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The Daily Tar Heel

86th year of editorial freedom

Books and trinkets'

Thousands of students with hardbounds, notebooks and paperbacks under arm file into long lines at the beginning of each semester. They all wait their turn amid the cacophonous clanging of the cash registers on the second floor of the Josephus Daniels Building. They wait their turn to pay higher and higher prices for the basic tools of their trade. And they have no choice.

Student Stores — there is no alternative. It's the only game in a town where the bread and butter are books and paper. But it seems that Student Stores, the campus bookstore designed to serve the University community, is hitting its customers, student and non-student alike, with sizable markups on not just trivial items like UNC ski caps, but the essentials to an academic world as well.

Student Body President Jim Phillips and his staff have been studying Student Stores pricing practices, and their earliest findings are some cause for distress. The increase in textbook prices over the last year may not be attributable to nationwide inflation alone, but seems to be due in part to an increase in the markup of new and used books. The markup — or percentage increase over wholesale price — on new textbooks rose from 19.73 percent in 1977 to 22.65 percent in 1978. The markup on used books, according to Student Stores' financial report for the 1977-78 fiscal year, rose from 33.18 percent to 35.58 percent.

Meanwhile, collegiate gifts and clothing on sale at Student Stores — items not integral to the community's livelihood and therefore likely candidates for high markups — have actually seen their markups decrease over the last year. The markup on clothing fell slightly from a high but not high enough 40.22 percent to 40.16 percent, while the markup on trinkets and the like was reduced by nearly 7 percent, dropping it from 38.78 percent to 36.21 percent over wholesale cost.

Of course, a markup is not a profit. Student Stores must, like any business, pay its personnel and meet the inevitable fixed costs. The stores' profit margin, after honoring its liabilities, runs around 9 percent — not an inordinately high figure — and the profits revert back to students in the form of scholarship money (another question altogether). Even so, Phillips and his staff have reason to question; common sense would ask that profits come from the sale of trinkets, not essentials. As long as the markup on books rises while the markup on Carolina T-shirts, gym shorts and coffee cups declines, however, the profits are being fed by people forced to buy necessities from a monopoly, not individuals purchasing odds and ends from a souvenir shop.

Student Stores, though, is pointed in the right direction. Its markups on memorabilia are substantially higher than the markups on books and other musts. But given the nature of the demand for UNC mementos, Student Stores could certainly make its markup on soap dishes and pajamas even higher — while cutting the markup on textbooks, notebooks and other academic-related materials as sharply as possible.

A utopian Student Stores would be one that sells its texts at cost and pays its personnel and overhead with the profits from clothing and gifts. This is no ideal utopian society, for sure. But as long as Student Stores shoots for just such a goal, then it will be providing the service to the academic community which is its stated purpose.

Open the debate

It is Nov. 1, 1975. You are a freshman in the fledgling class of '79, and you're thinking of dropping a course—say, because you're in over your head, or you're taking too many courses, or you just don't like the professor. You can still make your move.

But it isn't, of course. And you aren't. And you can't. The drop period, for those of you who missed it, has, like Halloween and the Dodgers, come and gone once again.

But whether you've lost in the World Series or seen your trick-or-treat bag burst over a puddle, there is always the comforting cry of the vanquished: "Wait 'til next year."

And for the drop period, too, there may be reason for hope. This afternoon, Student Government representatives will take their case for an extension of the drop period before the Agenda Committee of the Faculty Council in hopes of getting the issue some consideration at the next meeting of the council. And the SG representatives will be armed with some very convincing arguments.

They will, for example, compare UNC's drop period to those of other schools of similar stature. According to SG's research, the average drop period across the country is about eight weeks. Ours, of course, is four.

They might point out that such prestigious schools as Stanford and the University of Michigan allow students to drop courses up until final grades are posted.

And they might add that of all the schools surveyed, only two—UNC and N.C. State—have four-week drop periods. (They will probably add nothing about our being in such distinguished company.)

But the strongest argument, in the committee's eyes at least, will be the one that shows that there is no statistical correlation between the length of the drop period and grade inflation at UNC. One of the major arguments against the old 12-week period was that it fueled rising grades; but since the drop period has been cut, QPAs have in fact risen.

What the SG representatives will probably not bring up, though, are all the "old" arguments against the four-week drop—that student opposition to it is tremendous, that it simply doesn't allow enough time for deciding if a course is either worthwhile or passable. They will not use the "old" arguments because the Agenda Committee apparently is reluctant to put before the faculty an issue it has dealt with twice in the last two years without some "new" evidence.

And that is unfortunate. When discussion and debate of basic issues—and especially controversial ones—are cut short, then the University itself is in the long run the biggest loser of all.

The Daily Tar Heel

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Some college habits will be hard to break

Don Woodard's

Paradox Lost

If we are to believe in the Great Beyond, let's make it relative. Somewhere there is a South Building we mortals can comprehend.

Given that, the inevitable question arises: Will the Big Dean in the sky let us take life pass-fail? Better yet, how long will the drop period be?

By the time we are seniors, most of us will have spent 80 percent of our lives in school. (I'm counting my year at Miss Brouse's Academy. Hey, it was a competitive kindergarten.) We have little understanding of a world where people don't always carry books under their arms, tri-color pens in their pockets and distraught looks on their faces.

Sure, we've grown older, but the only thing that has ever really changed is the color of the chalkboard. For the most part, we have known only an environment of linoleum floors, one-armed chairs and flickering fluorescent lights that never seem to get repaired.

In short, we aren't ready for the (God, I hate this misnomer) real world. True, some of us can work for the student affairs or housing department of a

major university and remain forever sophomore, but most graduating seniors will be forced to work seriously for a living. For this reason we must leave behind certain notions that have followed us since pre-school days, through the Wonderbread years and up to our semesters in the hallways of higher education.

We must be de-programmed. Old habits are difficult to break. One doubts the feasibility of "cutting" work. It is hard to imagine that, while waiting tables, I would ask a customer if I could have an extension on his or her order. ("I've tried to get your steak here on time, but my grandfather died, and...")

And if I'm lucky enough to find a job in, say, advertising, I suppose I will have to buy another pair of jeans.

But how far will I have to go to make the necessary adjustments? I'll keep my hair short. I'll put my AM-dual speakers-hi-fi-digital alarm clock across the room in an effort to keep from re-setting the damn thing every 10 minutes. I'll even shave every morning. But there is a microcosm waiting for me on the outside that, despite peer pressure, I will never invade.

The Singles Bar. Fifty guys in turquoise leisure suits flirt with cocktail waitresses (everyone of them named "Betty Sue") and exchange real estate

sales stories among themselves. Gold-plated neck chains are as common as say-you're-a-great-dancer lines. The idea that if I buy enough strangers a pink squirrel I'll eventually find a wife sickens me.

Maybe these behavior patterns can be learned. Every middle-aged man didn't start off with a desire to join a bowling league and wear a silk shirt with the name "stickers" embroidered on the back. (Some of them had to learn to like it.) I am a little upset that Carolina—the General College in particular—never bothered to prepare me for what is soon to come. Thanks to their required courses I can tell you that Saturn does indeed look just like the pictures in your *World Book Encyclopedia*. But until I saw *Saturday Night Fever*, I was under the false impression that you don't wear brown shoes with blue pants...even if the trousers are polyester. No one had told me otherwise.

Look, I can pick up the steps to the hustle, so I'm not too worried. But if I change my mind and they won't let me drop my lifestyle, can I at least take an incomplete?

Don Woodard, a senior RTVMP major from Fort Worth, Texas, is associate editor for the Daily Tar Heel.

Letters to the editor

Gum fanciers should be chewed out

To the editor:

Cigarette smokers have been scapegoats for too long. I'll go along with signs in classrooms which read "No Smoking." Just please let me add "No Gum Chewing."

The sound of gum-chomping in my ear is far more annoying to me than smoke in the face. At least with smokers, you can turn around and glare, wave your hand to blow the smoke away, or hiss at the person to put the thing out. Gum chewers are a more delicate breed.

I am thoroughly convinced that the majority are totally unaware of the racket they make. Here's the golden opportunity to practice your assertiveness training: "Pardon me, your gum really bothers me. Do you think you could be a little quieter with it? Thank you very much." That seems nice enough. I stated how I felt without attacking the other person. She (I hate to admit, but it usually is a she) agreed my request was reasonable. Everything should be just fine, until...the chomping resumes, not one minute later—as if nothing had been said! Unbelievable!

Are these people totally unconscious? People always seem to manage to keep the sound of their burps and other gaseous emanations to themselves in class—why then, not so their chewing gum?

I don't care if gum-chewers rot their teeth out with the vile stuff; and I can't sympathize with their obviously ever-present predicament as to disposal (I will, however, credit them with creativity in this respect). All I ask is that they keep their noises to themselves, so others will be able to hear their professors.

If it's impossible to chew with your mouth closed because of buck teeth—consider braces. You can't chew gum with braces on, anyway, so that would solve both of your problems.

As to the scapegoat of the future, I nominate the rhythmical chair kicker.

Deborah Chamberlain
204 Carr St.

Intellectual snobbery

To the editor:

Worse than the slander, worse than the assaults, is the intellectual snobbery expressed by Mr. Hudson toward the gay person's fight for his/her Constitutional rights ("Innocent don't need to apologize," *DTH*, Oct. 31). The attitude that straights are normal and can therefore understand or accept gay people echoes the 19th century's "white man's burden." Let us not burden ourselves again.

Mr. Hudson, I would suggest that you turn your "ranked sense of justice," your obvious mastery of BS, and your law school training toward assuring that no one, gay or straight, has to ask for apologies from any community, or persons. As a straight man, as a person, I would fight, in every way possible, any attempt, by anyone, to restrict my rights, especially if that attempt came because I loved a woman. Any such struggle rates high on my list of "Conduct Above Reproach." Please, Mr. Hudson, re-evaluate your attitude, if for no other reason than that one day your son or daughter may say to you, "Dad, I'm gay."

Don McCullough

Just jobs

To the editor:

I was delighted to see the Armco ad in Monday's paper. It was amazing to see how a huge corporation could be so aware of students in this country and on this campus.

The ad referred to jobs. What a sensitive approach—after all, we are the job-conscious generation. That's all we care about! We're not like those "zealots" that the Armco ad alluded to who think alternative forms of energy should be developed. We want jobs and that means, Armco says, more energy. We don't care about low-level radiation or nuclear waste. We don't care about oil spills. We don't care whether strip-mining ruins the environment. No, we want jobs!

I'm glad Armco didn't associate us with the "curious combination of social reformers, wilderness fanatics and modern-day mystics" who "brought America's energy development almost to

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its knees." Armco knows what kind of people we are—we're out to make a buck, not to create safer, cleaner energy sources. Those "exotic" energy sources that Armco points out—sun, wind, geothermal and tidal action—are for people who care about, of all things, better lives for all people. Not us! We care about ourselves and our future. Jobs! That's the word.

I, for one, can't wait to graduate and get a job. Won't it be wonderful not to have to worry about other people or the earth we live on?

Julie Abbot
10-G Townhouse

Looking Sharpe

To the editor:

The varsity cheerleaders would like to express a sincere thank you to Sharpe's Formal Wear at University Square for providing the tuxedos worn by our male cheerleaders at the UNC vs. N.C. State game. Through this kind of support, we are able to exhibit true Carolina "class" to our opponents in a positive way.

The cheerleaders' attire has become a two-year tradition. Last year when UNC played State in Raleigh, Sharpe's provided tuxedos for the male cheerleaders to wear. Please accept our thanks for your continued support.

UNC cheerleaders

Kudos

To the editor:

We would like to thank the residents of North Campus Housing for helping us make this Halloween a little extra special for a group of retarded children. On Monday, Oct. 30, our group went trick-or-treating for these kids through the dorms on North Campus. The residents responded generously, donating \$220 in candy, fruit and cash. We appreciate and applaud such generosity. We also would like to thank the Children's Services Division of the Association for Retarded Citizens in Chapel Hill for getting us together with a wonderful group of children. Again, many thanks to all concerned.

The brothers of
Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity

Pro-peace

To the editor:

I am writing in regard to the *Daily Tar Heel's* Oct. 30 editorial "Sharing the prize" which commented upon the joint award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Israel's Menachem Begin and Egypt's Anwar Sadat. I am not so angry as depressed that the same worn-out clichés continue to surface whenever the Arab-Israeli

conflict arises for discussion. For almost a year now since Sadat's visit to Jerusalem we have heard endless debates on who was more intransigent or who gave more concessions, as if they were measurable commodities. These questions serve only to entrench already stagnated opinions further in a conflict state of mind.

I wonder if those who wrote this editorial have any conception of what the conflict is all about past the superficial daily reporting on television or in the newspapers. Do they know anything about the history of Israel or the Palestinians? Are they aware of the sad desperation of the people in that part of the world which lies behind slogans they quote so readily? Are they aware of the relative ease with which some governments can make major foreign policy decisions and the tremendous pressures in others to resist change? Can they cry for those in the refugee camps or suffer with the innocent victims of terrorist attacks? I doubt it.

My letter is not so much an emotional plea to create empathy and understanding where there obviously is none, but a plea for some well thought out and, at least, accurate editorials. Statements such as "...peace is worth considerably more to Egypt than it is to Israel" pervert any concept of humanity that participants in the conflict cling to and insult those of us who realize that the need for peace extends far beyond one

nation's social and economic problems. (Not the mention the fact that Israel's per capita arms expenditures and inflation rate are among the highest in the world.)

For those of you who are confused at this point and are searching for clues as to whether I am pro-Israel or pro-Arab, I will tell you. I am both. I am pro-peace. I am a Zionist who loves Israel and who also dreams of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza. Naive? Idealistic? Uninformed? No, because I refuse to sink into habits of mindlessly spewing forth clichés which bring the problem no closer to solution and which become self-perpetuating hindrances to such a solution.

What is my solution? I'm not sure. I find myself in a difficult position, one confronted by all those moderates who understand all the sides of a question. It would be far easier to bury myself in a hardline camp, but deep inside I am comforted that the conflict in the Middle East tortures me so and that I cannot shrug off its painful dilemmas with imitative acts of scapegoating. It proves to me that I understand it all too well. I hope future editorials will not consider only the daily ups and downs of the post-Camp David roller coaster but will demonstrate an original, farther reaching attempt at constructive accurate analysis.

Douglas Ross
Mount Bolus Road

Basketball ticket distribution explained

To the editor:

It's November and time for all rabid Carolina fans to turn their attention to the annual ritual of basketball ticket distribution. Here is a manual for surviving the arduous wait until distribution time.

In Carmichael, there will be either six or eight sections, each representing a separate waiting line. The first vacant position in each section will be marked by a highly visible flag, which will be removed when the section is full. When all sections are full, a flag will indicate the location of the overflow section, which is entitled to receive any remaining tickets.

Note: This year, the first row in each section will remain vacant; the line will begin in the second row.

Each hour on the hour, after about 500 students have arrived, the ushers will distribute numbered cards to

those waiting. The number represents its position in line and assures the holder of a ticket. At that time, the ushers also will check to see that those already holding cards are properly in line. Everyone must remain seated until all the ushers are finished. At the moment of truth (when one gets his ticket and discovers his seat location for the game), the ushers will take up the numbered cards.

Please, remember to bring your ID and athletic pass, so you will not be refused a ticket. Also, please hold your cards up when the ushers ask to see them, so that checks can be made as quickly as possible. Anyone having suggestions on making the system more viable, please pass your ideas on to an usher.

Thank you and good luck.

Bill Strickland, head usher
212-B Branson St.