

The Daily Tar Heel

94th year of editorial freedom

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Editorials

Reagan at the nadir

Last week, Walter Mondale, the presidential candidate who was swamped by a style-over-substance incumbent in 1984, aptly stated the importance of President Reagan's fumbling in the Iranian debacle: "We are faced here with the profoundest issue that ever occurs in America: the accountability of elected leaders before the law. Without that, we have nothing." Indeed; it's too bad Americans have to be reminded of the truism nearly every day, with seemingly endless revelations of ignorance — even corruption — among top-level administrators. Saturday brought particularly embarrassing news. The New York Times reported that "the U.S. government set up a major 'sting' operation late last year, complete with a fraudulent bank account, to catch arms merchants dealing with Iran . . ." The operation, expertly conducted by the U.S. Customs Service, netted 17 indictments. One is tempted to say: "Good work! If there's one thing the United States doesn't need, it's weasels who profit from arms sales to countries like Iran." But guess who was also arms dealing with

Iran at the time of the sting? That's right, the Reagan administration — the very government that (however unwittingly) financed the sting. If, by some miracle, the "stung" defendants are found guilty in light of Reagan's blundering, they would have good reason to shake their heads. How can they be castigated for supplying arms to Iran, while the president et al. had been doing the same? News of the sting operation is only the latest revelation in an incredible series of governmental bungling. The saddest part is that it's not at all the comedic kind of misstep. No, The Iran Deal/Mess/Fiasco represents something far more serious: It smacks of, among many things, deceptive PR, scapegoating, blatant disregard for the law and just plain ignorance. And Ronald Reagan, who thus far has demonstrated an overindulgence in the latter vice, rightfully finds himself in the midst of, as one reporter put it, the nadir of his presidency. To rise from it, he's going to have to come clean — and start concentrating more on substance.

A toast to tougher laws

Getting soft on drunk driving. Contrary to popular belief after the publicized push by citizens' groups to stem drinking and driving, that's exactly what the nation has been doing, according to the alarming results of a study released Sunday. Vast numbers of drunk driving offenders are evading the law simply because blood-alcohol tests are not being administered, according to the Crime Control Institute, a non-profit research organization led by law enforcement officials. Don't believe it? Take a look at these numbers:

- Of the 32,000 drivers surviving crashes involving fatalities in 1984, more than 75 percent were not tested for alcohol use.
- More than 25 percent of drivers killed in car accidents were not tested.
- Overall, only 45 percent of all drivers in fatal accidents were tested.

For a nation supposedly cracking down on one of its biggest killers, these numbers are inexcusable. Last week, Gov. Jim Martin launched a \$75,000 media blitz aimed at reminding North Carolinians about the dangers of drunk driving and the

penalties waiting for offenders. The 1983 Safe Roads Act stiffened those penalties. But did it stiffen them enough? Apparently not. Arrests for driving while drunk or impaired are up 17 percent over 1985 figures. President Reagan erroneously tackled the problem by blackmailing states into raising their legal drinking age to 21. Federal statistics from 1984 show that drivers aged 25-44, a group that comprises about one-third of the nation's driving-age population, received more than 53 percent of all drunk driving charges. Unfortunately, the president does not understand that drunk driving is not an issue of age, but of responsibility. Can drivers really feel threatened when reports prove the chances are better than three to one they won't be caught driving drunk when they kill someone? Of course not. Gov. Martin's ad campaign is admirable but insufficient. Even stiffer penalties than the ones currently on the books will be needed before drunk driving is significantly curbed. After all, if the public is expected to hold up its end of the bargain, the authorities must do the same.

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Tar Heel Forum

Bright future lies in holiday wrapping

Tom Camp
 Staff Writer

It's always the same at my house during the holidays. With stomachs as stuffed as the laundry bags we toted home and plopped down in front of the do-it-yourself washer and dryer, we college kids individually lay our most convincing, sympathy-drawing "doing well in school, but . . ." speeches on our folks. Being last in the line of five kids, my orations have become quite successful, even illustrious, I might argue, as I have listened and learned from the trials and errors of my predecessors. For those of you who have only delivered your Thanksgiving warning spiel or for those who have simply put the whole matter off until Christmas break, I've decided to unleash some valuable strategems that will keep you in Blue Heaven for as long as your parents are financially afloat. Entrance is key. Knock on the door ever so faintly, and when it opens, stumble past your mother and drop your musty, bulbous laundry bag at her feet. Continue your painful trek to the den, where you collapse on the floor, mere inches from the sanctuary of the sofa. Stay passed out until you are awakened for dinner.

Did I say make sure to go out bar-hopping the night before you come home? I meant to advocate that — I'm always advocating things. Anyway, a hard night on the town will yield red, squinty eyes, a bedraggled outfit and a rained brain — all excellent visual aids for your report. Don't look at your parents during the meal. In fact, don't look at anything except your food, which you have swirled and mushed into a soupy potpourri. Hold on as long as possible, but when you finally

must break from all the probing, tell Dad and Mom in a somber voice that you have something important to say. Tell them that you have decided to eliminate — er, change — your major. I'm not talking about sliding into physics from calculus. These changes must be grandiose plunges — like from microbiology to macrame or from history to scuba diving. Trust me, it works. One of my sisters did it five times. And she's still in school. While their state of resistance is so low, hit your parents with the reasons the grades are not up to par. Just be honest. Simply explain how you are a product of Chapel Hill's terrible miscarriage of education. One of the most successful lines in our house went something like this: "Look, Dad, I'm living in a place where it is possible, at best, to study only two times a week." The logic followed: "Mondays, of course, mean football, Tuesdays and Thursdays are late-night nights, any doof knows that, and well, Fridays and Saturdays, that's the weekend — and usually there's a football game or mixer then. So, when you look at my grades, they may look kind of low. But then you've got to consider the kind of time constraints I'm operating under." Then tell them about your teachers, and how they have erred in evaluating your progress. Name-calling can really increase the sympathy level. Some good ones that have worked for us have been "Tudor

monarchist," "computerchip head," "frog-like" and "polyestered self" (as in "his haughty, old polyestered self"). Describe how your teachers try to cover too much material in too little time, and despite all the hours you spent in the stupid foreign language lab, you still couldn't parley with a six-year old French *juenne fille*. After explaining the environmental constraints and the kind of people who teach, tell them about your optimism for the future. Rely on your personality and good looks. Tell your parents the world is full of real people like you. Also relate to your folks that in this computer age, being diverse is the key to success. (Draw in specifics from the last issue of Newsweek On Campus.) Try to make them understand how all your extra-curricular activities have separated you from the average "dorm-rat" or "frat-bagger," and that with all the friends you have made, your business success is limitless. If they don't believe you, list all the friends who would make prosperous business contacts. When your parents ask if you realize that you will be out on your own in a couple of years, tell them your plans are already settled. You're going to travel to find yourself. Everyone needs to find themselves, any doof knows that. But most of all, tell them that after finally realizing the things that were holding you back in school, you can at last make some changes for next semester. Tell them you will do better next semester. Yes, tell them we will all do better.

Tom Camp is a junior journalism major from Raleigh.

Break prejudice

The author is chairwoman of the UNITAS committee.

To the editor:

If you've ever felt frustrated by your own prejudices or by the prejudices of other people at UNC, you're not alone. That much is clear from the banter on the back page of the Daily Tar Heel. But sometimes it seems as though only people who are loud-mouthed "born leaders" or those willing to sacrifice all social and academic success are able to make any headway in combating prejudices. And sometimes it seems that individuals do not count for much on this campus, that you will always be labeled and categorized with a stereotype no matter how much things seem to have changed. If you've wondered how you can make a difference at UNC, student government may have the answer. UNITAS is a cooperative effort by a concerned group of students and supportive faculty and administrators to combat prejudice and promote activism on racial and cultural issues. Beginning next fall, the program will have 47 student participants who will live together in Carmichael residence hall for two semesters, take a course together on racial and cultural relations, interact socially and learn to use their new perceptions actively on the campus and in the community. All the final details concerning course credit will be worked out before the Christmas holidays, but anyone who wants to apply should plan on 3 hours of pass/fail credit for each semester. Any student who wants to apply should pick up an application and brochure in the student government office (Suite C in the Carolina Union) and turn it in by Jan. 9, 1987. Do not hesitate to turn your application in before exams are over, as that will help the admissions committee immensely. The most important element of UNITAS will be the students who participate. UNITAS needs you to make your mark on UNC by attacking the racial and cultural prejudices and misconceptions that characterize much of University life.

EMILY AYSCUE
 Junior
 Psychology



tially available at the Business Administration and Social Sciences reference desk on the first floor of Davis Library. Further, a complete, updated list of the more than 70 offensive companies can be obtained by calling the American Committee on Africa at 212-962-1210, or by sending \$6 and a request to The Africa Fund, 198 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10038. Regarding Salemi's insights, couldn't faculty as well as students benefit from a little self-denial, and also be directed to start with themselves as they contemplate pointing their fingers at unedified brethren?

CHRISTOPHER GUNNELL
 Evening College

No injustices

To the editor:

This is an open letter to Rick Spargo and Lori Taylor concerning their newly proposed "Carolina Straights Who Wait" Association. I read with interest of your proposed group and your plans to seek funding from the Student Congress ("Funding waits," Nov. 20). You claim that since the Carolina Gay and Lesbian Association is funded, and since your organization and the CGLA have so much in common, your organization should get funding also. After all, you say, your members are also in a minority group and you feel your organization is needed to "educate" the public about your "abnormal" sexuality. The problem I have with your proposal is that your "organization" and CGLA are worlds apart in purpose and ideology. The two have virtually nothing in common. As you should be aware, there is a long, tragic history of violence and injustices being committed against gay and lesbian people. Homophobia and hatred continue to run rampant, causing unbelievable amounts of pain in peoples' lives. There is no history nor any evidence of violence and

injustice being committed against "abstainers." Tell me, Spargo and Taylor, have members of your group felt so rejected by society that they have considered suicide to end their misery? What about job discrimination? How many of your group have been fired because they are "abstainers"? How many of your members were kicked out of their families and rejected by their loved ones because they told them of their feelings about abstaining? The answer, simply put, is zero. Members of your group are not threatened by physical attacks in public. They are not harassed by prejudiced law enforcement officials. The federal government won't ask them if they are abstainers in a job interview (or better yet, a lie detector test) and then deny them the job for that reason alone, regardless of their qualifications.

The U.S. Supreme Court has not upheld a law which regulates the abstainers' right to love whom they want, when they want and where they want. And on a historical note, abstainers were not burned in the Middle Ages nor were they gassed in Hitler's ovens. Gay people were.

I could continue with more horrible examples, but I think I've made my point. The pain and persecution suffered by gay and lesbian people throughout history has been so great as to be unimaginable. The pain and persecution suffered by "abstainers" has been nonexistent.

Education and support are desperately needed to stop what is happening to gays and lesbians. As for the "Straights Who Wait," the mere idea of such an organization is an indication of the extreme thinking of its proposers. In closing, let me state that if you can give me any examples of violence and injustice of this magnitude being perpetrated against your members, I will gladly and wholeheartedly support your group's quest for

funding. I'll look forward to seeing YOU at the budget hearings next spring.

PHILLIP PARKERSON-
 RIPLEY
 Senior
 Psychology

Seasonal losses

To the editor:

It is, unfortunately, a common belief among football coaches and enthusiasts that when given the opportunity late in the game to choose between a tie and a win, one should go for the win. If one goes for the tie, God forbid, there is a tremendous uproar from the fans and the media. What is so bad about a tie? It's certainly better than a loss. Take the Carolina-State game, in which we lost 35-34. We went for the win by opting for the two-point conversion. Had we gone for the extra point instead, the game probably would have ended in a tie. Granted, the extra point is not a given, but the probability of getting it is greater than that for the two-point conversion. Let's just say we went for the extra point and made it. Again, what's wrong with a tie? What I have to say might change your attitude toward ties. Are you ready? Our Tar Heels would be ACC Football Champions! Our record would have been 5-1-1, the same as Clemson. True, we would have had to share the title with Clemson, but, nonetheless, our Tar Heels would be champions. Also, our overall record would have been 7-2-2. Two losses in an 11-game season is pretty damn good. But we went for the win and lost. Now, we have to be content with a second-place tie with State. Don't get me wrong, second place isn't bad, especially after last year's disappointing season, but we could have been ACC champs! What's so bad about a tie?

STEVEN LEHMANN
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