

# The Daily Tar Heel

88th year of editorial freedom

## The negotiators

Amid the jubilation that has followed the release of the American hostages, those who negotiated their freedom are quickly being forgotten. They are unlikely heroes: a force of diplomats and businessmen and women, here and abroad, armed only with briefcases and frozen Iranian assets. Our suit-and-tie team stood in marked contrast to the bearded Iranian negotiator Behzad Nabavi, who seemed to wear the same fatigue jacket throughout the weeks of bartering.

The negotiators, however, are directly responsible for the hostages' release, and they deserve the nation's gratitude. Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher and his colleagues had to convince the Iranians to scale down their original demand of \$24 billion, in effect a ransom for the hostages, to the \$9.5 billion in Iranian assets this country had frozen.

The diplomats then had to work with American and English bankers to settle disputes about outstanding loans and interest. Finally, an arbitration committee was set up to process claims against Iran by American interests — the part of the deal that held up the hostages' release until Ronald Reagan's inauguration.

Christopher and the diplomatic corps have been working since last year to reach an agreement, and their task was made more difficult by the Iranians' persistent introduction of impossible demands. After realizing that an American apology was not forthcoming, the Iranians dropped that demand and eventually their request for the return of the assets of Shah Reza Pahlavi. The final agreement simply returns the two nations' financial situation to the status it had in November 1979, after the hostages were taken.

President Reagan has now declared that he wants his staff to read the agreement closely before implementing it, and he has blocked the lifting of our trade embargo against Iran. Prudence in implementing the agreement is in order, but Reagan cannot in good faith reject it. Protocol and precedent dictate that an incumbent president abide by his predecessor's executive agreements, and Reagan had agreed to do so beforehand. For him to withdraw now would lend credence to Iranian criticism of America, cast a shadow over the brilliant diplomacy of Christopher and the American negotiators, and place the United States on questionable political and moral ground.

## Don't toss the soup, yet

If you don't know it yet, you soon will. It may dawn on you suddenly. Perhaps one day you'll look up and a smiling face will beckon you. "Vote for me, vote for me." Or perhaps late one night while wrestling with another math problem or making a soup and sandwich snack, someone will knock upon your door ready and willing to give you his or her qualifications for an elected position. If you're the cynical sort, you may throw out the soup, but you'll also become aware that election time is once again upon us.

Each year this strange and somewhat befuddling process comes and each year the same cliches are given — either by the candidates or the voter. In years past such cliches rang terribly even if true. "Let's put the student back in the government." "The University should be an adviser not a supervisor." "Let's make our senior year the most memorable." The list goes on.

It is easy to see why one might tire of such trite cliches and catch phrases. Yet, to assume that the candidate is not sincere is perhaps unfair. The issues don't usually change each year. It's not so surprising, then, that candidates don't always harbor fresh ideas for unheard-of problems.

But just as distressing as the candidate's word games are those of the voter. "They just want to see their pictures in the paper." "He's cute, I'll vote for him," and best of all, "What difference does it make?"

Actually, not a lot if you're using death, war, and racism as a gauge. But this election will have an effect on campus life and issues like race relations, parking and housing. Ideas will be tossed about. Students will learn.

Now is the time to get to know a candidate and his positions on issues or better yet his ability to think and act under pressure, which the candidate is sure to encounter after elections are finished. Don't vote come Feb. 10 if you've made an honest effort to find an issue or candidate of interest or concern and failed. But, for now, don't toss the soup.

## The Bottom Line

Are you busy tonight?

Word has come from Indio, CA, the "Date Capital of the World," that this year's Date Festival will be held Feb. 13-21.

A Date Festival? The week of Valentines Day? The mind boggles at the idea of hundreds of couples going out for a movie, then stopping for a cherry coke with two straws; thousands of cars parked by the side of the road in Indio, apparently with no occupants; all-night drive-in movies with hundreds of fogged-up windshields. The possibilities are endless.

Alas, The Date Festival will commemorate the other kind of date, the boring kind. Indio may be liable for false advertising.

On writing well

A study funded by the Department of Education reports that 10 to 25 percent of American students have "massive problems" trying to write.

The study said most of the 9-, 13- and 17-year-old students tested knew the basic principles of writing descriptive paragraphs, business letters and other exercises. At each age, however, 10 to 25 percent "dis-

play massive problems with written language. They do not understand the nature and conventions of written language."

The results came as no surprise to us at *The Daily Tar Heel*. We know how difficult it is to produce a paper containing good writing each day. We think more students should take them remedial writing courses so they won't get to college and maybe work for the college newspaper and not know how to write proper.

Signs of the times

As soon as one crisis is over, it seems, another one begins.

The people in UNC's Planning Department, a forward-thinking group if ever there was one, are fearful for the future of the republic now that President Ronald Reagan has been inaugurated. Unable to contain themselves, they posted a sign above the department's water cooler. It succinctly states the feelings of many liberal Americans these days:

THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION: AMERICA HELD HOSTAGE, DAY 1  
And that's the left-wing bottom line.

# Inauguration Day

Event was impressive — if you saw it

By BUDDY BURNISKE AND GEORGE SHADROU

WASHINGTON D.C. — By 11:45 a.m. Tuesday as many as 70,000 people had pushed and crowded their way around the Capitol building here where Ronald Reagan would be inaugurated as the 40th president of the United States.

They climbed trees to get a glimpse of the event. They carried radios and televisions knowing that glimpse would be short-lived if it came at all. Some of them came to cheer him, wearing cowboy hats with Reagan campaign brims, waving Reagan pennants and sporting multi-colored Reagan buttons.

Some came to protest his debut, or at least to draw attention to the differences between their views and Reagan's. Equal Rights Amendment supporters were everywhere and the "Immoral Minority" carried signs boasting the joys of "Sex, Drugs and Rock 'N' Roll" and offering such sage wisdom for the president-elect as "Nuke (Alexander) Haig."

The pomp and circumstance of Inauguration Day did not often reach those of us standing amid the crowd, staring at our feet and listening to the catcalls of nearby observers. History may report for posterity that only two events of major importance occurred on Jan. 20, 1981 — the release of the hostages in Iran and Reagan's inauguration. But history no doubt had a better seat than we did.

Dozens of people hovered around a small television with an 8-by-10 screen. They were part of history because they were among the throng, but were not content to miss the event just because they were there. "Have the hostages gotten out?" someone shouted from behind the



DTH/Buddy Burniske

The next best thing to being there ... is a TV set to watch the speech

huddled group. The family that owned the set was oblivious to the invasion of their portable living room.

"Could you move over, I can't see," another person said.

"God, it's cold out here. Wind is blowing right through me."

"I hope this thing gets going soon."

"Listen, they're leaving the White House! They're leaving!"

The crowd around the television dispersed quickly as people ran toward Constitution Avenue, where the president and the president-elect's limousine was certain to pass.

Within minutes thousands lined Constitution Avenue. Children and adults pushed eagerly, while they prepped and poised their cameras for the coming of the president.

"Move over," a boy yelled at someone.

"Will we see them? Will we see them?" a girl begged her mother.

"Honey, could you move your head, I don't need any photos of your hair," a man said.

"Here they come!" someone shouted. Suddenly a roar of police motorcycles, a score at least, passed by. Then numerous buses carrying dignitaries and friends of the president, then secret service cars, then more limousines carrying forgotten names of mere senators. At last, the president's car, followed by limousines carrying Rosalyn Carter, Walter Mondale and others, their friends perhaps. Reactions were immediate.

"I saw him, I saw him."

"Where is he?"

"There's Mondale."

"Where?"

"Hey Rosalyn."

"Damn, I can't see nothing."

"Wave Johnny."

"I can't see them."

Seconds later, the motorcade had passed. "Did you see the president, he looked just like he does on television."

"He looked tired."

"He looked unreal, like a mannequin."

"I didn't see nothing."

badly to see what it wouldn't be able to see anyway.

The sign crept forward. "Amen," a man said, facetiously, as he regained a clear view of the crowds. A chorus of "amens" followed.

A thick baritone began to sing "God Bless America," his voice escaping the distant speakers arranged atop the scaffolding in front of the Capitol Building. People talked and laughed while many stood quietly peering through binoculars searching for a familiar dignitary's face.

"... through the night with a light from abooooooove."

The crowd laughed when it realized the singer was still holding the note they had passed one verse earlier. Radios added to the confusion, their delayed transmission trailing the voice of the singer.

"Where are they sitting?" someone asked.

"There. On the podium draped with the red, white and blue."

Fingers pointed. More heads craned forward. People balanced on toes. Finally, the oath was given. Reagan stood alone on the podium.

"What did he say?" asked a whimpering voice.

"I don't know."

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DTH/Buddy Burniske

Onlookers perch in tree during parade ... getting a good seat can be tough

## Criticism answered

# Muslim student praises American society

By MUHAMMAD HABIB

I am writing in response to the article "America seems 'atheistic' to Muslim Student," (*DTH*, Jan. 14), about Muhammad Buraey (a Saudi Arabian student in Chapel Hill). Buraey claimed that it was very difficult to be a Muslim in the United States. While he is certainly entitled to his opinion (this is a free country), my experience as a Muslim is quite different. In my first year at UNC in 1974, the Presbyterian Church provided our Muslim group (including Buraey)

"Response" is a feature of *The Daily Tar Heel* incorporating written opinion in response to columns or editorials. *The Tar Heel* welcomes such submissions, which preferably should be typed, double spaced, on a 60-space line.

with a room for our Friday prayers which we used until we founded the Muslim Student Association and moved to a room in the Carolina Union. This reflects the open-mindedness of the American people and their tolerance of people who hold different beliefs. Other aspects of being a Muslim (such as fasting during Ramadan and

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praying five times a day) are as easy for any Muslim to adhere to as his/her religious convictions are strong; certainly the American culture is not to blame for the religious shortcomings of weak believers, Muslims or otherwise. Buraey also stated: "My main point is that this country (America) is spiritually void and that the press or the media is just one of the devices used to downgrade Islam." I have a very different perception.

This country is full of Christians, Jews and Muslims who are religious and spiritually sound. Only a paranoid person would believe that there is a conspiracy in this country against Islam. The fact of the matter is that the people here and the media do not know enough about Islam to even conspire against it. If, as Buraey stated, he feels that Chapel Hill is like a prison, then it is certainly a prison of his own making. Obviously his lack of understanding and appreciation of America is the result of narrow views and failure to communicate.

Finally, contrary to Buraey's claim that America is a morally decadent land, I regard the principles and values of the people of this country very highly; in particular, I appreciate their tolerance of their ungrateful guests.

Muhammad Habib is a visiting scholar at the UNC Department of Statistics from Cairo, Egypt.