

The Tar Heel

LEADING SOUTHERN COLLEGE TRI-WEEKLY NEWSPAPER



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Saturday, November 10, 1928

PARAGRAPHS

Considering the coldness of approaching winter, we were surprised and shocked to note an assignment made by our new managing editor to a cub reporter: "Write a story on the new roof of Alumni Building." Sort of puts the reporter up in the air, too.

One thing that must be said of Playmaker reviews—they bring forth the best and the worst of our Open Forum letters.

Among the things we should like to know is this: What does the Governor of North Carolina say to the Governor of South Carolina after today's game?

During the game, he probably varies the old adage by remarking, "It's a long time between touch-downs."

The state of Arkansas, in a recent referendum, declared in favor of a law forbidding the teaching of evolution in states schools. Seems like the citizens of another state are desperately attempting to prove that they are not monkey-children!

Next Thursday night when Sherwood Anderson lectures here "The Desert Song" comes to Durham. Then will be the chance to test the respective popularity of tragedy and comedy.

The Uselessness Of Standing In Line

There are reasons and reasons for standing in long and tedious lines, but sufficient reason has not yet been shown us this year to demonstrate the necessity for the student body's having to block the lobby of the Y. M. C. A. for two days before each football game in order to exchange a student ticket for one designating a particular seat.

At some game like the Carolina-Georgia Tech contest there might be an excuse in the fact that such a large attendance was expected, but ordinarily there is neither rhyme nor reason for exchanging tickets. Anyone who is familiar with the size of student attendance can estimate the extent of the crowd for each game and then set aside a section of the stadium large enough to accommo-

date all students. Certainly the plea of inadequate room in the stadium can hardly be made, for all the games this year have demonstrated the fact that the crowd in attendance does not reach the overflowing point.

When a student has stood in line to register, has stood in line to obtain his athletic passbook, has stood in line to pay his University fees, he is in no mood to make himself a part of another long-drawn line in order to give in his passbook and receive a ticket of some other color. The passbook is intended to serve as an admission card to all athletic contests and it is an unnecessary nuisance to be compelled to join the line of restless waiters.

You Are—I'm Not!

Three columns, more or less, of Open Forum letters in this issue indicate a healthy condition of thought on the campus. The Tar Heel issued an appeal for such material early in the school year, and always welcomes it when it comes. The columns of this student's paper are always open to expressions of the student's mind.

Whether or not the opinions of letter writers agree with those of the editorial staff or the policy of the paper is of no importance. Letters are printed without correction or change if they are not distinctly libelous and are accompanied by the writer's name and address, which need not necessarily be printed if the contributor so wishes.

A number of letters has been received recently which deserve censure. In keeping with the Tar Heel's policy, no change has been made in any of them before printing. These letters were written by hot-headed and injudicious people who cover up the shallowness of their thinking with attacks on other people, instead of their opinions.

Calling a man dumb does not prove that your idea is better than his, or that his opinion is wrong. Invective is not argument. Personal attacks serve no purpose, since the writers of Open Forum letters are generally unknown to each other. The man who calls another stupid because he does not agree with him is merely labelling himself.

Let us have Open Forum letters, and plenty of them. Let the campus speak out if there is anything which requires discussion. But let us discuss matters sensibly and impersonally, as befits college men.

—H. J. G.

Open Forum

MITCHELL IS DEFENDED

To the Editor:

We wonder if the editor of the Tar Heel thought before he wrote this heading over Mr. B. F. M.'s letter, which appeared in the issue of November 8, 1928, "The Dramatic Critic is Criticized." What we want to know is, "Was he?" There is certainly no evidence of intelligent criticism in Mr. B. F. M.'s letter, and the writer confesses that he searched the remainder of the Forum to see if by any chance this heading was placed at the head of the wrong letter. How a graduate student of the seeming intelligence of Mr. B. F. M. could write such a letter against Joe Mitchell without realizing that he is doing exactly what he is criticizing Mitchell for doing is more than we can see. After reading Mr. B. F. M.'s letter we think that he would have done the Tar Heel and the campus a great favor by going to Joe Mitchell personally, and telling him what he thought instead of burdening the column with something that isn't worth any more to the Tar Heel readers than a Chinese coin in Mexico. It is clearly evident, however, that Mr. B. F. M. wrote his letter for a purpose, and one purpose only—that is to stir-up agitation on the campus. Well if that's what he wants we are willing to try to help him along. Before I say anything I want the readers clearly to understand that I am associated with The Carolina Playmakers, but I want them to also understand that this is a personal opinion and is not an official expression of the Playmakers organization.

In the first place we do not see how Mr. B. F. M. makes any connection between Joe Mitchell's review of "An Enemy of the People" and Mr. John M. Booker's letter which appear-

ed in the issue of November 6, 1928. It is plainly evident that Mr. Booker has no idea of "showing up" Mitchell, for he clearly states in his opening sentence, "This is a conscientious penny." On the other hand how could Mr. B. F. M. have missed this fact: Mr. Booker agrees with everything Mitchell says about the personal performances except the acting of Mr. McCone. If he doesn't believe it, let him get the two articles and compare them. But yet, after all, Mr. Booker's criticisms are, like Joe Mitchell's, only personal opinions, and therefore there is no reason why any student on the campus should get so excited over them as to call forth such an Open Forum letter as Mr. B. F. M.'s. That is, of course, unless—as we have hinted before—he merely wants to stir up agitation. Still they call this "criticizing" the campus critic! Yes, truly sometimes we have evidence of sophomoric minds appearing in print "without the accompanying witty brilliance that makes an occasional sophomoric mind tolerable."

Mr. B. F. M. accuses Joe Mitchell of making his name at the head of his review appear in letters almost as large as the title of the column. We would like to ask Mr. B. F. M., who makes up the paper, the Editor or the Dramatic Critic? Also, would Mr. B. F. M. please inform us what student on the campus is better equipped both from an intellectual standpoint and a background of reading, to judge the dramatic performances than Joe Mitchell. I wonder if Mr. B. F. M. knows what Prof. Paul Green thinks of Joe Mitchell's ability as a student? Well we all know that Mr. Green knows as much about the theatre and drama as any person on the campus and I defy Mr. B. F. M. to belittle Mitchell's ability in front of Mr. Green. I wonder if Mr. B. F. M. knows what the Playmakers' staff thought of Mitchell's review? No, of course he doesn't. He doesn't know that the Playmakers staff thought, although not agreeing with everything that Mitchell said, that it was a fine piece of student reviewing. Yes, Mr. B. F. M. says the review was "all wrong" when such men as Professor Heffner, who teaches Ibsen and directed the play, and Professor Selden, who has probably forgotten more about the real theatre than Mr. B. F. M. will ever know, congratulated Mitchell on the review.

Mr. B. F. M. criticizes Mitchell's opening paragraphs in his review. I wonder is Mr. B. F. M. has ever read reviews by J. Brooks Atkinson of the New York Times or St. John Ervine of the New York World. If he has he certainly couldn't help but notice that they use the same method in their criticism that Joe Mitchell is developing in his. If Mr. B. F. M. is smart enough to tear Mitchell's review to pieces by using Mitchell's own phrases, then let's see him publish a review in the Open Forum that will better Mitchell's and then we'll take his letter seriously from a critical standpoint. He says that all Mitchell said in his opening paragraphs had been stated on the program. All right; granted that it was, at the most only 600 students could have seen the production both nights. How about the other 1800 students on the campus that were likely to read the review? Is that telling them something that they had just read? I'll wager that sixty per cent of the students on the campus didn't know that Ibsen wrote a play called "An Enemy of the People" before they read Mitchell's review. Not because there is any lack of intelligence on the campus, but because there is a woeful lack of play-reading. If Mr. B. F. M. doubts this statement let him ask the professors who teach Modern Drama.

Unfortunately the English language is more or less limited in its expressions of "praise". We wonder how Mr. B. F. M. would have expressed Mr. Bissell's performance other than "splendid" if he really thought it was "splendid"? We wonder how Mr. B. F. M. would have expressed a performance as "he managed his walk-on part creditably" if it was only "managed creditably"? I'm sure Mr. Mitchell would appreciate Mr. B. F. M. giving him a few suggestions as to the use of eulogies and critical remarks next time he writes a review. Mr. B. F. M. criticizes Mr. Mitchell's remark that the sets were "brilliantly executed." Without arguing the truth or falsity of Mr. B. F. M.'s statement, we would like to know by what standards he judged the settings used in the play? I am sure that The Playmakers would appreciate any advice or suggestions which he might be able to give them as to how they might improve their settings. Perhaps Mr. B. F. M. didn't realize that "An Enemy of the People" is a serious comedy, and that to set the mood for a comedy it must be lighted much brighter than tragedy. After the number of Ibsen tragedies that have been performed on a stage so dark that you couldn't tell what the characters were doing, I am not surprised at Mr. Mitchell's surprise and pleasure at seeing Ibsen successfully

produced on a well-lighted stage. There is one thing that Mr. B. F. M. says in his letter that after reading it, I thoroughly agree with, and that is "it's all right to say what you think, but is what you think worth saying?" Yes, Joe Mitchell may be a rotten dramatic critic, but I'll wager that what he says in one review in the Tar Heel will be more worthy of being read than all the Open Forum letters that such people as Mr. B. F. M. can cram into the column during the entire year.

Yours most sincerely,
Howard W. Bailey. '29

To the Editor:

After reading B. M. F. '28's letter in the Thursday Tar Heel I find myself unable to decide whether Dr. Booker helped the worm to turn or whether he himself did the turning, implying, I suppose, that—but that is neither here nor there. Let's talk about Joe Mitchell. Once or twice I told him that he was a punk critic, and once or twice I said that he wasn't so bad after all. That's what "I thought" about it. But that's not Joe's fault. Suppose that he is punk. Apparently the others are punk—and what to do?

If B. F. M. '28 were to submit a better criticism than Joe, which (off-hand) I think doubtful, I believe the Tar Heel would give it preference. I'm not sure, but I think so. The point is (if there be any point) that this campus is phlegmatic (to say more would be unkind)—except, of course, in things like Dean Paulsen's returns, comic strips, and the general insensate chatter that, happily, drifts away at the rate (so says Dr. Stuhlman) of 331 meters per second.

I wish, therefore, to nominate Joe Mitchell for the Hall of Fame, because, among other things, he has steadily contributed punk (if you will) material that has perplexed, incensed, overjoyed twenty-five hundred or more alert products of a whirling age.

J. J. SLADE, JR.

Davidson College Is Remembered in Will

Announcement that Robert F. Phifer, an alumnus of Davidson College, had bequeathed \$30,000 to the institution, to be paid upon the death of a sister, has verified the contention of college officials here that former students of the college are more and more remembering their Alma Mater in wills. This announcement brought to mind the fact that almost a quarter of a million dollars has been left to Davidson in 10 different wills during the last five years, and most of this has come from estates of alumni. The late Mr. Phifer was a member of the class of 1869, but was not a graduate of Davidson. He entered Davidson from Concord, maintained his interest in North Carolina for a number of years after he left here, and then went to New York, where he remained until a year ago when he went to Battle Creek, Mich., for his health. Death occurred there on October 16.

Sigma Alpha Epsilon announces the pledging of Royall Brown, of Blacksburg, Va.

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