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The Daily Tar Heel

92nd year of editorial freedom

Day of reckoning (Part III)

The crunch has arrived. The General Reserve piggy bank is empty as a result of less-than-cautious CGC funding and the giant losses incurred by Chapel Thrill last year. Additionally, a bid to increase the Student Activities Fee did not pass. So now, with budget requests exceeding available funds by more than 50 percent and with the prospect of excellent student organizations being cut altogether from CGC funding, CGC representative Dawn Peters (here acting solely as a "concerned student") has drafted and begun to circulate a petition calling on the Board of Trustees to raise student fees by \$1.50 per semester.

Obviously, UNC is in serious need of a fee increase. But Peters' petition may be an unnecessary act of desperation, especially since it has the effect of circumventing the democratic process. Instead, the Campus Governing Council should remove from the Student Code the by-law requiring that 20 percent of the student body vote on a fee increase referendum for the referendum to be valid. Once that provision is gone, students can state directly, by means of a vote, whether they favor a fee increase; the incentive *not* to vote, as provided by the 20 percent requirement, also is removed.

The Board of Trustees has the final say on whether student fees are raised; even if the fee increase had passed in February, BOT approval would still have been necessary before fees could be raised. Peters' petition notes that the fee received the approval of 66.3 percent of the voters in February — less than half a percentage

A day gone wrong

Most of Gay Awareness Week — the few speakers, the small groups discussions, the stray flyers and leaflets — goes unnoticed by the majority of students at UNC, and this is somewhat of a shame. The goal of Gay Awareness Week is an admirable one: to promote a greater acceptance and understanding between the gay and straight communities. But even more of a shame is that the only part of the week that inevitably captures the attention of heterosexuals — Blue Jeans Day — also provokes in them hostility toward and disdain for the gay community.

On Blue Jeans Day, the Carolina Gay Association asks all homosexuals and anyone who supports the gay rights movement to don denim. What the CGA is trying to show the straight community is that living in fear of superficial judgment is an uncomfortable, often intolerable way of life. Just as the gay man or woman may worry with each day about what some aspect of his or her appearance or behavior may say to harshly judgmental fellow students, the straight

man or woman is forced today to stop and pause and worry about what to wear, about the rebuke that certain attire may encourage.

Of course, most straight students won't see it this way. They will perceive the inconvenience of opting the khakis over jeans as precisely that — an inconvenience. Not a lesson or education in tolerance and sympathy. Not an enlightenment of any kind.

Blue Jeans Day is a classic example of response betraying intention, of idealism gone awry. When most students leave campus after classes today, what they will take to happy hour with them is not sympathy for the homosexual — whose sexual preference is no more intentional than are the jeans on a straight student who simply "forgot" Blue Jeans Day — but more animosity toward the gay community. Such a reaction is more than unfortunate. It's a failure to recognize and respect fellow human beings for what they are, and to care for them nonetheless.

The intellectual life and diversity of this University demand a fee increase. It is unfortunate that some student groups must suffer financially until the will of the student body can be gauged. Peters' petition may prompt a fee increase, but a genuine election, unhampered by the 20 percent requirement, would be the more correct course of action.

Being gay can be a wonderful, delightful, exhilarating, happy and generally positive experience. It can mean being proud of one's self and one's lifestyle. It can mean having camaraderie with beautiful gay brothers and lesbian sisters. It can mean being on the cutting edge of a movement to allow people to practice their natural desires, to love and live without the interference of bigots and chauvinists.

In regards to Kimball Crossley's column ("Where everybody's a winner," DTH, March 28) we would like to say that we are pretty steamed and insulted by Crossley's slur on the San Antonio Gunslingers of the USFL. In his article he states that he could not name two players on the Gunslingers team if he had to. We, as devoted Gunslinger fans, are proud to say that not only can we name two 'Slingers (as we like to call them) players, but that we can recite the complete roster to Crossley's liking.

Who can forget the spirited play of Gunslinger quarterback Rick Neuheiser, the six near catches by 'Slinger receiver Danny Buggs, the hard-hitting defensive efforts of San Antonio linebacker Rich D'Amico and, of course, who can deny the often boyish vitality radiated by 63-year-old coach Gil Steinkamp, whose unequalled offensive genius led the Gunslingers to their first win of the year (a 14-10 romp over the powerful Washington Redskins).

Oft heard in San Antonio is the familiar adage, "Let's win one for the Steinker." Who can forget the illustrious 37 years this man spent coaching and teaching physical education at small-college powerhouse Texas A and I.

Just who does Crossley think he is? Hopefully next year he will think twice about insulting a tradition-rich USFL team such as the Gunslingers.

Scott Smith
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Today's the day: wear those blue jeans, and wear 'em like you mean it!

Robert F. Pharr
Chairperson, Carolina Gay Association

Candles, a guitar and the touch of a friend

By SHARON SHERIDAN

When James Hutchins was executed in Raleigh at 2 a.m., March 16, I was standing outside Central Prison with a candle in my hand.

I left UNC with students from the Campus Y at 5 p.m., March 15. The sun was shining as we drove, and we listened to the news and discussed election-year coverage. When we reached Raleigh, we parked near the governor's office and joined the anti-death penalty vigil there. I walked around the building once, stopping to talk with old friends. Then, holding a sign that read "Stop the violence," I joined the line of men and women keeping the vigil. As the sun set on the city, the woman next to me said, "Looks like a beautiful sunset. I hope Hutchins can see it."

The vigil stopped about 6:30 p.m., and we went to a local church to eat pizza and plan the rest of the evening. We participated in a church service at 8 p.m. Hutchins' wife attended, and I couldn't keep from watching her. It occurred to me that there would be another widow Friday morning. And once Hutchins was executed, he could not be punished anymore. But his wife, who was innocent, would continue to be punished with the memory of that night.

During the service 34 of us held index cards, each bearing the name of someone on death row in North Carolina and his victims. We each stood up as the names on our card were read. Together we moved to the center aisle, turned, and led a march out of the church to Central Prison.

I experienced feelings hard to describe during that march. I felt a certain pride at being among the first 34. I felt disconcerted as we walked out and camera lights shone in our eyes, so at times I couldn't see. I was glad to sing — it was a way of expressing emotion — and I felt what would have been tears, had we not been singing as we started out. I have sung for many occasions, but I have not always felt that my voice was important, the way I did that night.

Imagine marching two or three abreast down a dark, basically deserted street. There are houses at your side, lighted, and people come to some of the doors and watch you go by. On the other side of the street walk men in plainclothes, obviously some sort of security forces.

We saw many police that night, sent to ensure that the demonstration was peaceful. I knew why they were there, but I have to say that as I watched those men walking opposite us, I felt a little as if I were the criminal.

After the march, we held another vigil, standing in the dark with the prison in the background on one side and a highway on the other. Death penalty proponents picketed on the other side of the highway. Some passing cars beeped. One blasted its horn as it went by and its occupants shouted, "Kill him, kill him." Someone in another car rode by chanting, "Let him die."

As the vigil progressed, many people lit candles and flashlights. Some prisoners apparently saw them and tried to respond, for tiny lights appeared in some of their windows. Word circulated that some of these lights were in the windows of death row inmates.

Just before 2 a.m., someone shouted, "Support cop killing, save Hutchins." I can still feel the shock of that shout breaking the silence.

The media were everywhere. I'm used to being a reporter, not to being reported on, so I wasn't very happy when someone decided to photograph me and a friend holding a banner. Bright lights were turned on us. I didn't know what to do. People were watching, which made me uncomfortable. Usually when someone takes your picture you smile, but that obviously was not appropriate. So I stared blankly, perhaps defiantly, at the blinding light and endured what I could not avoid.

It was a night of contrasts. There were points of light — from our candles and flashlights, from cameras and headlights, from the prison — breaking the darkness in Raleigh. There were words of love and respect for life — even murderers' lives — and chants of "kill him." There was the burn of hot wax on my hands — hands shaking with cold — when the wind blew and I tipped my candle the wrong way.

I spent about six hours outside after that church service, and in a way it became an endurance test. My legs grew tired, but I sat little, for to sit was to sit on cold ground. I'm not sure I would have lasted if someone hadn't brought hot coffee. Those few

spots of coffee tasted better than anything I can remember in a long time.

I found myself wishing it would be 2 a.m. and it would all be over. Time passed so slowly sometimes, it was as though we were suspended at that prison forever. Sometimes I felt guilty for thinking of my physical comfort and wanting the vigil to end when there was a man in that prison who soon would feel nothing. I thought I should be feeling more — perhaps I should cry.

One of the most moving moments came at about 10 minutes before 2 a.m., when we all gathered together facing the prison and were silent, holding our candles aloft and waiting for word that the execution had taken place.

Just before 2 a.m., someone shouted, "Support cop killing, save Hutchins." I can still feel the shock of that shout breaking the silence.

At about 2:15 a.m. we blew out our candles and sang "Amazing Grace." A few people spoke, and

it was finished.

The ride home was a little surreal. It was after 3 a.m., but I wasn't very tired. I was just appreciating the heat, the chance to sit, the presence of other people. There were stretches of highway where I saw no other cars. It was as if only we existed, driving forever....

It was odd to be back in Chapel Hill. Walking around the next afternoon, I saw people playing frisbee, listening to music and socializing, just as they did before I went to Raleigh. My schedule went back to normal, too. I caught up on my sleep, studied for and took exams, wrote articles and did laundry.

But last Sunday, when we sang "Amazing Grace" in church, I stood again in the darkness. I saw the lights from dripping candles and in prison windows, saw the prison and the darkened highway. I could hear shouts and a guitar. I could feel a friend put an arm around me.

"Amazing Grace" will never be the same again.

Sharon Sheridan, a sophomore journalism major from East Setauket, N.Y., is a staff writer for The Daily Tar Heel.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A jeanetic difference

To the editor:

However, it can also mean facing discrimination. It can mean being kicked out of one's apartment or being harassed by roommates. It can mean rejection by parents and loss of a job. Because of the fear that leading an openly "gay" life could be sheer hell, many gay people have entered the "closet," and as the name implies this place can be dark, lonely, and confining. Being "in the closet" does not just mean total secrecy about one's gayness. It also means not being able to be honest about oneself. It

means constant fear of being detected.

Because of this dilemma, the Carolina Gay Association proclaims this day to be "Blue Jeans Day." Today "gays" and "straights" alike are asked to wear their blue jeans in affirmation of gayness and gay people. Gay people should view this day as a time to be "Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas." It's a time to say to hell with the world; I am who I am! For straight people it's a time to experience some of the anxieties that gay people face every day. More importantly, though, it's a chance for you to make a statement in affirmation and acceptance of

your fellow students, faculty, parents, co-workers and friends.

So to all my brothers and sisters — straight, gay, and otherwise — I say put on those jeans. Yes, that old pair with the rip in the knee. Yes, the one's you've been wearing for three days. Yes, the ones with the ketchup stains and the iron burn. Yes, the Gloria Vanderbilt's, Chics, Levis, Lees, Wranglers and the K-Mart Specials.

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Robert F. Pharr
Chairperson, Carolina Gay Association

To the editor:

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DTH editorials this week

Tuesday: In a society that often takes its democratic tradition for granted, students are among the worst culprits when it comes to failing to vote. Student Government's promotion of National Voter Registration Week here on campus gave students the perfect opportunity to take action and recognize their potential political power year replete with important national, state and local elections.

Wednesday: If only one truth emerges after the long, emotional debates over the funding of campus organizations are over, it will be that there is not enough money to go around and that students are the ones who will be hurt because of it.

Although the Reagan administration cannot cure all of the ills of the 43-month-old war between Iran and Iraq, it has taken concrete steps to try to curb the Iraqi use of poison gas. By vigorously and outspokenly striving to end the use of poison gas in the Persian Gulf war, the White House has looked beyond immediate national security interests to pursue a wise and moral policy.

Thursday: The financial loss of last year's ill-fated Carolina Concert for Children is finally being felt — and it is being felt acutely. So imperiled by the CGC's financial restrictions are several established campus organizations that a petition is now being circulated to see if students' interest in a fee increase has now been heightened.

Of the two philosophies espoused during CGC budget hearings — that each organization should get at least some funding or that the funding of "high priority" groups should be considered above the funding of smaller organizations — the latter philosophy is a sounder one. Because of the most stringent of budgets, the CGC just can't be all things to all people this year.

World and Nation

"If we lose, we're in trouble. But if we win, they're going to have to make a pretty good grab at our coattails to catch up with us."

— Former Vice President Walter Mondale, a Democratic presidential candidate, speaking before the New York Democratic primary Tuesday, which pitted him against Sen. Gary Hart, D-Colo., and the Rev. Jesse Jackson. Mondale went on to get 45 percent of the vote and 133 delegates, a significant victory in stemming Hart's gathering momentum. Hart received 27 percent and 72 delegates, and Jackson got 26 percent and 47 delegates.

"We're having an awful lot of guilt by accusation. I'm not going to take any action that is based on accusations without proof."

— President Ronald Reagan, speaking at a televised news conference, on criticism of White House Counselor Edwin Meese. Meese, Reagan's nominee for attorney general, is being investigated by a special prosecutor over allegations involving his personal finances.

State

"Election campaigns should be more than battles between television commercials. They are a time to debate seriously the future of this country."

Week In Review

— Gov. Jim Hunt, Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate, in the latest of a series of position papers which are designed to answer the age-old question, "Where do you stand, Jim?"

"If someone wants to help in our campaign, then they help. Lawyers contribute to judges; check your records and go write about that."

— Insurance Commissioner John Ingram defending his solicitation of contributions for his Democratic gubernatorial campaign from top executives of insurance companies. As insurance commissioner, Ingram decides whether companies will be licensed to do business in North Carolina.

Campus

"I hope that Student Government can move with all deliberate speed in helping us to get a space. Right now STV is growing so fast. We need a centralized space not only because we demand it but because the students demand it. We can't just operate out of students' backpacks."

— David Leventhal, executive board member in charge of public relations regarding Student Television's request for a space in the Union. Organization members have had to

carry business information in their backpacks, and they transport equipment in car trunks and store it in members' homes or a room in the Union.

"I don't want to cut any organizations, but I'd rather have 25 organizations that are worth the students' money and are well run than have 35 organizations that are marginally run."

— Finance Committee member Tim Newman (District 11) on the CGC decisions about funding student organizations. On Thursday there was only \$6,781 left to allocate to several organizations.

"We have made gains in overcoming racism and poverty in this country, but in the area of war we haven't gone too far. Martin (Luther King) had developed a movement from 1955 to 1968 that had systematically and non-violently addressed racism and poverty."

— Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young in a speech which concluded a day-long series of events on awareness of racism which was sponsored by the Carolina Union Forum Committee. It was sixteen years ago Wednesday that Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.



GIRL SCOUT COOKIES! WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO, KILL ME?

Opinions from The Charlotte Observer

"None of the victims had a chance to run. Three of the victims were taken into fairly dense, wooded areas and assaulted."

— Major Arnold Gold, head of the uniformed patrol, discussed in a news conference Wednesday four rapes which have occurred since July 1983. The police gave the conference to make the public safety-conscious, to deter females from walking alone at night and to encourage victims who have not reported assaults to do so.

Sports

"We expected to win it. We were hoping to win it. If we played our game, we knew we could win it."

— Georgetown junior forward Ralph Dalton, on the team confidence that helped to lead the Hoyas to the NCAA basketball national championship Monday night, by downing the Houston Cougars, 84-75, in Seattle.

Etc.

"I'm here to gamble. Gambling comes first; eating comes later. I'm sure somebody will be running the restaurants."

— Angie Cooper of St. Louis, one of many tourists arriving in Las Vegas despite a strike by 17,000 hotel and restaurant workers there.

Sunday: The tornadoes of March 28 were a great adversity that brought out the best in some people. The destruction wreaked by nature that night showed the foolishness of man in periodically battling his fellow man.

Monday: The implementation of district representation for Statesville's city council, a move that should bring greater political representation for blacks, will probably take place. District elections have worked to unite Charlotte and increase confidence in government on the part of underrepresented groups.

Tuesday: The death of a female mental-health patient under highly questionable circumstances in South Carolina — the latest in a series of such fatalities — increases the need for a shakeup and investigation of that state's mental-health system. An autopsy has indicated that the dead woman had not received doses of medicine recorded in hospital records, and that she probably had been raped.

Wednesday: The case of Lenell Geter, the South Carolina wrongfully accused of robbery who spent 16 months in prison, highlights the imperfections of the law enforcement system. The manner in which Geter could be added to the list of suspects, the wisdom of using in court testimony from other cases, and the reliability of eyewitness testimony all bear close review.

N.C. Rep. Phil Berry's difficulties in handling his own financial affairs while maintaining an image of propriety raise serious questions about his judgment and character.