

## Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

The students and faculty of Senior High should be ashamed of the discriminative manner in which the AFS Talent Show was planned and carried out. It seems as if the publicity was kept at a minimum until the week of the talent show, purposely in order to omit the student body from participating; therefore, only those few that were wanted were given the chance to perform. I have heard that the reason for the talent show being carried out in such a peculiar manner was explained as wanting those students who had won awards at contests to be able to perform because many of them never get a chance to play for the public. My response to this explanation is that it is impossible for one or two people to know every person in Senior High that has won an award for his talent. It seems to me that the people in charge of the talent show would have at least been smart enough to disguise their plot by having an audition, and pick the elite few they wanted from the audition. I for one as a senior, a participant in two previous talent shows, a dedicated member of the Marching Band, Wind Ensemble, and Jazz Band for three years, a member of the All-State Band for two years in which I won two awards, and a former member of many independent bands, am disgruntled over the fact that I didn't have the right to participate in my own school's talent show.

Although the opinion of the student body obviously does not mean much, I advise that in the future the student body be informed well in advance that this event is going to take place, and that there be a specific date set for an audition with capable and unprejudiced judges presiding. The people in charge would probably be surprised how much better the show would be if they would use this format.

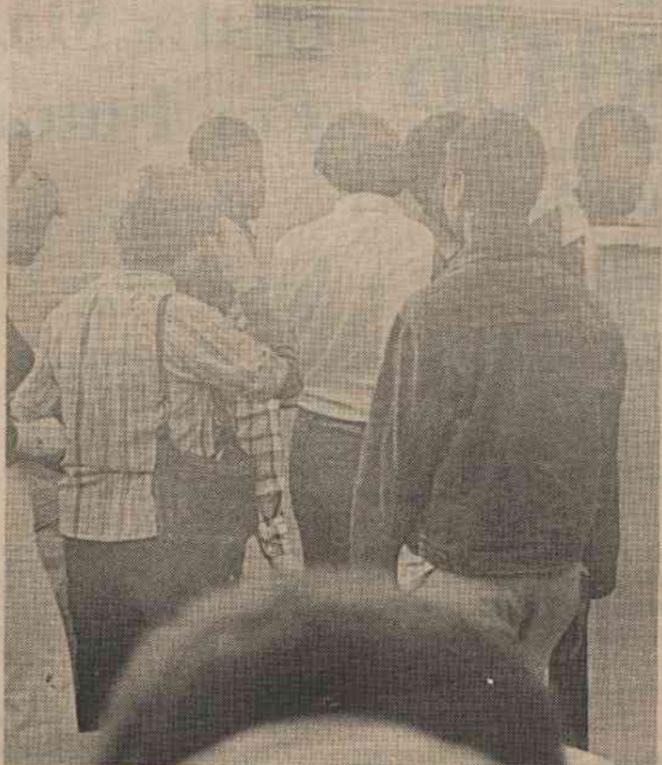
Doug Winstead

**(Editor's Note)** As we understand it, A.F.S. members were asked to bring in names of interested persons according to A.F.S. faculty advisors. The show neared and not enough people had shown interest, so S.R.A. members were supposed to have brought information to their homeroom about entering the show. S.R.A. members either neglected their duty or students didn't listen.

Dearest Editor,

The students of Rocky Mount Senior High have reason to be proud of its student newspaper. The Gryphon has won many national honors for excellence. But RMSH students should be very much ashamed of the newspaper, for there is great doubt as to how "student" it really is.

The fact is that even though



**BREAKING IN LUNCH LINE IS COMMON PRACTICE** — Above is just one of many incidents of line-breaking in the lunchroom. Many students are quite annoyed at those who break in line. Assistant Principal Charles Davis is on duty in the lunchroom during most of both lunches, but it is impossible for one person to catch all the line-breakers. Students should use self-restraint and respect the rights of others.

[Photo by Bulluck]

students do write the paper, it is being censored by their "advisor." However, this power of censorship was not assumed by the advisor on her own, it was given to her by staff members. Untrue you say? Here's the sad true story:

A couple of months ago I wrote an editorial about the Sub-Deb Club. After lengthy discussion of the pros and cons of publishing the editorial, the staff voted to run it. At this point the advisor said she would quit because she had failed as a teacher to bring a rational decision from her students. She also said she couldn't take all the hassle the editorial would cause. We suggested a few things that could be done so she wouldn't get any flack, but she refused to even consider them. So, to make a long story short, the staff revoted and decided to kill the editorial, only to keep the advisor. So you see she has the power of censorship because she can always threaten to quit whenever something upsets her.

I guess it is better to have a censored school newspaper than none at all, but it is sad that it had to come to that choice. What upsets me is that the Gryphon is still operating under the aim "to stimulate awareness of issues, to promote a

better understanding of others, and to bring about positive action where change is needed." I feel that in order to represent the true purpose of the paper, the aim should be stated as "to avoid controversy, to win Journalism Awards, and to keep the advisor happy so staff members can all get A's."

John Gilmore

## SOAPBOX

By Clifton Barnes

"You'll be seeing me on television on Monday." These words came from a new celebrity a couple of weeks ago. The celebrity held hostages at gunpoint for 40 hours in an Ohio city hall and made outrageous demands, including a public apology by President Carter for white oppression from 1619 to 1977. This is almost sensible compared to the declaration that all whites leave the planet within seven days.

This is just one example of the effects the news media has on crime. The news media, especially television, has a way of glorifying criminals and making heroes out of lawbreakers.

The media sometimes does not only report the news, it also constitutes the news even if quite by accident. The outlandish person beforementioned released one of the hostages in exchange for a television set and a tape of the late night news. He wanted to see and hear what was being said about him. He also wouldn't talk to anyone but friends and reporters about his intentions and demands.

There is another case of gunmen holding over 100 hostages, this time in Washington, D. C. The leader would only talk to reporters by phone and frequently, too. All comments and orders were relayed from the gunmen directly to newsmen.

The coverage by the media is a matter of ethics. The ethics of news coverage in such incidents are low, and they seem to be getting lower. Reporters find themselves not innocent bystanders watching the goings on. Instead they find themselves participants in the drama.

One news director says, "It's time we took another look at our coverage of such incidents . . . we are disturbed that the media . . . overplayed it to the extent that another one is almost guaranteed."

The competition between newspapers and television stations is a big reason for the overlooking of morals and ethics. The competition should ease up when a sticky situation unveils itself. This is certainly not to say that the media should ignore the events but to merely report them reasonably and without interference.

Some persons, including UN ambassador Andrew Young are calling for news restraints. When one starts setting limits on news, that's when we stop believing in ideals that founded and shaped this country. Freedom of the press would no longer be true.

I find these limitations unlikely but the media should take a step back and reassess themselves and hopefully follow a well-rounded code of ethics. If not, "news restraints" are on the way.

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And we'll never forget it.



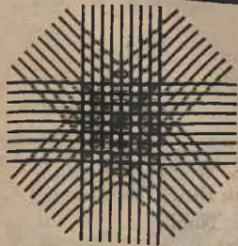
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