

CGC representation

The hullabaloo about proper representation by the Campus Governing Council offers a sad commentary on the understanding of representative democracy by some individuals on this campus. The same poor understanding seems to be behind angry reactions of political figures to recent mass rallies and petition campaigns aimed at political change.

The ultimate power of the governed, in a representative democracy, is the vote. Citizens can vote upon individual officials or upon specific policy questions by means of a referendum. Although the outcome of the smoking ban referendum set for October will not have an official effect on smoking in classrooms, it may have an effect upon the University administrators who determine building use policies. Directly or indirectly, therefore, the vote is the first tool of citizen participation and influence.

But there are other tools. Working in or contributing to a campaign in hopes of influencing other voters is a means of citizen impact. Writing letters to representatives or to newspapers is another means of influence. So is a petition drive for the recall of an official or for the initiation of legislation. And so is a mass demonstration such as that staged by the Black Student Movement in protest of the handling of the BSM Gospel Choir's budget by the CGC.

So those elected officials who cry "unfair" when the masses arise or the BSM marches do not understand that in both cases citizens are expressing their desires in order to use the powers over elected officials which, as citizens in a democracy, they inherently possess. When some individuals tried to stage a show of white counterforce during the CGC meeting at which the BSM was discussed by circulating flyers urging anti-BSM students to come in force, they discovered that the power of the BSM lies not in numbers but in the active interest of black students in their immediate well-being. Dissident whites may have been grumbling about BSM influence, but the issue was less salient to them than to the BSM. Hence, black students outnumbered the white students at that CGC meeting.

Now some unhappy constituents have exercised their prerogative in voicing discontent with CGC Representative Dan Besse. That these constituents understand their prerogatives and means of influence is commendable. That they misunderstand the various models of representation by an elected official is unfortunate.

These constituents are distressed that Besse did not vote the way they perceive most people in their district would wish him to vote on certain issues, primarily that of funding for the Carolina Gay Association. It is true that this is one model an elected official might follow. But there are others which are equally defensible in the democratic context. Indeed, the other models may be superior to the strict constituency-oriented model, which restricts the time a representative has to study policy issues (by forcing him to study popularity polls and public opinion) and which tends toward majority rule regardless of minority rights or higher goals.

The second model is that of the representative who follows the party line, or in the absence of party, the actions of individuals who impress him or her. In the case of the CGC, there are some representatives who seem to vote in such blocs. The advantage of this model is that party or ideological labels become indicators of which way a representative will vote on certain issues, thereby allowing constituents to identify desirable candidates on the basis of party or affiliation. The disadvantage of the model is that informed choice may be sacrificed to party line, and public policy-making may become concentrated in the hands of a few party leaders or influential representatives.

The other model is that of the representative who votes according to his or her own judgment based on available information, personal principles or personal priorities. The model has roots in Plato's idea of the philosopher-king, who learns the truth and rules benignly. If a representative can temper his or her own judgment with that of the constituents, following the more persuasive lead, the third model may be the best, as long as the representative remembers that re-election is contingent upon satisfying the general needs and wants of the constituents.

To reject this final model as "undemocratic," as some of Dan Besse's constituents are doing, is to act in ignorance. A representative who votes according to conscience has not betrayed democracy; he or she has tempered the judgment of some with his or her own judgment.

If that is an unreasonable manner of operation, then the CGC might as well dissolve itself and let us rule ourselves in a direct democracy, voting on every issue on the basis of what we as voters can learn about important issues on our own time.



THEREFORE, NEVER SEND TO KNOW FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS IT TOLLS FOR THEE

Ben Cornelius

The land of cotton—forgotten

"The Stars and Stripes Forever" — a rousing tune, the epitome of apple pie, a gun over every door and a nation united. Rousing indeed, until I endured it nine times last spring as I watched a majorette tryout in Carmichael Auditorium.

But as I was drifting off into the Land of Nod, one of the veteran performers instantly commanded my attention. She was a competent twirler, but there was more to it than that. She had elected to perform to "Dixie." I rejoiced, for here was a respite from Sousa, and here, also, was the symbol of the South, a song rarely heard in these days of ethnic awareness. I cheered.

For years newspapers and magazines have been full of promises of "The New South." They speak of new attitudes, new views, new action — really a new rebuilt, revamped region of the United States. This all sounds nice to me, but I must admit that, somewhere along the line, I've missed it; I don't see anything new, I don't see anything rebuilt or revamped. What I do see is something reshaped, and I don't like it. It is nothing more than the North relocated. We are now plagued with traffic jams, overcrowded cities, decaying rural areas, lack of public transportation, and

a generation of children who have grown up without knowing the joy and pleasure of fried chicken, mashed potatoes, and hush-puppies, or else they eat them at the Colonel's, and that's really the same as not having them.

When a magazine features an article on "The New South," it opens with a picture of the bustling city of Atlanta. The scene is from the east (which affords the best view) and it shows the Interstate highways, the tall buildings, the round buildings, and, of course, the Hyatt House, capped with a banner headline — something like "The New South Is Fulfilling the Phoenix Legend."

A closer look at Atlanta will show a snarled, tangled highway system and a city that has grown too far too fast. Atlanta has shed its Southern image for that of a fast-moving international city — its own slogan is "Atlanta . . . the next great city of the world." Will this lately great Atlanta be like bankrupt New York? How about crisis-weary London or pollution-choked Tokyo, overcrowded Calcutta or racist Johannesburg? It seems that "great cities" are having troubles these days, and I'm not so sure that striving to be a great international city is such a wise policy.

The New South is a fine goal to try to achieve. The South has the opportunity to learn from the other regions' mistakes. In fact, we must learn from the others' errors.

But Atlanta, the heralded symbol of "The New South," reminds me of Hartford, Connecticut. I for one don't want Atlanta to remind me of anyplace else. But somewhere off in the vague, uncharted mind, somewhere off in the fog, there looms the goal, "The New South." I don't know exactly what it is, because it has remained as elusive as turning lead into gold. I hope and pray that it's not the magazine picture of Atlanta, for if it is, looking back and looking forward, "The New South" will be nothing more than a cruel joke.

For sure, many parts of the South will have to play catch-up with the rest of the country. The important part of that action will be the way they do it.

But until there's another solution besides "The New South," I will continue to doze through "The Stars and Stripes Forever" and cheer for "Dixie."

Ben Cornelius is a sophomore journalism major from Winston-Salem.

letters

Ethics and the press

To the editor:

Cole Campbell's editorial "At long last the end," in which he expresses his opinion on how the Student Supreme Court should rule regarding the Student Constitution, is reminiscent of other fine journalistic efforts of the past.

One can't help but recall Dr. Sam Sheppard who in 1954 in Cleveland, Ohio was tried on the editorial pages of the Cleveland newspapers which also urged their "interpretation" of the case.

Sam Sheppard was found guilty. In 1966, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned his conviction and he was subsequently acquitted by a jury trial.

Not being a journalist, Mr. Campbell, no doubt, knows little of journalistic ethics. Thank God he wasn't in Cleveland too in 1954.

Richard Pope
10-A Estes Park Apts.

Editor's Note: The issue in the Sheppard case was one of prejudicial pre-trial publicity affecting a jury trial for a criminal charge. It is hardly analogous to a civil non-jury hearing on a constitutional question about a public policy issue.

Worth a ten-cent stamp?

To the editor:

I am writing this letter hoping that you will put my name in your school paper, because I want someone to write. I am in prison in London, Ohio.

I have no family or friends to write and sometimes I wonder if I am worth a ten-cent stamp.

I will answer all letters that I receive from students at the University.

I am 30 years old, five feet, 11 inches and weigh 167 pounds. I will send a photo if anyone has ten cents to waste on a lonely prisoner who has no light coming in from the outside.

I will see the parole board in eight months so please help me if you can.

S.M. Stevenson #127-8933
P.O. Box 69
London, Ohio 43140

The Daily Tar Heel

83rd Year of Editorial Freedom

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Joyce Fitzpatrick

NRA overrides public opinion

The building is different from those that surround it — more modern, taller, with walls of black marble. A stern inscription in a row of white stone buildings. Expensive looking. Permanent looking . . . with a large impressive entrance. On one side of the massive doorway, huge aluminum letters are securely fastened into the marble:

The National Rifle Association.
On the other side of the door, the inscription: "The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

Inside the quiet building there's office space for over 250 employees and a firearms museum. There are editorial offices for the monthly magazine called *The American Rifleman*. There is a large section of offices in the accounting department, whose duty is to manage the annual budget of at least 6 million dollars. Most of all, this building serves as the nerve center for almost 12,000 local shooting clubs, gun manufacturers and state rifle associations. There is also a legislative and public affairs division which informs any of the one million NRA members of any legislative threat to "the right to bear arms."

The building houses the most amazingly powerful and efficient national lobby ever assembled. Mobilization of NRA forces is lightning quick. Almost overnight they can send perhaps half a million letters to U.S. Congressmen. On a local level, if city councilmen or politicians have the courage to suggest legislation that would restrict or control the traffic in guns, the computerized membership list can supply the names of the gun enthusiasts in the district who should have a warning of the threat.

A recent CBS documentary, "The Guns of Autumn," encountered the forces of the NRA when advertisers were pressured to withdraw their support. The documentary ran, nevertheless, due to a risky but wise decision from the top of the CBS hierarchy.

Along with the documentary, two attempts on President Ford's life and the startling rise in statistics of death by handguns in the U.S. have refocused attention on gun control legislation once more. Attention, like that during



THE HUNTER AS A DECOY

the tragedies of the 60's, is intense and direct but mysteriously receives little results, even though recent polls have shown that over 80 per cent of the American people favor stricter gun control laws.

The NRA. Huge and unwavering. Senators who favor gun control laws and are vocal in their support are curiously not re-elected. Things soon return to normal. A certain mystique surrounds the gun in America — the myth of the American West, the frontier where man's best friend was his pistol.

The gun in America is big business. The sale of firearms and ammunition totals more than 300 million dollars in an average year. American boys are given toy guns as casually as the girls are given dolls. We seem to be training the boys for murder more effectively than we ever suggested motherhood for the girls. It is no wonder that some American men react so violently to any proposal for limiting their freedom to buy and use guns.

The fact is that neither NRA literature nor the inscription on the

black marble building quotes the full text of the Second Amendment. It reads: "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

Some constitutional experts interpret this amendment to mean that it is a right of the people collectively to maintain an armed force (a right denied colonists of King George). If so, the individual citizen has no constitutional right to keep a firearm in his home. But this remains a moot point, in that a re-interpretation has not been issued.

The disturbing point remains the incredible amount of power the NRA wields. *The American Rifleman* dismisses the assassination of Martin Luther King somewhat casually.

"No law that human ingenuity can devise," says the magazine, "would have prevented the murder." And in the same issue articles appear like the one called "Happiness is a Warm Gun" with a picture of an eight year old holding a dead pheasant and a shotgun. This kind of mentality determines our gun laws — or lack of them.

Such organizations as the NRA show the tremendous influence of special interest groups on the American system. The dilemma is real for the Congressman who supports gun control legislation yet wishes to remain in office. The dilemma is also real for the innocent victims of handguns — guns which are too easily purchased, registered and delivered.

Since 1938, the NRA has enjoyed an incredible winning record in Congress. If ever their power is to be checked and the people of the U.S. protected from themselves by much stricter gun control laws, the time is ripe. Now while three assassinations are still cold memories and now after two attempts of the President's life are chilling reality.

The majority of the American people, the 80 per cent who want stricter gun laws must reorganize and vocalize.

Meanwhile, the NRA building stands with quiet dignity, tall and strong, dominating a Washington street.

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