

# The Daily Tar Heel

91st year of editorial freedom

KERRY DEROGHI, Editor

ALISON DAVIS, Managing Editor    JEFF HIDAY, Associate Editor

LISA PULLEN, University Editor  
CHRISTINE MANUEL, State and National Editor  
MIKE DESISTI, Sports Editor  
BILL RIEDY, News Editor

JOHN CONWAY, City Editor  
KAREN FISHER, Features Editor  
JEFF GROVE, Arts Editor  
CHARLES W. LEDFORD, Photography Editor

## Live and let . . .

A federal law went into effect last month requiring that all hospitals receiving federal funds post signs reading: "Discriminatory failure to feed and care for handicapped infants in this facility is prohibited." Such legislation was in reaction to several incidents in which the parents of infants born with brain damage or life-threatening handicaps have denied their consent for low-risk surgery for the infants, who subsequently died. The law, however, failed to recognize the complexity of the issue it addressed, and a federal judge struck it down earlier this month. In turn, several congressmen have introduced bills designed to set up similar restrictions concerning the choices of an afflicted infant's parents and physicians.

This current controversy is yet another example of the darker side of the two-faced coin which symbolizes the impressive advances of modern medicine, the side of the coin which asks society to answer the most difficult of ethical questions. How vigorously should doctors fight to sustain a life which cannot support itself? And is it more right to intervene medically and postpone the moment of death than it is to let nature take its course?

There is a practical dimension to this issue, a dimension which requires some objectivity. When an infant needing extensive, out-of-the-ordinary medical care is so severely handicapped that he will never lead a life with any independence or normalcy, the cost of maintaining his existence must be evaluated. Is such a life worth the emotional and financial toll it will take on parents and siblings? Should the money of taxpayers be used to prolong such a life?

In question here are sensitive ethical matters about which no legislation will ever be sufficiently comprehensive and judicious. No single law will ever be able to anticipate the breadth of circumstances which render each individual case unique.

It's up to lawmakers to delineate some guidelines, based on the nature of the infant's affliction and the extent of his dependence upon unusual medical procedures, concerning the fate of the child. Certainly, the handicapped infants who remain alive solely by virtue of their attachments to machines might be allowed to die. But when a baby is merely mentally retarded and the medical measures required to save his life are low-risk, commonplace procedures, he should be treated.

Outside of these general guidelines, the decision concerning the infant's fate must rest with his parents and physicians. They are the only ones who will fully comprehend each situation's circumstances. And these people, those closest to the infant, are the ones who will be responsible for the care upon which he will be dependent for the duration of his life.

## Blocking busing

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system has long been acclaimed as the nation's model of a busing plan that works. It's ironic then that while this system prepares to graduate its second class of students who have attended integrated schools all their lives, mandatory busing programs nationwide face opposition from those who advocate voluntary plans. The arguments for voluntary busing however, are short-sighted and better-suited for a Utopian Society — where there are no prejudices, no racism — rather than a U.S. inner city. To say that voluntary desegregation can work is to deny that past separation and inequality never existed.

Mandatory busing has always had opposition, ever since the 1954 Supreme Court ruling which gave it its legal power.

Traditionally, it has been the parents who have opposed busing, citing the inconvenience and ineffectiveness of such plans. They've argued that it isn't good for children to ride a bus for more than 10 minutes; the children wouldn't like it. And besides, they've added, surely the gas costs too much.

It's by concentrating on busing's logistics that has enabled the opponents to deny the foundation for their opposition: the fear that sending blacks to white schools would downgrade the white school's education programs, and that sending whites to black schools would not be fair for the whites. It's the philosophy that began with the Jim Crow laws of the late 1880s and the philosophy that still segregates much of society today.

By viewing integration as a potential harm to a school system, opponents deny its very strength and support the need for a mandatory plan. Integrating the schools provides for further integration of society. Under a voluntary plan, that just won't happen. It hasn't before. To call mandatory busing some type of tyranny imposed upon school children is to downplay the significance and benefits of a system which has encouraged black and white children to work together and perhaps accept each other as equals. Certainly that is worth a 15-minute bus ride.

## The Daily Tar Heel

Editorial Desk: Frank Bruni and Kelly Simmons, writers; Jonathan Talcott, staff columnist

Assistant Managing Editors: Pete Felkner, Lisbeth Levine, Melissa Moore and Eddie Wooten

Special Projects: Mark Ancona and Keith Bradsher

News: Tracy Adams, Cheryl Anderson, Pete Austin, Joseph Berryhill, Ashley Blackwelder, J. Bonasia, Joel Broadway, Paul Cooke, Tom Conlon, Kate Cooper, Ashley Dimmette, Lisa Dowis, Charles Ellmaker, Suzanne Evans, Katherine Farley, Bonnie Foust, Sherri Goodson, Julie Haack, John Hackney, Ivy Hillard, Kevin Johnston, Bob Kimpleton, Kim Kleman, Rita Kostecke, Susan Kuhn, Stuart Long, Eugene Marx, Gary Meek, Karen Moore, Kim Morrison, Thad Ogburn, Ellen Orahood, Rosemary Osborn, Heidi Owen, David Poole, Sarah Raper, Sharon Rawlins, Mike O'Reilly, Mont Rogers, Lynsley Rollins, Cindi Ross, Mike Sharsky, Lori Schantz, Sharon Sheridan, Jodi Smith, Don Solomon, James Stephens, Mark Stinnerford, Susan Sullivan, Carrie Szymeczek, Amy Tanner, Keith Taylor, Lynda Thompson, Stuart Tonkinson, Michael Toole, Perry Twisdale, Beth Walters, Mickey Weaver, Scott Wharton and Lynda Wolf. Liz Lucas, assistant University editor, Hope Buffington, assistant state and national editor.

Sports: Frank Kennedy and Kurt Rosenberg, assistant sports editors. Glenna Burress, Paul Gardner, Lonnie McCullough, Draggan Mihailovich, Kathy Norcross, Robyn Norwood, Michael Persinger, Lew Price, S.L. Price, Lee Roberts, Allen Dean Steele, Mike Waters and Tracy Young.

Features: Debbie August, Dan Bishop, Dawn Brazell, Toni Carter, Michelle Christenbury, Tom Camacho, Tom Grey, Cindy Haga, Kathy Hopper, Dana Jackson, Warren Miller, Mitzl Morris, Jane Osmont, Stevie Roe, Debbi Sykes, Randy Walker, Clinton Weaver and Edith Wooten, Mike Truell, assistant features editor.

Arts: David Schmidt, assistant arts editor; John Altschuler, Steve Carr, Jim Clardy, Todd Davis, Jo Ellen Meekins, Karen Rosen, Gigi Sonner and D.F. Wilson.

Graphic Arts: Jamie Francis, Jeff Neuville, Zane Saunders, Scott Sharpe, Al Steele and Lori Thomas, photographers. Dick Anderson, Greg Calibey, Cabell Finch, Doug Hillburn, Anthony Moses and Janice Murphy, artists.

Business: Rejeanne V. Caron, business manager; Anne Sink, assistant business manager; Linda A. Cooper, secretary/receptionist; Dawn Welch, circulation/distribution manager; Patti Pittman and Angie Wolfe, classifieds.

Advertising: Paula Brewer, advertising manager; Mike Tabor, advertising coordinator; Sharon Duckworth, Keith Lee, Terry Lee, Jeff McElhane, Doug Robinson, Deana Setzer and Marla Zablocki ad representatives.

Composition: UNC-CH Printing Department

Printing: Hinton Press, Inc. of Mebane.

# The silent sufferers

By KEITH TAYLOR

The welts on Dominique's head protruded like brown bubbles the size of marbles through his curly black hair. The blood stains on the shirt he was wearing when the crewleader beat him up had dried into a sickening red-brown.

But by the time the Haitian migrant worker's case came up in Wilson County District Court, the welts from two months earlier had all but healed. Dominique's counsel from Legal Services had photos of the welts at their worst, and they had the bloodied shirt. But the crewleader's attorney had a point: No one could prove that the welts in the pictures had been those on Dominique's head. As for the shirt, it could have belonged to anyone, he said, and the blood could have come from anywhere. It proved nothing.

Nothing except that someone had brutally beaten someone else.

The judge had to let the crewleader go. There wasn't even a slap on the wrist. Once again, a case of violence against migrant farmworkers in eastern North Carolina had gone unpunished.

Why was Dominique beaten? He had come to the refuge of a friend who had likewise been beaten after complaining about his wages. Migrant farmworkers are generally paid by the bushel for gathering such crops as cucumbers, peppers and sweet potatoes, sometimes at the ridiculously low wage of 30 cents for a large bucket. It's certainly all right (and legal) to pay farmworkers by the bushel — as long as they receive minimum wage. But most do not; the law gets ignored.

The predominantly black crewleaders who work for predominantly white farmers and landowners use indebtedness, force or the threat of violence to keep the workers under control and to prevent them from leaving

the camps. It's a virtual slave system comprised mostly of blacks, Haitians and Hispanics. It allows many of the landowners to deny that such a system exists on their property, or to claim (sometimes truthfully) that they did not know it was going on. The farmers' crops get harvested cheaply while the crewleaders handle the workers.

In 1975, a migrant worker named Charlie Jones tried to ask crewleader Freddie Lee Black about his wages. He asked twice. The second time, Black shot him to death.

For the killing, Black pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter. He paid a fine of \$1,000 and court costs and received a suspended prison sentence.

While murders of migrant workers in eastern North Carolina have been rare, other cases of mistreatment have been more common. Most migrants are forced to accept substandard, unhealthy housing — often converted animal pens or tobacco barns. For this housing, the migrants are often charged more than they earn for their work in the fields, so that at the end of the growing season they "owe" money to the crewleaders or the farmers. In some cases, the migrants drink and bathe in contaminated water which has nevertheless met with the approval of the health departments. The question of who's responsible is complex, as are most of the problems the migrants face.

The state government could go a long way in rectifying at least some of this inhumane treatment. No single agency is responsible for addressing the problems of migrant farmworkers. Complaints are usually handled by the local sheriff or other authorities, who often seem to handle calls however they wish, often according to the dictates of personal prejudice. Most migrants know this. As a result, cases of mistreatment go unreported. The workers prefer quiet endurance to making complaints that will likely result in retaliation from the crew boss.

The migrants will be back again this summer. As usual, their welcome will be mixed. Farmers are glad to have the cheap labor of migrants. But letters to editors in eastern counties have complained about the problems that the

migrants themselves are blamed for bringing into the state. The writers of these letters obviously have no understanding of the myriad reasons why the problems exist in the first place.

The general attitude of many people is like that of *The Sampson Independent*, which said in an editorial a few years back:

"Having the migrants with all the accompanying ills and trouble is the price that the county is having to pay for being an agricultural county with an emphasis on produce."

Many people cannot see ways of helping the migrants, or reasons for doing so, because they can see only the "problems" they themselves encounter as a result of the migrant system (such as large numbers of migrants hanging out at "respectable" shopping centers on Sunday afternoons). As a result, unless there is an unexpected change of attitude, little will be done to effect any real improvement in the migrant situation.

Which is a shame. The Raleigh *News and Observer*, in a September 2, 1981, editorial, said North Carolina holds the "unenviable distinction of being first in exploitation of some of the nation's least fortunate people." The newspaper called for consolidation of state responsibilities regarding the migrants into a single agency. That would be a good start toward correcting the abuses of migrant farmworkers; but so far, the Legislature has not taken any action.

The problem of fair treatment for the migrants is not an issue that will go away until the people of North Carolina decide they are willing to make it go away. With language barriers, lack of political and economic clout, and a seemingly infinite number of other disadvantages, there is little the migrants can do to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps.

Keith Taylor, a senior journalism major from Wilson, worked as a volunteer assistant for Farmworkers Legal Services the last two summers.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### What do pro-lifers care about?

To the editor:

After reading the "pro-life" letters in the *DTH* on April 25, it occurred to me that, rather than sitting at home burning with righteous anger or spending a couple of dollars on posterboard and marching in the streets, those fine people might be the very ones to start and operate a program which will really put an end to the problem of abortions.

First is the establishment of an adoption service in which the names of concerned pro-lifers are placed in a register. When a woman becomes pregnant, instead of seeking an abortion she will visit a pro-life

center and learn the identity of a person randomly selected from the register who will pay all medical, nutritional and other expenses associated with her pregnancy. When the child is born, this person will adopt it and see to it that any losses the natural mother may have suffered (job, family, etc.) are restored. What if the person selected isn't ready for a baby? What if she can't afford it? What about the problems of raising a child, the lifetime commitment? Certainly "inconveniences" such as these aren't worthy of consideration.

Even better than an adoption service is

having pro-lifers volunteer to pay for a cesarean section for the prospective mother as soon as the decision is made to have an abortion. Surely a six-week-old embryo (excuse me — person) can be removed from the uterus and placed in a loving home at that time. After all, the woman's blood and the person's never mix. There just might be a low survival rate for this operation, although since an embryo is no more dependent for life on the body housing it than a newborn baby is on its mother, I can't imagine why.

I have a plan to solve that problem also. All pro-lifers should immediately begin placing 15 percent to 20 percent of their income into a fund which will sponsor research for an operation in which a fetus can be transferred to the uterus of another woman, who will be randomly selected from the above-mentioned register. This woman and the male of her choice (but also on the register) will pay for both operations and for all expenses during the recovery period of both women. The natural mother would sign papers giving up all rights to the fetus. Now, this may be inconvenient for the new parents, but that is no consideration when a person's life is

at stake.

After the operation, the new mother can either bask in the admiration of others when she tells of the sacrifice she's making, or she can play the game as it is really played and see what reaction friends, relatives and even strangers will have when they learn of her approaching single parenthood. (Married pro-lifers, this is one less problem for you.) With all the advances being made in medicine today and with the tremendous funding this project would have, there is no doubt that such an operation is possible.

Since there will always be women who want and get abortions, legal or not, everyone who sincerely believes that abortion is murder has a moral obligation to participate fully in this program. They may feel that they shouldn't have to take responsibility for another person's misfortune, but if that is the case, what do they really care about — the life of a child or seeing to it that any woman guilty of the heinous crime of sexual intercourse is duly punished?

M.L. Jones  
Chapel Hill

### Start planning now

To the editor:

For the moment, forget about the tickets that should have been sold, and look at the 4,300 fans who did go to the Carolina Concert for Children. Look at the great time they had screaming, dancing and, as Bono (of the group U-2) said, "singing in the rain!"

From rapping with Grandmaster Flash, to holding my breath hoping Bono wouldn't fall as he climbed to the roof of

Linda Messner  
Chapel Hill

## Stealing the show

By FRANK BRUNI

Max Steele stands at one end of a seminar table, his eyes deep-set and sparkling above rosy cheeks. He looks much like one might expect Santa Clause to look without his white beard and red suit. The perpetual blush of his face lends to him an air of charismatic joviality.

"Hello, I'm Doris Betts and a funny thing happened to me on the way to class," he says, barely able to contain his own laughter and obviously pleased with the chain of hysteria he unleashes among the 15 students.

Betts has asked Steele to substitute one of her creative writing classes. He has obliged, seizing the opportunity to do what he does best — win affection and admiration for his warmth and vivacity and openness.

"There's no one point where you decide you're going to write," Max Steele, English professor and head of the creative writing program at UNC, says. "You make the commitments as you find out that you can write well, as you find yourself successful."

Indeed, Steele has had many such affirmations of his talent. He sold his first stories at the young age of 21. Before too long, his work had been published in such well read periodicals as *Harper's*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and *Cosmopolitan*.

"I wrote," says Steele, "because I was making a living at it and I didn't know how else I could make money."

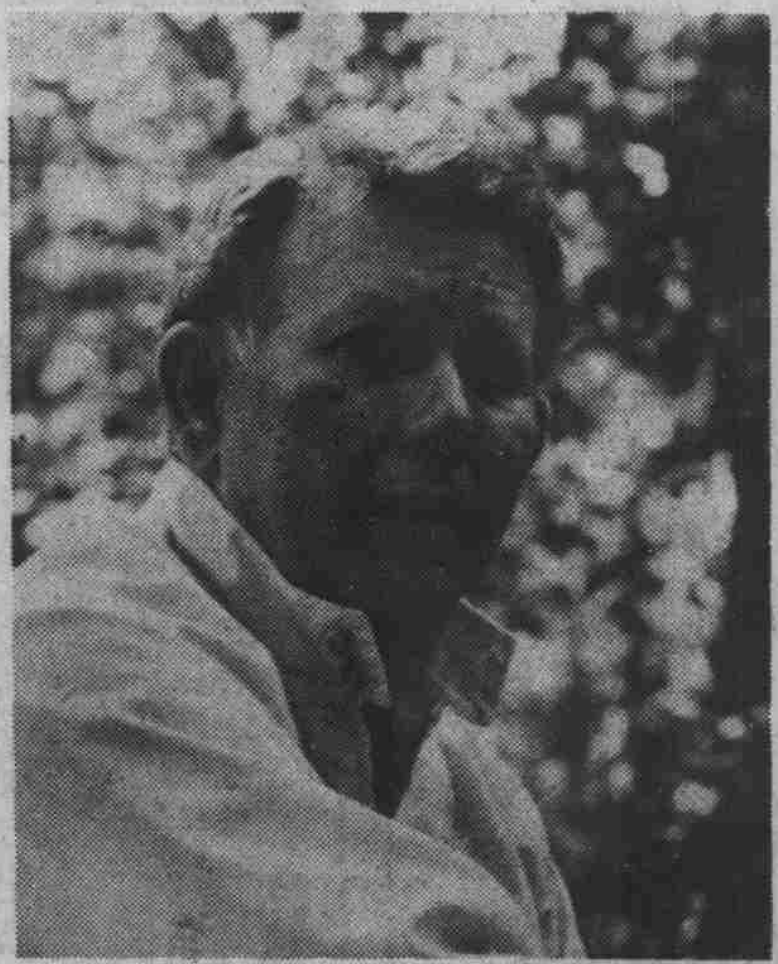
In 1950, Steele's novel *Debbi* won the Harper Prize, beating over 600 entries, for the best novel of the year. Other accolades have ensued, with both 1953's "The Wanton Troopers" and 1969's "Color the Daydream Yellow" being chosen as O'Henry Prize Stories (an annual compilation of the year's dozen or so best works in short fiction) for their respective years.

The past few years have found Steele mostly teaching. For Max Steele, the combination of teaching and writing is not always an easy mixture. He finds teaching the college students of today to write a particularly difficult challenge and blames the eminence of the television set in the contemporary home for much of this.

"Students write stories like television characters speak," Steele complains. "And the hardest thing to get writers to do is to tell the truth. I'm not sure I believe in talent. Talent may be the ability to tell the truth."

Steele believes that the writers who make successes of themselves are not necessarily the ones who handle their prose the most deftly. "I'm much more interested in discipline," Steele says. "It's those who have good work habits who publish later on."

Max Steele has asked students to each draw a horse on the blackboard. In groups of three or four, they scurry to



the board and ineptly attempt to etch chalk renditions of the animal. These students are writers, not equestrians. But Max Steele has something up his sleeve.

Within minutes, one wall of the Greenlaw seminar room is covered by a parade of horses. Some are galloping; some stand still. One is backward, its rear end facing the class. Still another oddly resembles the Peanuts cartoon character Snoopy.

Max Steele steps up to the board. Then, one by one, he analyzes the personality of each horse's creator. Curved lines in the drawing of a horse indicate emotional balance; jagged, rigid lines with sharp angles represent a capricious, passionate nature. A galloping horse reveals its artist's flexibility and continual growth. A still horse depicts stagnation.

Then Max Steele approaches perhaps the oddest entry in the barnyard pageant — a horse with no body, a perfectly round face with human features, and a mane brushed like a ponytail to one side of its head.

"This," Max Steele begins, and then shakes his head. "This is the strangest class I've ever encountered."

At times, Max Steele wishes he didn't have to worry about publishing.

"I like writing," Steele explains, "but I hate publications. Publishing today has become a bit of a three-ring circus. It's such a jazzy thing, with the speaking and

readings and book signings."

Still, Steele admits to his need for readers. "Readers are essential to the writing part. I doubt if I could ever write anything without publishing it."

Although Steele is ambivalent about the publication of his works, there is no wavering in his dedication to truth and sincerity in his writing. He recognizes that his newest short story, "The Man in the Doll House," will be hard to sell because of its religious references and the prominent symbol of a crucifix. "I knew that while I was writing it," he states matter-of-factly, "but I wanted to write it anyway."

Steele's forte has always been the short story. His fiction has frequently graced the pages of *Esquire* and *The New Yorker*, among other magazines. Yet Steele's absence from academia this past semester has been dedicated to work on a new novel, which promises to be as serious, thoughtful and, of course, truthful as the rest of his work.

"It's about marriage," he says, and stops there. Max Steele has never been one to carry on about himself or his work.

Max Steele isn't sure. On the one hand, he'd like to hear the students read some of their own work, but, on the other hand, he's holding in front of him this short story which he's just finished and about which he seems extremely excited.

"I'd like to read it to you," he says, "but it's really too long to read aloud."

After an endless series of apologies concerning the length of the story, Max Steele agrees to read. As he begins, it becomes evident that he is really a bit nervous. That he is not, as are so many authors, dramatic and stylish and arrogant in the reading of his work. His speech is flayed by earnest.

The autobiographical dimension to his story, "The Man in the Doll House," reveals itself in the first few paragraphs when the setting, Chapel Hill, is established. The story itself brims with sensitivity. Its characters seem uncompromisingly, painfully real.

And when Steele reaches the final paragraph of his story, when the conflict between father and son climaxes in a bitter man's realization of the importance of forgiveness, Steele's voice assumes a poignant edge.

The class is silent after the story's conclusion. Whether Steele realizes that he has deeply touched students in the class or not, he responds to the class's reticence in a characteristically self-effacing manner.

"Thank you," he says. "Thank you for putting up with me."

Frank Bruni, a freshman English major from Avon, Conn., is an editorial writer for The Daily Tar Heel.