

The Daily Tar Heel

94th year of editorial freedom

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Editorials

Reagan legacy — future grief

When Ronald Reagan relinquishes the Oval Office in 1989, historians may describe him as the most popular president of the century. But after Reagan's shortcomings plague the next president, history will not be so kind.

Reagan has survived the embarrassment of occasional blunders with uncanny ease. Dubbed "the Great Communicator," Reagan can usually cultivate public support. But historians will one day note that Reagan's words merely glossed over the nation's real problems, leaving them for the next president.

The spiraling deficit

Perhaps the foremost issue Reagan has not tackled is the federal deficit. At budget time, the president is like a child in a candy store: he wants everything. Among the treats he most desires are a strong defense, farm support, Social Security, Medicare and a host of other domestic programs.

These budget demands cannot all be met. Rather than allow Americans to suffer higher taxes, Reagan has supported cutbacks in domestic programs, while forging ahead with his agenda for an invigorated defense.

Balancing the federal budget is a duty the president and Congress should share, but which Reagan has shirked. He has never submitted a balanced budget, and has often blamed Congress for the resulting new round of deficit spending.

It is impossible to determine whether the deficit will plunge the nation into another recession, but given the debt's size, a recession could mean disaster. The consequences of the federal deficit are evident today. One result is that private and corporate debt are keeping in step with the deficit. And for the first time in history, the United States is a debtor nation.

Reagan has scarcely confronted the deficit, choosing instead to lambaste Congress and push for such legislation as the tax reform bill. In doing so, Reagan once again delayed the inevitable — attacking the deficit with a revised fiscal policy.

Unsuccessful arms negotiating

Reagan's failure to negotiate an arms control agreement is another disappointment. Even before assuming the presidency, Reagan criticized the traditional formula of negotiating fixed limits on various weapons. Reagan wants to do more than just slow the arms race, he wants to reverse it. Hence the "zero option" proposal to eliminate the Euromissiles and the offer extended at Reykjavik to wipe out all nuclear missiles over the next decade.

Reagan walked out of the Reykjavik meeting because of an impasse over the future of the Strategic Defense Initiative. The affair ended without plans for a future summit and without an agreement to dismantle a single missile.

Unfortunately, Reagan's desire to reduce arms is marred by a deep-seated distrust of the Soviets, which has hindered negotiations. Reagan clearly favors an "all or nothing" approach; sadly, it is the latter result that has typified his efforts.

The Reagan legacy

Among the popular motifs of the Reagan presidency are lower taxes, a sound defense, sharply curtailed inflation and a resurgence of national pride. The president's feats are commendable, but the failures threaten the successes. Reagan's esteem pales alongside the stumbling blocks that plague his administration.

The Reagan legacy, then, stands on shaky ground. The deficit and nuclear stockpiles are enigmas that could altar or destroy the United States. These lingering problems, joined together and presented to the next president, will ensure that some of Reagan's goals will be abandoned. What better justification for a future president to raise taxes and cut defense spending than to battle the federal deficit? What greater reason to forsake Star Wars than to secure a wide-reaching arms control victory?

What clearer cause for Reagan to make efforts now to smooth the path of the future?

For all you do, this X-word's for you

Know what an ablation is? How about a punkah? We won't even ask if you know the name of Hel's watchdog. (Surely you remember Hel, the Norse goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.)

The point is, if you've been doing your crosswords like good little girls and boys, you'd know these essentials. You'd say, "Of course I know an ablation is a bath. A punkah is an Indian-style ceiling fan. And Hel's watchdog, FYI, is the one and only Garm."

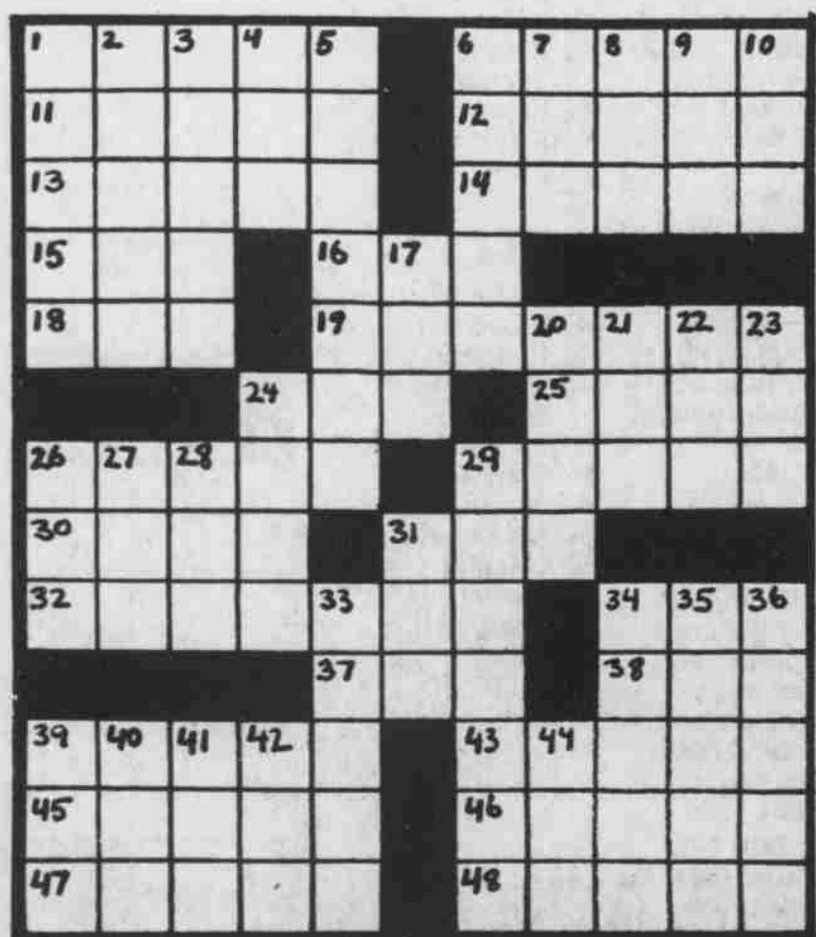
A lot of us poor souls, however, still scratch our heads over the four-letter word for Punch and Judy's dog, and some, try as they must, will never fill those eight blank squares for "purfle." One group of X-word diehards, in fact, is rumored to be lobbying

The Bottom Line

Washington for an outright ban on the clue, "Swiss canton," though to no avail (witness the tragedy of 51 down in today's Daily Crossword, page 7).

So, all you frustrated crossword maniacs out there, This Grid's For You. Just pay close attention to the clues and, remember, if it's not in the dictionary, you can't use it. (By the way, sources tell us that Toby is the mutt in question, and that either "ornament" or "decorate" will do purfle just fine.)

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Tar Heel Forum

Death row youth too young to die

Marcie Cloutier
 Guest Writer

There are 33 inmates on America's death row who are there for crimes committed when they were under the age of 18. Eighteen of them are black, 15 are white and two are female.

Of the 36 states which permit capital punishment, 26 allow death for offenders who were juveniles at the time the crime was committed. In Mississippi, the minimum execution age is 13; in Indiana, it's 10. In its history, the United States has executed 281 juveniles, and within the last year, three juvenile defenders have been put to death.

Americans apparently favor capital punishment. A 1986 Gallup poll concludes that 70 percent support the death penalty. But before an official poll determines how Americans feel about capital punishment for juveniles, I would like to present arguments against it.

No one who has committed a crime

punishable by death should receive preferential treatment under the law. That is the argument of those in favor of capital punishment regardless of age. Each man is equal under the law, but is each viewed the same? Evidently not in this country. When it comes to the draft, voting and alcohol, those under a specific age — varying from 18 to 21 — are treated differently.

Distinctions can be drawn between the adolescent and adult criminal, taken in part from general distinctions between adolescents and adults. Most teenage murderers are "impulse killers." Death is a distant concept; youth are enticed by dangerous drugs and reckless driving, behavior which

defies death. When Clarence Darrow defended two boys who killed a fellow schoolmate, his defense was primarily a plea of "compulsion."

More importantly, prospects for rehabilitating teenagers are infinitely stronger than prospects for most adults. During adolescence, personality and behavioral tendencies are still forming — and the possibility for positive change is still strong.

In recent years, some states have established a minimum age of 18 for a death sentence. New Jersey made the decision this past January. This may become a trend among states which uphold capital punishment and a small step toward good sense and basic, humanitarian principles.

Marcie Cloutier is a history major from Jupiter, Fla.

Start caring

To the editor:

Ninety-nine percent of all Americans do not support apartheid. That makes sense. No one would want to be oppressed by a higher authority, have most of their basic rights abridged or be classified as inferior to other human beings. Yet of this 99 percent, what portion supports action against apartheid?

Let's see. Some support divestment, some do not and some don't care. Of the group that does not support divestment, most agree that the situation could be best remedied through constructive engagement. You know, the Sullivan Principles, political pressure, right?

Wrong. The Sullivan Principles only guarantee that a non-white worker gets paid a minuscule wage (as opposed to a minimum wage). Yet they still hinder a black or colored (the other large non-white group) employee from being promoted past a certain rung on the corporate ladder, thus supporting the idea of a superior race. Most defenders of the Sullivan Principles, such as Gary Gillis, ("Seek Innovation," Nov. 24) point to the fact that they do guarantee equal wages, but this only refers to equal wages among blacks and the colored. Sullivan himself has admitted that his principles are ineffective in solving the racial problems in South Africa.

But wait. If we break ties with South Africa, we'll have no political influence there to possibly change the system. But so far, all we've gotten is stronger military control over the blacks and a news blackout. That's real progress.

Why are we not getting answers as to how constructive engagement works in lieu of the above analysis. If attacks against this view are not defended, how can anyone continue to uphold this "rational" conclusion?

Up to this point, not only are the divestment folks making the best sense, they're making the only sense.

Webster defines apathy as "release or freedom from passion, excitement or emotion." The failure of the no-divestment school of thought to respond to these arguments and the failure of others to even take a stand displays a clear absence of critical thinking. It's disturbing when people say they are caring, that they came to college to expand their minds, but don't act accordingly. This type of hypocrisy is deplorable.

These are strong words because I am so opposed to the gross oppression of human rights in South Africa. I'm not writing this to shake a finger in students' faces or to scold



The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comment. For style and clarity, we ask that you observe the following guidelines for letters to the editor and columns:

- All letters/columns must be signed by the author(s). Limit of two signatures per letter or column.
- Students who submit letters/columns should also include their name, year in school,

major and phone number. Professors and other University employees should include their title and department.

■ All letters/columns must be typed. (For easier editing, we ask that they be double-spaced on a 60-space line.)

■ The Daily Tar Heel reserves the right to edit letters and columns for style, grammar and accuracy.

them for being insensitive; I'm writing to ask people to appraise the situation.

Revolution in this area of the world seems inevitable. Our current policy — both of the United States and this University — only props up the white regime and can only delay such change, making it more bloody and the end result more unstable.

If you think apartheid is bad, propose, support or justify a solution. If you don't or can't, this only shows your support of the situation there. The ball is in your hands; don't drop it, and don't pretend it's not there. Apartheid is not just going to roll off the court. Displaying such apathy would only show your freedom from (com)passion towards those with no freedom.

GEOFF BURGESS
 Freshman
 Applied Math

Take action

To the editor:

I am tired of hearing people like Bill Peaslee and Michael Komada of College Republicans and Students for America talk about how the Anti-Apartheid Support Group shanty violated their right to a beautiful campus. Aren't your complaints a bit trivial when compared to the enormity of the human rights violations in South Africa?

For a moment, put yourselves in the shoes of the average black living under

apartheid. You are denied the right to vote, the right to free speech, the right to live or work where you choose except in the areas or jobs designated for blacks by the ruling white minority. You cannot strike for better wages without risking jail. You cannot marry someone of another racial group. You are denied access to free, quality education.

You are denied the right to decent housing and health care. You can be arrested and detained without trial. You can be tortured through methods such as electric shock, sleep deprivation and the breaking of teeth with pliers.

Time and time again, I have heard these people say they are not racist, that they oppose apartheid, but that they do not think "our way" is right. If this is true, why don't they come to one of our meetings and suggest "their way"?

To those mentioned above, if you have complaints about the way we do things, tell us at a meeting of the Anti-Apartheid Support Group. Frankly, I doubt that you will ever come, because I doubt the sincerity of your "opposition" to apartheid.

The shanty may not have been aesthetically beautiful, but it was symbolically beautiful, because it represented the aim of our group — to see a system that causes people to live in shanties abolished forever.

KELLEY S. HUGHES
 Sophomore
 Criminal Justice/
 Philosophy

Real concerns

To the editor:

I am responding to Michael Komada's letter of Nov. 21 ("Own protest"). Michael, your use of Saturday Night Live lingo reflects your attitude in dealing with serious issues.

You said you are concerned with how your record will look in the future as well as the surrounding beauty while you're here. Those concerns are understandable and valid. But some people's concern goes beyond themselves.

I am more concerned about the millions of black South Africans, denied the most basic human rights. I am a member of the Anti-Apartheid Support Group who has lived and slept in the shanty. I made the decision to get arrested (and "taint" my record) for what I believe — that total divestment is the only ethical move for the Endowment Board to make.

As far as your proposal to build igloos and teepees, your sarcastic tone was offensive. I am part Cherokee Indian and would gladly sit in a teepee. And I'm sure that Marguerite Arnold or any other of the compassionate AASG members would join you in the igloo.

J. AMY THOMPSON
 Junior
 English

No glory

To the editor:

I cannot understand what could be so "glorious" about the \$8,200 restoration and reinstallation, ironically during Human Rights Week, of "Silent Sam." No monument to war should be regarded as "majestic," much less one to a war which held in the balance freedom and slavery for vast numbers of people — dare I say human beings? That's not to mention its more contemporary sexist meaning.

As a white woman, I feel utterly disgusted. I wonder what Silent Sam symbolizes for black students. Did anyone ask them?

To rectify this discrimination at least in part, this University should give a like sum of money to a minority scholarship fund or perhaps erect a bronze statue commemorating the first black people who attended this University.

DOROTHY TEER
 Chapel Hill

