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# The Daily Tar Heel

89th year of editorial freedom

## Media loses objectivity in Reagan shooting

By JIM HUMMEL

It's been a week since President Ronald Reagan was shot, and by now thousands of journalists have offered their analyses, interpretations and general impressions about an assassination attempt that gained instant world attention.

Many writers used the incident to launch a renewed call for gun control or mandatory death penalties. Others took us through the last 20 years of their lives, highlighting violent acts of the 1960s and 1970s and recalling exactly where they were when John F. Kennedy was shot in Dallas.

Many commentators have expressed concern about how indifferent society has become about violence and condemned those who did not let the world come to a standstill in the hours following the shooting. Sure, they said, it was the topic of conversation from Hollywood to Philadelphia, but while people were shocked by the suddenness of the attack, many Americans had lived through similar incidents before and were used to violence.

Perhaps it was the editorials and columns in the days following the event, coupled with the initial news coverage Monday afternoon that rubbed me the wrong way. Some papers played the media event to its full potential, running enough maps to make the American Automobile Association proud, while other newspapers simply reported the incident and offered a brief word of sympathy for the four men who were shot and their families.

At *The Daily Tar Heel*, editors had to decide which story to give more attention — Reagan or the national championship if the Tar Heels happened to win. Fortu-

nately — or unfortunately — the decision never had to be made.

Papers throughout North Carolina and across the United States decried the rise of violent crime in America and offered their opinion about the state of American life in general. Terms like "crazed assassin" and "senseless murder" (is there such a thing as a sensible murder?) plastered the nation's newspapers, but quickly

On the same day a columnist for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote an article titled, "The president was shot but they played anyway," that criticized NCAA officials for being heartless by deciding to go ahead with the college basketball national championship. *Hollywood stepped aside on its biggest night of the year. Oscar hung his head. Sadly, sports did not*, the article said.

to say Americans should be untouched and detached from such a tragic incident. The momentary paralysis that swept the nation while Reagan was in surgery served as a time for reflection.

It was the impassioned editorials, however, that detracted from the reality of the situation and bordered on desperate commentary. One editorial said, "The frightening thing is that yesterday it was President Reagan. Tomorrow it could be the mailman, the plumber, you or me." The person who wrote that must be living in a vacuum.

The president was not shot because he was Ronald Reagan the mailman. He was shot as a result of his being the president of the United States who is highly visible and a person who takes a risk every time he walks outside.

It hasn't taken long for politicians and journalists to speculate about the political ramifications of the shooting. How will it affect the president's budget proposals and his popularity ratings? To some, this attitude may seem cold, but even Reagan has made it clear that there are decisions that have to be made.

The media should not be indifferent to last week's shooting, but the sensationalist journalism that appeared in many newspapers over the past week served no constructive purpose.

Newspapers and television stations have enormous influence in shaping American opinion and policy. Americans should condemn violence in this country, but if the media ever expects a change in society, which it so fervently advocates, commentators must voice their concerns in a calm and rational way.

Jim Hummel, a junior journalism and political science major from Grafton, Mass., is editor of *The Daily Tar Heel*.



lost any meaning because they were weak attempts to explain a situation that made no sense.

Tuesday morning *The Raleigh News and Observer* already had designed its own "Reagan Shot" logo. It ran with a picture of Reagan that made it look as if rigor mortis already had settled in. Apparently, the paper wanted to help draw attention to every story about the event, but the tacky symbol just reinforced an impression that the media were milking the shooting for all it was worth.

The saddest thing to me is that the *Inquirer* ran the writer's column. Maybe the reason so many papers went overboard was because the shooting was an event that touched every American and for a few brief hours drew people closer together. Readers were eager to see how other people felt, reacted and viewed the same situation, and columnists made an attempt to satisfy that need.

But in the heat of the battle many people lost all sense of perspective, as was clear to anyone watching the three television networks that afternoon. This is not

## Food options

Few issues on campus have evoked the degree of controversy and outrage that has been raised over proposed plans to renovate and enlarge student food services. Now that the possibility of a mandatory meal plan has been discarded, student leaders have raised alarm over mandatory student fees that would finance food services for a minority of students.

The Vice Chancellor's Food Service Committee is now preparing its recommendations for improving the system and will submit these to Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Donald Boulton by the end of the month. The committee was asked to make recommendations on five food service improvement options, ranging from \$400,000 to more than \$3 million in cost.

Although one option to renovate only the Pine Room would cost students a low \$1.30 a semester, there are serious questions about whether primarily cosmetic changes would really improve food service operations. Another option to renovate Lenoir Hall and close the Pine Room would provide higher quality facilities with a greater seating capacity, but would cost each student \$6.50 per semester.

The question of the mandatory student fees needed to finance any improvements, is at the crux of the food service debate. Although it is certainly UNC's responsibility to provide economical and higher quality food services, the University should not do so at the expense of the majority of students.

Between the 60 percent of UNC students living off campus and the 25 percent belonging to fraternities and sororities, many students would not be interested in any form of food service. Any costly renovation can be justified only if it produces a multi-purpose facility that can be used constructively by the entire student body.

Although student concern about mandatory fees is justified, student reaction and involvement should not stop at criticism. Boulton's assurance that any mandatory student fee would have to be proposed as a student referendum puts the ball squarely in the students' court.

The student food service options raise complex questions and any proposed improvement must take into account the best use of space in Lenoir Hall, competition with Student Stores, student eating trends and a variety of other factors. Given the fact that a better student food service is needed, students and administrators must be willing to examine all possible options and work together in implementing the most economic and equitable solution.

## letters to the editor

# Students can protest aid cuts in letters

To the editor:

By now, everyone has heard of the much publicized proposed federal budget cuts. The threat that these cuts pose to higher education interests has been made less apparent. Financial aid experts have stated that as many as 750,000 students, nationwide, will be unable to attend school if Reagan's proposals are accepted.

The shift in spending priorities is made apparent when one discovers that the Pentagon will enjoy its largest peacetime budget increase in history, while some students may be forced to drop out of school. These cuts are directed at a number of facets of the federal aid to higher education. Of these, we should be most concerned with the significant reductions which affect the Pell Grants, Guaranteed Student Loans and the phasing out of Social Security benefits as aid to students.

The Pell Grants, formerly known as Basic Educational Opportunity Grants, will be altered by at least three noteworthy changes. First, students will be required to contribute more under President Reagan's plan. The self-help expectation will be increased from \$500 to \$750. Second, families will be required to increase their assistance toward defraying educational costs. This change will be achieved by increasing the assessment rate for determining a family's discretionary income, that which could be spent for education. Reagan wants the portion of income which could be used to pay educational costs increased from 14 percent to 20 percent. Third, the maximum award could drop from \$1,800 to as low as \$1,200.

Presently, 70,000 students in North Carolina receive Pell Grants and many will be unable to qualify next fiscal year. Nationwide approximately 575,000 fewer students will be able to receive Pell Grants because of tightened eligibility requirements.

The proposed changes to the Guaranteed Student Loan program are said to lead potentially to barring 90 percent of the present borrowers from obtaining a loan. The Reagan administration wants the interest rate for these loans changed from 9 percent to current market rates. Another proposed change would be to force the burden of costs onto the students by requiring them to repay the interest

which accrues, while attending school.

The third major program to be targeted for drastic cuts is the proposed phasing out of Social Security benefits to more than 800,000 students. More than half of these students come from families earning less than \$8,000 a year.

These changes will increase the cost of a college education at a time when institutions such as UNC will be facing tuition increases. A college education could become inaccessible to many who are in need of financial assistance. We, in Student Government hope to enlist your support as we make plans to lobby our representatives in Washington. To date, most of the reaction that they have received from their constituents has been "pro-cut."

We hope to counter this response with a letter-writing campaign involving as many members of this educational community as possible. Please write a letter, which expresses your concern for the

threatened security of your college education. It is important that our representatives receive our input. Please address your letter to:

The Honorable L. H. Fountain  
Room 2188  
Rayburn Office Building  
Washington, DC

Instead of mailing the letter, please bring it by Suite C of the Union so that the Student Body President can deliver it to Representative Fountain, in Washington.

Scott Norberg  
Student Body President

Alfred Perry  
Director of National Affairs  
Student Government

Food drive

To the editor:

On behalf of the staff of the Orange County Dept. of the Social Services, we would like to express our gratitude to the brothers, sisters and pledges of Alpha Phi Omega Fraternity for the food drive they conducted in March. Their efforts provided us with more than 20 boxes of canned goods, which will benefit the agency greatly.

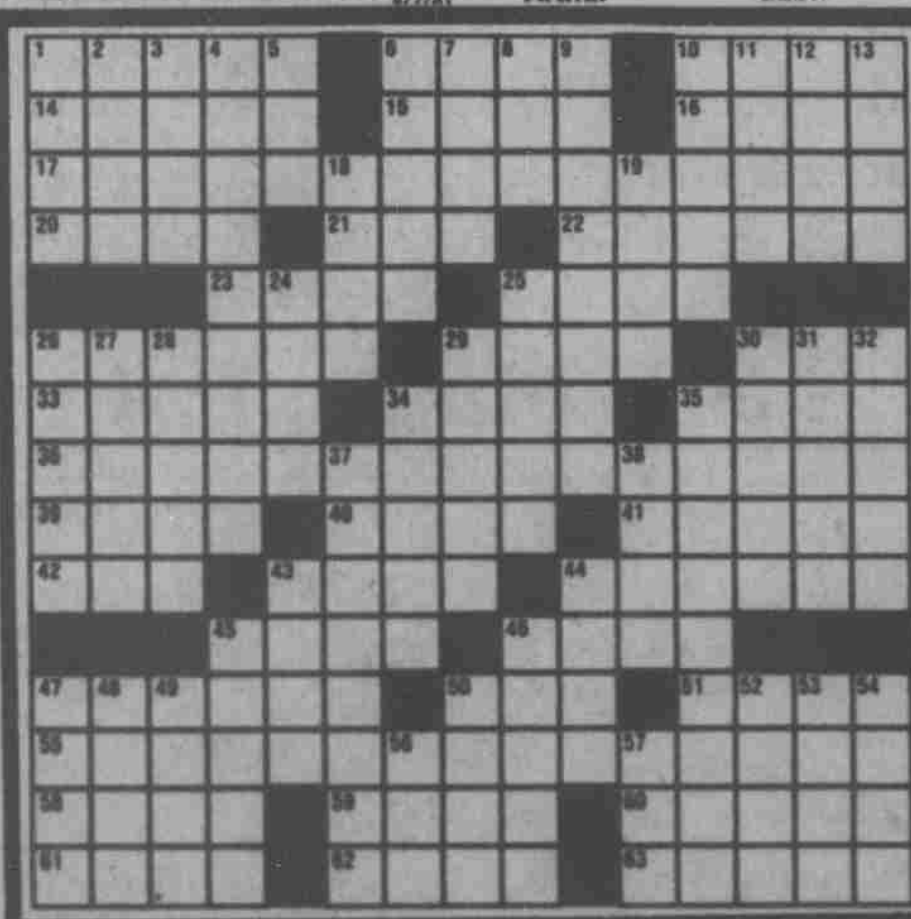
Thanks also to everyone at UNC who donated food to the APO drive. In these difficult times, it's heartening to see college students responding so generously to the needs of the community.

Kathy Putnam  
Bill Kastanotis  
Children & Family Services Staff  
Department of Social Services  
Carr Mill Mall

## THE Daily Crossword by W.A. Henderson

- |                         |                            |                       |                          |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| ACROSS                  | 25 Ruminant's chews        | 44 Applies pigments   | 19 Opera                 |
| 1 Cornucopia            | 26 Actor                   | 45 Old plane          | 24 Vex                   |
| 8 Daisy Mae's crasor    | 29 Info                    | 46 Kind of owl        | 25 Styly spiteful        |
| 10 Eastern priest       | 30 Flatfish                | 47 Pertaining to bone | 28 Molten rock           |
| 14 Befitting a king     | 33 — of (in conflict with) | 50 Muscle twitch      | 27 Under way             |
| 15 Jason's ship         | 34 Carry                   | 51 Festive            | 28 Esther of TV          |
| 16 Asian wild goat      | 35 Fleur-de-lis            | 52 Wily dog           | 29 Active ones           |
| 17 Sled dog             | 36 Bird dog                | 53 A Roosevelt        | 30 Couch                 |
| 20 Camera part          | 39 Beauty mark             | 54 Quaker word        | 31 Wide awake            |
| 21 Myra of movies       | 40 Mountaintop nest        | 55 Ankles             | 32 Cow barns, in England |
| 22 Part of a door frame | 41 Trap                    | 56 Suit to —          | 34 Brought to bay        |
| 23 Middle East country  | 42 Corroded                | 57 Evergreens         | 35 USSR city             |
|                         | 43 Canonized women: abbr.  | 63 Defunct auto       | 37 Birthrate             |
|                         |                            |                       | 38 River into the Danube |
|                         |                            |                       | 43 Gaiter                |
|                         |                            |                       | 44 Walk to and fro       |
|                         |                            |                       | 45 Coarse hairs          |
|                         |                            |                       | 46 Morsels               |
|                         |                            |                       | 47 Greek mountain        |
|                         |                            |                       | 48 Scram!                |
|                         |                            |                       | 49 Ripped                |
|                         |                            |                       | 50 Muscle                |
|                         |                            |                       | 52 Ventilates            |
|                         |                            |                       | 53 — majeste             |
|                         |                            |                       | 54 Seed covering         |
|                         |                            |                       | 56 Haggard novel         |
|                         |                            |                       | 57 Highway: abbr.        |
|                         |                            |                       | 18 Chester — Arthur      |

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



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## Budget cuts

# Legal services for the poor should be kept

By ALEX CHARNS

The Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution does not read, "All people are guaranteed equal protection under the law if they can afford it." However, to be protected by the law you must have access to the courts. Effective access to the courts requires an attorney.

Prior to 1965, a poor person could not obtain an attorney for a noncriminal case without the outlay of money. The scales of justice demanded payment before they would balance. Under the guise of fiscal austerity, President Ronald Reagan would have us return to the pre-1965 form of justice — justice contingent on the ability to pay. Reagan's budget message to Congress requested that the Legal Services Corporation not be funded.

In 1974 the LSC was formed. Its predecessor dated back to 1965 as part of Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society." LSC is a private, nonprofit, federally funded corporation which provides legal services to the indigent. The \$321 million a year LSC budget funds 320 legal aid programs across the country, employing just under 6,000 attorneys and 2,500 paralegals. Legal aid assisted the poor in 1.5 million cases last year.

Attorneys at legal aid attempt to ensure that the poor receive the rights and benefits guaranteed them by our constitution and laws. Legal assistance is provided for family law problems, housing evictions, utility cutoffs, welfare and Medicaid eligibility and consumer disputes. Legal services is not a handout or a privilege. It is a protectorate of legal justice; it is a right.

President Reagan's effort to kill legal aid reveals the fallaciousness of his assertions that his budget cuts will not hurt the truly needy. The proposition that cut-

ting off legal aid for the poor will not hurt the poor is an affront to the intelligence of the American people. The effect of such a cut would be devastating.

A legal right is worthless if it cannot be enforced. Excluding the poor from the judicial system will render impotent their constitutional guarantees. Their rights will become no more than hollow and unfulfilled promises, caged in the paper on which they are written. To eliminate legal aid for the poor is to set the

executioner's hand in motion upon the ideal of equal justice.

Funding legal services is not a liberal versus conservative issue. Legal aid for the poor is an issue so fundamental to our democratic system of government that it should transcend petty partisan politics.

Many politicians, caught up in the reactionary fervor, have not confronted the real issue — equal access to justice. Even President Reagan can't shake his unfounded and myopic view of legal aid developed while he was governor of California. Legal aid lawyers, the former governor once said, are "a bunch of ambulance chasers who do their own thing at the expense of rural poor."

Legal services must be saved. The still unfulfilled promise of equality under the law must be fought for through the law. Equality cannot be obtained on the courthouse steps. If legal aid for the poor is not funded we will have to change the end of the Pledge of Allegiance to read "with liberty and justice for all who can afford it" so our children may recite the truth as they face the flag and their future.

Alex Charns, a second-year law student from Livonia, Mich., is second-year president of the Student Bar Association.

