

Editor's notebook

The last month

With the first announcement of candidates for campus-wide office, the editor of the Daily Tar Heel begins to sense the immediacy of his or her impending departure from office.

But it is my intent not to be a lame duck, at least not until my successor is chosen and a few days of transition transpire as the new editorial administration shapes up.

Much of my campaign platform has either been implemented or, as in the case of narrowing the page by an inch, discarded as economic shifts have occurred.

I began my editorship with two editorial posts designed to contribute to long-run progress. Both of these editors completed much preliminary work, but the graduation in December of one and the resignation in protest in November of the other have left this work unfinished.

But I have decided to try, because some of these proposals make such good sense that I cannot let them slip into the realm of forgotten shibboleths convenient at election time and a

hindrance after election victory. Among the programs that I shall endeavor to implement between now and spring break, or bequeath to my successor, are:

A comprehensive readership survey. A preliminary draft of this survey has been ready since last semester. Power shortages have kept it from being redrafted and distributed. Cooperative overtures have been made by faculty members in the School of Business Administration and the School of Journalism about advice or aid in completing the survey.

Negotiation for administration-faculty bulk subscription.

At several schools, including Penn State and Berkeley, the administration pays a lump sum to the student newspaper to provide a guaranteed number of papers each issue for faculty and staff.

Investigation of a fee check-off system.

If students could check off whether some of their fees went to the DTH, this paper would be forced to be responsive to reader demands like any other newspaper on the market is forced to do.

Report on financial independence. Financial autonomy is a critical goal for a press that is to be free of external pressure. As promised last semester, I shall have ready in February an overview to financial independence to put before the UNC Media Board, the Campus Governing Council and the UNC Board of Trustees.

These major projects come at a time when election coverage, special series on race relations and women on campus and other news stories demand constant attention.

It is going to be an awfully busy month.

Art Eisenstadt

Sanford heads the casualty list

And then there were 11.

Terry Sanford's sudden, but not totally unexpected, withdrawal as a Democratic presidential candidate is the first of what will probably be a series of individual departures from the race.

Most, like Sanford's, will ostensibly be voluntary. With 11 Democrats and two Republicans remaining as announced candidates, plus three or four other prominent politicians who have yet to explicitly say yes or no, it is obvious most of them will have to go—there can only be one President at a time.

Considering the large number of candidates remaining, and the large number of primaries and state caucuses yet to come, Sanford's withdrawal will not make the race very much easier to interpret, even in his home state of North Carolina, where five additional candidates have joined Jimmy Carter and George Wallace in the March 23 presidential primary.

Sanford, president of Duke University and a former North Carolina governor, had the dubious distinction of being one of the

least recognized candidates and most improbable longshots of the Democratic field. Speculation as to why he became the campaign's first casualty—recognition of his campaign's futility, possible health problems, a chance to avoid debt, an offer from the Carter forces—is rather meaningless at this point.

The most important legacy of the Sanford campaign is the serious thinking it forces one to do about the remaining 1976 contenders and the electoral process.

Sanford's withdrawal speech at his press conference Jan. 23 will probably be eerily similar to the future, inevitable withdrawals of Milton Shapp, Sargent Shriver and Robert Byrd. Even such medium-chance candidates as Birch Bayh, Mo Udall and Lloyd Bentsen will probably not survive until July 18, when the Democratic convention will begin in New York.

As individual campaigns begin resembling the final weeks of the World Football League, our best hope will be to find one or two reasonably qualified candidates among the survivors.

It is an unhappy commentary on the presidential political system that only one Democrat currently on the primary road—Jimmy Carter—is believed to have a serious shot at the nomination.

The primary system exacerbates itself. As the number and perceived importance of small individual primaries increased, so did the number of candidates who apparently believed they could make at least one reasonable showing somewhere. This, in turn, only made the whole process even more convoluted.

The opportunity for distortion is such a system—30 primaries, cumbersome caucusing in the remaining states—is great. A caucus between Carter and Shapp in Florida, a primary between Wallace and Sanford in North Carolina, has not more meaning in determining who should be the nation's next President than a jayvee basketball game between UNC and Atlantic Christian College does in determining the national champion.

A national primary would be a better idea, but would be extraordinarily unwieldy. And

also somewhat risky—the presidential nominations are vastly more important than other offices and should depend on more than a one-shot showing.

Perhaps a staggered series of regional primaries would be the ideal compromise. These would be small enough not to be prohibitive, yet large enough to be meaningful.

Terry Sanford was not a particularly outstanding candidate for President, although we could have done much worse. To the extent that the current electoral process wadded Sanford out, we cannot say it is wholly ineffective.

But until we can be reasonably confident that the system will enhance, the candidacy of an individual a majority of Americans believe is qualified to be President we can only hope that our luck will hold out this year.

Art Eisenstadt, news editor of the Daily Tar Heel, is a junior journalism major from Huntingdon Valley, Pa.

letters

Out of the closets and into the showers

I read with interest Tom Carr's delightfully amusing article concerning homosexuality in the Jan. 15 DTH. The manner in which he reversed the questions so as to put heterosexuality on the spot was really imaginative.

The event that brought this article to mind occurred minutes ago at Woolen Gym. I had just participated in a victorious intramural basketball campaign, and I was all ready to reward myself with a leisurely, invigorating shower.

I mentioned the unusual incident to the fellow next to me, who was preparing to enter the shower room.

All the excitement sort of petered out for the next few minutes as I toweled off and began to dress. I dressed leisurely and reached for my shirt. All this labor must have taken about 10 minutes, due to the difficulty of drying off in the steamy room.

Anyway, I pulled my shirt on, grabbed my jacket, turned in my basket and combed my hair. I was ready to go but curiosity got the best of me. I walked by the shower room and sure enough, the spectator was still there, lathering his hair for at least the third time.

With a five-minute walk to the dorm ahead of me, I had time to think about the scene which I had just observed. Suddenly, the hilarity of the whole thing struck me. Here are guys, excuse me, here are guys such as Tom Carr telling me how perfectly normal and even rational homosexuality is and I'm expected to swallow all this garbage after seeing some guy spending his afternoon playing Peeking Poof in the showers.

Wait a minute, revelation is upon me! Sure, why not be sexually attracted to those of one's own sex. Certainly it's not abnormal; after all, some people do have gay

desires. But why stop here? Why not strive for total liberation? I think cats are simply gorgeous, especially the really furry varieties.

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Abdicating her duties

To the editor: Re: Resignation of Speaker Pro Tempore Laura Dickerson.

The January 28 DTH reported the above mentioned resignation. Ms. Dickerson gives as her reason for resigning the fact that, "They (the CGC) haven't done anything all year but spout off." Granted, but having witnessed several CGC sessions at which Ms. Dickerson sometimes took the chair, I sometimes wonder who is part of the solution and who is part of the problem.

... AND IN THIS CORNER, I'M PLEASSED TO SAY...



Melanie Modlin 104 Parker

The Daily Tar Heel

83rd Year of Editorial Freedom

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Bill Sitton

Filming the Great Boston Molasses flood

Being a little tired of the drudgery of law school, I have begun contemplating easier ways to seek my fame and fortune. My original plan was to launch a campaign to abbreviate the name of our state from North Carolina to simply Carolina. The result would be obvious. South Carolina would automatically be condemned to an obsequious position of servitude in much the same way that West Virginia now basks in the shadow of our northern neighbor.

My second plan, though, is bound to succeed. I am writing the script for a new disaster movie. Now, I know that you are probably thinking: how can he do that? Every catastrophe in the history of mankind since the Red Sea engulfed Pharaoh's army has been memorialized at one time or another.

There is still one disaster yet to be filmed, and best of all, it is a true story: The Great Molasses Flood of Boston.

It was a cold, gusty afternoon in Boston on January 15, 1919. Folks were mostly indoors, venturing out only for the most necessary of errands. Not too many people

heard the dull, muffled roar inside the Purity Distilling Company, a roar immediately followed by the explosion of a huge molasses tank.

The tank gave way under the enormous pressure of 2.3 million gallons of molasses, and what happened rivals believability.

The result of the explosion was a 15 foot tidal wave of molasses enveloping everything in its path as it swept through the distillery and out into the city streets. The buoyancy effect of the "lava" was so great that every building in the immediate vicinity was ripped from its foundation and carried considerable distances from its original location.

In places where the wave of molasses struck a retaining wall on the opposite side of the street, the sticky mass splashed as high as thirty feet in the air, felling small trees and covering others with a thin coat of syrup.

Moving in an opposite direction, a second wave of molasses, carrying a section of the broken tank in its wake, crashed through a Boston firehouse, killing three firemen playing cards on the second floor and throwing a fourth out the window into the harbor. The other half of the tank crashed into the Boston Elevated Railway on Commercial Street, destroying three spans.

A train has passed over the railway just moments before the explosion.

The greatest loss of life occurred in a municipal office building a block away. The four story building was rent from its foundation and was carried over 50 yards by the syrupy flood.

When the final count was taken, 21 people were killed by the flood and over 40 were injured. Property damage included dozens of houses buried in the tide. Fourteen wooden buildings from one to four stories in height were destroyed. Contents of over 20 other buildings were a total loss.

It took the fire department, together with the local military company, a week to wash the molasses into the harbor. All the cellars in the neighborhood had to be pumped out, the thick molasses being first thinned by water.

With World War I having ended only two months before, initial suspicion as the cause of the disaster was focused upon foreign powers. Harry Dolan, attorney for the Purity Distilling Company said, "It is possible the tank may have been broken by enemies of the United States, who knew that we were engaged during the war in the manufacture of alcohol, which was used in

the making of munitions."

A subsequent scientific investigation revealed, however, that the explosion was simply the result of the immense weight of the molasses, splitting the tank apart at its seams.

Well, there you have it. A true, documented story of a great American disaster. If anyone doubts its authenticity, check a copy of *The New York Times*, Jan. 16, 1919. I haven't quite decided on how to capture this extraordinary event on film. One possibility might involve casting Paul Newman and Robert Redford in the starring roles. They could be two con men hawking syrup on the sidewalk after the flood, with George Kennedy as the irate fire chief in charge of clean-up operations.

At any event, Bostonians still remember that terrible tragedy which struck their city so unexpectedly that awful day. To commemorate those unfortunate souls who lost their lives, plans are now being finalized to erect a huge concrete pancake as a fitting monument to their memory.

Bill Sitton is a first year law student from Hickory.