

The Daily Tar Heel

97th year of editorial freedom

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Demand quality responsibly

For the past month, students have been circulating petitions in support of a visiting history lecturer who was not given a permanent professorship. The students are protesting the loss of an excellent teacher who is an expert on the history of North Carolina. While it is worthwhile to stand up for excellence in teaching, the protest comes as too little, too late, and it only serves to further alienate administrators with its irresponsible methods.

Junior Gene Davis began the petition campaign, which has netted over 750 signatures so far. Davis told lecturer Gary Freeze he was going to gather signatures, but he never discussed his concerns or the reasons behind the decision with the chairman of the history department. Davis says that was unnecessary, because he felt he could predict what Chairman Colin Palmer would say.

That attitude, however, practically forces administrators to not respect student concerns. If students are going to protest, they must do so responsibly: they must research all angles of an issue before they campaign against it, rather than reacting rashly.

At this point, Freeze has another job at Erskine College, so students should protest the problems behind the decision by offering constructive criticism. Students should demand more input during the search committee's interviews of applicants, who often speak to classes as guest lecturers for a day. Although Palmer says students could have done that last March, while the decision was being

board opinion

made, and then offered suggestions to the committee, students should request a formal way to offer suggestions. The department should ask classes, or at least some students within the classes, to fill out evaluation forms of the applicants.

In addition, administrators should realize from this protest that what is important to undergraduates is excellent teaching. Undergraduates are not interested in who does the best research — that's not why they're here. Obviously, research is important for professors to keep up with the latest developments in their field, but without strong teaching skills, their research is meaningless in the classroom.

We cannot debate whether Freeze was the best candidate for the position. Certainly Jim Leloudis, the doctoral student who was chosen for the position, has a strong record of teaching and research. This protest is not a criticism of the search committee's choice so much as it is an expression of disappointment that an excellent teacher is slipping away from the University. The issue is larger than one professor. It is the continuing problem of a lack of student input on the matters that affect students the most.

Unfortunately, students were unable to express their disappointment in a more responsible and effective manner. In spite of this, administrators should understand the reasons behind the protest and work from now on to involve students in the selection process from the beginning. After all, quality teaching is what students are paying for, and they have a right to demand it.

Children going to the chair

Detectives in Broward County, Fla., were stumped by the death of a 2-year-old boy for two days, until an autopsy uncovered the cause of death as asphyxiation.

Then they realized that the boy's 11-year-old stepsister had strangled him.

The girl appeared before a circuit court judge on Friday, her 12th birthday, and became one of the youngest people in south Florida ever to be charged with murder. If a grand jury decides to try her as an adult, she could receive the death penalty.

The case could become a nationwide example of the travesty of the death penalty and its use in Florida. The state's affinity for the death penalty is well-known and well-publicized after the recent execution of Ted Bundy. But to even consider a 12-year-old girl a threat to society and to place her in a judicial situation where there is even a remote possibility that she could receive the death penalty is preposterous.

The girl, whose name has not been released, evidently snapped under the pressure of having to take care of her stepbrother and 15-month-old stepsister. Her mother, a nursing assistant, worked extra hours because she

needed the money and left the girl in charge of her siblings.

According to her teachers, the girl was a good student and a responsible child. Obviously, she needs psychological help, but it's hard to believe she would commit a similar crime if the pressure of caring for young children before she's even in her teens is removed.

If the girl were a delinquent with past examples of dangerous or erratic behavior, perhaps her prosecution would be more understandable. But the authorities are treating her as any common criminal. For now, she is being held in a juvenile detention center for 21 days while defense attorneys prepare their case, rather than being released into the custody of her mother, who said she forgives the girl. It is incredible that the case has gotten this far. To continue any further with it is a clear example of cruel and unusual punishment.

The use of the death penalty is founded on the dual principles of punishment and rehabilitation. When society begins punishing children as adults without considering counseling, the system itself demands to be questioned. — Kimberly Edens

Coming home to Jamaican dysentery

Ian Williams
Wednesday's Child

And a big hip howdy-doo to all of you out there in magical happy DTH land — I trust and pray that each and every one of you had a delightful spring break and that your March has indeed entered like a lion and is exiting like a lamb. Personally, my March entered like a tree sloth and is exiting rather like a tree sloth, but I suppose that comes with the territory of being an angst-filled back-page writer.

I'm sure deep down everyone is excruciatingly disinterested in what everyone else did for spring break; as long as everyone comes back with the first stages of skin cancer and a few good tales of a Floridian sexual alcohol fantasyland, then even the most inquisitive folks will leave well enough alone. And God knows the last thing I want is to be Wednesday's Whiner, but I feel compelled to explain my Spring Break From Heck if for no other reason than to do my part to stir things up over at the Jamaican tourist board.

On Thursday, before anybody had left, Chapel Hill was a worst-of-both-worlds nightmare. The morning, like every other morning for the last two months, was black, drizzly and cold. After penciling in nightmarishly wrong answers to my religion midterm, I walked outside to a bright, warm blue sky that sent waves of pleasure down everyone's spine and also sent sharp shards of melted icicles plummeting from the trees onto everyone's skulls.

"That's okay," I thought, "Soon I shall be in a Caribbean paradise, with nary a care in the world..." and sure enough, a few hours later, there I was staring out at the azure blue Jamaican sea from the back of the airport van. Soon, however, the beauty of the island coast gave way to the highway carnage reality of the van driver, as he attempted speed-o-sound blind passing on hills and little Jamaican kiddie dodging in the villages.

By the time we reached the town of Negril, night had fallen. Because I had failed to sign up in time for a package spring break deal, I had to come down two days earlier than everyone else and was forced to find my own place to stay. Fortunately, the jail-like 10 feet by 10 feet room to which I was directed was spared the latest hurricane and was run by a very nice old lady; unfortunately, there was no hot water within a 7-mile radius and telephones were as rare as a good Taco Bell.

When day broke, things at least seemed

better; the hot sun was high in the sky, and the beautiful waves crashed violently against the cliffs as I laid out on the deck. After a few Jamaican meals and a day along the shore, however, every native in the entire town knew that some college kids with fresh American money were roosting in their nest. They planned their attack.

This one dude in a rastafarian tank top followed me along the dirt road that night and placed in my hand a good solid 3-pound branch of marijuana, and said it was mine for thirty U.S. dollars. After recovering from the shock that I was holding in my hand enough reefer to keep my entire religion seminar in the troposphere for three months, I hastily slapped it back to his chest and told him I didn't have any American money.

"Dat's okay, mon — I take Jamaican dollar."

"No, you see, I don't have any money — it's all back at my room."

"You get it all wrong," he said. "First I say 30, then you say 20, then I say 25 and we make a deal, it work like dat..."

"No, but your little scenario is based on the fact that I want marijuana at all."

"Oh! You want coke? I got dat too..."

That evening, I began to suspect that something was biologically very wrong. I felt like an ancient Greco-Thessalonican war was being re-enacted in my intestinal tract, and my forehead started getting so hot that the tiny room window began to bead with moisture. By around three in the morning, I definitely knew that I had stepped in some sort of viral cow patty and that I might as well buckle down for the ride. The next day, I had a temperature of 104 and threw up everything I and six past generations had ever eaten. I lay on the bed, bathed in a cold sweat, writhing and having the worst hallucinations ever — driving cross-country in an AMC Gremlin with talentless boob Tiffany singing along with AM country radio stations; drinking six solid bottles of Mrs. Butterworth; making the DTH in the earlier pages: "Columnist Williams is certainly full of woe tonight in Negril, Jamaica as he faces 57 consecutive life sentences for holding three pounds of

cannabis and basically being big, white and stupid. 'It was as big as a loaf of bread,' he told reporters, still glassy-eyed and drooling," etc. etc. etc.

After hearing me enact a few of these day-mares, the locals thought it was time I took a trip to the hospital. Throwing my wracked frame into the back of a taxi, they sent me to the doctor's office down the road. There's no Student Health in Jamaica, and as I staggered into the balsa wood doctor's office on the beach, I longed for the sterile cinderblock and pamphlets on chlamydia.

The doctor stepped in, a tan, lanky French dude with greasy hair that looked a little like a mid-70s European porn star. After probing my torso and asking unintelligible questions about my gastro-intestinal system, he told me that I had dysentery, but with his accent I couldn't understand him.

"What do you mean, the disease in me is disinterested?" I yelled. "I'm not too psyched about it either!"

He didn't get it.

The next day was sheer hell, as the locals tried to dupe a sick boy out of all his money. They would charge 15 U.S. dollars for a three-minute taxi ride to the phone, and I had to pay them because I couldn't walk. For three days, I was alone, sick, and friendless, hounded by marijuana thugs and avoided by telephone operators that could book me a flight home. Finally, after lengthy negotiations, I got a flight out of Kingston and was free.

I was home. It was Tuesday. I spent all my money, and my break was over before some people had left. Now perhaps I'm just hopelessly provincial and unadventurous, an absolute slave to the niceties of my cushy home here in the states... and perhaps that lady that sings that "Come Home to Jamaica" song will come hunt me down here in my suburbia, but I'll be waiting for her. When she rounds the corner I shall pelt her with Hostess Zingers, working telephones and cold Sprite! I shall stone her with Taco Bell grandes and manicured poodles and hotel massage beds! She shall drown in a morass of useless American luxuries! *God bless this country!*

Ian Williams is a music and psychology major from Los Angeles who fully acknowledges that he used the word "disinterested" incorrectly both times in this article.

Readers' Forum

Noise not made just by sorority

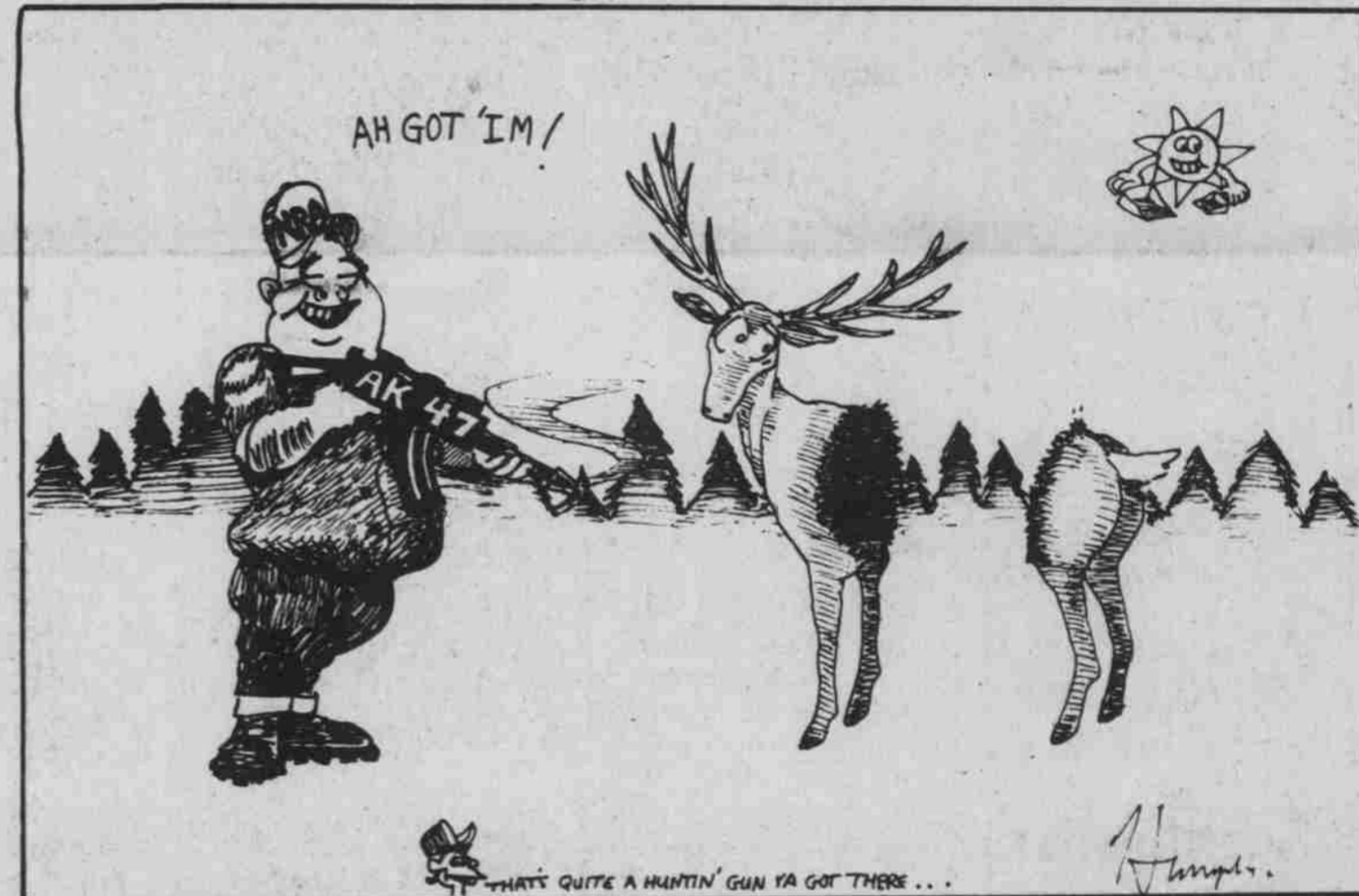
To the editor:

Walston and Stinner asked to be educated in their letter to the editor ("Respect goes both ways," March 20). I pose to you, do you really want to be educated? Well, let me take this opportunity to do so.

Before "going over" (the completion of the pledge process), we were stepping in the Morrison recreation room preparing for our spring step show. In the adjoining lounges the sounds of U2 muffled our voices and the tapping of our feet as we attempted to master the intricacy of a step. Lo and behold, after about ten minutes of practice the assistant area director paid us a visit to tell us to quiet down or vacate the room, for we were preventing someone from studying; yet the party next door continued without a murmur from the AAD. Henceforth, step practice will be held in the cold parks of Chapel Hill or (if we are fortunate enough to secure a room) in the Student Union. There are those who protect your rights; may I ask you, who protects ours?

In preparing for our final march as neophytes, my sorority sisters and I made a conscious effort to set the event before quiet hours. In a tour around Hinton James at 8 p.m., we were drenched with water from the tenth floor by a white male. May I ask you, who protects our rights?

I would like to extend an apology for our infringement upon your rights on March 4 (a Saturday evening) when we conducted a "sentimental and sacred" ritual. I offer you my admiration, for I am sure you



reprimand those who bring home their cheer from Burnout and Beach Blast traditions; I am sure you reprimand those who show their Carolina spirit by throwing toilet paper, breaking beer bottles and yelling from balconies after a victory against an arch-rival; and I am sure you reprimand the Clef Hangers and the Lorelies for singing in the dormitories. All of the above have the tendency to occur after quiet hours. Yet, not one complaint. Why now?

EILEEN CARLTON
Senior
Education

Need for racial understanding

To the editor:

I like Mia Davis' definition of "respect" ("Races need mut-

ual respect," March 8); she says it is "due courtesy or tolerance for things that I may or may not understand." In my ignorance, I associate the Greek rite "Death March" with wars and enemies.

When I awaken at 1 a.m. hearing voices reverberate within my room and my head, I think, "Invasion!" If I were more violent and inexcusably rude, perhaps I would do something that would be misconstrued as racism. Or, if I were more respectful, I might greet my dorm's visitors politely and learn the "secrets" behind Delta Sigma's tradition. Too lazy and drowsy to do either, my only reaction is to plead, "Please, please stop."

Mia Davis and the Black Greek Council should feel "furious and disheartened over the conduct exhibited by several white UNC students."

However, they cannot support this march, for which other students might be arrested, without giving logical reasons. This is not a pitched battle (or is it?). Greek organizations should not be roused to take a "stand" against me. Racial harmony can begin at this university with education, and I implore Mia Davis to understand my position and help me understand hers.

DAVID ISRAEL
Sophomore
Physics

Letters policy

Students should include name, year in school, major, phone number and home town. Other members of the University community should include similar information.

Students justified in protesting Atwater

To the editor:

It is obvious that Mr. Skillman ("Howard protest condemned," March 21) knows little of Howard University and its current confusion. He also views Lee Atwater, the Republican Party and its efforts to approach the black community with the comfortable acceptance that does not even attempt to view the issue from the blacks' point of view.

He does not see that Howard students and faculty might regard with skepticism attempts to approach them which can be viewed as beneficial to the Republican Party. To suspend that skepticism simply for the sake of the financial reward that Lee Atwater would bring the university might be regarded as lack of character.

Lee Atwater is considered by many in Washington — both Republican and Democrat — to be partially responsible for the fortunes of the Republican Party. He has developed, embraced and been a proponent of the tactics used by the Republican Party in the 80s. Most of the

tactics were shrewd; some were manipulative. That is the nature of politics.

The "Willie Horton" commercial should be viewed in the context of the 1980s, when Republican campaigns in the South were directed by the Republican National Committee and used every opportunity to exploit racism. I worked for a Democratic candidate in 1982 who was the victim of an ad which showed him seated next to three blacks. The caption: "Do you want these men running the country?" The campaign against this candidate was not run by Lee Atwater, but it was directed by an individual sent down by the Republican National Committee.

In addition, the Republican Party in the 80s has the reputation of cutting funding for many programs that benefit blacks, for appointing a Civil Rights Commission that represented a step backwards in civil rights, and for supporting court cases that attempt to erase some of the progress made in civil rights in the past 30 years.

The David Duke affair, proposed by Mr.

Skillman as an example of the Republican Party's attempt to fight racism, could also be regarded as a part of the Republican strategy to approach blacks. But more simply, David Duke is an embarrassment to the Republican Party, and he was opposed for this reason.

The protest at Howard has brought positive results because it has raised questions that needed to be asked: what is the direction of the university, and has the current president of Howard been irresponsible in his leadership of the university? If Howard University can successfully deal with the question of its direction for the future, it will be much better off than it would have been without asking questions and receiving the monetary benefits that Lee Atwater would have brought.

COURT WALTERS
First Year
Medicine

