

COMMENTARY

THE TAR HEEL

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Think about it

There's every reason in the world for North Carolinians to be relieved that the five-month-old anti-drunken driving bill finally became law last week. No more DUI newspaper articles and editorials, television newscasts or radio broadcasts. Even the Raleigh rhetoric and political lobbying are destined to slacken. It was a long, tough battle for Gov. Hunt's Safe Roads Act, supposedly the toughest law in the nation.

But despite the drudgery, it was precisely that five-month period of political maneuvering and scrimmaging that had as much, if not more, impact on driving than any law could. The media coverage of the legislative contest may have been drudgery to readers, but it focused attention on drinking and driving. And it led to some changes, perhaps subliminal, in the public attitude toward drunken driving.

It is easy, and fair, to praise Hunt's successful drunken driving campaign. That's nice, we say, nodding our heads in agreement with Hunt's idealism. But, just as when a family member or close friend dies and you say "I never thought it'd happen to me," everyone is prone to accept and praise the legislation, pushing aside reality. The specter of an accident occurring to you or someone you know is very real—check your local newspaper for details. Sure it's real, but we students don't need to depress ourselves with such thoughts, we say.

Just in case none of this excites you, consider some of the tougher aspects of Hunt's single driving-while-impaired charge. For instance, if you drank a beer, just one, and drove afterwards, you could be arrested under the new DWI bill. Furthermore, the incident likely would cost you at least \$1,000 that's the minimum amount lawyers are being recommended to handle such a case, regardless of guilt or innocence.

'60 Minutes' soap opera

The verdict is out. A civil jury voted 10-2 Monday that CBS, *60 Minutes* and Dan Rather did not slander a California doctor who sued them for \$30 million over a 1979 report linking the doctor to an insurance fraud scheme.

But the defendant, Rather, confident and cocky at first, was visibly tense as the trial went on. The credibility of this top-rated show and its former host was on the line; the tables were turned by the plaintiff who put the spotlight on Dan Rather. While it seems that *60 Minutes* is legitimately off the hook this time, some questions remain concerning the ethics of investigative reporting and the tactics used by the series in filming its sows. Just how far should one go to get at the "truth" and what means should be used to obtain it? Regardless of Galloway's guilt, some of CBS' reporting techniques could be described as unethical. Would CBS have been acquitted if the plaintiff himself was truly guiltless?

Plaintiff Dr. Carl A. Galloway likened his plight to "David up against Goliath." The same may ring true for the media's eager coverage of this event as CBS claims that this case has been blown out of proportion, especially by the other networks (NBC and ABC). Still, the verdict of the trial did show that *60 Minutes* did not have disregard for the truth and is committed to the practice of investigative journalism. Most of all, this case served to illustrate that no one, least of all journalists, is above the law or public scrutiny.

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—LETTER TO THE EDITOR— Cole to act only as student in any concert litigation

To the editor:

Concerning your story "Student may file suit; Claims '83 concert was mismanaged," June 2) and editorial ("Stormy weather," June 2) dealing with my allegations against the Carolina Concert for Children Committee: It was not my intention to go public at that time, but since someone had leaked information concerning my inclination toward litigation against the committee, I thought it best to personally state my position so as to avoid any misunderstandings. To my dismay, I find that many people have misconstrued the relevant facts.

I am not looking into suing Ben Lee for fraudulence. Any claim I make will most probably rest upon what I feel was a breach of his fiduciary duty as a trustee of \$103,000 of student funds. The facts are clear. In order to receive approval for an extension of the deadline for signing a headline act, Lee told the Campus Governing Council that he would purchase rain insurance no later than April 15, eight days before the concert. He said that there was no way that we could lose any money other than the cost of the insurance policy, since if it was sunny, the concert would make a profit, (which was to be turned over to the charities involved).

Since it did rain on the date of the concert, our policy would have been in effect; we would have lost not \$70,000, but about

\$10,000, which would have been the cost of the policy. Having failed to protect our funds with insurance, Lee made no effort to procure an alternate indoor site such as Carmichael Auditorium. Carmichael could have accommodated up to 8,000 patrons.

The tickets Lee ordered were totally inadequate. There were no audit stubs to facilitate accounting for sales. As a result of this oversight, coupled with inadequate control procedures, a large number of tickets remain unaccounted for. Worse yet, the incorrect time appeared on the tickets, and some of the tickets were actually sold before this error was corrected. As a result, we received complaints from some who came to Chapel Hill but missed the concert. We were able to refund the money for their tickets, but what of their wasted trips, time and gasoline? Is this the image that we wish Carolina to project?

Let me make it clear that in any litigation I act as a fee-paying student. I am not suing as a member of CGC, nor am I suing CGC. Any monetary settlement would go to student government coffers, to replenish a fund that was needlessly and foolishly depleted. At the very least, I hope that my actions will prod those persons entrusted with student funds to take their duty more seriously than they have in the past. Someone may be watching.

Rebel A. Cole
SCGC Student Affairs Chairman

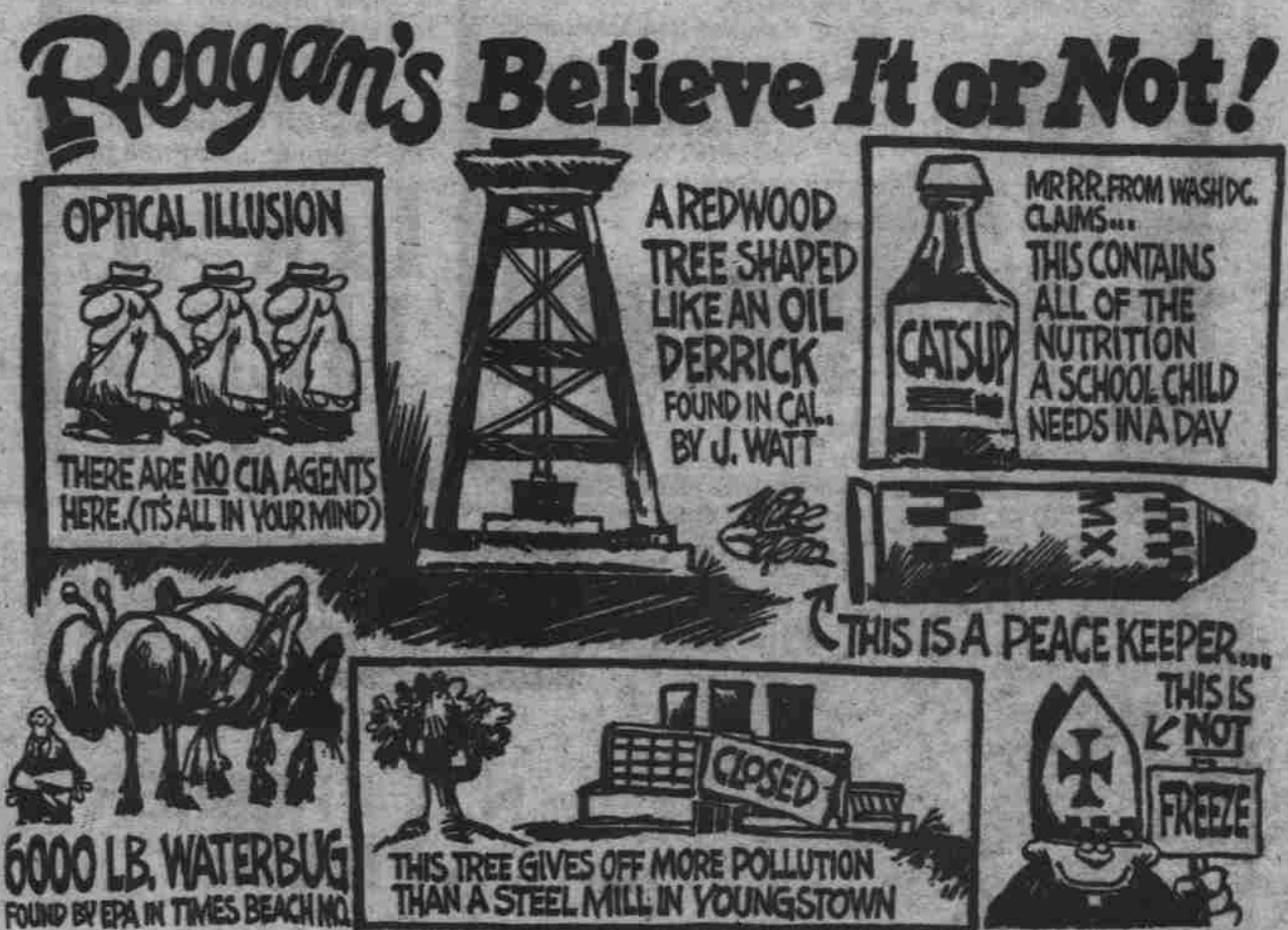
Letters?

The *Tar Heel* welcomes letters to the editor and contributions of columns for the editorial page.

Such contributions should be typed, triple spaced, on a 60-space line, and are subject

to editing. Contributions must be submitted by noon each Monday.

Column writers should include their majors and hometown; each letter should include the writer's name, address and telephone number.



SOAP'S

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