

Economics lingo baffles too many Americans

President Ford's Monday "fireside chat" and his Wednesday state-of-the-union message pointed out the main weakness of our democracy: complete inability to take decisive or concerted action on complex issues. In economic matters our failing is especially obvious, since so few of us know anything about them.

The most we can do is smile winningly when the President mentions a tax cut (one of the few reforms we would at least understand, if not appreciate), hope he knows what he's doing when he quotes the other statistics and pray. We are vaguely glad that he is no longer preaching "old-time religion," but his new, more daring, remedies are equally mystifying.

When the President is not discussing war or politics, he might as well be speaking French, our comprehension is so slight. We were annoyed when the commentators criticized him in Watergate fashion after his speeches, but more because we liked his mannerisms than his ideas. For once he looked and spoke as a President should, and that was almost enough to satisfy us.

The Democrats will certainly challenge his proposals in the coming weeks, and months, but even our representatives will only be playing politics with numbers. They simply do not have the group expertise to decide whether gasoline should be taxed at the pump, on the dock, or at the drill-site, or whether fuel should be rationed, controlled, or decontrolled. Therefore, the best solution is trial and error, not in decision. We should try President Ford's program for a while in order to give at least one coherent program a chance to work. And even if it doesn't, we will know more than we do now.

On a local level, the best we can do is raise our level of economic literacy. The production possibilities frontier is one of the last unexplored areas in the United States, and one of the most important. But now we are indifferent even to indifference curves and content ourselves with learning economy, not economics—keeping our checkbook instead of keeping up with national policy.

We have allowed the reach of our political power to exceed our grasp, and if we don't watch what we are neglecting, someone will be sure to relieve us of our democratic responsibilities. Whether it is a man on horseback, an Arab chieftain, or a shy economist, someone is waiting in the wings. As Richard Heilbroner pointed out in "The Human Prospect," no democracy has ever lasted longer than five years with double-digit inflation.

All sections of UNC's economics courses should make an effort to gain some stature and respect in the university. Our economics experts should continue their research but also simplify their learning for their fellows, whether it takes using newspapers, magazines, or soapboxes. They are the new seers, sybils, and soothsayers of our generation, and they must share their art with the people. After all, if we are some of the most educated and privileged people in the country, what hope is there for rational national policy?

President Ford did a commendable job of explaining his proposals, and some of their implications, to the nation. But he still gave us far more credit than we deserve. Even our elected representatives know only porkbarrel, not oil-barrel, politics.

Johnny Kaleel

CGC preferable to old SL

Probably the vast majority of students are not aware of a constitutional referendum coming up this Tuesday, Jan 21. Two proposals being submitted for consideration involve changes in the Publications Board structure and a name change to the Media Board.

The third question on the ballot was set up by a November 1972 referendum in which the student body voted overwhelmingly (78 per cent) in favor of an amendment to the Student Constitution. The amendment set up a massive reorganization of the legislative arm of Student Government. The most noticeable change was the reduction of the number of representatives from 55 to 21. The Student Legislature (SL) was also renamed the Campus Governing Council (CGC). The Student Legislature had become such a cumbersome body, which took an extraordinary amount of time to accomplish the most miniscule objectives, that most observers had

termed SL a circus. Among its problems were the turnover of representatives and attitudes that caused a complete degeneration of responsible budgetary authority and necessary legislation.

That vote also set up a two-year trial period, at the end of which would be held another referendum (the one this Tuesday) to determine whether to keep CGC or return to SL. Although most students here today do not remember SL, the probable consensus among those who do is that CGC should be retained. Admittedly, CGC has had its share of problems, but two years is not a long time for a newly organized legislative body to prove itself. The problem with turnovers (which received so much publicity last fall) lies not with CGC, but with students who will not even exercise their basic right to vote in order to influence their own welfare. There is no way a representative can feel a sense of responsibility to his district when he won on a total of three or four votes. Hopefully, the special CGC

Committee on Reforms will propose some slight changes without drastically altering the essential nature of CGC, which has an unlimited potential for improvement.

This year, most of the students who have done the majority of work in CGC are returning, and this group should be the basis for next year's stronger CGC. It will take its own share of initiative in Student Government, while relieving the Executive branch of the excess burden of leadership it has carried the last two years.

Most of the groundwork has already been laid by this year's CGC after a slow start and painful break from the unnecessary traditions of SL during CGC's first year. Use this chance on Tuesday to show that you really are concerned over the state of affairs in Student Government. Give a damn!

Johnny Kaleel is speaker of the CGC and vice president of the student body.

L.T. McRae

U.S. oil tariff only way to stabilize economy

President Ford has announced the imposition of a new tariff to discourage oil imports. Various members of Congress have proposed similar measures. The one clear result of these measures will be higher prices for gasoline and other petroleum products. One might reasonably wonder why, in the face of an already monstrous inflation, anyone would want to drive the price of oil even higher.

One reason, of course, is that Henry Kissinger can't give a proper performance as Metternich if he's tethered to a fragile Arab oil pipeline. The United States, as policeman to the World, Defender of the West, etc., etc., cannot afford to have its foreign policy moves dependent on the whims of Arab sheiks.

The principal reason though lies in the realm of international trade and finance. Until recently, international trade has not been an important part of the American economy. Economists could, and often did, ignore the foreign sector altogether, while to laymen international trade and finance were the least familiar and most mysterious area of economics. But the growth of international trade in the 1960s and the approaching exhaustion of domestic

reserves of some crucial raw materials have changed the situation entirely. We live in an international economy, and we must deal with it. Indeed we have lost control of our own destiny—as most other countries did decades ago—and we are not likely ever to regain complete control.

Although the high price of foreign oil is itself disturbing because of its effect on prices in this country, the major concern raised by the oil cartel is the flow to the cartel members—particularly to the Arab states—of huge amounts of Western currencies. If the Arabs could manage to spend all their oil revenues in the West, there would be no major problem. We would be poorer, and they would be richer, but the flow of currency from the Arabs would match the flow of currency to the Arabs.

The problem is that the Arab states, consisting principally of sand and a few camels, have no useful way to spend revenues which may reach \$100 billion a year. These are not populous states and without their oil revenues would be desperately poor. The former King Saud of Saudi Arabia was internationally renowned for such stunts as giving a new Cadillac to a chorus girl who had particularly

impressed him. If every Arab lived and spent as did King Saud, it might be possible for the Arabs to spend all of their new revenues on goods from the West. But there is no sensible way to spend that much money.

Thus the West is doomed to watch its currencies and a massive amount of purchasing power flow to the Persian Gulf. The loss of purchasing power from Western economies can be offset by appropriate stimulatory government policies and is not in itself a major problem. As long as the Arabs are willing to trade oil for paper, we can go on. We can burn the oil and the Arabs can bury the dollars in the desert. Unfortunately, we cannot expect the Arabs to indefinitely continue trading oil for paper, particularly when the worth of that paper is being daily eroded by inflation.

Indeed the Arabs are already refusing to accept certain types of paper, including the Italian lira, the British pound, and practically all of the undeveloped countries' currencies.

Italy is the extreme example. It is totally dependent on the Middle East for oil, but the Arabs will not accept payment in lira, so the Italians must use other currencies—dollars, German

marks or Swiss francs—to pay for oil. As a long-term proposition, Italy can acquire a stock of these so-called "hard currencies" only by running a positive balance of trade with the United States, Germany, Switzerland, or the Arabs; that is, by selling more to these countries than she buys from them. This outcome is unlikely since Italy hasn't enjoyed a positive balance of trade since World War II.

Italy is broke and living on credit extended by West Germany. This solution may hold up for a while, but ultimately it must collapse and the Italian economy with it, since Italy will abruptly find itself unable to pay for any imports at all. Even if Italy performed a miracle and achieved a positive trade balance, it is impossible for all the world's countries to simultaneously enjoy a positive balance of trade. Thus if the Arabs cannot spend their revenues in the West, we are all looking down Italy's road.

If the Arabs do continue accepting paper for oil, there remains another problem. The existence of huge liquid reserves of currency in the hands of a few Arabs creates a potential for chaos on the international currency exchanges. If the Arabs decided to

Lu Ann Jones

Slang's a real bummer

It was Friday night and John sat in his dorm room waiting for this outta sight chick, Suzy, to show. The past week had been a real bummer and John was really up for a quiet, hassle-free night. You know?

The atmosphere was carefully adjusted to suit his frame of mind. Candles illuminated the room and a Joni Mitchell album was playing. While John rolled a couple of joints he occasionally glanced at his most prized poster—the one of a child in a meadow with the motto, "Tomorrow is the first day of the rest of your life."

Then he began to think of Suzy. I mean, like, wow, she was a super, hip chick. It was just amazing the way she could always figure out what was going on in John's mind. Freaky even. Far out. And she never handed John any bullshit. Suzy was an out-front chick, all right.

At 8:30 Suzy still hadn't made the scene so John started flipping through a heavy new book he'd just bought on Transcendental Meditation. Like, he was really getting into this guru stuff. After reading about all those Eastern philosophies, John was beginning to realize how messed up in the mind he was. I mean, like really fucked up.

Finally he heard a light knock on the door and Suzy slipped in. "Oh, wow, you look super tonight," John said. "I mean like, wow, like . . ." "Thanks," Suzy said. While she took off her coat, she looked around the

room and spotted the new lamp John had bought that afternoon. "Hey, this is great," she enthused.

"Yeah, but I got ripped off. No big deal though," John said. "Hey, are you up for getting stoned tonight? I just bought this really good dope and I want you to do a couple of numbers with me."

"Awwright, I can dig it," Suzy replied. As John lit up the first J, Suzy continued, "You know, it's really strange, but this room is just what I pictured it would be like tonight. Like wow, this is far out. It's freaking me out. It's as if we read each other's minds."

John took the first hit and passed the joint to Suzy, saying, "Oh, Jeezus, what a rush. Oh, wow, this is really good shit."

John and Suzy smoked for a while, not saying much to each other but really getting into the candle flickers and the music. The mood was mellow when suddenly Dan, an old friend of John's, and two dudes John had never seen before, barged into the room.

"Hey man, what's happening?" Dan asked.

"Not much. What're you doing up here?" John asked.

"My friends and I just came up for the weekend and thought we might crash here. What d'ya say?"

"Sure," John said a little hesitantly. He looked over at Suzy and saw she was getting a little uptight with all the new people around.

Catching her eye, he whispered, "You

wanna split and go over to your place? This is getting to be a drag. You know?" "Yeah, I'm getting bad vibes."

And so they left. Far out.

Slang has become such a standard part of our everyday language that it has been lowered to the level of clichés. Granted, the above vignette exaggerated the use of slang, but only slightly in many cases. We all mouth these pat phrases, but do we really say anything?

Often, we use slang to avoid thinking. A storehouse of these choice phrases are locked in our minds and roll off the tongue with no thought whatsoever; after a while we become so accustomed to the jargon that we turn a deaf ear.

More and more, college English professors are discovering that students do not know how to write. Perhaps this is because we talk and think in slang and clichés; therefore, to write eloquently and clearly requires that we shift to an entirely new set of language. Our writing is often stale because our everyday speech is also stale.

We can surely think of fresher and more lucid words to express our feelings and actions. Our brains may have to work a little harder, but that's what they're there for.

Anyone can spout off clichés. And anyone at the college level should be able to express himself originally rather than depending on handy, overused words. Think about it.



Letters to the editors

Clemson coach defended

To the editors: Upon reading John Dunlap's article, "An Opinion on Clemson's Locke," I feel compelled to give "An Opinion on the DTH's Dunlap." As is so often the case with "sportswriters" a great deal of emphasis is placed on a coach's ability to put aside his own emotions. He is frequently called upon to make this nearly impossible separation immediately after a bitter defeat. In the particular incident cited, Coach Locke was confronted not only with the heartbreak of losing a game that his team played well

enough to win, but also with being questioned by a writer who had been responsible for unfavorable publicity about Clemson's freshman standout Skip Wise.

Admittedly, the momentary "tirade" by Locke is not becoming of a coach of a major university, members of basketball's most prestigious conference. There comes to mind, though, certain other similar incidents over the history of the ACC that would seem to warrant mention if Locke is to be labeled as a monster that Mr. Dunlap apparently would have us condemn. The ACC was, until

recent years, the home of a couple of monsters in their own right. Until the recent rise to prominence of Maryland and North Carolina State University, their respective coaches were known as "tyrants" both on the court and immediately after the game.

Certainly, Mr. Dunlap is entitled to his own opinion of Tates Locke, but having met the man myself, I would attest to the opinion generally held by the press—that Tates Locke is a true gentleman though he is fiery and aggressive. It is those very characteristics that make Locke an outstanding coach who has shaken up the smugness of the Carolinas, States, and Marylands.

It is my hope in writing this letter, that those who know Tates Locke only through Mr. Dunlap's "introduction" will be able to see another side of Coach Locke. I would also encourage Mr. Dunlap to give himself the chance to know one of America's outstanding men, both as a basketball coach and as a truly considerate human being. John Dunlap, meet Tates Locke—the real Tates Locke.

Rick Hendricks
506 Morrison

The Daily Tar Heel

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