

The Daily Tar Heel

93rd year of editorial freedom

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No such salvo

The unraveling of the Chris Washburn affair has stuck North Carolina's university system with a lot of extremely bad press. State legislators, always sensitive to the pulse of the media, if not to that of their constituency, are now pondering a package which would offset the bad press left lingering after the Washburn affair. Unfortunately, the legislation they now ponder seeks to amend the reputation rather than the realities of our university system.

Reps. Howard B. Chapin, D-Beaufort, and Frank E. Rhodes, R-Forsyth, recently proposed bills in the North Carolina State Legislature which would establish a minimum requirement of 700 on SAT scores for students seeking to enter any of the 16 universities in the state system. Thus, students like Chris Washburn, who received a total of 470 on his SAT's, would no longer be allowed into any of these state-run universities.

Reps. Chapin and Rhodes maintain that such an SAT minimum standard would provide "an incentive" for high school students to work toward. More likely, that is all idle talk and will never come to bear upon reality. The bills, put bluntly, are not well-conceived, for they skirt the greater issues presented by the Washburn affair. Apparently, and unfortunately, Reps. Chapin and Rhodes prefer to seek a quick, handy remedy to the problem of admissions standards. The proposed legislation smacks of an interest in public relations, and would probably do little to improve the quality of education in this state.

'My way' safety

North Carolina motorists will have to buckle under yet another restriction on personal freedom if the General Assembly passes the mandatory seat belt bill introduced last week.

Legislation by Rep. W. Caspar Holroyd, D-Wake, requires drivers to wear seat belts or face fines of \$25 or \$50. Such a law would prevent some of the state's 400 annual highway deaths attributed to the lack of buckling up. The driver's action might encourage passengers to use seat belts. And collected fines could finance public awareness campaigns promoting their use.

Personal choice, however, is a fundamental hitch that demands more respect than the one keeping people strapped into their cars. The director of UNC's Highway Safety Research Center stated the contradiction when he told the *News and Observer*, "My own personal view as an individual citizen is that . . . it is worth it to have that kind of simple traffic law."

Remember, someone's own personal view as an individual citizen has treated blacks with disgrace, denies women

Few states spend less per student on high school education than North Carolina. In recent years, North Carolina has been ranked as low as 49th in high school spending; historically, North Carolina's legislators have balked at significantly boosting high school spending. Rather, as with the present case, they have sought to better the reputation of their university system at the expense of educational quality on the high school level.

The responsibility of the State Legislature lies in assuring that high schools are well-funded, and that the state-run universities have no need to set an artificial, and entirely arbitrary admissions standard.

The legislation proposed by Chapin and Rhodes is geared to weed out athletes who are academically incompetent. Yet fully 5 of the state-run universities have average SAT scores below 700. What will happen to students at those 5 universities, who surely cannot all be athletes?

Furthermore, charges that the SAT is culturally biased have not been adequately refuted. If such charges have any real basis, then the proposed legislation would itself be biased.

In sum, the proposed legislation does not get at the actual problem - the deficiency in the quality of high school education in North Carolina. And, to top that, the two bills before the Legislature are conceptually flawed. They might function as stop-gap measures to enhance media coverage, but they do little to improve the very real problems of education in this state.

equal rights and demands a national code based on its morality.

The decision not to wear a seat belt harms no one but the one who decides. Some have said it increases insurance and hospital care rates for everyone, but minor consequences such as this could be attached to any choice a person makes in this free society. We all affect someone else in some way.

In this case, when individuals mandate the actions of others who hurt no one, they risk forcing others into harm rather than safety. The advantages of seat belts far outweigh the disadvantages, but seat belts have caused death in certain auto accidents. These instances are extremely rare, but even if just one driver who didn't wear seat belts before the law died because of it, responsibility would lie on the heads of the legislators.

The General Assembly and law enforcement officials need to channel their efforts toward making the public realize how valuable seat belts are. Instead of deciding the choice for them, the General Assembly can best serve people by helping them make an educated one.

To the dth degree

Did this catch your eye?

Only one week, and already an issue has come boldly to a head. Hear ye, hear ye, read all about it.

Last Monday we helped herald the change in editorship with new headlines. Simply punching a different number into the terminal's command for headlines transformed the old type into bolder characters. Maybe it broke a few design rules, but if we can't experiment now, when can we?

All I heard the first day was that the headlines were too small at the top of the page. That was one design rule we didn't mean to break, although always putting the biggest on top is a journalistic quirk that seems to defy "balanced" reporting. I could even argue that making "UNC falters in stretch, loses to State" the page's smallest headline gave its content the perfect degree of emphasis.

In any case, we've avoided it since. Eventually people began to notice the change in style, and the reaction at times was equally as bold:

"I kinda like the new headlines, Dave, sort of."
"Looks too much like State's Technician!"
"Sure, Dave, they'll probably grow on me."
"They're obnoxious and ugly!"
"Well, I didn't want to mention this

before, Dave, but people have been telling me . . ."

"Get rid of them NOW!"

I'm not one to take hints, and strong reaction was exactly what I wanted. At least it proved the headlines jolted people, drew their attention and were read. I'd prefer that the paper's looks challenge you to notice it rather than sit pleasantly on the table while soaking up milk from the cereal bowl.

Actually some comments were very positive indeed, but when an easy compromise exists, we'll take it. Soon we will enter a new typeface into our system that is both bold and pleasing. It is sans serif (without the lines on bottoms and tops of letters) and called Chelmsford Demi-Bold, so the headlines should resemble those of the Greensboro *News and Record*.

Such a typeface will complement the stylish off-column layouts that Managing Editor Stuart Tonkinson has provided each day. Look for the new headlines sometime after Spring Break — unless they strike you first.

On a related subject, applause for News Editor Steve Ferguson's headline Monday for the latest Broadway-on-Tour production: "Brighton's people, set are simple Simon." Steve, we Neil before thee.

—DAVE SCHMIDT

SDI: A start down the right road

By DAN TILLMAN

"What if free people could live secure in the knowledge that their security did not rest upon the threat of instant U.S. retaliation to deter a Soviet attack, that we could intercept and destroy strategic ballistic missiles before they reached our soil or that of our allies?"

—President Reagan, March 23, 1983

It is unfortunate that many have chosen to misinterpret and misrepresent President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. Instead of objectively evaluating the president's proposal, some have immediately turned to demagoguery in an effort to dismiss the SDI as worthless or unrealistic.

Since the days of the Cold War the United States and Soviet Union have been caught in a vicious circle of nuclear arms buildup. Indeed, those that call for unilateral or multilateral disarmament cite the destructive power of both countries as sufficient to destroy the entire world many times over. As more sophisticated and accurate weapons have been developed by both sides, the destructive capabilities of the superpowers have reached ominous levels.

Thus the condition of mutual assured destruction has been relied on to keep the superpowers out of direct military confrontation. MAD is based on the presumption that if both countries remain nuclearly strong, neither will launch an attack for fear of being destroyed by a retaliatory strike. In other words, the peace has been kept by the assumption that war would be unwinnable for either participant.

Under the administration of President Jimmy Carter, the United States sought to demonstrate its commitment to halting the growing nuclear stockpile. Its efforts were met with a Soviet peacetime military buildup unprecedented in history. Reagan realized the danger of allowing the stability of deterrence to be undermined and began rebuilding America's defenses when he assumed office in 1981.

In the face of U.S. and NATO determination to regain and maintain military balance, the Soviet Union walked out of arms control talks in Geneva on fall 1983. Many predicted, and rightfully so, heightened nuclear buildup by the Soviets followed by more buildup by the United States and its allies.

Mutually Assured Security

However, in March 1983, Reagan announced his plans for research and development of the SDI. The proposal was one of moving away from mutual assured destruction to mutual assured security for the United States and eventually for the Soviet Union. (Reagan has stated his intention of sharing our technology with the Soviets for a space-based defensive system.)

In January 1985, Secretary of State George Shultz and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko met to begin planning for the resumption of talks between the two countries. Many attributed Reagan's SDI with prodding the Soviets back to the negotiating table.

What does the SDI offer then, other than a bargaining chip with the Soviet Union?

Quite simply, it offers a way to curb the massive buildup of nuclear weapons and holds the key to eliminating the threat of nuclear war.

Those that argue against the large expenditures required to develop the SDI should consider the continually escalating costs of developing and producing missiles of mass destruction. The United States, along with the Soviet Union, has been forced to pour great amounts of money into weapons that if ever used may destroy us as well as our enemies.

Those that argue research and technology are far from attaining the level of sophistication necessary to develop the SDI will find many experts arguing against them. Admittedly, both sides field scientists and engineers en masse to support their own side of the issue. But let us hope experts that have led the world in advances from computers to medicine can now perfect the capabilities needed to save us from the weapons



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technology they helped develop. Also, many believe the technology necessary to make the SDI a reality is only held back by U.S. adherence to the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.

Those that argue the SDI system would not be 100 percent accurate fail to realize that perfection, while a long-range goal, is not necessary. The key to the deterrence of the SDI would be an unacceptable risk factor for any would-be attacker. Yes, some Soviet missiles would almost certainly evade destruction and find their targets within the United States. But the Soviet strategists could not predict which targets would be hit.

If the Soviet Union were to launch a first-strike nuclear attack, it would have no assurance that vital command structures, missiles and silos would be knocked out. It is foolhardy to think Soviet leadership would launch a nuclear attack on the United States that might only destroy cities and non-military targets with no regard for the retaliatory capabilities of the United States.

Thus, the element of doubt created by the SDI would serve to deter Soviet use of nuclear weapons. At the same time it is likely Soviet scientists would work on perfecting their own land-based or space-based defensive systems.

As space-based technology advances and matures it will serve to make large arsenals of nuclear weapons obsolete. Neither side will be able to risk an attack that could fail to destroy vital enemy retaliatory capabilities.

As U.S. security becomes more certain under

the protection of SDI, it will be possible for us to reduce our nuclear weapon stockpiles. When the Soviet Union joins us in the strategy of mutual assured security, both sides can make reductions and eventually reach levels of nuclear weapons that serve merely defensive purposes, rather than offensive.

Verification and lack of mutual trust have crippled arms control efforts in the past. However, SDI would allow each side to take risks in efforts to secure meaningful arms control agreements.

Debate about the president's SDI is healthy and necessary in a free society. Yet, those that attempt to merely dismiss and mock the proposal do nothing to lessen the threat of nuclear war.

For far too long the United States and Soviet Union have followed the paradoxical notion of security through mutual assured destruction. It is time to seek security through a defensive program designed to lessen the chance of war by protecting the United States and its allies from nuclear weapons rather than merely threatening the Soviet Union with equal destruction. It is time to seek security through a program designed to lessen and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons rather than be forced to continue building them.

Reagan's proposed SDI offers the United States and the world the opportunity to start down the road of nuclear disarmament.

Dan Tillman is a senior RTVMP major in broadcast journalism from Alexis.

READER FORUM

Long and whining columnist needs a clue

To the editors:

After reading Sebastian Alston's column in the *DTH*, "It's just plain hard to get sympathy" (Feb. 22), I had to stop and think a minute. Is this guy serious? Surely he's being humorous or at least sarcastic. I read on further and it appeared he was actually serious!

Get a grip, Sebastian! You sound like a whining 7-year-old. Your immature complaining really brings you my sympathy. Geez, how dare a professor give you an A-minus instead of an A. Please! I get a B-minus and count my blessings. And, darn it, you didn't get to crown the homecoming queen. That loss must

be devastating to you!

You cited many other examples of how you feel you were cheated that aren't even worth repeating. I find it hard to believe that a "fourth year UNC medical student" would attempt to waste editorial space to whine to several thousand uninterested ears about how he feels the world is against him.

Everybody experiences disappointments, pal. If you wouldn't worry about what you didn't get in the past and think about what you can do in the future, you might be happier and I would certainly be less nauseated because of columns such as yours.

Snow excuse, 'DTH'

To the editors:

Touron (toor-on) n. A cross between a tourist and a moron. Usually found around resort areas, particularly those of the skiing industry.

With this concise definition of a touron I am forced to respond to Loretta Grantham's article ("Pricely pain for would-be snow bunnies," Feb. 20). It seems that in any resort area a given number of tourists will continuously circulate. The ski industry, however, manages to attract hordes of a unique breed of tourist. Depending on the resort, these people are commonly termed mud puppies, nose pickers, tree kissers or the generic and perhaps most accurate, touron.

While reading Grantham's article, I felt remarkably tense thing back to beginning skiers whizzing by me in a pseudo-tuck position, completely out of control. I thought of people clad in blue jeans and acrylic sweaters falling off the lift

because they had never considered taking a lesson. I remembered one particular and unfortunate kamikaze skier who thought that he could give "Tom Terrific" a run for his money. As a ski patrolman at Sugar Mountain, I helped carry this beginner off the mountain and directly to the operating room at Cannon Memorial.

My gripe is this: Why use valuable newspaper space explaining how to "waste money" on a superficial excursion to the slopes? In the future maybe a column could be printed on current snow conditions, safety and the beginning skier. Spring Break ski trips to the Rockies or the UNC Ski Club.

Incidentally, the UNC Women's Ski Team will be competing in the nationals over Spring Break — not all Southern skiers are mud puppies!

Mary Sheryl Horine
Chapel Hill

Before I finish, I can't help but laugh at your complaint about not being chosen to play pick-up basketball. I'm sorry you're 6-2 and don't get chosen. I'm 5-9 and would probably be picked before you because I wouldn't be in the corner whining. "Awww, nobody wants me."

Basically, the cause of all your problems is your attitude. People

don't like whiners. People who look for sympathy don't usually get it, so dry your eyes and count your blessings. I was never in the band; I was never class president; and I never received an academic scholarship. I just thank God for what I do have and I'm happy with things the way they are.

Richard Halliburton
Chapel Hill

No tears for Alston

To the editors:

In response to Sebastian Alston's column ("It's just plain hard to get sympathy," Feb. 22), we have a short response.

Look at the bright side, Sebastian. Not everybody has the opportunity to attend a university whose newspaper apparently has so few columns of significance that it readily prints unabashed, self-indulgent "tributes to oneself" written by megalomaniacs like you. You complained of being too

slow to play at the guard position in basketball (despite your admittedly fine talent). We suggest that you might become quick enough to be a successful guard and, in fact, succeed in all those areas where you fall just short of greatness if you can only unburden yourself from your tremendous ego.

Steve Colman
David N. Collier
Catherine L. Ives
John L. Moomaw

Some people are so naive

To the editors:

Some people are so stupid. I think President Friday owes us all an explanation of how somebody like Mark Mattox could have been let in this school ("Good times to be had at a socialist party," Feb. 21). I guess he got in the same door as Chris Washburn. In case you still don't understand, Mattox, let me be clear. Being a socialist has nothing to do with being social; it's a political philosophy (with which I, personally, do not agree).

It's inconceivable how somebody

could get into college without understanding what a socialist is, but I think it's a sorry indictment on our educational system. This is, after all, the same university where more than 90 percent of the freshman class could not pass a simple geography class. I get some satisfaction out of knowing that Mattox is a Granville resident. His type are exactly what I expect.

Thomas Proctor
Chapel Hill
P.S. I'm a junior history major from Fuquay-Varina.