

# The Daily Tar Heel

95th year of editorial freedom

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## Editorials

### Spirit of heart and mind

In 1927, the University student newspaper was a four-page collection of neatly horizontal columns of copy calling itself the "leading Southern college tri-weekly."

Today, the conversational tone and slightly editorialized news of that year's editions might seem strange to college students. But many concerns of the time still apply, and a column written by an assistant editor especially captured the mood of the day with an insight that hinted of future wisdom.

"If there really isn't any mischief underfoot to be revealed or any deep-dyed villainy that should be brought to light, that lack should be remedied somehow. . . . Why it's absolutely appalling when one sees how peacefully the campus is sleeping!" the assistant editor wrote. More than 50 years later, he would stand before a group of Phi Beta Kappa inductees as a revered member of the University community and deliver the same message with great urgency.

The death of the columnist, journalism professor emeritus Walter Spearman, doesn't diminish the importance of his words, nor their relevance to college students today. He pleaded with students to use not only their minds to the fullest extent, but their hearts as well. Care about academic work, your fellow students,



Spearman's column logo, 1927

your world and the people in it, he told the inductees.

Spearman's idea that commitment to any cause is better than none at all is timeless. Ideally, the student's purpose in attending the University is to work toward an improved future. He must leave it with a sense of enrichment in the mind and the body to enact some change in his environment.

As a student in 1927, he wrote with an appreciation of the progress he felt his generation was experiencing. In one column, he envisioned the village of Chapel Hill transformed into a metropolis of skyscrapers and subways. "All hail, ye Great City!" he wrote.

Spearman once said that everyone needs a hero. His progressive outlook and concern for student hearts and minds have all the makings.

### A president never forgets

These days, the Iran-Contra crisis is unavoidably recalling memories of that nutty Nixon crew. As during Watergate, Americans are losing faith in their president and are questioning his ability to run the country.

However, there is a difference. Where Nixon had complete control over the activities of his staff, legal and otherwise, Reagan's power has been so well delegated that he forgot to save any for himself. Americans are more concerned about his ability to hold onto the White House reigns than they are about his guilt or innocence.

Perceptive of public opinion, Reagan's advisers are struggling to maintain his image as a man in power. However, they can't decide how best to present him.

Concerning the August 1985 sale of American-made arms to Iran, former national security adviser Robert C. McFarlane claimed that Reagan had approved it in advance.

However, White House chief of staff Donald T. Regan's testimony countered McFarlane's, saying that Reagan did not approve the sale until "after

the fact." While revealing Reagan's guilt, McFarlane's statement shows that Reagan did exert some executive influence. Regan's statement proves Reagan's relative innocence in the scam, but it displays him as a notary who merely okayed his staff's decisions.

Regan obviously realized the damage he had done to Reagan's power image. Risking his job last week, he brazenly confronted the unconfrontable Nancy Reagan about the need for a "high public profile" for the president. He must have been hoping to re-establish Reagan's Big Daddy role.

Unfortunately, Regan is unable to clear up the matter as to what the hell it was he actually did. For the life of him, the poor guy just can't remember.

After 13 years the presidency's credibility is again at a low point. In the '70s, Nixon destroyed the American people's faith in government with his blatant lie, "I am not a crook." Reagan may do the same with a claim to wimpiness: "It's possible to forget."  
 — M.K.

### The Daily Tar Heel

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## Readers' Forum

### U.S. hides human rights abuses

Martin Gonzalez  
 Guest Writer

As I was reading the Sunday paper a few weeks ago, an article on El Salvador caught my attention. There are two reasons for this. The first is that I find news about Central America especially interesting in face of the fact that the White House's duplicitous foreign policy is finally getting some attention in the press. The second is that while I am very interested in current Latin American affairs, there has been very little written concerning El Salvador lately. This at the same time that U.S. military and economic aid is flowing at greater and greater rates into the nation, with over \$400 million this year alone. Yet cases of torture by security forces continue, and are continuously ignored by the press. Apparently, El Salvador is not sexy enough to make the news anymore.

So this article caught my attention. The headline said, "7 Salvadorans reported killed by air force." The article goes on to say that the army denied the killings and reports that, "One house on the outskirts of Laguna Seca was hit directly by rockets or a bomb, killing a mother and her two daughters. . . . Four other peasants, including a child, were killed by machine gun bullets or shrapnel as they ran from the attack."

But equally disturbing news comes later. "At first the army press office and the U.S. Embassy (my emphasis) denied that the attack and civilian casualties had occurred. The army also refused late last week to permit a reporter to enter the battle area." Later the article noted that "as evidence of the air attack grew, the army press office changed its account," admitting that civilians "might have been killed."

So what is the big deal? Two things. First, that the Salvadoran army has to be forced to admit its "mistakes," and second, more important to the

average U.S. citizen, that the U.S. embassy is involved to such a degree that it lies to cover up human rights abuses.

But unfortunately, lies by U.S. foreign affairs officials to the public are not unusual. All we have to look to is the double talk and disinformation that government officials have been putting out, not only on Central America, but on the rest of the world. One of the more interesting examples is Alexander Haig as secretary of state telling the press that three nuns and a layworker had been killed by the Salvadoran army because it was believed that they had "tried to run a roadblock." That is why, we can assume, they were buried in shallow graves and their van was burned as well. There is an almost infinite list of this sort; one has only to read the daily list of statements, retractions, and "no comments" coming out of the White House officials to get a sense of the duplicity.

But as justification for this kind of action the argument is proposed that if we don't fight with everything we have, the Russians will move in. Note the argument for sending weapons to Iran. Here, we are told, we need to get our foot in, to make contact with the moderate factions within the nation before the Russians do.

And yet, when it comes to Latin America, there is no room for argument, no room for disagreement. There is instead a bunker mentality based on dogmatic ideological absolutism that allows no room for discussion. The main spokesperson for this view is our own Elliot Abrams. The Sandinistas, in his view, are "totalitarian Marxist Leninists" and the scourges of Central

America. Our allies, of course, may have problems, but in this view they are essentially good, democratic types. Those of us who criticize our allies are very often presented as "communist dupes" or in the jargon of the new right, presented as "useful idiots," to be ignored because of being so naive.

But things are not that simple. Criticism of so-called friendly nations cannot be dismissed that easily. The fact the U.S. embassy is involved in cover-ups, and becomes increasingly involved in cover-ups, should be disturbing to anyone concerned with our role as it concerns human rights.

Additionally, it will not do for the United States, if we are to remain a pluralistic and intelligently democratic society, to swallow the lies and half-truths of our hired help (that is the senators, congressmen, bureaucrats, presidents, etc.). So, if we are told that the reason that we sent arms to Iran was not because we were ransoming hostages, we need to be skeptical. In the same way, if we are told about "massacres" of Miskito Indians in Nicaragua, we should be skeptical. Especially when there is no corroboration.

Why then should we remain so critical of our foreign policy, why should be so critical of our leaders? For the simple reason that we can do better. And it seems that we can do better rather easily.

Lastly, and most interestingly, why does the U.S. embassy feel so compelled to deny things that have happened in El Salvador? There are two possibilities. The first is that they did not know what they were talking about, in which case why say it? The second is because we are doing something in El Salvador that we need to be ashamed of. It looks like the latter.

Martin Gonzalez is a graduate student in Latin American history.

### Seniors' swan song

To the editor:  
 This Thursday night Dook vs. UNC... what else needs to be said? To the Carolina Seniors, this game means much more. To Kenny, Joe, Curtis, Dave, Michael, and the other 3300 Seniors, it's our final home game!

During our 4 years at The Hill, we've witnessed many special things. We've seen the SAC start as a bunch of blue metal and end up being the Dean Dome. We've lived through the final home game and the second final home game at Carmichael. Also, over 4 years, our home record is 39-3, and Thursday we can add to that by beating those DAMN DOOKIES!

So, Seniors, when you come to the game to sit in our lower level block, be prepared to scream, yell, cheer, and party for 2 hours which shouldn't be too hard because we're LEGAL. Also, remember to wear your Senior T-shirts, sweatshirts (available at Carolina Pride), Carolina blue, blue-face, blue tattoos, and don't forget those blue pom-poms (get 'em at the Student Store). And after we do beat those Dook nerds, let's take over center court (joke!).

TONY KEARNEY  
 Senior Economics

PREETI PATEL  
 Senior Chemistry

### ACC signup unpublicized

To the editor:  
 Very few things happening on campus bother us to the point where we become outraged and feel compelled to write letters to this paper, but we are writing now to protest the manner in which the recent signup for the student tickets



The Bull, the Bear and the Boesky

for this year's ACC basketball tournament was held. We were unable to come to school on Tuesday and part of Wednesday due to the icy conditions and the fact that we both live at the bottom of very icy hills. When we did get here, there were no DTHs to be found anywhere. On Thursday, the DTH had no mention of the signup going on in the pit. There were no notices anywhere at the law school about the signup. The first we heard about it was after it was all over.

Law students and other professional students do not find themselves on the main section of campus very often, so we did not happen upon the signup as some of the undergrads probably did. In fact, last year a table was set up inside the law school to facilitate our signing up for the tournament tickets. This year that did not happen. The Tar Heel did not have any notices about the signup on Thursday, the last day of the registration. There were no signs up informing us where or when we could register. We had no notice at all about the

signup. We know of some law students who managed to find out about the registration only because they had the foresight to check an article from the DTH which they had clipped out a month ago.

As third-year law students, we are very disappointed that we did not have the opportunity to sign up for our last chance to obtain student tournament tickets. We can only hope that in the future other students will not be cheated as we were, and that the parties responsible will be more responsible next time.

ELIZABETH STRICKLAND  
 REBECCA A. WATERS  
 Graduates Law

### Applause for CGLA

To the editor:  
 Throughout the history of the United States, it has taken very courageous people to test democracy. It has taken people with strong beliefs who have been determined to buck the tide of the majority to win rights for a persecuted minor-

ity. Without this political process, the United States would not be a country "for the people."

I applaud the efforts of the CGLA. They have the courage to speak out and begin, through the political process, to win rights for an enormous silent community - the gay community. Through their efforts, and the efforts of gay organizations throughout the United States, gay people will one day be able to openly express their sexual orientation without fear of discrimination and prejudice.

Through the efforts of the CGLA, those of us who are not gay can learn to understand and accept a different way of loving. Only then will we be able to understand the necessity of groups which support the gay community. Don't wait until you condemn homosexuality only to find out that a friend of yours has been struggling with the fact that he may be gay. He needs your support - not your condemnation.

Three cheers for the CGLA!  
 MICHELLE NICOLLE  
 Junior Psychology

### Instead of fighting, try the mediation service

To the editor:  
 Mark and Russell are roommates in a UNC dorm. Mark owes Russell money for the November phone bill, because Russell said it would be okay to pay him after Christmas. However, because of Reagan's student aid cuts, Mark can not pay Russell for the bill. Also, Russell has taken up smoking pot in the room, which Mark can not stand. They have stopped talking to each other. They can not take the problem to their R.A. because they do not want to ruin their chances of getting back into university housing by admitting to drug use. Where do they turn?

Although the characters in the scenario are fictitious, the conflict of interests is not. The fact is that conflict exists when roommates squabble, when a boyfriend and girlfriend disagree, and when students and administrators do not see eye-to-eye.

It seems to me that Mark and Russell have two options. The first is to avoid confronting the problem and let it stagnate to a point of intolerance. The second is to handle the situation while it remains in its

infant stages and work to an end that will allow their relatively long-term relationship to continue.

The Dispute Settlement Center on campus was designed last year by a group of students who wanted to offer an alternative method of problem solving, known as mediation, to the standard kicking, cursing, biting and threatening. Mediation is a technique that relies on the willingness of the disputants to engage in a confidential discussion facilitated by two neutral parties, the mediators. The responsibility of reaching a resolution to the problem does not rest with the mediators, but rather with the disputants themselves. The mediators remain unbiased throughout the mediation session and encourage the disputants to let their defenses down and lay all the cards on the table. When each party realizes the point of view of their opposite, they are generally more willing to compromise and offer a solution to the problem. However, the solution will only be effective if both sides feel an obligation to uphold their end

of the bargain and feel that they will receive something worthwhile in return.

Six undergraduates, two graduates, and one administrator have been trained to act as mediators. They represent a diverse group and realize the significance of their background role in a mediation session. They are trained to work with disputes ranging from anything as trivial as a small telephone bill to something as serious as sexual harassment. The sessions are all confidential and cannot be used in a court of law, thus creating an atmosphere which is conducive to seeking resolutions. Cases may be referred to Kathleen Benzaquin in the Dean of Students Office, 06 Steele Building, 966-4041. So, like the guy on TV says, if you, a friend, or someone you love is experiencing a problem with another human being, pick up the phone and give us a call. We may be able to help you help yourself.

DAVID FOUNTAIN  
 Sophomore  
 Math Education