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The Daily Tar Heel

89th year of editorial freedom

Changing of the guard

Today marks the annual changing of the guard at *The Daily Tar Heel*, and for a group of seniors that has devoted thousands of hours to the production of this newspaper it is time to end a special part of our lives and move on.

We leave with the deep satisfaction of having played a part in publishing a college newspaper with a long and respected tradition. During the past 90 years, the *Tar Heel* has been an integral part of UNC, and anyone who has worked at the *DTH* quickly appreciates the sense of devotion that so many people have for this paper.

At the same time we depart with a sad, somewhat nervous feeling, knowing that many of the things we have been able to do here have been once-in-a-lifetime experiences. As we leave the paper, we also leave behind a part of us that will never be recaptured.

Editors here come and go, but the spirit and purpose of the *DTH* remains the same. And often with the pressures of trying to meet deadlines and fill a newspaper without flunking out of school, many of us have wondered why we would be insane enough to make so many sacrifices—all to produce copy that quickly yellows and fades from the average reader's memory.

This is the time of year, however, that the *Tar Heel's* tradition becomes terribly important to editors who relinquish their positions—somewhat reluctantly—to a new crop of talent that brings with it energy and excitement to serve as a breath of fresh air for the coming year.

Today Susan Mauney, Edwina Ralston, Charlie Herndon, John Royster, Beth Burrell, Geoff Mock, Clifton Barnes, Scott Sharpe, Norman Cannada, Leah Talley, David Jarrett and Chuck James leave their editorial positions. They join Mark Murrell, Jonathan Rich, Tom Moore and Donna Whitaker, all of whom have left the paper already.

Unfortunately, the *DTH* editor often is the only person visible to the majority of students on campus, by the nature of his position as an elected official. He is the one who is invited to the banquets, serves as an *ex-officio* member of every conceivable board and is first in line to receive praise or criticism, regardless of whether he has had direct contact with a given story.

But the editors listed above and the staff writers, advertising representatives, composition crew and printers serve as the heart and soul of this newspaper. Long after the glamour of seeing your name in print wears off, they are the ones who have put the *DTH* before all else.

Over the past 12 months editors have seen their love and respect—for each other and this newspaper—grow, as we have sweated through writing on deadline, struggled to decide editorial policy and coped with the tensions that plague every family.

In many ways we have tried to give this campus the best possible newspaper and stimulate students' thinking, something that is vital in any academic community. At times we have fallen short, at other times we have been able to expose and comment on things that make a real difference to every person at this University.

Because the *DTH* is such a big part of our lives it is hard to accept that we soon will become distant from something that has been so close to our hearts. As we leave, though, we know that the *DTH*, under John Drescher and his staff, is in good hands. Like the hundreds of people who have come before them, they know the joy and responsibility associated with being an editor at the *DTH*.

Over the next several weeks you will probably see people wandering around campus with glazed looks on their faces wondering what to do with the enormous amount of time that has just been given to them. Chances are it will be a group of former *DTH* editors, who have had two free afternoons in the last four years. But in that period of time, they have learned about themselves, as well as how a newspaper works and the tradition that is attached to it.

This talk about tradition may seem strange for people who are not familiar with the inner workings of the *DTH*. But for the outgoing seniors it has served as a signal—and a reminder—that we were here to publish the best paper we could and to maintain the editorial freedom and responsibility that *The Daily Tar Heel* has enjoyed since 1893. It is a tradition that we are proud to have been a part of.

The Democratic Party had a lot of explaining to do after the 1980 elections. Not only had it lost the White House to the Republicans, but in a matter of four years it had blown a two-to-one majority in the Senate. By any possible standard the 1980 elections were a major defeat for the Democrats. But behind every political defeat lies political failure. The pressure is overwhelming not to accept this failure, but to blame it on some external force. Thus, the defeated liberals, to explain gross political mistakes and to serve as a rallying point around which to regroup, created the movement of the New Right.

The justification for the fabrication of a New Right movement comes from the defeat of several liberal incumbents in recent elections and the pressure from elected officials for broad social legislation to correct a perceived moral decay in this nation. These claims are indisputable. But the origins of the popular anger against the defeated liberals lies not in the stirrings of conservative evangelists, but in the liberals' inability to listen to the legitimate social needs of a broad range of Americans.

There is supreme irony in this. Thousands of Americans are expressing through politics discontent with their lives and their desire for the government to intervene and solve their problems. Liberals, who never give a second thought to government intervention in the economic sphere, have completely abandoned this bloc of Americans. Nevertheless, the fear of a person for the type of world he lives in is worthy of the same political attention given his economic woes.

People who burn books, cling to pathetic religious superstitions and migrate to crank authoritarian figures do not receive a good image in contemporary society, and deservedly so. But too often liberals stereotype these people and overlook the real frustrations that drive them to such political behavior. When these people look for political aid, the liberals give them ridicule. The result is

Why the liberals fabricated a movement

By GEOFFREY MOCK

that they have no choice but to turn to conservative leaders who cynically exploit them.

People who burn books, cling to pathetic religious superstitions and migrate to crank authoritarian figures do not receive a good image in contemporary society. But too often liberals stereotype these people and overlook the real frustrations that drive them to such political behavior.

"It was the social issues that got us this far," conservative fund-raiser Richard Viguier said. "We talked about the sanctity of free enterprise, about the communist onslaught until we were blue in the face. But we didn't start winning majorities in elections until we got down to the gut-level issues."

Out of this liberal stereotype has come the New Right movement. Perplexed beyond belief at why these Americans are acting so "irrationally," liberals have blindly lumped them together, assuming there are few differences among them.

In fact, there is little homogeneity about the New Right. The only thing they have in common is a vented rage against the world around them. Beyond that the similarity ends. The family from South Dakota that comes to Washington to thank Jesse Helms for his abortion stand is different from the Arkansas father who wants his child to learn the Genesis version of the creation of man. Instead of talking about a New Right movement, it would be better to emphasize the slightly

increased importance of social issues as a general trend. Within that trend there are many distinct issues that require different solutions. At a distance these voices seem to call in harmony for conservative governmental action, but up close that unity is destroyed by the variety of interests. Theodore Adorno called these people the "pseudo-conservatives." Perhaps it is more apt to say they are part of a pseudo-movement.

But even with these qualifications, it must be added that the ability of these people to influence elections is minimal. They are by and large political amateurs, but to hear the defeated liberals speak of them you would think they were political geniuses. But the liberals' exaggerated claims of radical-right influence only served to play into the hands of radical leaders, who likewise have overstated their importance.

But while both liberals and radical conservatives credited the radicals with being a decisive factor in recent elections, the victorious conservative politicians are not so sure. If anything, radical support hurt these politicians by creating a popular backlash against the radicals' tactics.

In South Dakota, James Abdnor asked the Federal Elections Commission to stop the National Conservative Political Action Committee from using his name in his race against Democratic Sen. George McGovern. In Indiana, Republican Dan Quayle said radical support hindered his successful race against Sen. Birch Bayh. And in Idaho, an aide to Steven Symms said NCPAC's support almost damaged Symms' victory over Sen. Frank Church. "I think, if anything, groups such as

NCPAC probably hindered Steve Symms," Bill Fay told *Congressional Quarterly*. "I think people got tired of trash." Post-election polls backed up Fay's claim.

By creating the myth of the New Right, liberals have found a partial solution to their problem of organization and fund-raising. By mobilizing support behind exaggerated claims of a radical-right peril, liberals have been able to replenish their money coffers.

While Bayh, Church, McGovern and other liberals lost, some liberals facing serious conservative opposition won by bigger margins than ever. In Maryland, Sen. Charles Mathias took 66 percent of the vote, and in California Alan Cranston won with 59 percent of the vote. These landslide victories, plus the fact that more than half of the candidates endorsed by NCPAC lost, shows that any liberal candidate with genuine popular support can withstand any conservative opposition.

The one area where the radical right has extended its influence recently is in fund-raising. But liberals don't talk much about this and with good reason—they are to blame for it. Well intended but poorly thought out election reforms supported by liberals have had the effect of increasing the importance of conservative political action committees while demolishing the Democratic Party as a fund-raiser.

Campaign reforms restricted single-lump corporation donations. This forced businesses to con-

vass money from management and employees for PACs, which turned out to be a more efficient means of political contributions. Meanwhile, liberal reform within the Democratic Party diminished the power of the unions and big-city machines, often a source of liberal campaign finances. This in turn has forced liberals to turn to corporate PACs for contributions, making them more sensitive to conservative pressures.

Liberals have made other errors. Again well-intended reforms to "broaden the party" have weakened the role of the professional politician in the Democratic Party. It is as if liberals have abandoned the Democratic Party as an organizational unit, and into this vacuum conservatives have increased their strength. Republicans always outspend Democrats, but the gap between party contributions in 1980 was unprecedented. The Republican Party gave Paul Gann \$521,755 in his unsuccessful challenge to Sen. Alan Cranston. The most given a Democratic congressional candidate from his party was \$39,940 to Pete Flaherty running for the U.S. Senate from Pennsylvania.

By creating the myth of the New Right, liberals have found a partial solution to their problem of organization and fund-raising. By mobilizing support behind exaggerated claims of a radical-right peril, liberals have been able to replenish their money coffers. They have successfully imitated the direct mail fund-raising tactics of Viguier and other conservatives.

The failure of liberalism has come not from subversive politics from the radical right, but from the liberals themselves. They can pass off their failures as resulting from unfair tactics of the radical right, but such a simplistic view will only worsen their failures.

Geoffrey Mock, a senior political science major from Baltimore, is associate editor of *The Daily Tar Heel*.

Four years later

Life at the 'DTH' often a paradoxical experience

By JIM HUMMEL

"Excuse me, I came to see about joining *The Daily Tar Heel* staff," the timid redheaded freshman said to the secretary, almost expecting her to break into gales of laughter.

"Wait a minute, let me answer the phone, then I'll be with you," she said, trying to act friendly while doing five things at once.

"Maybe I can come back later," the freshman said, as he looked into the office and saw two staff members engaged in a heated discussion.

"No, stay here just a minute and I'll introduce you to our state and national editor, David Stacks," she replied.

I had heard horror stories about *The Daily Tar Heel*—stories about how you could never get a job unless you had an inside track and could pull strings with someone on the staff. I looked about 12 years old, was mildly interested in journalism, but wasn't sure whether I could handle working for a large college newspaper while trying to adjust to living 700 miles from home. I didn't know a single person and was undergoing something of a culture shock.

"What did you do for your high school newspaper?" asked Stacks, wanting to see some of my work.

"My high school didn't have a newspaper," I said, wishing I could sink quietly out of the office and back to Massachusetts without anyone noticing.

That was three and a half years ago, the first day of my freshman year. Today is the last day at the *DTH* for me and a number of other seniors who, come Monday, will begin wandering around trying to figure out where the last four years of our lives have gone.

And as many of us look back, we realize that much of that time, for better or for worse, has been spent at the *DTH*. With the exception of a three-month leave of absence to run for editor last year, I have spent every day of my college career at the *DTH*.

At first it was a nominal commitment: covering speeches and rewriting press releases. Gradually I began to spend more time at the office, partly because I worked my way into more time-consuming editorial positions and partly because I was sucked in by the magic that touches almost every person who has ever worked for this newspaper.

I was excited to be on the cutting edge of the news—to learn about events before the majority of students on campus did. Being a reporter allowed me to talk with a variety of people and served as a good outlet for developing my writing style.

But I also quickly learned about the drawbacks of working for a nationally respected college newspaper with a circulation of 20,000. I was open to criticism every time my byline went on a story, and I was expected to put the *DTH* before many other things, including academic and a social life. A student newspaper trying to compete in a professional world.

By the middle of my sophomore year my parents and friends knew they had a better chance of reaching me down here than at the dorm. And I could really tell the person with the American Heart Association that I gave at the office.

Looking back over four years, I realize that I have learned about almost every major event either at the *DTH* office or from a fellow staff member.

"Hey, Jim, take a look at this," and editor said one day my freshman year, pointing to a story that had just come over the Associated Press wire machine. "They had a spill at some nuclear plant up in Pennsylvania, but it doesn't look like it's really that big a deal."

Little could either of us at the time have known the consequences that the

accident at Three Mile Island would have in the coming months. There were other big events: The same day five Communist Workers Party members were shot in Greensboro in November 1979, Iranian students were taking over the American embassy in Tehran. Who could have predicted the ordeal would drag on and dominate much of the news during my year as state and national editor?

I also began to see the paradox of working for a newspaper like the *DTH*. Being a journalist has allowed me to talk to everyone from Jesse Helms and Billy Graham to Ted Kennedy and George McGovern. At the same time it has limited my perspective, just by the fact that I've spent so much time with people who, more or less, view the world from a common point of view. Hang around a newspaper and find out how cynical you can become.

As state and national editor it was my responsibility to go through the AP wire copy every day, reading stories dealing with everything from the N.C. General Assembly to peace in the Middle East. As I continually read about train wrecks, mass murders and crime rates, I quickly became desensitized to what was happening. They were merely stories on a piece of paper with a news value: should it go on the front page or on the inside?

There was an ongoing joke in the office about Yugoslavian President Josip Tito. In the spring of 1980 the European leader was close to death, with his condition changing from "grave" to "very grave" to "almost in the grave." For about a month I used to have strange nightmares that we labeled "The Tito dreams." The editors at the time also had bets about when he would die; we all had this fear that he would die either right after we went out of publication for the semester, or just as the last paper was going to press, forcing us to rearrange the front page. Callous? Maybe—or maybe just a way to deal with much of the bad news that we had to face every day.

The next fall I was responsible for supervising the coverage of the 1980 state and presidential elections. That fall was



Election Day, 1980

one of the highlights of my time at the *DTH*.

"Who do you think is going to get it, Carter or Reagan?" a fellow editor asked me right before Election Day.

"I think Reagan might pull it out," I said, confirming what she probably thought anyway. "What if he wins?" I asked.

"I've got my plane ticket for Toronto purchased," she said, half-jokingly, half-seriously.

I took over as editor of the *DTH* just after Ronald Reagan was inaugurated 40th president of the United States. After the president began to unveil his new economic program, I used to wander through the office, occasionally muttering in a very sarcastic tone that Reagan should be shot. The afternoon of March 30 it actually happened.

Like every other person at UNC I woke up that morning excited about the basketball team's game that night with Indiana for the national championship. As I walked into the office I got a strange feeling that something had happened. It didn't take long to find out what, and I quickly felt a pain in my stomach—a feeling I hadn't had for years.



Klan shooting in Greensboro; Nov. 1979

Photo by Jim Stainfield, Greensboro Daily News Copyright 1979