

Journalism School Visitors Look At Political Campaign Coverage

BY LEANN SPRADLING
STAFF WRITER

Media members took a hard look at problems covering presidential elections this weekend in a program titled "Mass Media Coverage of the 1996 Elections: Is It Substance or Sizzle?"

Journalism educators and professionals from across the nation, including members of the journalism school's Board of Visitors, listened and spoke about topics related to election coverage.

Journalism Professor John Sweeney, who was named "the best advertising teacher in the South" by Advertising Age magazine, began the session by examining negative political television ads, saying these ads persist because they are effective. "If I say something nasty about a party, people would look at me and say, 'How could you?' Then they would turn to that party and say, 'Well, did you?' and then I'm off the hook," Sweeney said.

Sweeney showed political television ads from the 1950s to the 1996 New Hampshire primary, including a famous Lyndon Johnson ad that began with an image of a young girl playing with a flower and ended with images of bombs and war.

"Advertising is all about finding what makes heads go like THAT," Sweeney

said, snapping his head around.

Sweeney pointed out that speech in political ads is unregulated by the government, unlike speech in commercial ads.

"What's unfortunate is, because this process is constitutionally protected, mudslinging is usually where we end up."

Michael Pride, editor of The New Hampshire Concord Monitor and veteran of five New Hampshire primaries, spoke about what happened when hordes of journalists descended on his small state to cover "the horse race."

Pride said candidates would give voters in-depth explanations of their positions and plans in speeches around the state in the months before the media showed up. Ironically, Pride said, the voters most wanted to hear the candidates speak about issues in the last week before the primary, but the media would show up then and coverage of issues would give way as candidates scrambled for attention.

"Those packs of TV crews have supplanted the amber waves of grain as an American symbol," Pride said.

"In the presidential campaign itself, substance has a short shelf life."

Pride said his paper attempted to combat this by interviewing the candidates early and saving hard-hitting stories — such as a chart of where each candidate

stood on various issues and a story about how Lamar Alexander got rich — to run in the final days of campaigning.

Pride said he and his staff tried their best to maintain good local coverage during the primary. "There was a loss of emphasis because the front page was dictated by the election, but there was plenty of coverage on the local page."

In the last speech of the day, Michael Gartner, USA Today columnist and editor of The Daily Tribune, of Ames, Iowa, took up the issue of local coverage.

He described the swarm of reporters assigned to cover the primary trying to get stories they could have gotten from the wire. "You have to say to yourself, what would these people be covering if they weren't in Iowa? And why are they here?"

Gartner noted the Iowa caucus occurred at the same time as local events having a huge and direct impact on the lives of Iowa's citizens. Reporters were drawn away from local events to cover the primary.

"If you're going to commit a mass murder in Iowa, you'd better do it in the two weeks before Feb. 12," Gartner said.

Gartner said another problem was the isolation of candidates from real voters. He said Clinton and other office-seekers used to go around the state to diners and high schools to try to have real dialogue with citizens, but that approach was dying out.

Gartner said that covering the news was not all grim seriousness.

New High School Arts' Budget Faces Cuts

BY LESLIE KENDRICK
STAFF WRITER

While Chapel Hill-Carrboro School Board members approved the 1996 academic course selections for East Chapel Hill High on Thursday night, debate continued on cultural arts funding at the district's new high school.

Dave Thaden, a member of the ECHHS planning committee and principal of the new high school, presented board members with a catalog of the more than 80 courses ECHHS will offer in the fall.

Thaden said plans for ECHHS focused on providing students with academic advisers, smaller classes and higher standards for academic performance.

School board member Nick Didow said ECHHS's academic course offerings seemed to give students at the new high school the same opportunities as those attending Chapel Hill High School.

"Overall, the total number of courses

offered at Chapel Hill High is 155-168, depending on how you count it, and at East Chapel Hill High the number is 83 to 85," Didow said.

However, many CHHS parents and students at the meeting said that ECHHS's proposed cultural arts funding would leave the band program with fewer resources and opportunities than that of CHHS.

ECHHS's proposed cultural arts budget allows for a part-time band director to teach marching and concert bands.

"We have a pretty rich cultural arts package, but we do have a shortage in staffing," Thaden said.

Chapel Hill High School band director Steve Bingham said he was concerned that a part-time band director would put ECHHS students at a disadvantage.

"I have a lot of students with me who will be going to East," he said. "It's unfair for East students not to have the same opportunities that CHHS students do."

Patrick Smith, a CHHS student, said a

part-time band director could not give students the same quality of instruction that Bingham gives his students.

"Band really does require a full-time position," he said. "Dave Thaden said himself at an East planning meeting that Steve Bingham is the hardest-working person he's ever seen in his whole life."

Funding and scheduling problems might also make band at ECHHS an extracurricular activity instead of an academic class, Thaden said.

Eric Fletcher, a CHHS sophomore who will attend ECHHS next year, said having a part-time band director and holding band after school would cause some students to choose other activities over band.

Thaden said he would try to make note of students' input in his budget requests for ECHHS, and he would look at other alternatives, such as sharing an assistant band director with CHHS. "It's expensive to open a high school, and I'm not going to pretend that it's not."

CAMPUS

FROM PAGE 1

ancing act.

The 1994 Nation of Islam incident at Howard University, a historically black university, is an example of the risk associated with free speech. At a student-sponsored rally, the main speaker, a Nation of Islam member, attacked whites and called Jews, "no good, dirty, lowdown bastards." Heavy news coverage of the incident included editorials in The New York Post depicting the university as a "citadel of hate." Students reacted, claiming the school was misrepresented by the group. Officials pledged a stricter code toward hate speech.

At Pomona College, a small liberal arts college in Los Angeles, a 200-foot wall covered in graffiti has served as a forum for freedom of expression for the past 20 years. College officials are now considering whether the wall should be torn down.

Recently, bigoted messages and expressions of violence against minorities have appeared on the wall. One example prompted college officials to re-evaluate free speech on campus. Following the O.J. Simpson verdict, the words "Kill O.J." and a drawing of a noose were discovered on the wall.

But enacting hate speech codes is easier said than done. Codes that are too broad have been deemed unconstitutional. Sev-

eral universities have tried to enact hate-speech ordinances that would effectively ban certain types of speech from campus. But the battle is uphill, as evidenced by the recent repeal of the hate speech code at Stanford University. Stanford University's hate speech code, passed in 1990, was deemed unconstitutional in February of last year, after a lawsuit was filed by nine Stanford students and alumni. The lawsuit claimed the code violated free speech rights.

Stone said major universities such as the University of Michigan, Tufts and Stanford had all failed in their court attempts to enact a hate-speech code on campus. "I can't think of a campus where it has been successful."

ished for any part of their being."

Nation of Islam member Fred Mohammed said he condemned the swastikas and the intolerance for different religions and races. "However, this bigotry arises not so much by action but by inaction. It is a manifestation of evil that lurks inside human beings," Mohammed said. "We need to look inside our hearts and root out those thoughts of bigotry and hatred."

Chris Lea, a junior, said the swastikas affected his Jewish friends. "I've lived here and it always seemed an open place to me but I'm forced to wonder about that now."

sent.

■ RET-77-150 A bill to censure representatives Caldwell and McKamey, and to expel representatives Kimzey and Young. Adopted by consent.

■ BFI-77-141 An act to subsequently appropriate \$1350 to the Alliance of Black Graduate and Professional Students. Adopted by consent.

■ RSA-77-147 A resolution to condemn the theft of the Carolina Review. Adopted by roll-call vote 13-5-1.

■ RSA-77-149 A resolution to encourage the University to fund the Great Decisions lecture series. Adopted by consent.

■ RSA-77-138 A resolution to recognize the achievements of the UNC Law School moot court teams. Adopted by roll-call vote 14-3-1.

■ BIC-77-145 A bill to amend Title IV of the Student Code. Bill passed.

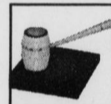
SPEAK OUT

FROM PAGE 1

speak out, about 60 people joined hands and formed a circle.

"Here are our allies that stand united against hatred and bigotry," said Nelson as the group joined hands.

About 300 people signed the petition, including Dean of Students Fred Schroeder, who also spoke at the speak out. "We cannot, cannot lose their meaning in any sense by acknowledging the symbol as a joke," Schroeder said. "The community cannot stand still when any members are dimin-



CONGRESS MINUTES

A summary of actions taken at the last Student Congress meeting.

■ BSA-77-148 An act to approve equitable student parking. Adopted by voice vote.

■ BFI-77-143 An act to subsequently appropriate \$14,500 to WXYZ. Adopted by con-

Campus Calendar

MONDAY

Noon LYNN POWELL will read from her new novel in Donovan Lounge in Greenlaw Hall.

2 p.m. DISSERTATION SUPPORT GROUP: Handle the problems that block progress with specific strategies. University Counseling Center in Nash Hall, 962-2175. Registration required.

3:15 p.m. CAREER CLINIC: Develop an action plan for choosing a major or career. University Counseling Center in Nash Hall.

6:30 p.m. UNIVERSITY CAREER SERVICES will sponsor a presentation by the Marina School at 209 Hanes Hall. Open to all interested students. This is a private school founded in 1989 to teach free thought for Russian students. The American curriculum was developed at UNC.

7 p.m. Professor ERNEST ALLEN of the W.E.B. DuBois Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, will discuss Asian Influences on African Americans in 101 Greenlaw Hall.

7:30 p.m. THE DIALECTIC AND PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETIES will debate the topic "Was the American Revolution Justified?" at their next weekly meeting in the Dialectic Chamber, third floor, New West. Everyone welcome!

8 p.m. Film showing of "CRIMES OF THE HEART" followed by playwright Beth Henley's comments. Free admission in Hanes Hall auditorium.

8:30 p.m. LEON TUCKER, singles pastor at Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh will be speaking in Carmichael Ballroom. Open to everyone. Sponsored by FCA.

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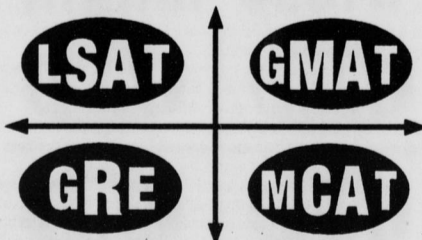
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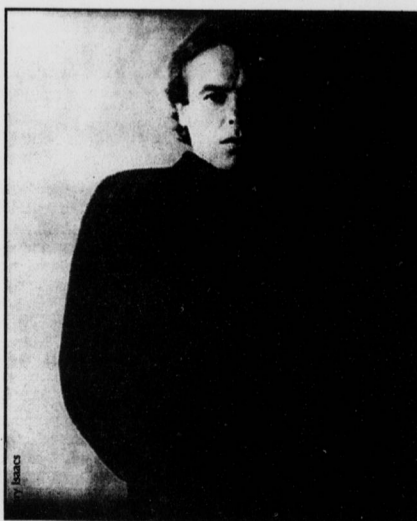
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