

The Daily Tar Heel

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The Law Comes First

The Muslim Student Association might no longer be eligible for funding, thanks to a semantic tap dance and a blatant disregard for a Supreme Court ruling.

In the same week that Student Congress passed minority recruitment measures, it still managed to leave one minority group in the dark. After years of being officially recognized as a student group, why is the Muslim Student Association now told they don't fit the bill?

In light of the Supreme Court's Rosenberg decision, religious groups on campus have recently been seeking the funding Student Congress is legally bound to give. And they've been getting it. But the flow of cash has now been dammed by the delicate and questionable notion of discrimination.

Upon learning that a homosexual would not normally find himself a member of the MSA, Rep. Terry Milner, chairman of the Rules and Judiciary Committee, called for a review of the group's recognition on the grounds of possible discrimination. Sounds pretty noble, right? Not so fast.

A little research revealed that, according to the MSA constitution, a non-Muslim could not hold office in the group. No kidding, a non-Muslim can't hold office in a Muslim organization? As it stands, unless the MSA makes some changes in their constitution, they'll have to abandon their space in the Union and any hope

of getting funded.

So much for the Supreme Court decision. This is a case of semantic ambiguities crusaded by only a few congress members seeking to apply a label of negative discrimination upon groups that are inherently exclusive. It's like calling churches unfair for binding Satan from the sanctuary.

Milner's move is also a means of getting around the Rosenberg decision. Whether that is the goal of those in congress is unclear. But the fact that a review has been called of all religious groups' constitutions — for explicit or implicit discriminatory clauses — leaves the groups in a state of jeopardy.

Perhaps Milner should be reminded of the Supreme Court's decision in Healy vs. James where it was held that "a school's non-recognition of a student organization ... as an official campus organization may not be based upon the school's disagreement with the organization's alleged philosophy, for such would constitute a violation of the student members' rights to freedom of association."

Congress should step out from behind the guise of discrimination and fall in line with the law. They could start by funding the MSA.

Nunn Left

Sen. Sam Nunn's announcement that he would not seek re-election leaves a gaping hole in the already riddled Democratic Party.

Another one bites the dust. Sam Nunn, the leading Democratic Senator on the Armed Services Committee, announced last Monday that he will not seek re-election next November.

Renowned both throughout the country and the NATO alliance, Nunn holds wide respect from leaders of many ideologies and will be sorely missed.

The dilemma for the Democrats, however, is what's happening to their party? Eight senatorial Democrats have announced that they will not seek re-election next year; only one Republican has done the same.

With this desertion of experience, Democratic legislation is being consistently defeated. The party's leaders appear to be directionless. The loss of control in both the House and the Senate didn't help, but the 1994 election represents a deeper problem.

When President Clinton was elected in 1992, there was an emphasis in his campaign on the New Democrats from the South. Trying to embody the old "conservative" element of the south with the more "liberal" sentiment among northern Democrats, Clinton's strategists wanted to mix some of the old ideologies of the party with the new.

The result: a clueless and split Congressional and national party from which 137 officeholders have become Republican since Clinton came into the White House.

This is not to say that all the blame should rest with Clinton. Far from it. The splits within the party started 10 years ago, and in many ways, are inevitable. Political boundaries and sectorial cleavages are changing, thereby altering the makeup of the party's power bases. Other constituencies must struggle to keep up, and those

areas, for the Democrats, will not be the traditional Southern ones.

To argue that the Democratic party is finished, however, posits a ridiculous misjudgment. Party strength come and goes: 30 years ago it was the Republicans who were directionless and falling apart. Fifteen years ago it was the turn of the Democrats. History suggests that the Democrats will come back.

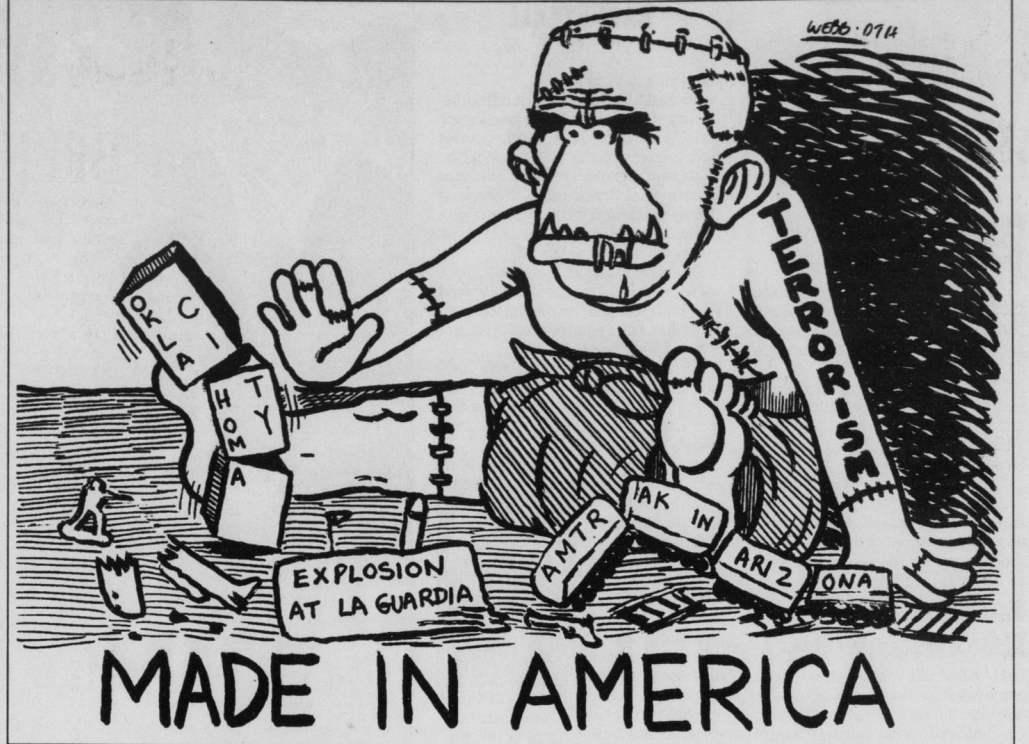
The transition that Nunn optimizes must run its course. Do the Democrats even have a chance of regaining control in Congress next year? Maybe, but probably not. The party will become strong again, but the question remains when, and how? For now, we must say goodbye to one of the better leaders of the Senate and of our country.

BAROMETER

Now that the UNC basketball team has started practicing for what promises to be a tough season, let's hope that Midnight Madness doesn't evolve into March Sadness.

THE DAILY TAR HEEL

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'Food for Thought': Aiding Student-Faculty Discourse

The best things about Colby College are the excellence and approachability of the professors.

Professors are the heart and soul of the solid liberal arts education available at Amherst College. They garner rave reviews from students, who describe them as 'outstanding,' 'concerned' and 'friendly.' Enthused one sophomore, 'I spend about two hours a week talking with a chemistry professor whom I consider a very good friend. I don't think that happens very often at big schools.'

Davidson's focus is on the students ... professors are always there for you.

The statements above — drawn from recruitment brochures and commercial college guides — highlight the chief selling points of our nation's most prestigious liberal arts colleges. Above all, the top undergraduate colleges point to faculty excellence and faculty access as the keys to a superior undergraduate experience.

There is no doubt about the distinction of the UNC-Chapel Hill faculty, and the academic credentials of our undergraduates are also first-rate. But the report of the recent Task Force on Undergraduate Education identifies "a disturbing anti-intellectual climate" as a significant problem affecting the campus. One source of the problem goes directly to the issue of student-faculty relations. Although readily admitting the complexity of the issue, below, I hope to



LEON FINK GUEST COLUMNIST

offer a single, incremental step in a corrective direction.

On a large campus like ours, personal contact by faculty with undergraduates does not always come about easily. On the one hand, our chief aim — like that of the most exclusive colleges — is to endow our students with a love of learning and to endow them with the tools to be effective and successful citizens. On the other hand, we deal with many more students, including graduates as well as undergraduates, and our definition of education stresses research and publication as well as teaching responsibilities. Aside from the anonymity of some big classes, the busy lives of both faculty and students simply do not facilitate sustained intellectual exchange between faculty and undergraduates outside of class.

Yet, it is exactly such exchange (as the small colleges boast) that often means the most to students in the long run. On the Chapel Hill campus, therefore, we might well consider new means to encourage greater interaction between

faculty and undergrads. Food for Thought is one such initiative. Briefly, I propose the creation of a fund to be used for luncheon appointments on campus between the College of Arts and Sciences faculty and their undergraduate students. With only a modest incentive, I think that the program could make a dramatic impact on the climate of faculty-student relations — at once stimulating informal intellectual dialogue and helping teacher and student to better understand each other.

Practically speaking, a trial run for the 1995-96 academic year should be capitalized at \$12,000 as a minimal initial installment. We might begin with a simple check off of designated FFT meetings at Lenoir Dining Hall. At the suggested rate of \$4 maximum per participant (including faculty) — and no more than three students paired with a faculty member at any one sitting — we will combine a tangible incentive with the larger principled appeal of the program.

Altogether, the project would stimulate some 1,500 new conversations in the trial period alone. More importantly, we will have said to students, to faculty, to alumni and the larger public, that Chapel Hill is a caring, friendly, as well as a serious place to be an undergraduate. Isn't there a donor out there who would like to be toasted thousands of times a year?

Leon Fink is the Zachary Smith Professor of history.

Nation of Islam, Muslim Faith Are Not the Same Thing

Editor's Note: The authors are members of the Muslim Student Association.

TO THE EDITOR:

As practicing Muslims we have to ask Dwayne X (Eatmon), ("Million Man March Should Be Observed Locally, Too" DTH, Sept. 29): What is Islamic about the Nation of Islam? Muslims worship together in mosques (mosques), follow an imam during prayer, and read and recite The Quran.

In contrast, members of The Nation of Islam go to temples, follow ministers, and read and quote Biblical scriptures. More importantly, Islam is for all humanity; a person of any race, ethnicity, social class or economic background can become a Muslim. The Nation of Islam, however, excludes all but black people.

Finally, Muslims believe there is no deity except Allah and that Prophet Mohammed is the last messenger of Allah. The idea that Allah came to Earth as Fard Muhammad (or any other person) is anathema to Muslims because Allah is above all such human associations. Similarly, it is outside Islamic belief to call any contemporary person a prophet, as Elijah Muhammad claimed to be.

The beliefs and practices of the Nation of Islam seem to be a mixture of black nationalism, Christian doctrines, the original ideas of Elijah Muhammad and some Islamic terminology thrown in. They are not Islamic beliefs and practices!

This confusing mix is only adding to Americans' lack of understanding about Islam. Please remember, Islam means "submission to Allah" in Arabic. Only a person who actively works to obey Allah can be called a Muslim.

All this is not to say that the planned march isn't a positive thing for African Americans. It might well be. Just don't mislead people about Islam and Muslims.

Kris Ayisha Al-Ghoul GRADUATE CELL BIOLOGY & ANATOMY

Walid Al-Ghoul POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE NEUROLOGY

'Sensationalistic' Focus Story On Drug Use Was Incomplete

TO THE EDITOR:

The DTH's sensationalistic Oct. 4 "Focus: Drug Use on Campus" covered only marijuana, alcohol and an ill-defined category, "hard drugs." Tobacco, caffeine, sugar and prescription medicines also affect mood, judgment and health. Each of the three stories reported only the opinions of users and of experts on the damage the selected drugs can cause.

No attempt was made to find sources on what constitutes "wise use" of any drug. This information is readily available for alcohol, from the same authorities who created treatment plans for alcoholics.

Little information was provided on the range of vulnerability to addiction. A family history of

READERS' FORUM

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticism. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 400 words and must be typed, double-spaced, dated and signed by no more than two people. Students should include their year, major and phone number. Faculty and staff should include their title, department and phone number. The DTH reserves

the right to edit letters for length, clarity and vulgarity. Bring letters to the DTH office at Suite 104, Carolina Union, mail them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or e-mail forum to dth@unc.edu.

substance abuse, the experience of having been raped or beaten as a child, or exposure to drugs when very young or in the early teens are all factors that make it more likely an individual will self-medicate with drugs, legal or illegal, and become addicted.

Tobacco addiction generally begins in the teens, is harder to shake than heroin and causes worse direct physical damage. The ability of Washington, D.C., Mayor Marion Barry to work for years while doing crack made it an open secret that the same drug that will kill one person in days or weeks can be tolerated indefinitely by someone else.

In my life, I've seen coffee bring on panic attacks in people prone to them, and sugar seem to bring on episodes of depression. Yet I've known people who functioned quite well despite, in my opinion, abusing marijuana or alcohol.

The DTH story's moral was: Students are getting away with doing drugs! (But they'll pay later.)

Wise use of drugs is a more important topic to address. Just as with sex, many will argue that the wisest path is abstinence, and I agree in principle concerning many drugs and many people, despite my own cherished addiction to caffeine. But guidelines to distinguish drug use from abuse are available and should be published. I am disappointed the DTH failed to do so.

Food Task Force Made Poor Choices During Investigation

TO THE EDITOR:

It seems that every time Calvin Cunningham opens his mouth, he says something short-sighted or ignorant. Now Cunningham has decided that Harvard and Boston College are the types of schools that should help UNC decide the fate of its future food services.

With all of the low-cost, large state schools to choose from, he has gone to two high-cost, elitist

schools that are in an expensive part of the country to live.

I could write pages about the ridiculous choice of going to Boston and about the lessons that Cunningham seems to have learned while up there, but I will stop now and refer any interested readers to the front of Monday's DTH for more information.

The Daily Tar Heel Should Not Encourage Binge Drinking

TO THE EDITOR:

When I noticed Tejan Hichkad's article, "Drinking Games Live! Up Student Shindigs" (DTH, Oct. 9, 1995), I was considerably surprised that The Daily Tar Heel was running a feature story on this questionable wise cultural phenomenon.

Was Monday a slow news day? Had this article been bumped from Thursday's "Diversions" section?

What about drinking games makes them worthy of third page news in one of the oldest and most distinguished student newspapers in the country?

Hichkad's "journalism" almost reads like a how-to book, with a catalog of current and "classic" games. Do Carolina students really need more opportunities and encouragement to drink irresponsibly?

At a time when the University and the Chapel Hill-Carboro communities are still dealing with the aftermath of a student's death following a drinking binge, I can't see the logic behind running without a single quote or comment regarding the ill-effects or potential problems of drinking games.

Even if binge drinking among students was new, a responsible journalist would give more consideration to other viewpoints and consider the phenomenon in a larger context. Hichkad does neither of these things.

I, too, thought that the "Century Club" and "Hour of Power" sounded like a lot of fun a few years ago. I didn't have much to say against drinking games until I spent time as an R.A. near the end of my undergraduate years. Even then, I looked the other way and thought of binge drinking as a part of the "spirit of the college atmosphere."

This changed the night one of my residents drank enough during an "Hour of Power" to bring about alcohol poisoning. He stopped breathing in a pool of his own vomit and nearly died. Not many people looked back on that night as normal, good-spirited fun.

Any social event which focuses on drinking, or any game which insists upon binge drinking as its central tenet, is a nightmare waiting to happen. Binge drinking is a sign of alcoholism, makes you more vulnerable to rape and other forms of violence, and might cost you your life.

We should all think twice about the "games" with such consequences, and The Daily Tar Heel should think twice about running stories like Hichkad's.

Mark Simpson-Vos GRADUATE STUDENT ENGLISH