue might not be presented, that group would have time to organize its own presentation.

A hope of Human Rights Week is that students and area residents will focus on the staggering imperfections in our world and realize that a one-hour seminar or meeting is just the beginning, that together — through awareness, dialogue and then action — we can make a difference. Human Rights Week is over for this year. But really, it should never end. And in that vein, the letters that have recently been printed in the DTH about imbalanced presentations are part of the continuing process of awareness. We urge anyone who feels that an issue was missed or inadequately covered to contact us at the Campus Y and help the dialogue continue. All power to the people!

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I want to thank Campus Y and all the organizers and participants for Human Rights Week. The programs were interesting, educational and eye-opening. The most eye-opening programs were Philip Agee's speech and particularly the documentary "Cover Up."

"Cover Up" deals with the CIA, the Iran-contra affair and the Reagan administration's involvement with both. The issues brought out in the film will shock you and you will be surprised by the atrocious, immoral actions performed by our government, the Reagan administration and the CIA. Now, hold on. I am not one of those radical activists running off my mouth that many of you are tired of hearing from. I am the average, dare I say "apathetic" college student. I am not a member of the CIA Action Committee or the Carolina Committee on Central America. I strongly supported the right of the CIA to interview on campus. I wanted to interview with them. I've been a supporter and fan of President Reagan and Vice President Bush. However, the things I heard in Agee's speech and in the "Cover Up" documentary have opened my eyes tremendously, and it has me thinking much differently about my views on these subjects.

Well, what was so shocking? The

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documentary talked about Reagan and Bush dealing with Iran in the fall of 1980 to postpone the release of the hostages until after the election to avoid an "October Surprise." The hostages were released about 20 minutes after Reagan's inauguration, and a few weeks later, arms were shipped to Iran. The film told of the atrocities on civilians performed by the CIA-formed contras. Oliver North and the many other players in the Iran-contra affair (some from top government positions) who did some suspicious, probably illegal, things were discussed. During the hearings, two men protested and were whisked away, but did you know, as the film points out, they were sentenced to over a year and a half in jail? There is an allegation that while the Reagan administration wants us to "Just Say No," the CIA is bringing drugs into the country by using its influence to get through customs. These are only a few of the shocking things exposed in the documentary. The people who assert these things are people who know what's going on — former CIA agents, Barbara Honinger, an adviser

to the 1980 Reagan/Bush campaign, and many other people "in the know."

Why hasn't this film gained national media attention or access to all Americans? I asked Agee and he said he believes that some people don't want it to be shown because it could create a Constitutional crisis, as Watergate did. The issues in this documentary are that crippling.

I'm glad I saw this film. At the same time, I wish I hadn't. Like many Americans, I don't want to hear bad things about the United States. I love the United States and view her as a country who values democracy and freedom above all the others. The fact is that we do some nasty, immoral things and I am finding it hard to swallow.

Judging by the turnout for Agee's speech, there is a strong desire to know more about what the CIA is doing. I strongly recommend that everyone see "Cover Up" and think for themselves about its allegations. You can call Martha Drake if you would like to view the film. Also, Campus Y may be showing "Cover Up" sometime in the future.

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Keeping afloat in a tide of dirty laundry

Suds by high noon or you're dead," read the note I found attached to my door with a clothes hanger. "Signed, Bryan."

This past weekend I once again won the war of nerves with my roommate. Because I'm from out of state, I'm unable to drive home on weekends meaning I have to see the macaroni and cheese in Lenoir every day and have to do my own clothes instead of dumping them off on my parents. Therefore, I delay doing my wash for as long as possible, and Bryan ignores the smell from the clothes Kilimanjaro collected at the bottom of my closet.

Usually I can last pretty long, at least until a vacation. I do this trick by redefining "dirty." My rule is, "Anything you've worn once, you can wear again." I try to avoid spilling things on myself because that's harder to hide than just sweat. If I'm desperate, though, I just spill my entire breakfast all over my already-dirty clothes, so people think that the stains have come from today. Better for people to think you're a slob than a lazy slob who won't clean his own clothes.

My first experience with doing my own laundry came when I was in one of those "bleach your new blue jeans so that they look older than you do" phases. I poured gallons of Clorox directly on to my Levi's, thus inflicting them with a strange sort of jean leprosy. Mom still made me wear them, though, a fashion mark of Cain showing the world that I was inept.

Deciding that laundry was inevitable, I had to plan for when and where I would clean my clothes. I chose the Morrison facilities. I could either go late at night or during a football game when I wouldn't have to wait for an empty machine. The football game would combine sleep and the best guarantee of clean clothes without the wait, so I had to take interim measures to last until the weekend. I made the sensible choice, going to the student store to buy a complete Tar Heel wardrobe.

Thus, garbed in blue and white sweat pants, sweatshirt, socks and boxer shorts, I set out early Saturday to do my laundry. I picked up all my dirty clothes and put them in my laundry bag, leaving my towels and sheets for yet another month of good use. My motto is, "Only wash what you wear."

I then had to figure out how to get change for my excursion. I went down to the Country Store and bought a piece of gum. I pulled out



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a \$20 bill, and innocently remarked, "Gee, I thought I had something smaller." I now had \$19.97 with which to do laundry.

College laundry can be summarized in one phrase: "Wash it in cold." The cold cycle was invented for people like me who don't know the first thing about what's a "light" or a "sturdy" or even "knits/perm press." So, lacking the space, the expertise and the quarters to divide my laundry into all sorts of subgroups like happens at home, I crammed it all into the Speed Queen and took

my chances with laundry ghoulish. Thank God for "Cheer."

There are basically three approaches to passing time in the laundry room. The "Hi, I'm David, what's your major?" approach, the "bring boring class reading" approach and the "stare mindlessly at the dryers turning the clothes over and over hypnotically" approach. I usually go for the third; it's relaxing, educational and a fun alternative to the ordinary sitcom. I can also wait for a free dryer and reserve it by putting in a sheet of Cling-Free with my initials on it.

After my wash is done, I make the futile attempt at drying my clothes. It seems like no matter how long I dry my laundry, it's always damp and winds up strewn about my room, drying the organic way.

One thing frustrates me, though: after a long, hard laundry session, the clothes I'm wearing are dirty clothes, and I've already got something to put in my laundry bag. I could do laundry naked, but that'd be cold, and I wouldn't have anywhere to put my quarters. I've finally come up with the solution to my problem; put washers and dryers in the bathrooms. Students can wash their clothes and themselves simultaneously, slipping directly from the shower into toasty dryer-warmed clothes avoiding any dirty-clothes residue. Think about this: this winter, in the spring, I plan to lobby the Residence Hall Association.

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Affirmative action gives deserved opportunities

Affirmative action is a policy by which companies or schools hire or admit minorities disproportionately as compensation for past discrimination against them. Many universities and companies in the United States abide by the affirmative action policy. In my History 22 class the other day, the subject of affirmative action came up. The professor introduced an affirmative action proposal: If there is a group of students with fairly equal abilities applying to a university, should race be a criterion in their admission? The response to the proposal was tremendous, and I would like to address three of the responses that stuck in my mind.

A student from Brazil said he had to apply to UNC twice despite his "impeccable grades." The student implied that if he had been black, he would have been accepted the first time he applied, which is not necessarily true. He is not the only student here at UNC with "impeccable" grades; UNC's high admissions standards require all students' grades to be close to impeccable. He may have been denied admission because the requirements for out-of-state students are usually higher than those for in-state students. The student also said admitting students with lower SAT scores based on their race would lower UNC's academic standards. This argument appears to be invalid because SAT scores are not a direct indicator of how a person will perform in college. A high SAT score does not guarantee good grades in college, and a low SAT score does not guarantee poor grades.

One white student said she didn't support the proposal because it promoted "tokenism" on the part of minorities. Tokenism? I would like to ask the blacks on this campus, do you feel like tokens? I don't feel like a token. A token is a fake coin used to play video games in an arcade. Black students, do you feel like fake coins playing a game at UNC? I would think not. We are for real. If we believe that we are here just to satisfy a racial quota, then we will be tokens. If we believe that we are here because we want to be here and because we can make a difference, then tokens we are not.

Another white student said she rejected the proposal because affirmative action promoted "reverse discrimination" against whites. What she said was in part true, but she did not take into account the blatant discrimination that has suppressed black people for more than 200 years. I don't know anything about the white students in my history class. However, I do know that despite their backgrounds, society puts them at an advantage. It is very easy for them to sit in class and criticize a policy designed to help minorities because they don't know what it feels like to be a member of one. Those white students don't know how it feels to sit in a classroom and not see anyone of their race. They don't know how it feels to be born at a disadvantage solely because of the color of their skin.

It is ironic that students in a history class have forgotten so much history. Students who opposed affirmative action forgot that blacks were slaves until the 13th Amendment was ratified, and that black males did not get the franchise until the 15th Amendment was passed. They didn't recall that the "separate but equal" rule denied blacks the opportunity to attend school with whites until Brown vs. the Board of Education in 1954; or that blacks could not use the same public facilities as whites until the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If they would take time to remember a little black history or the history of any minority, they would see that affirmative action is necessary to admit minorities into universities in proportion to their population. But more importantly, affirmative action is vital to ensure that minorities in the present and future receive the same educational opportunities that majorities have enjoyed in the past.

Debbie Baker
Guest Writer

Debbie Baker is a sophomore journalism major from Raeford.

Ignorance prompts condemnation of Hatcher's hostage-taking

Eddie Hatcher's campus visit and its subsequent DTH coverage provoked a rather forceful display of ignorance from no less than a UNC professor of history. Norbert Mayr's angry tirade ("Hatcher is a hypocrite," Nov. 18) reveals his lack of awareness of both the conditions which compelled Hatcher to act last February, and of the trial which vindicated his actions in October.

Robeson County isn't a place where law and order prevail. Just the opposite is true. Politically-motivated murders, arbitrary detentions and police brutality occur routinely, with government and law enforcement complicity. While residents' basic rights have been trampled for years, racial politics have choked off democratic channels for redressing injustices. Were Robeson more like Orange County, peacefully resorting to an honest court might have

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sufficed. But in an environment where due process has been suspended, the conditions are all too ripe for violence.

Second, it isn't surprising that Professor Mayr considers the verdict rendered in the case of Hatcher and Timothy Jacobs to be a "travesty" and a "sick joke." Having heard none of the testimony that acquitted them, his own verdict that "Hatcher and Jacobs behaved like criminals" can only be based on hearsay and uninformed opinion. For nothing speaks louder than the facts unfurled during the trial and dangled before the jury: As many hostages testified under oath, neither Hatcher nor Jacobs ever pointed a gun at anybody; neither

made any violent threats, only reassurances that no one would be hurt. Nobody, moreover, was told to "prepare to die" as Mayr wrongly asserts. In fact, with few exceptions, The Robesonian hostages eagerly testified that the entire incident was carried out "compassionately." Perhaps most remarkably, they sympathized with Hatcher's plight and supported his demands. Most of the time the hostages were held was spent in negotiations over requests that were deemed "quite reasonable and selfless" by representatives from the governor's office. But the failure to prove either defendant acted "knowingly, willfully or maliciously" was reflected in the jury's final verdict: Hatcher and Jacobs did not act with criminal intent, but rather out of desperation and fear for their lives. Thus, the acquittal stands, for the people have spoken, and Hatcher and Jacobs must be presumed innocent

until proven guilty. Fortunately for us, even Professor Mayr's distortions and declamations cannot change that basic principle of justice.

Third, Mayr's assertion that Hatcher and Jacobs ought to deliver on their "pledge" to turn over evidence of drug trafficking is baffling. Not only was no such promise ever made, much less in exchange for a verdict of innocent, but releasing that information without an official inquiry and subpoena power to back it up is pointless. To interpret Hatcher and Jacobs' silence as evidence that their knowledge "existed in their imaginations alone" simply defies logic, especially since U.S. Attorney William Webb's office has already vowed to hand down indictments to some of the very persons Hatcher charged with drug trafficking. Furthermore, the maps of the drug drop-off points that fell into Hatcher's hands have been confirmed to be

genuine, and the sworn affidavits of SBI agents corroborate Hatcher's allegations of cover-up in the murder of Julian Pierce.

Finally, Mayr's indignation at seeing Hatcher, whom he calls a "terrorist," advocate civil rights is a bit misplaced. The term "terrorist" has been so horribly misused and diluted nowadays that it has begun to denote nearly any form of political oppression without regard to its particular origins. Calling Hatcher and Jacobs "terrorists," as Mayr and others have done, is akin to pronouncing the partisans of the French Resistance or fighters in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade "terrorists." It reflects a profound ignorance of the repressive conditions that induced the violence in the first place, and justifies using even more repressive tactics to combat it. As Hatcher himself pointed out, the repressive backlash is well under way in Robeson County,

where 15 or more questionable assassinations date from the Feb. 1 takeover. Whether we condemn his actions or not, Hatcher steadfastly refused to turn a blind eye to the injustices in Robeson County. He continually sought the assistance of both state officials and FBI agents, who told him to get lost. Finally, fearing for his life, he rose up against those injustices and succeeded in drawing the public's attention to them. Taking up arms to accomplish political objectives is a solution we all rightly abhor. But preventing it from happening again means restoring justice in Robeson County, not making martyrs out of Hatcher and Jacobs. Unfortunately, this goal is not served by confusing issues or by blatantly misrepresenting the facts as Professor Mayr has done.

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