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# The Daily Tar Heel

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## Court TV

Florida's election problems can teach us an important lesson. North Carolina's Supreme Court should televise its hearings.

It appears that one positive change could emerge from the legal chaos in Florida during the presidential election.

The Florida Supreme Court televises its hearings, so the state (and in this case the nation) did not have to rely on media reports to filter from the courthouse for information. They had instant access.

Incoming N.C. Chief Justice I. Beverly Lake Jr. has expressed interest in doing the same thing in this state.

He should make it happen. Many state residents know little to nothing about the N.C. Supreme Court and Court of Appeals.

During his campaign last fall, Lake promised that as chief justice he would work to improve the public's understanding of the state's court system.

Providing permanent televised coverage of the courts is an excellent first step toward making that campaign promise a reality.

Of course, the courts are not attempting to maintain an elaborate veil of secrecy to keep North Carolinians out of the loop.

They already hold public sessions. But televising the proceedings would make it extremely easy for anyone anywhere

in the state to see what's transpiring at the highest levels of jurisprudence in North Carolina.

If Lake is able to flesh out this idea, the court broadcasts will not be a major ratings draw - but neither is C-SPAN.

But stations such as C-SPAN are needed in the interests of openness and the public's right to know.

One of Lake's primary goals as chief justice is to serve the people of the state.

By reaching out and helping increase public awareness and understanding of the courts, he is faithfully working toward that goal.

Though the plan has been well-received so far, there are some concerns.

The cost of bringing the courts to television is one. Court funding is lacking this year and both appellate courts are in need of renovations.

But the price tag for placing one or two small cameras in the wall and using existing microphones would not be exorbitant.

It would be well worth it.

In the end, this measure only increases public knowledge of an important body.

There's no negative aspect to that.

ERIN MENDELL — EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

## Got Sex?

"Temptation Island," a new Fox series, is all about lust, and network executives should proudly embrace the concept.

Leave it to the Fox network to take reality television to a new level of trashiness.

Not that I mind, of course. "Temptation Island," which debuts Wednesday at 9 p.m., will show couples who have been together between one and five years interacting with beautiful people meant to tempt them to cheat on their boyfriends or girlfriends.

The concept has a lot going for it. For one thing, the cast will be more attractive than that of "Survivor."

After all, sex sells. But Fox network executives are claiming the show isn't about sex, according to an article in yesterday's Washington Post.

Right ...

If something looks like sex, smells like sex and feels like sex, it's probably sex.

The show is also about couples testing their loyalty to each other.

Call me old-fashioned, but I don't think cheating is a nice dinner and a good-night kiss on the cheek. Cheating is sex.

In addition, every cast member was tested for sexually transmitted diseases before being allowed on the show. If it's not about sex, why is being STD-free so important?

Fox officials should just face it and admit they've created a show about sex.

No, not everyone will be happy about that. But saying a show isn't about sex and then making it about sex won't fix that problem.

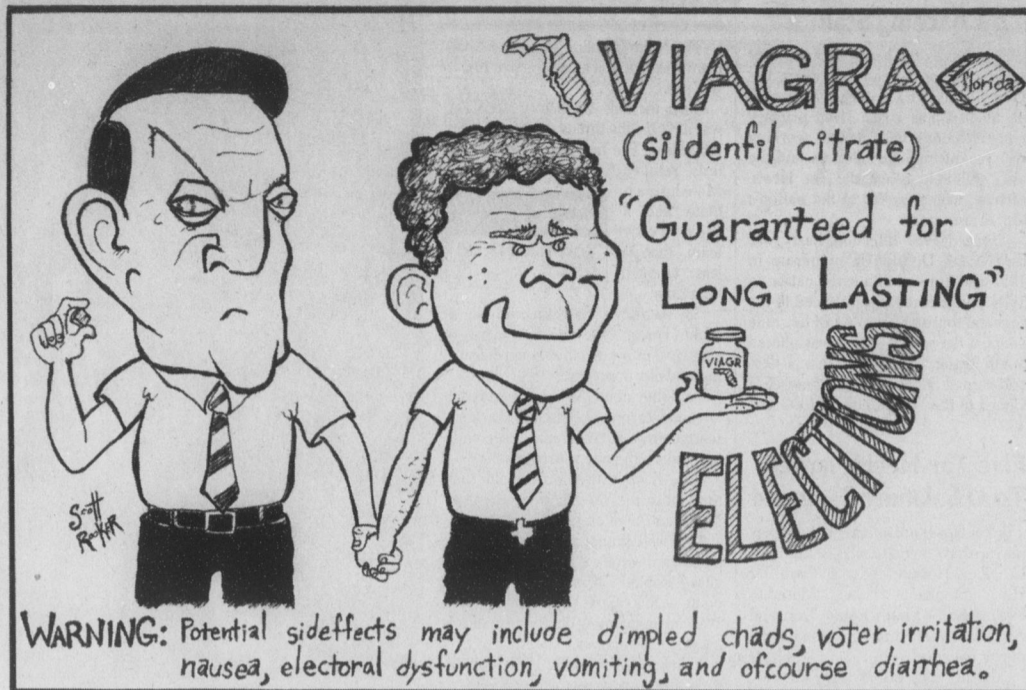
And here's a note to all those parents who will get upset about "Temptation Island:" Now's the time to use that V-chip the federal government requires manufacturers to put in all new television sets so parents can block out certain programming.

Besides, say whatever you want about the quality of Fox's programming, but the network has certainly pushed the envelope when it comes to people's standards of acceptability. Network executives shouldn't chicken out now.

If Fox wants to pretend the show is just a social experiment, the creators should have made the cast members wear more clothing.

I don't want sociological experiments from Fox. What I want from Fox is tawdry, sexy television. I get my science from the Discovery Channel.

And if they're going to create a show about sex, Fox officials should do it proudly.



## Lessons From Historical Heroes

Welcome back! Hope you had a great holiday and came back rested, healed and excited about the new year.

Today I'd like to introduce myself by introducing three of my heroes. These are the healers that have most influenced my thinking and whose ideas influence everything I write.

So, in chronological order...

Lao-Tsu is considered the primary sage of Taoism. I guess I've been a Taoist since I fell in love with Winnie-the-Pooh as a youngster, though I didn't know it until as a freshman I read the "Tao of Pooh" by Benjamin Hoff. Fantastic book. It's a great introduction to Taoism and much easier reading than the major writing of Taoist philosophy, the "Tao Te Ching."

That extraordinary work is an ideal leadership manual if ever there was one. "If you want to be a great leader, you must follow the Tao. Stop trying to control. Let go of fixed plans and concepts and the world will govern itself."

Taoism is very healing. It offers an optimistic view of the world: Relax and let good things happen. Don't force it. "I let go all desire for the common good, and the good becomes as common as the grass."

If you force it, you'll be forced yourself: "Violence, even well-intentioned, invariably rebounds upon oneself."

Skipping forward a few thousand years, Jesus Christ is my savior and God. He spent most of his time preaching, "Love God and love your neighbor," and then he showed us the awesome depth of his love by allowing himself to be martyred on our behalf.

God loves us so much that he gave us free will. Obviously he wants us to choose his way, but he pointedly leaves that choice to us. Jesus showed us what to do with our freedom. He lived what he preached: "Turn the other cheek" and "Do to others as you'd have them do to you."

He taught that we'll "reap as we sow" - our lives and future will reflect our actions. He



RUSS HELMS  
HEALING OUR WORLD

didn't want us to force people to be good - he could have done that - but he wanted us to choose to be good ourselves.

We are to be the light on a hill that teaches people by example. Though I think his message of love is a very healing message, it hasn't always been used that way.

A couple thousand years after Christ, Thomas Jefferson was a leader among a band of incredibly wise men who dared to try a new social experiment - set the people free.

While the concept "live and let live" may not have originated in the 13 American colonies two centuries ago, it hadn't been tried on such a grand scale. Jefferson was its most devoted and eloquent proponent, though James Madison and George Washington were ardent too.

I know it's not politically correct these days to respect Jefferson, what with the widespread publication of some of his "youthful (and not-so-youthful) indiscretions." But I'm willing to forgive others as I hope to be forgiven myself, so I focus on Jefferson's strengths. I think he was our best and smartest president.

President Kennedy agreed. When entertaining a large group of Nobel Laureates in the White House dining room, he remarked that it was the greatest collection of intellect to grace the room "since Thomas Jefferson dined here alone."

Some of Jefferson's plans and visions have become obsolete, but I think his ideals remain as true today as they were when he articulated them: We are all "endowed by our Creator

with certain inalienable rights, among these the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Some we've improved upon. While he said "All men are created equal" in the eyes of their creator, we'd now say that all people are created equal.

The theme that binds these heroes together is that these are all world-healers. They all taught and lived by nonaggression (with a few notable exceptions that I recognize but don't have space to justify).

Taoism is all about letting good things happen. Jesus believed so firmly in nonaggression that he died for it: "Blessed are the meek." Jefferson helped turn the principle into a government.

And all taught individual responsibility. We heal the world not by forcing others to act well but by doing so ourselves. We reap as we sow.

I've got other heroes that exemplify these traits - Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa leap to mind - but the three I offered are the ones who have most influenced me.

The principle of nonaggression has two faces: honesty, tolerance and respect toward others - and repairing any damage we cause.

Those will be the themes of this column.

Don't worry, it won't be a religious rant. I'll bring up current issues - mostly political - and use my ideals to generate healing solutions. I'm not the first - or the best - to offer such solutions.

I named the column after a book by Dr. Mary Ruwart that has some of the same themes. Her "Healing Our World: The Other Piece to the Puzzle" is surprising. I don't agree with everything she says, but I love and respect her way.

I hope you enjoy the column.

Russ Helms, a doctoral candidate in biostatistics from Chapel Hill, is the president of the Tar Heel Libertarians. E-mail him at rhelms@bios.unc.edu.

## Filling Shu's Shoes Is a Difficult but Essential Challenge

It almost didn't seem fitting. The memorial service for legendary journalism professor Jim Shumaker, who died of cancer Dec. 19, lasted all of 30 minutes in a small Baptist church that didn't even fill to capacity.

The pastor, God bless him, did his best to eulogize Shu and comfort his family by reminding them that he was in a better place.

But I suspect many sitting in those uncomfortable wooden pews, especially his former students and colleagues, wanted one last chance to hear about what the old man did before heading off to the hereafter. They wanted a few stories to make them laugh and help them remember this unique man and how he made them feel about themselves.

They didn't get it. What they did get, I imagine, is exactly the kind of affair Shu would have wanted.

No gushing eulogies, no frills, no fuss. The closest thing in the service to gushy was a brief, anonymous poem. The closest thing to frilly was the American flag that Shu earned the right to have draped over his coffin for



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his service in World War II.

This was appropriate for a man who shunned the quasi-celebrity status that accompanied his affiliation with the comic strip "Shoe" and his popular columns in The Charlotte Observer.

Robert Friedman, who occupied an office next to Shu's when Friedman worked here as a doctoral student many moons ago, said Shu never talked about his alter ego in the funny pages or his service in World War II, in which he was taken prisoner and held captive for more than a year.

But to hear Friedman tell it, Shu's humility had more to do with his innate bovine excrement detector than with sheer modesty. "Shu had the best eye for talent and the best nose for

bullshit," Friedman said.

It is this trait that so guided Shu's life that it even manifested itself in his funeral. It's also what made him a great journalist and a beloved professor.

There was no question whether Shu was a talented journalist. He was.

Friedman told of Shumaker's brief stint as editorial page editor at the Wilmington Star-News where he did everything - wrote 21 editorials a week, fielded phone calls from irate readers and performed various other administrative duties - all by himself.

His columns in The Observer were always favorites among readers and were collected into an anthology when he retired.

But there are plenty of good writers out there. The problem is that most don't supplement their talent with that uncanny combination of tough-nosed honesty and homespun modesty like Shu did.

That's why his death is such a blow to the field of journalism.

Friedman said Shu was one of the last of a dying breed of crusty, no-nonsense newspapermen, and that's too bad. In my short time in this profession, I've stumbled across more flam-

ing egos, know-it-all prima donnas and naked ambition than you can shake a stick at.

And I've caught myself on more occasions than I care to admit exhibiting these nauseating characteristics.

We journalists need people like Shu to call us on our pretension and ego-driven behavior so that we can do the job we are called to do - tell the truth.

Too bad folks like him seem to be the exception nowadays.

It is for this reason that Shu's death should give pause to folks in the J-School and anyone else who teaches for a living. Who will be the next Shu?

And I don't mean the "that guy that cartoon's based on" Shu.

I mean the Shu who singled out the stellar students in his class, took them under his wing and made them better journalists and people.

The Shu who cared more about helping ragamuffin college students make names for themselves than making one of his own.

And, yes, the Shu who, with like-minded folks like Friedman, sat in the back of faculty meetings and rolled his eyes when the bullshit was flying fast and furious.

There are folks at this paper and everywhere else, I suspect, that desperately need that loving kick in the pants Shu was willing to give the kids that would understand and benefit from it.

Not everyone can have each of the unique mix of traits that made Shu special.

Few do.

Not everyone can be that gruff nurturer who can motivate with a few words, a glare or, as countless students found out, with a heap of red ink.

And too few of us have the guts to stand up to authority on paper and in life the way Shu did.

Maybe it was that year as a POW in Germany, or maybe he had a similar editor back in the day that shoved him in the right direction.

Who knows why Shu was the way he was.

What I do know is that this profession, and by extension the whole lot of us, is on its way down the tubes with-

out people like him to tell it straight and, in his own way, help out his fellow man.

I'll close by confessing that I am not even close to the best person to be writing this.

Shu was out sick the semester I was supposed to have him for editorial writing, so I never knew him very well. (I hope none of his former students deduced that by reading this column).

But I could not ignore the fact that this paper lost one of the best things that ever happened to it. Countless DTHers have benefited from Shu's curmudgeonly wisdom, and this paper is infinitely better for that.

With the Pulitzer Prize winners and hundreds of other top-tier professionals who owe Shu a debt of gratitude, a tribute from our humble publication might not seem like much.

But it means a lot to us that our paper often bore the first saplings of the seeds that Shu planted in his students.

Here's hoping someone picks up where he left off.

Matt Dees is a senior journalism and political science major from Fayetteville. Reach him at mbedees@email.unc.edu.



JIM SHUMAKER