

# About The Chronicle

Davis B. Young  
Editor, The Daily Tar Heel

Absolute free aim of the press to discuss public questions is a foundation stone of American liberty.

Herbert Hoover  
April 22, 1929

The editorial page of today's Daily Tar Heel is centered around the furor created by the printing of a column entitled "A Christmas Story" in last Wednesday's edition of The Duke Chronicle, the student paper of our sister institution in Durham. The column in question was written by Duke student Steve Cohen, formerly, she was fired from the paper, a member of the Chronicle staff. It appeared by action of Editor Fred Andrews, formerly, he was also fired from his post, chief of The Chronicle's operations.

The column itself was an inferior example of student expression. It made a complete travesty of the Virgin Birth, making an event, which in the minds of many is beautiful, Cohen's comments rambled from line to line, lacking the coherency desired from a literary standpoint when writing such fiction. That his article is in poor taste is obvious to the reader. It would appear weak to the point that he was forced to depend upon the vulgarities written therein to hold the reader's attention.

For these reasons, Editor Andrews failed to use the proper discretion in allowing the column to be printed. By definition an editor must edit. This he failed to do. Yet it must be said in his defense that this year's Duke Chronicle has been the best in our memory. Andrews made a complete amateur, while editor, to deal with significant questions in a hard hitting, journalistically ethical manner. At the time of his firing, he was putting out one of the best, non-daily college papers in America, a paper in which Duke students could display justifiable pride. The Duke University Publications Board will have a hard job finding a consistently better editor.

Cohen's column contained, among other things, allusions to rape, homosexuality and prostitution. It is certainly within the domains of the college paper, or any similar publication, to discuss such subjects. Yet, such discussion must be handled with impeccable taste. Using them to degrade a rich religious experience is to say the least, questionable.

Thus, we may conclude that The Duke Chronicle won't miss Steve Cohen. Firing him is defensible. Firing Editor Andrews will prove, in the long run, to have been a mistake. His successor will more than likely show a distinct lack of the superior intellect and personal courage which made Andrews a good editor.

As for the suspension of publication, our only comment is: inexcusable. Such pre-publication censorship is an abridgment of the freedom to which the paper should be entitled. Although it is possible that The Duke Chronicle did exceed the boundaries of freedom, ignoring its responsibilities, that is still no valid reason to cease publishing. The destruction of the Friday edition of The Chronicle after it had been printed is nothing more than suppression. Even though we concede Cohen and Andrews were wrong, we must somehow wonder if the effect of stifling their views won't result in a future fear by members of the Duke student community to comment on anything more than the least controversial matter.

It is obvious that the Duke University Administration is worried about the public relations aspect of this fiasco. The Cohen column has hurt that institution's good name. But, by firing Cohen and Andrews, and releasing Hollis Edens' statement to the press, the problem has been compounded and blown up out of proportion. If Duke leaders are interested in preserving their integrity before the public's scrutinizing eye, they will think twice in advance of releasing such statements in the future. As it now stands, virtually every major college paper in the country will comment on this, as well as state papers, and possibly a national news outlet.

No self-respecting editor can sit by and watch any paper be killed in the manner of The Duke Chronicle. We disagree with those who printed the column in the first place, but more so with those responsible for suppression and the ceasing of publication. All the king's horses and all the king's men can never make the Duke Chronicle a great paper again.

## Merry Christmas

1. The nation is at war.
2. The nation is losing the war badly.
3. The nation must exert a vastly greater effort

## The Daily Tar Heel

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## Comment From Hollis Edens And Edit From Durham Sun

The following is the text of a statement by Dr. Hollis Edens, President of Duke University, Editor.

"The column goes far beyond the broad freedom within which The Chronicle has traditionally operated. The story has the compound fault of mingling the acutely obscene with the offensively sacrilegious. It is the opinion of the Administrative Committee that the editorial decision to print the column had the effect of turning freedom into license."

According to the Durham Morning Herald, Edens said that The Chronicle has long enjoyed a breadth of freedom traditionally common to all areas of the university and probably unrivaled by many other college newspapers. He added that there has been no restraint on the freedom to criticize, to recommend or to discuss. However, the column in question has received from the student body and from the university community at large the most general condemnation in his experience.

Edens went on to add, "We regret that we had to take this drastic action. I wish to make it clear that there is no disposition to throttle The Chronicle in the future; there has been none in the past. We do insist that intellectual activity cannot be separated

from individual morality. While responsibility seems often to students to be the less attractive partner of freedom, it is nevertheless fundamental. Our student writers and editors must govern themselves by the same checks upon license employed by scholars and scientists or any reputable newspaper."

### From The Durham Sun

"Now that Duke University, swiftly, has itself acted, the university community, and the area within which the Duke Chronicle may be seen, should comment it. The Chronicle has been suspended. The case was that of crude and revolting outpouring of malice and conscious or subconscious rage by a Jewish student who mocked and ridiculed the Christian faith. He wrote a 'Christmas Story'; a sniggering travesty on the Virgin Birth.

"Someone must have treated him abominably, sometime, perhaps because he is a Jew. In striking back, however, his coarseness and scurrility have defeated his purpose and more deeply marked him. He is an Ishmael; one of the obnoxious, who bring upon their people the sort of exclusion which so often has come to be their fate."

## New Falangist Salute



Herblock is mean due to illness

MAULDIN

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## 'A Christmas Story'

# Column Causing Duke Paper's Ban

Steve Cohen  
The Duke Chronicle

## From The Editor

### To The Student Body:

In this space today I had planned to print the column which caused the banning of The Duke Chronicle. Last night at 7 p.m., I decided against it. My foremost consideration in reaching this decision was the welfare and good name of this University. I remain convinced that the readers of this paper should be allowed to read "A Christmas Story" and decide for themselves whether it is or is not in good taste. However, I feel that the publication of such an article on the pages of this paper would have reflected unjustly upon the students, faculty and administration of this University.

Pressure was brought to bear upon me from both sides. I know that I am damned as much for not running it as I would have been if I had. However, this pressure was brought from students alone. No member of the administration made any overture towards censorship. So in a large matter the battle has been won. I could have printed the column. And for this, I think this University and its attitudes are something, perhaps beyond words, and must be preserved as

a stronghold of free expression.

But, The Daily Tar Heel is not my paper. It is our paper, belonging equally to each and every subscriber. Last night as I sat in my office writing this statement I received more phone calls than I have ever known. Friends from every corner of the campus came forth to offer their support. And the members of the staff, although divided pro and con, showed through their undivided loyalty to the paper and its traditions, a greater bond than I have ever dreamed possible. And maybe through this wonderful friendship I have learned more about the true meaning of Christmas, rather than printing what I had intended.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank both sides. The concern displayed yesterday has given me a renewed faith. If by not printing the column in question I have in any way repaid even a fraction of what the students at this University have given to me, I thank God for the decision I made.

Davis B. Young, Editor  
The Daily Tar Heel

## An Inquisition At Duke Univ.

Frank Crowther  
Associate Editor, The DTH

Elsewhere on today's editorial page you may read for yourself the controversial column which precipitated last week's suspension of "The Duke Chronicle."

Since we expect that diverse criticism will undoubtedly be directed at our paper for this publication, several remarks of introduction are in order.

Our editorial staff has been investigating and discussing "The Fair Cohen" throughout the past weekend. On Sunday afternoon, we decided to publish the column in today's edition. We do so not to flout any authority, not to asperse ridicule upon our sister institution, and not to prance like a peacock in displaying our own traditional and rarely challenged freedom. We hasten to add that our enforced demise by any powers that be was not a serious consideration in our decision to reprint the Cohen column.

Since I, personally, have been associated with this paper, we have passed through two recall elections—one successful, the other not. During this time we have also been embroiled in countless disputes with individuals and groups, with the administration and, as is typical of students everywhere, with the general state of the world in which we live. Throughout these years of turmoil, we are first and proud to point out, our administration has never questioned the paper's implicit right, as I have heard many a student editor assert, "to print whatever we damned well please."

Again, I will be the first to admit that there were times when a more restrictive administration might have been tempted to chide us. It seems, however, that their "hands off" policy has succeeded and we of the "Tar Heel" are wildly proud of that tradition.

The recent events at Duke University put one alarm at a less for words and a starting point.

Cohen's column may well have been in poor taste, at first sight shocking to the timid (or in-temperate) soul, of questionable intent and badly written. All of us must admit at the outset that we have not seen the other four installments. I, for one, would like to read them.

But all of these allusions to a discussion of prostitution, homosexuality, rape and sadism as being "acutely obscene and offensively sacrilegious," as Dr. Edens put it, especially when the tone overtly infringes upon the "inviolable" domain of the Church, organized (often fanatically) religion, and this strange word, "morality,"—all of these things strike a discordant note for me. When we scrape off the specious gloss of this pontifical and audacious morality, only the most naive is surprised to discover the root embedded in the most prevalent of evils—hypocrisy.

And what might Dr. Edens possibly mean by asserting, "We do insist that intellectual activity cannot be separated from individual morality"? Does he mean that before we dare act intellectually we must check these actions against the moral temper of the times? Whose morality, his? Or one of the many canonized decrees? Or, possibly, Hemingway's (something is moral that you feel good after)?

I would rather lean toward Pascal's conception that the principle of morality is the endeavor to think well. In this case, Dr. Edens appears to be as guilty as Mr. Cohen. The latter we may excuse.

Totalitarianism begins by ever increasing the restrictions on human conduct. If allowed to fester, it may soon attempt to control the domain of man's freedom to think for himself. History is pregnant with examples, but the Spanish Inquisition was probably the most despicable—an unpardonable instance of fanaticism which, in Santayana's words, consists of redoubling your efforts when you have forgotten your aim. The Spaniards burned human beings; the Duke Administration has merely terrorized two boys (one of whom was being considered for a Rhodes Scholarship) and burned ideas which it arbitrarily called obscene and offensive.

Compounding the felony, "The Durham Sun" printed a blatantly desecrated and destructive editorial (reprinted on this page) vituperating young Cohen. Besides being poorly written, the editorial was excruciatingly cruel and conceived in distressing ignorance. In accusing Cohen of being anti-Christian, the editorial itself was harshly anti-Semitic. And we might all do well to remember that Jesus Christ was a Jew, not a Christian; thus Cohen was also cutting into the foundations of his own religion, even though Judaism does not consider Christ as the saviour—if I remember my theology correctly.

I have no cursing words of eternal wrath for any of the parties concerned, although I am capable of great anger. I hope that I am not possessed of an inhuman hatred for the rest of the world. There can be no recompense to any man for such. Rather, I am once again disappointed by the actions of my fellow men. Their lack of tolerance saddens me. Their callousness is disheartening.

Those of us yet young are often unhappy and sometimes misguided by our bursting energy. The world of man which we are to inherit seems to be filled with antipathy, antagonism and alienation. We are learning not to believe the lies we are taught, of necessity, in youth. We have seen not only corruption of State but of Church as well. The promises of our elders have frequently been made in deceit, and we now hesitate to trust them.

Possibly, as we read, man is by affliction schooled. But this affliction comes not only from us, the young, but from these elders who seem to have lost their ability to have patience with us and lead us with understanding.

God is not dead—love is.



BY KELLY

BY SCHULZ