

# The Daily Tar Heel

97th year of editorial freedom

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## Pennies from heaven Pay raise for TAs needs hefty increase

### board opinion

Most students are aware of the poverty that graduate students face, and many have seen the sarcastic signs on their teaching assistants' doors asking if their TAs hold office hours while they wait tables. Now, it appears that other members of the University community also may be listening to graduate concerns and recognizing the need to pay them more. It's about time.

UNC's Faculty Council Committee on Instructional Personnel acknowledged that increased pay for teaching assistants should be a priority and required all departments to raise the minimum yearly salary of a TA with full responsibility — those who actually teach undergraduate courses — from \$6,400 to \$7,000. While graduate students will probably appreciate every penny, this requirement doesn't go nearly far enough.

The committee's edict never addresses the financial problems of TAs who only teach recitation sections or those who grade papers and hold office hours for assistance. These graduate students, who are already at the bottom of the pay scale, will see no change in their paychecks when department heads follow through on the committee's requirement. Teaching a recitation section and holding office hours can take as much time as teaching an entire course; TAs must still attend all the class sessions for which they teach recitations — and these teachers deserve equal recognition.

Obviously, though, paying TAs a few more dollars per year won't make that much of a difference in their wallets, and it is unlikely that they can expect more money from the state this year. With North Carolina's full-blown budget crunch, which

seems likely to last long beyond this fiscal quarter, graduate students demanding higher pay will find much sympathy but little money available to them. At N.C. State University, for example, TAs were recently laid off from their duties as teachers, section leaders and graders, and TAs who were planning to teach in the fall have been dismissed. The problem isn't nearly that severe at UNC, but certainly there is no room in the budget to vastly increase TA salaries. At this point, the University must begin a dedicated search for other revenue sources.

The most obvious of these is in the deep pockets of alumni. Graduate students need the support of University administrators in asking that alumni begin to earmark most of their donations for worthy educational endeavors, including increased graduate pay. Obviously, graduate students will be more enthusiastic about their teaching duties if they receive the appropriate financial recognition for their work, and for alumni, enthusiasm and dedication among teachers should be a high priority. Many alumni want their children to attend UNC, so it's time to make them realize that their children's education will suffer if they don't put their money where the University most needs it.

On so many recent issues of reform at UNC, the response seems to be "good, but not enough," and that holds true for this as well. A nearly 10 percent raise is better than nothing, but it should be increased and extended to all graduate assistants with the help of money from alumni, grants and teaching awards. Considering the dedication of most TAs and the exorbitant cost of living in Chapel Hill, graduate assistants should settle for nothing less.

## Stealing stories Buchwald's victory will protect writers

It was a long-overdue victory for the writer and the artist. The problem of story-stealing is not uncommon among writers, but it is a crime difficult to prosecute. Art Buchwald's victory over Paramount Communications Inc. Eddie Murphy, which focused on the hit movie "Coming to America," gathered the publicity needed to highlight this recurring problem that often plagues writers. While the case may not result in large payments to Buchwald, it is a symbolic landmark for copyright laws and writer protection.

Buchwald, a Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist, said he wrote a screenplay titled "It's a Crude, Crude World" about an African king who travels to the United States in hopes of attaining nuclear weapons but instead returns home with a wife from a Washington slum. After Buchwald sold the script to Paramount in 1983, it was renamed "King for a Day." However, the studio dropped the project after partially developing it and paid Buchwald \$17,500.

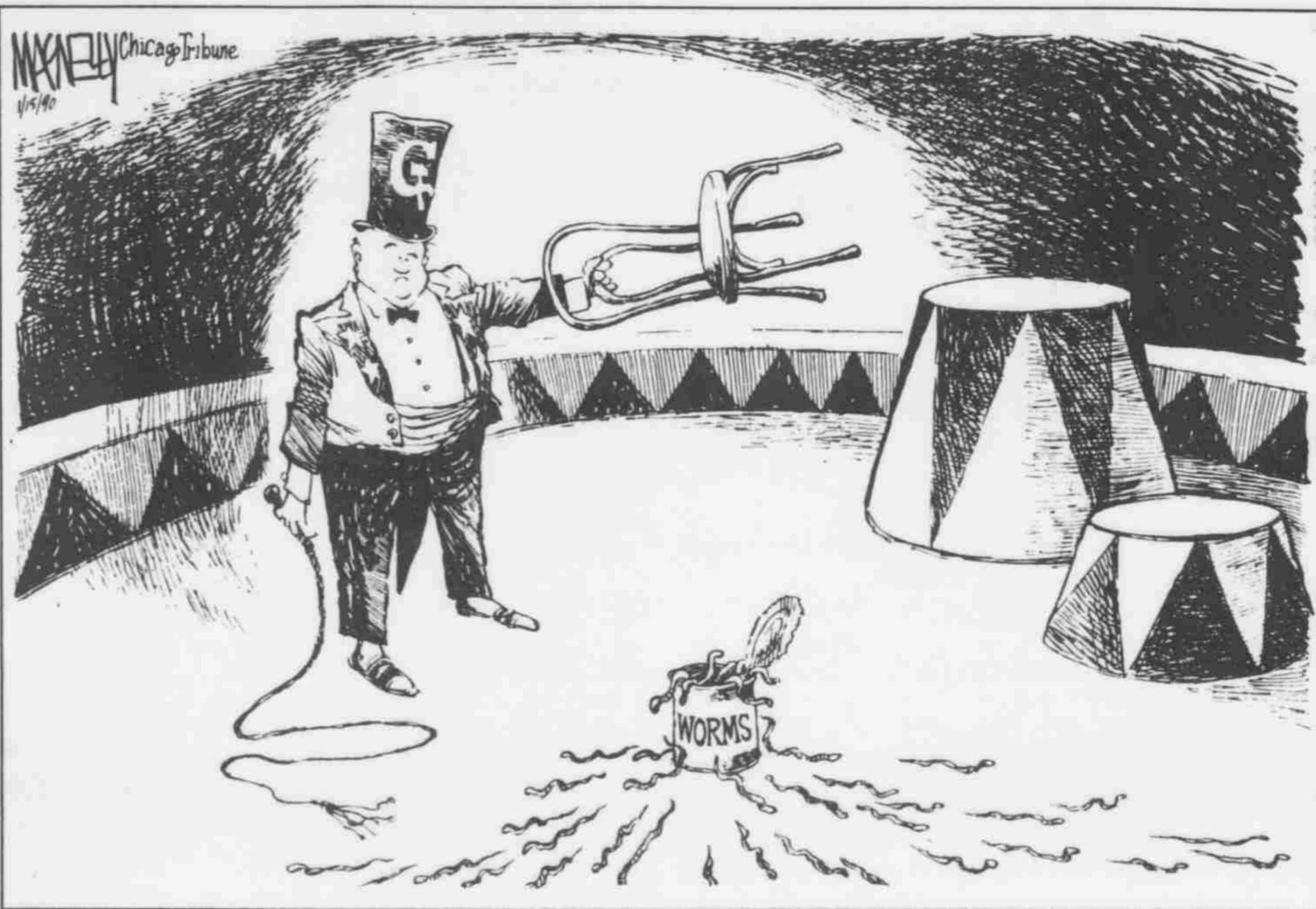
But that was not the last time Buchwald was to see his story. In 1988, "Coming to America" hit the screen with full power but was credited to Eddie Murphy and Arsenio Hall and backed by Paramount. The movie is based on an African prince who ventures to New York City to find a bride and, through his mishaps, winds up residing in the slums. Murphy claimed he created the story based on his own tumultuous relationship, but Buchwald felt the similarities were too familiar to accept that explanation.

After a long battle in the Los Angeles courts,

Buchwald proved his case. But he has yet to receive the money due him from the defendants. According to Paramount's contract with Buchwald in 1983, he was entitled to \$265,000 plus 19 percent of the movie's profits. But the judge only awarded him \$250,000 and the profits from the film have mysteriously disappeared. Despite the movie's ranking as one of the top 20 highest-grossing movies of the '80s, the financial books fail to record any net earnings.

Most writers are discouraged by the odds of winning such a case, and even more are discouraged when the costs of going to trial are more than the penalties paid. But Buchwald brought this case to trial in hopes of a symbolic rather than financial win. The Copyright Act of 1978 protects writers from the moment an idea is written down. No special process is required for a story to be copyrighted — it must only be written on something. But many writers have similar ideas, making it tricky to claim an idea as original, and most do not have the financial security to attempt to prove a story is their own.

For these reasons, a repeat of Buchwald's win is not very likely. Unfortunately, the case will not necessarily scare publishers and movie studios from stealing writers' works either. There are not many writers with the prestige or money of Art Buchwald who can afford to lose, but this case is still important. Buchwald's victory spoke for a large population of frustrated writers who are tired of losing their works and their glory. — Jennifer Wing



## Cold War: Tanks for the memories

Ever since I started writing a cooking column people I hardly know have been coming up to me and saying, "Hey Conover! What in the Sam Hill are you doing writing a cooking column? You don't even cook!"

These people are right, of course, although this doesn't make them any less rude. It is true that I've yet to win a blue ribbon at the State Fair, but it is also true that telling a guy he can't cook is a sure sign of poor breeding. I try to rise above such pettiness and concentrate on the larger scheme of things.

And besides, the only significant difference between myself and the great chefs of Europe is that I learned to cook on the back deck of an M-1 Abrams Main Battle Tank and most of them did not. I understand most of them went to school for it.

I learned many things in the U.S. Army and don't regret for a moment that I joined up. I learned that less is sometimes more, that your real friends are the people you can count on, that MacIlhenny Tabasco sauce goes with anything and that the exhaust from the heat exchanger on a \$2.4 million tank will warm up a package of beans in about 10 minutes.

Those who say the last item is trivial are hung up on hierarchies.

As a tank crewman in two armored cavalry regiments I spent a great deal of time living in Army field rations and now consider myself an expert on the subject. I can't say that I've ever benefited from this distinction, but with all the changes afoot in the world one never knows when there will be demand for a military food consultant.

My interest in military nutrition was originally piqued by an incident on a West German tank gunnery range in the summer of 1985. While waiting for our turn to shoot, one of my crew mates dropped part of his Meal, Ready to



Daniel Conover  
Conover's Kitchen

Eat. Two hungry-looking dogs who had been watching us from a distance saw the drop and ran over. However, when they got close enough to actually smell the food-like substance they stopped, snarled at us and ran away.

This did little to improve my morale.

Breakfast didn't either. Our typical field breakfast in the Cav consisted of cold green scrambled eggs and Spam patties, served off the back of a truck in the rain at 5:30 a.m. by a First Sergeant in a bad mood. I'm sure it didn't rain every morning for breakfast but I can't for the life of me remember when it didn't.

A life like this wears thin enough without having to eat green eggs and Spam for breakfast. I began keeping notes on the food experiments the military conducted on me, planning to use the notes as background whenever I got around to either a) writing an expose, or b) filing a lawsuit, but time passed and I mellowed.

It is at least possible that the world has mellowed, too. History is speeding past us like fiber through a lower intestine, and every day brings us closer to a world in which there may not be quite as much call for \$2.4 million M-1 Abrams Main Battle Tanks. There are even those who are actually calling for the federal government to cut defense spending and put the money into social programs. Morning in America indeed.

So this week's recipe is a nostalgic recipe

for me. I worked it up while serving as a tank commander in the desert of New Mexico, and although it calls for a Main Battle Tank you can substitute a conventional oven. You miss out on the history and context that way, but times are tough and few of us can afford a \$2.4 million appliance.

### Chihuahua Burritos del \$2.4 Million Main Battle Tank

Roll refried beans in three to six fresh flour tortillas.

Place the tortillas in a deep casserole dish or at the bottom of an empty No. 10 can (preferred for tank cookery).

Cover with green chile sauce (available at your average grocery store).

Run your \$2.4 million Main Battle Tank up to tactical idle, producing temperatures as high as 900 degrees Fahrenheit and burning an average of 8 ounces of fuel every 15 seconds. Set your No. 10 can on a wire rack behind the heat exchange exhaust vent (don't try this with a casserole dish). Turn in 10 minutes. Cook a total of 20 minutes and serve with anything cold.

For those of you using a conventional cooking method, bake the burritos at about 300 for 20 minutes. That should pretty well do it.

Maybe some of you liberals out there who have been screaming for this so-called "peace dividend" will celebrate the end of this culinary tradition, but speaking personally I think the world is losing something when red-blooded American boys can't cook a smothered burrito on the back deck of a machine designed to cause death and destruction.

I'm not sure exactly what that something would be, though.

Daniel Conover is a senior journalism major from Carrboro.

## Readers' Forum

### Large businesses eat away at small towns

To the editor:  
As a transplanted Yankee I just want to confer with your editorial, "Busting Businesses: Marriott decision dooms local owners," on Jan. 17. One does not need a Ph.D. in urban planning to realize that supporting the "domino effect" is a model of the Garden State.

The cornfields, strawberry patches, horse farms, etc. are gone from my childhood years. Hous-

ing developments, shopping malls, condos and lots of franchises have consumed the "village atmosphere" you all are desperately trying to cling to for the future. New Jersey got sucked up by a "silent spring;" don't let North Carolina be the "other armpit" of America. Boycott Marriott and patronize small independently-owned businesses.

PEG GREGSON  
Graduate student  
Public health

### Smokers can make an effort for campus

To the editor:  
As an ex-smoker who has always been intolerant of smokers who strew their spent butts everywhere, I would simply add one suggestion to Marilyn Keating's warranted complaints about such behavior ("Cigarette butts ruin campus appearance," Jan. 12).

Smokers, if you are so "lazy" that you can't be bothered to find a trash can, then at least rip off

the filter and throw it in your pocket or purse until you can get to a trash can before throwing the rest on the ground. Then, the organic tobacco and paper will decompose in a week or so and the non-biodegradable filter will not be added to the accumulation of filters that have been lying there since Winston and Salem were separate towns. When I smoked, this was not only no trouble, but became quite automatic.

CLIFTON TROY TOTH  
Student Health Service

## American involvement is a complex issue

To the editor:  
Well, here we go again. Our resident knee-jerk theorist, Dale McKinley, has again opened his orifice ("Panama invasion shows hypocrisy," Jan. 16) and graced us with yet another emission of vituperative, pseudo-intellectual drivel. He subjects us to another rendition of the tired Third World view that an overbearing, deceitful U.S. continues to manipulate developing countries through some form of Machiavellian imperialism for our own fiendish ends.

I think McKinley needs a short course in world history:

FACT: The U.S. and its government do care about democracy in Central America and the rest of the world. We believe in human rights, self-determination and fair play. We try many things — from foreign aid to behind-the-scenes pressure to occasional military actions — to encourage in others the basic principles and values for which we stand. Yes, we sometimes are driven by short-run expediency and, yes, we screw up at times — sometimes horribly. Harry Callahan once said, "A man's got to know his limitations." The U.S. certainly has limitations on its ability, regardless of desire, to affect positive change in the world, in no small part because the developing countries in which we are involved aren't great material with which to work. We try, though. I'm not sure what McKinley would have us do as an alternative.

FACT: Yes, the U.S. currently is more interested in Eastern Europe than in Africa and Latin America. Why? One, we have stronger ties with Eastern Europe; many Americans are descended from European forebears and have strong cultural links with that part of the world. Two, Eastern Europe seems genuinely interested in us and seeks to emulate our political freedom and economic success. In contrast,

parts of Africa and Latin America are flushing themselves down the toilet and don't seem to want to help pull themselves out. Some are too preoccupied with their own orgies of self-indulgence, rather violent self-destruction to accept responsibility for their woes, grit their teeth and get on with making things better. Things get "better" for select groups, perhaps, but remember that the American concepts of individual worth and rule of law are not universally held.

FACT: Although the merits of and justification for our invasion of Panama are questionable, it is hard to argue that America's involvement in Panama over the last 80 years is not the primary reason for Panama's political and economic successes relative to some of the other Central American countries. Building the Panamanian defense forces in the 1960s and sponsoring Noriega without fully understanding the long-term implications of such actions had terrible consequences for Panama, but we are now trying to help Panamanians to create for themselves a vibrant, free country. Whether they will achieve the freedom and stability of, say, Costa Rica, is up to them, not us.

FACT: The countries McKinley lists as victims of American policy and neglect (South Africa, Guatemala, Salvador, Zaire, South Korea and so on) are caught up in turmoil of their own making. Their difficulties are rooted in beliefs and attitudes that are centuries or millennia old. It is wrong of McKinley to depict these countries as unchanging. If you want to change age-old ways of thinking, you must accept that the effort will be slow, painful, fraught with error and not always successful.

FACT: Our government, including the parts concerned with foreign policy, contains many losers, jerks and opportunists. It also possesses

tens of thousands of intelligent, hardworking, honorable men and women who do their best to uphold and foster in others the values and principles on which this country is based. Again, at times they make the wrong choices — we all both things from time to time. All in all, though, I am immensely proud of them and of my country. I've been in some dismal places around the world, and I've always been very glad (although sometimes cautious about making it known) that I'm an American.

I'm mad at Dale McKinley, not because he points out our problems, but because his analyses are one-sided, shallow and poor for a political science student. I genuinely want people to talk about the world's problems, but I want them to do so in a manner that is heartfelt, intelligent and constructive, not demeaning and vitriolic. I think McKinley could contribute something of value to our world, but he will expire in a blathering rage of frustrated cynicism if he doesn't learn to see the good in people along with the bad.

As a parting shot, I'd like to remind McKinley that, while I staunchly support his right to speak freely, he should do so with the recognition that a graduate student from Zimbabwe can speak his mind here because many tens of thousands of Americans, of all races and cultures, died in support of his right to do so. His venomous voice cheapens the memory of people who were blown up, starved, shot, burned, dismembered, tortured and drowned in the name of freedom. I challenge him to spend and afternoon in Arlington National Cemetery thinking about that. I'd even pay for his travel if I thought he'd really go.

MARK PRUETT  
Graduate student  
Business

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