

The Daily Tar Heel



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Friday, November 1, 1929

Tar Heel Topics

"Wolfpack Wants To Beat Carolina Team," headlines the infant daily. Wonder what the headwriter thinks they play football for, anyway?

One more consolation for we underpaid typewriter pounders is that we didn't have enough coin to buy ourselves some stock before the market went blooie.

Hallow'en night and nary a false fire alarm, busted plate glass window or old lady frightened to death in Chapel Hill. Maybe the collegian is growing up after all.

A Dangerous Precedent

Three Washington Times reporters were sentenced Wednesday to 45 days each in jail for contempt of court by Judge Peyton Gordon when they refused to reveal to a District of Columbia grand jury the names and addresses of persons from whom they claimed to have purchased liquor. The men told the court they had bought liquor in 49 speakeasies in Washington, that they had gained admittance to them through friends and that they had promised not to reveal the names of bootleggers, asserting their only purpose in going to the speakeasies was to develop news stories concerning crime conditions in Washington.

Though sentenced for 45 days, the reporters face indeterminate sentences, since they will be liable to another contempt action if they refuse to answer the questions at the end of their terms. The judge implied that they might be freed before the expiration of their sentences if they revealed the names of the bootleggers.

It seems to us that the District of Columbia is countenancing a high-handed and highly dangerous procedure if it permits the sentences of the reporters to stand. A precedent would be set which would very effectively prevent newspaper campaigns against crime conditions and political abuses. In the past newspapers have rendered service of inestimable value to the public on numerous occasions by revealing corruption in government and inefficiencies in police administration.

It is the duty of law enforcement officials to act upon reports of crime and the privilege of

any citizen or publication to point out violations of the law. Courts and other crime prevention agencies should be appreciative of tips from individuals or newspapers which inform them of instances of law breaking.

Prosecution of criminals hardly lies within the province of journalism. Newspapers have a definite duty to perform for the public in bringing to light deplorable crime conditions; if their reporters are to be required to secure evidence against individual lawbreakers and divulge this evidence before tribunals of justice they should be subsidized by the state. Judge Gordon has attempted to convert a newspaper staff into a police department. It is true that newshounds are often amateur sleuths, but the average reporter would hardly be willing to become a federal "flatfoot," even if his journalistic duties did not prevent it. Strange as it may seem, even a reporter has a few principles.

The Forensic Situation

Along with other developments in the field of extracurricular activity at the University of North Carolina has come an alleged decline of interest in forensic undertakings. It is by no means an uncommon occurrence to hear members of the faculty, who were intercollegiate debaters in their undergraduate days, lament the fact that debating no longer draws a packed house of students, faculty members, and townspeople. Every now and then some elderly person tells of the days when he had to go to Gerrard hall early in order to get a seat for the occasion of the annual Carolina-Virginia debate. That the disappearance of this condition indicates a decline of interest cannot be denied. The writer feels, however, that there are several facts in this connection which should be cited as an explanatory measure.

Debating is the oldest form of extracurricular activity in which representatives of the University now participate. It had its beginning long before the days of football and long before the days of the famous Carolina Playmakers. The Dialectic Senate and the Philanthropic Assembly, essentially forensic organizations, were founded in 1795. Thus, forensics early became a part of the University itself. With this beginning debating here rapidly became the chief activity of the various rival clubs and other organizations which developed in the course of the ensuing century, Carolina's first intercollegiate debate finally taking place in 1904. Forensics at Carolina have a nobility of origin, therefore, which is second only to the founding of the University itself.

Time was when a Carolina student had to debate if he engaged in any form of extracurricular activity whatsoever, for there was nothing else to do in this field of endeavor which is all-important in the present day. Moreover, attendance of the literary societies was assured by faculty regulations from which none were exempt. This situation no longer exists.

But let us be more specific and more modern. Most of the four hundred and twelve organizations which exist on this campus at present originated within the last forty years. Students who would have flocked to intercollegiate debates even twenty years ago now attend various social meetings, political gatherings, picture shows, and the like. The forensic cause is the sufferer. And why? Simply because other things are more dramatic and appeal more to the average youth who is bent upon a good time. The extreme development of the moving pic-

ture industry, the rise of brawn worship with its many football heroes, and many other forms of amusement involving the physical element and social appeal have sapped intercollegiate debating of large audiences. The contention of the writer is substantiated by the fact that the annual Carolina-British debate always attracts a large audience. People want to see what the Britishers look like just as they want to see famous football players in action.

Intercollegiate debating is concerned with questions of national and international importance. Moreover, statistics show that the average age of students enrolled in the University is considerably lower than it was fifteen years ago. The tendency from the first class to that of last year is toward graduation at an earlier age. The contention here is that young students are not as much interested in big national and international problems as older ones are. This factor cannot easily be overlooked in explaining the decline of forensic audiences. Youths of eighteen and nineteen years who become very much excited when watching a football game would consider a debate on immigration nothing short of a gripe.

Nevertheless, the pendulum has swung the other way now, and intercollegiate debating here is gaining steadily in prominence. Since the organization of the debate squad, from which all intercollegiate debaters are selected, the number of candidates for teams has increased very noticeably. Owing to better presentations in all debates arising from the aforesaid increased competition for positions on the teams and such features as the debate with the British women in Memorial hall last year, attendance is also increasing from year to year. The Carolina-Virginia radio debate, begun last year and now an annual affair, has done much to arouse interest.

In the whole forensic game at Carolina there seems to be a steady revival after a very lamentable slump.—J. C. W.

Readers' Opinions

IN ANSWER TO MR. MEBANE AND HIS DRAMATIC CRITIC Editor the Daily Tar Heel:

But for the rather brutal pun on the word "shrieks," Mr. Greenblatt's letter was a model of dignity and restraint that I might do well to imitate. However, the temptation offered by the content outweighs any admiration I may have for Mr. Greenblatt's literary abilities. Particularly noticeable is Mr. Greenblatt's contempt for "press notices" and "newspaper men." In reply, I should like to ask this question: What written dramatic criticisms are not "press notices?" What are Mr. Greenblatt's comments but "press notices?" And who except "newspaper men" write dramatic criticisms of current plays? Mr. Mebane himself says that the Carolina Magazine theatrical column is patterned after those of "Life" and "Judge." In the broad sense of the word, George Jean Nathan and Ralph Barton are journalists. Even if Mr. Greenblatt is a purist, I consider my talents greatly complimented to be ranked with Percy Hammond, Robert Littell, and St. Johns Ervine. When Mr. Greenblatt improves on these men, I shall be very happy to offer him my heartiest congratulations and most profound admiration.

In comparing Mr. Greenblatt's column with the dramatic department of "Life" and "Judge," which Mr. Mebane assured me were the models of its design, I find one distinct difference. Un-

like Mr. Greenblatt's comments, George Jean Nathan's terse criticisms are based upon a more adequate review, which has appeared in a previous issue. Robert Benchley's statement in the last "New Yorker" concerning "Strictly Dishonorable"; "The first real light comedy of the season, etc." was preceded by a two column review in the issue of October 26, even though most of us should be willing to accept Mr. Benchley's unqualified "yes" or "no."

Another matter I should like to mention is the purpose of Mr. Greenblatt's column. As my kind supporter, Another Damsykee, put it: "What is the use of reviewing plays five hundred miles off in New York?" While I thank him for his assistance, I do not entirely agree with him on this point. Carolina prides itself on being progressive and abreast of the times. To ignore anything as much a part of the development of our national culture as the New York theatre would be inconsistent with this policy. If the column is intended to serve as a guide, perhaps the short comment form is the best. However, even in this case, the visiting New Yorkers are told very little of what the plays are about, and have only Mr. Greenblatt's personal opinion as to whether they are good or bad. Mr. Greenblatt's disappointment in "Journey's End" is interesting inasmuch as it is contradictory to the prevalent opinion of the merit of this play, but without further elaboration I should not feel satisfied to accept his verdict. And were I to avoid seeing it merely because he didn't like it, I should be rather angry to discover afterwards that it is generally considered to be the best play in New York.

Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, and I am not advocating sheep-mindedness. However, I do believe that for the guidance of those people who have only a limited time to spend in New York, and wish to see these plays which are most representative, worthwhile, and enjoyable, a more authoritative and mature opinion would be advisable—perhaps that of these same "newspaper men." Despite Mr. Greenblatt's contempt for them, their business is to know and recommend good plays. And I believe that their experience with the theatre is more extensive than his.

If Mr. Greenblatt's column is for the information of those who are unable to attend New York productions, a more detailed review seems to be indicated. It should briefly discuss the nature of the play, the plot, the setting, the characters, as well as the quality of the play and performance as a whole.

In conclusion, I want to apologize for any personal remarks I have made. Unfortunately, when criticising anything so individual as personal opinion, it is hard not to be personal. And then too, Mr. Greenblatt found boring a play which I consider one of the high spots of my life. Sincerely yours,

A. NEW YORKER.

Three New Members Elected To Vestry

The student vestry of the Episcopal church held the election of new members last Tuesday night at the parish house at which the following men were elected: Bill Draper, Jack Peshan and Mandy Webb.

Dick Winburn resigned as president of the vestry at the meeting because of lack of time to fill properly the duties invested in the office. His successor will be elected at the next meeting. Members of the vestry include Bill Carbine, Joe Eagles, Aubrey Parsley, Peter Brown Ruffin, Beaky Huger, Charlie Waddell and Robert Brawley.

Did You Know That—

The most mispronounced, and misspelled word, is *optimist*? According to Howard Mumford Jones, many students here say *optomist*, and some go so far as to spell it that way. Another oft misspelled and mispronounced word is hypocrisy.

The cornflower has been voted the unofficial flower of the University of North Carolina?

An interesting sociological movement is going on within the confines of "I" dormitory? Just as the old Christians, who were so outnumbered by the Romans, formed secret societies and met in the Catacombs, and like the Huguenots in France, the Moors in Spain and like the contemporaneous little races within races, such as the "Little Italy's" and the "Little Hungary's" of New York, endeavored to retain their individualities and withstand the pressure of foreign thought and ideals, so have the Christians in "I" dormitory banded together and formed the "Gentile Club." Of course, as anyone who has ever been to "I" may know, the men eligible to join the "Gentile Club" number not more than forty or forty-five percent of the entire dormitory. Weekly meetings are held, officers have been elected and steps taken to form a strong, powerful organization which will be able to cope with the gradual encroachment of the entire dormitory by the opposition.

Every time President Chase frowns, 50 muscles must work, while every time he smiles, only 13 of his muscles go into play?

When Archibald Henderson goes into the Carolina Barber Shop to have a shave and a haircut, it is said that he always mumbles, "Give me a shavian haircut, please?"

"Dean" Paulsen has been growing more and more amazed at the continued increase in the use of undershirts and underdrawers among the students? Three years ago, only full-grown union suits were to be seen tumbling out of the laundry bags but now not more than one or two men, at the most, out of each dormitory and fraternity house send in the good old-fashioned union-suits.

There is a most disappointed sophomore wandering about, looking forlorn and lovelorn?

Last week, he received a letter from his girl in New York stating that her father and mother would be away for the week-end and it would be wonderful if he were to come up to see her. He left Thursday afternoon, after borrowing as much money as he could lay hands on, and leaving with the full knowledge that he was cutting two mid-term examinations. When he finally arrived in New York, he spent the entire week-end talking to his girl, who was in bed, from the threshold of her room. He wasn't allowed to enter her room. Diphtheria had beat him to it. He's broke now, flunked one exam that he had not time to prepare for and must take two exams that he missed this week.

The library subscribes to more than 1080 periodicals every year?

'Chi Psi fraternity announces the pledging of William B. McLean of Red Springs.

Advertisement for CAROLINA THEATRE featuring the play SALUTE with George O'Brien and Helen Chandler. Includes text: "The Army-Navy Football Classic in this NEAR! ALL TALKING SEE! Movietone SALUTE with GEORGE O'BRIEN + HELEN CHANDLER Who's Bride? A future admiral and a future general decide that question on the grid-iron. It's West Point vs. Annapolis and brother vs. brother — with the biggest screen thrill of your life as the result. Added Features "Sleeping Porch" All Talking Comedy Pathe News Showing the Latest News Events"

Advertisement for The New and The Old suits and topcoats. Text: "The New Fall Styles and Patterns Featuring Stetson 'D' and the famous Biltmore Homespun. and The Old Fine Workmanship and Quality Built into every Garment. Suits and Topcoats Tailored to Your Individual Taste \$29.50 and more. Stetson D logo." The ad is framed with decorative scrollwork.