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The Daily Tar Heel
85th year of editorial freedom

letters to the editor

Affirmative action is not reverse discrimination

To the editor:
I would like to respond to the letters of Messrs. Bainbridge and Kania, who commented on my column of last week ("Bakke victory would be loss for all minorities," Oct. 7).

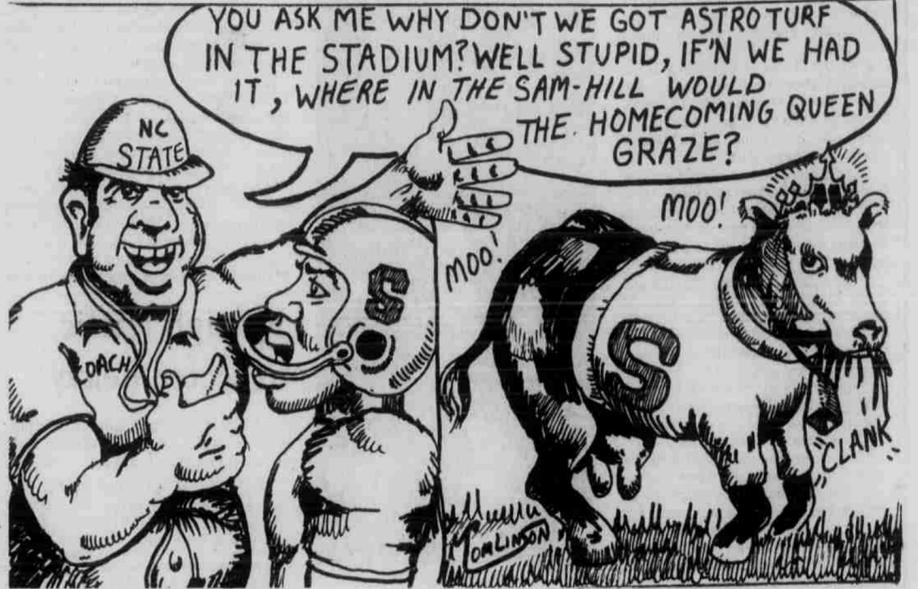
That poverty and past discrimination is reflected in our "objective" measurements of merit and capability is not likely to change if college and university admissions rely solely on the use of culturally-biased test scores. Indeed, the use of these so-called "objective" criteria is tantamount to an active reinforcement of our unfortunate heritage of racism and inequality. While in theory just and fair, the use of these criteria alone is, in practice, racist and reactionary in that they make no allowances for social and economic differences.

Witness the disproportionately small percentage of blacks even in our own University. To contend that equality and fairness pervade is to deny the facts. Special considerations are in order for the victims of racism. To declare whites to the victims is pretentious and deceptive to say the least.

I have known and seen the effects of poverty and deprivation. Growing up with the black kids in my neighborhood, I have observed that their intelligence and capabilities are equal to those of the most successful whites — but where are they now? Attending college? Beginning rewarding careers? Enjoying the benefits of a wealthy society? No, and not from a lack of motivation or effort, but because the whole system of white-dominated education and employment is against them. So talent and imagination wither and waste in the tobacco fields and unemployment lines of eastern North Carolina.

Mr. Bainbridge may be assured that I am not a "knee-jerk liberal." My thoughts on the Bakke case represent hours of reflection and study and are based on what I perceive to be rational thinking, not the emotional response of a white who feels his position threatened by minorities. The accusation by Mr. Kania that I am a racist ready to violate the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination is absurd. Affirmative action is not discrimination. I would not call Mr. Kania a racist simply because he seems unconcerned with the desegregation of public schools and the extension of educational rights to minorities.

The contention that affirmative action and racial quotas constitute "reverse discrimination" is a pathetic sham. Certainly everyone opposed to special considerations in admissions is not a right-wing extremist. Some politically moderate whites have been led to believe that fairness to minorities means depriving whites. Reactionaries, however, use the notion of "reverse discrimination" to avoid the national responsibility of desegregation, while racists use it to blame their problems on minorities (Why the complete lack of concern over special considerations for children of alumni and financial contributors? What about veterans? These forms of special consideration predate affirmative action for women and blacks, but only the programs



designed to help those most disadvantaged in our society come under attack.

Messrs. Bainbridge and Kania, if you reject the notion of special considerations for the victims of prejudice, then how do you propose to overcome the terrible burden of our past? Or do you shirk this responsibility altogether with the declaration that you are not to blame for the past and hence the present? Surely you don't imagine America to be a fun-for-all Disneyland of equality and justice. Such a viewpoint ignores the reality of various social, economic and racial factors that handicap non-whites and women. Such naive (or is it pretension?) has no place in a serious discussion of how to eliminate racism and discrimination.

Finally, it should be remembered that the use of affirmative action (or racial quotas) is a temporary measure. To declare a university "open to everyone" and "non-discriminatory" is a farce if allowances are not made for the reality of past racism and present inequities. In recruiting, educating and hiring minorities now, we insure more equality of opportunity tomorrow. The awesome weight of centuries of repression can and must be overcome. This transition will occur neither magically nor of its own volition; it must be aided and actively encouraged. Sexual and racial quotas will become unnecessary and can be abandoned when minorities obtain equal social and economic status with their white brothers. And if such a situation excludes more whites, then it is apparent that educational facilities should be expanded.

Rather than blame minorities for one's exclusion, one should condemn the tight-money policies that reduce every one's

opportunities and provoke brawling between races. Rather than fight among ourselves over a trumped-up and divisive notion like "reverse discrimination," whites and blacks and men and women should join together to renounce educational cutbacks and fight for more educational funding.

Roger Lancaster
523 Morrison

Dialing tip

To the editor:
There have been several letters complaining about Southern Bell's charge for directory assistance. Most of them appeal to Southern Bell's sense of virtue or its duty to the students. That is ridiculous; Southern Bell has us where it wants us and thinks that there is nothing we can do. There is, however, something we can do. By calling long distance directory assistance and asking for Chapel Hill, you can get your number without being charged.

As for you people who wrote nice letters, haven't you learned anything from Kennedy, Daley, Johnson or Nixon? I learned my lesson well. If you can't beat the system legally, use whatever means you have available. It is about time we took advantage of Southern Bell for a change.

Chris Kueny
829 Morrison

Out of bread

To the editor:
A funny thing happened at Shoney's

Monday night — they ran out of bread. Of course, I wasn't too surprised, because the bread they ran out of was for the free Shoney's Big Boy hamburger for which the Daily Tar Heel had carried a coupon that day. A similar event occurred just a few short weeks ago at this same "well stocked" restaurant. They ran out of ice cream for a special 25-cent chocolate sundae.

The irony of this latest situation is that in order to get a free hamburger you had to fill out a questionnaire designed to improve the quality of the restaurant. The only question that forgot to ask on the questionnaire was, "What do you think of Shoney's management?" Of course that is not much of a question; it is more of a joke.

John Condry
Carboro, N.C.

Editor's Note: Shoney's had 1,500 people respond to the offer this week.

Correction

Student Legal Services apologizes for failing to note North Carolina General Statute 90-21-14 in yesterday's column ("You may be liable for aid given after injury") on rendering first aid. This legislation further limits the liability of any person rendering first aid unless there is a showing of gross negligence, wanton conduct or intentional wrongdoing on the part of the person rendering the treatment.

Fall break necessary relief

Not a student, professor or administrator at this University could deny that the fall semester is a long and oftentimes frustrating ordeal. For nearly two-and-one-half months, from Labor Day to Thanksgiving, school is a day-in and day-out affair, with only the weekends offering the barest respite from academic work. And for all but the most cavalier, the two-day weekend is too short for physical escape from the University and its scholarly demands.

Although the spring and fall semesters are of comparable length, the former never seems quite as long, and the reason is spring break — a ten-day leave of absence from the hallowed halls of academia for greener grass, warmer climes and fresher air.

Developments over the past few days may do something to make the long fall a little easier to endure. The Calendar Committee unanimously approved Monday a proposal for a scheduled fall break in 1978. And although the proposal still requires the approval of the Instructional Personnel Committee and the vice chancellors before Chancellor N. Ferebee Taylor makes the final decision, student supporters of the proposal are optimistic of final approval by Thanksgiving.

A break in the middle of the semester will not only relieve some students' academic pressure by give the faculty a chance to catch up on grading or simply relax. It's a proposal that should meet little opposition when it comes up for final approval.

BSM's sound of silence

In an era when students are criticized roundly for their lack of social conscience, in an era when student voices are seldom heard on any issue, the Black Student Movement (BSM) protest Wednesday was a welcome sound of silence. The 100 students, most of them black, who lined the walls of Memorial Hall during the University Day convocation did not speak, but they made an eloquent statement.

Holding placards that decried Allan Bakke's reverse discrimination action and criticized the University's lethargy in recruiting blacks, vigilant students made it clear that the University has yet a long way to go in achieving its motto, "Light and Freedom." The vigil underscored the predominance of whites in the University Day ceremony.

This University has a great history, but that history does not include blacks. One hundred students stood in Memorial Hall Wednesday to claim their place in the future of this University.

Ironically, the majority of students and faculty were taking advantage of canceled classes to sleep late, work or just take it easy during the ceremony. Very few appeared at the ceremony.

"While every one else is sleeping," BSM chairperson Byron Horton said, "we have to march for our rights." Civil rights are no longer the cause celebre they were in previous decades. Race relations problems have been neatly filed away in "affirmative action" reports. Wednesday's silent protest served as a positive and necessary reminder that upon the 184th anniversary of this University, there is a need for much more of the progress that has distinguished this University in the past.

Approval of Carter formula brightens hopes for Geneva peace conference

American hopes for a resumption of the Geneva conference before the end of the year were bolstered Wednesday when Israel approved President Carter's peace-conference formula.

But Carter also warned that the Israeli cabinet's unanimous approval of his plan was "not a final decision" and noted that "private concerns" of the Israelis and Arabs had to be satisfied. Jordan and Egypt may also join Israel in accepting the U.S. conference formula, but Syrian approval is less certain, according to State Department officials.

Though the Israeli cabinet did not hedge or add qualifications when it declared the U.S. plan acceptable, most observers feel that Israel's "private concerns" may center on the precise form of Palestinian representation at the conference, which is rather vague in the still-secret U.S. plan.

According to diplomatic sources, the U.S. proposal would have the Israelis and one Arab delegation, including the Palestinians, attend the ceremonial opening session of the conference. The Israelis have agreed to bargain with Palestinians from the occupied West Bank and Sinai territories, as long as they don't formally represent the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The Arabs demand PLO representation.

President Carter expressed guarded optimism about the possibilities of a Geneva conference. "I think they're all beginning to see it's not something they need to fear. It's a first step toward a possible peace settlement. But it's extremely sensitive and extremely complicated."

In other Middle East developments, renewed fighting between Christian rightists and Palestinian leftists threatened to delay the dispatch of Lebanese Army regulars to patrol the border with Israel and enforce a U.S.-mediated cease-fire.

Meanwhile Sen. Frank Church, D-Idaho, suggested that the entire Foreign Relations Committee visit Panama to clear up some concerns about the recently negotiated treaty. He said the lawmakers would then get a "firsthand view" of canal-zone defenses and could "get some feel of the political climate" in Panama and also the attitude of the countries in the Caribbean.

"We're discussing now a treaty not limited to Panama but one in which the whole hemisphere takes a great interest," he said.

President Carter is expected to meet today with Panamanian leader Omar Torrijos to discuss the treaties and the "public debate" about them. Torrijos is passing through Washington en route to Panama after a three-week trip through the Middle East and Europe.

Torrijos said earlier in the week that he felt his country got much less than he had expected in the treaties. "As a citizen, I admit that the new treaty is far below what I expected," he said. "As chief of state, I know that the present circumstances prevented us from getting more."

THE WEEK

By LOU BILIONIS AND ED RANKIN

Asked what would happen if the U.S. Senate refused to approve the treaty, Torrijos said, "God save me from that; I prefer to make the sign of the cross and go to Rome to get the benediction of the Pope."

A stalemate in the Congress over federal funding of abortions this week which saw rejections of compromise proposals by both chambers threatened to hold up paychecks for thousands of government workers and benefits for millions of unemployed, disabled and poor people.

The dispute over abortion subsidies stalled consideration on a \$60.1-billion appropriation for the departments of Labor and Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). On Sept. 30 the departments lost their spending authority, and only a resolution on Thursday assured that the pay and benefits could be issued.

The House and Senate are quibbling over the language of the abortion bill, with the lower chamber maintaining that the Medicaid program should not cover abortions except where the life of the mother would otherwise be endangered. The Senate said cases of rape, incest and where a doctor deems an abortion

"medically necessary" should qualify for federal funding.

The Republican Governors Association — a group which some observers have tagged "an exclusive club" — convened in Breton Woods, N.H. this week.

The conference's highlights were addresses by former Texas Gov. John Connally and Gov. Jim Thompson of Illinois. Connally said the GOP should learn the lessons of the past and try to elect governors and congressmen instead of presidents. He moved Tuesday to require the party's national committee to reserve one-fourth of its campaign funds to finance gubernatorial races.

"Too long we have assumed that as long as we engage in the Chinese fire drill every four years of electing a president of the United States, that is what it's all about," said Connally.

"One of the reasons we have not been able to change things is because we have not been able to control the governorships and not been able to control the Congress."

Thompson, speaking before the governors on Monday, said if the GOP wants to increase its numbers it should stop attacking the Democratic Party. The freshman governor, frequently mentioned as a potential Republican presidential candidate in 1980, noted that party identification and party loyalty are not the most important things to American voters.

"More and more people are taking a look at a candidate and saying, 'Do I trust that candidate to handle the problems that will arise in the next four years?'"

Ten of the country's 12 Republican governors attended the conference, which included a workshop for 28 gubernatorial candidates from 16 states.

President Carter's tax and energy reforms once again drew interest this week.

According to sources in the administration, Carter's long-awaited tax package will "most likely" include a tax cut totaling \$22 billion for individuals and businesses.

Carter spent the Columbus Day weekend at Camp David working on the tax reforms promised when he was running for office.

The tax reduction is expected to be \$15 billion for the public and \$7 billion for businesses.

But Treasury Secretary Michael Blumenthal said last week the tax cut would be the "sweetener" in the package, with a reduction in

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benefits used by many middle-class taxpayers likely.

The President is also expected to take steps to limit loopholes used by the nation's business community.

On Wednesday, the President told the Congressional leaders he planned to intensify his efforts to support the energy reform package, which took a heavy beating at the hands of the legislators over the past months.

"The inevitability of an energy crisis that can be devastating to us and the world is becoming more obvious," said Carter.

The issue is of such great concern to Carter that he says he plans to go "back to the country" to promote his energy proposals.

Sometime next year, the first do-it-yourself

pregnancy test kit may make its way to the nation's drugstore shelves, according to a spokesman for Warner-Lambert, a pharmaceutical firm headquartered in Morris Plains, N.J.

The spokesperson said the test, which will sell for around \$10, "is as easy to use as a home permanent." The test has been found to be 97-percent accurate in detecting pregnancy following the first missed menstrual period.

The plexiglass kits, about the size of a package of cigarettes, will be available without prescription only in pharmacies.

Lou Bilionis, a junior economics and English major from Fitchburg, Mass., and Ed Rankin, a senior history major from Concord, N.C., are associate editors for the Daily Tar Heel.