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The Daily Tar Heel

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BOARD EDITORIALS

A Shot of Reality

Let's see if we can get this straight: officials are using the results of a recent study to give the impression that two out of three UNC students don't drink alcohol.

On the other hand, the Chapel Hill five-oh arrested 46 people on 56 alcohol-related charges Sunday night during a sting of underage booze buyers.

Of those, 33 were college students. Nineteen of those go to UNC.

And the University says most students don't drink.

To be sure, the whole point of the "two out of three, .00 BAC" campaign is to stop students — such as the hapless 46 arrested Sunday — from drinking in the first place.

The discrepancy, though, is between the laws and reality. Young people drink. Duh.

Denying that is lunacy. Trying to keep booze out of students' hands is even dumber.

Remember Prohibition? That word should send bells ringing in anyone's head that regulating alcohol doesn't fix the problem.

It only makes it worse.

UNC isn't alone in its efforts to stop student drinking. Locally, both N.C. State and Duke universities are using a computer program called "Alcohol 101."

It allows students to enter virtual-reality bars and order drinks. The program then shows students what their blood-alcohol con-

tent would be after taking the drinks.

The N.C. General Assembly has jumped on the crackdown-on-drinking bandwagon, too. Lawmakers last month stiffened the penalty for 19- and 20-year-olds caught with alcohol. What used to be a simple infraction is now a Class III misdemeanor that carries up to a \$500 fine.

Taken together, these efforts show just how serious society is about curbing drinking in general and underage drinking in particular. Nothing happens in a vacuum, and that's why UNC is so bent on stopping drinking.

But even if state lawmakers won't wake up and smell the coffee, the University with all its wealth of smart folks should — and that means conceding that students drink.

Sunday night's sting proved that. Officials should stop deluding themselves.

If the honest-to-God truth is that 66 percent of students don't drink, fine. As the G.I. Joe cartoons said, knowing is half the battle.

A better approach would be for UNC to provide information about the risks of drinking to those who are considering it and offer counseling for those who abuse it.

As long as there's a legal age, there will be underage drinkers. As long as there are colleges, there's going to be drinking.

And despite legal ages and penalties, people will decide on their own to drink or not.

Clearly Overkill

In light of the recent wave of violence sweeping the nation's schools, office buildings and even day-care centers, it is clear that something needs to be done to protect the children.

But what is less apparent is the answer to the question of when excessive caution becomes a problem.

Schools nationwide have been installing metal detectors, requiring students to wear or carry identification badges and even banning backpacks in their efforts to keep guns out.

One local school, A.L. Stanback Middle School in Hillsborough, has adopted a different take on the backpack ban, mandating that students carry transparent backpacks made of clear plastic or mesh.

The intention is good, but we don't need to turn our schools into prisons, and we don't need to treat all children as if they are budding criminals.

What's next? Clear clothing? It would certainly prevent students from carrying guns in their pockets, but it would at the same time mean that hormonally charged middle-schoolers would be walking the halls naked, paying more attention to each other than to

their studies.

When not carried to their logical end, bans and restrictions on backpacks seem like good ideas. But they have the potential to aggravate the problem.

Face it, kids will be kids. And kids like to break rules.

Harsh restrictions to keep children from sneaking guns into schools could backfire in a big way. The rules present a challenge, and kids will be tempted to sneak a gun, be it a toy or the real thing, into the classroom to see if the new rules can be broken.

The preventive measures being taken by schools across the nation are nothing more than remedies designed to cure a symptom of a much larger problem.

Real change will not occur just because school children have to carry ID badges and tote around clear bags.

While those measures might help trim the number of massacres that happen in the nation's classrooms and on its playgrounds, they will not stop the underlying cause.

For that to occur, a fundamental societal change must take place. Let's not hamper that with precautions that become problems.

Get Your Name in Print

The Daily Tar Heel wants to represent the voice of all its readers — from students to professors to university workers to panhandlers on the street.

A great way for that to happen is for you — yes, you — to put pen to page and submit a guest column to appear on this very page. You can take advantage of this opportunity every day the DTH hits the newsstands. Call Editor Rob Nelson or Editorial Page Editor Scott Hicks at 962-0245.

If art is more your thing, apply to be a cartoonist. Come by Student Union Suite 104 before Aug. 27.

BAROMETER

Board This!

The Carrboro Board of Aldermen's identity crisis continues. May we suggest the Carrboro Board of Chumps? Or maybe they should just kick the women out and it won't even be an issue.

So(da) Long ...

The joy of cola is no more — Lenoir Dining Hall, the last oasis for Pepsi lovers on campus, has ditched the taste of the next generation for Coke. Cheers to the real thing?

Of Rush and Rom

God bless technology — UNC's sorority houses now have a computer program to match rushees to houses. Does it take into account hair color, bust size and number of tank-tops?

Welcome Change

Department of University Housing officials say there won't be any construction in residence halls this year. Maybe we'll be able to sleep past 6:30 a.m. this year without backhoes rumbling outside.

TAR HEEL QUOTABLES

"It's a very emotional period."

CHI OMEGA PRESIDENT LEIGH MARCUS
On fall rush. Yeah, Leigh, and so is being buried in an earthquake, ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and being shot at school or the office.

"These buildings are going to be dramatically nicer than the rest of the buildings on campus."

VICE CHANCELLOR FOR STUDENT SERVICES DEAN BRESCIANI
On plans for new residence halls. Whoa, do you really mean to say that those beautiful South Campus high-rises aren't the best residence halls on campus?

"The young people that we met (Sunday night) were pleasant. Nobody got hurt."

CHAPEL HILL POLICE CHIEF RALPH PENDERGRAPH
On a weekend bust of underage booze buyers. Makes you wonder how often the cops rough up those undergrads.

"(At age 18) teenagers are ... old enough to get married. Why can't they, if they want to, buy alcohol?"

N.C. SEN. HAM HORTON JR., R-FORSYTH
Even Republicans make a damned good point once in a while.



SUV Appeal Stems From Penis Envy

Some years ago, a car commercial ran on TV that depicted a flock of geese flying over a field. Suddenly, the background shifted, and they were flying inside a Buick sedan.

The gist of the accompanying voice-over was this: "Americans love big things, so here's a big car for them."

It seemed innocent enough. After all, who doesn't need a little extra room to stretch out in the car?

Flash forward to the present, however, and the demand for larger automobiles seems a little more insidious.

Carmakers haven't confined their augmentations to the interiors of vehicles (or even to cars, for that matter).

Instead, they're adding on where the frills will be most noticeable — the outside. As a result, sport-utility vehicles are at the forefront of a sickening new trend in American consumerism.

All Americans know that Ronald McDonald makes a better apple pie than mom, just as everyone knows that Wal-Mart is the convenient alternative to the grocer, tailor and bric-a-brac shop.

So why disparage a product like the sport-utility vehicle, which also exists solely on the basis of the public's demand for them?

Because SUVs are more than just a result of market forces. They are indicative of deeper defects in the collective American psyche, namely, the inability of the bourgeoisie to think socially.

Practical cars seem to have gone the way of the dinosaur as far as the middle-class is concerned. The bottom line in car buying is that bigger is almost never better, and yet there are waiting lists for some of the most popular SUVs.

Many of the people willing to shell out for these monstrosities rationalize their purchase with such excuses as needing a large towing capacity or off-road capabilities.

Some even insist that they need room for



JOSH FENNEL
CAUSTIC CORNER

several passengers. Here's a tip: Buy a minivan. Even better, take the bus. It may not have a great stereo system, but it seats 60.

Besides, at a base sticker price of \$27,396, it's a safe bet that nobody is four-wheeling in a Jeep Grand Cherokee.

For that same 27 grand, a poor family could have bought a house. Maybe not in a neighborhood littered with sport-utility vehicles, but hey, who wants to live with people who are so easily ordered about by popular culture anyway?

Larger-than-average vehicles are more than socially irresponsible; they're also a danger to everyone on the road.

Every driver who has been behind one knows that SUVs block out a great deal of visibility for other drivers, making it nearly impossible to pass or to judge stopping distances.

Also, while it is well-known that SUVs provide excellent protection for their drivers, it is a rarely discussed fact that when an SUV and a car collide, the driver of the smaller vehicle is probably going to die or at least be badly injured.

Running a stop sign no longer results in a fender-bender; it now ends in a trip to the morgue.

As a matter of fact, Ford had to install a four-foot steel bar under its newest SUV to prevent it from driving over a car in an accident.

That's not just death; it's decapitation. Such

disregard for fellow humans is more than just the consequence of greed or stupidity — it's ghoulish and perverse, and it indicates a willful desire to harm others.

With all of the facts in mind, it would seem that SUVs are both the problem and instruments of a larger one: the drivers who own them.

Naturally, those drivers would be men. Let's not kid ourselves — when the words "bad" and "driver" are used together, we are usually speaking of men or little boys masquerading as such.

But, oddly enough, the perusal of any busy intersection yields this fact: The majority of SUV drivers are women.

How did that happen? Why would a woman want to drive something so obviously useless and obnoxious?

The answer is this: penis envy. Fact is, women want to be men and vice versa. In exercising her new-found rights at the turn of the century, the American woman, though still bound by myriad taboos and the influence of a husband, is attempting to distinguish herself from faceless and silenced generations of the past.

And the way she does that is by exerting her will on others, specifically men. Freud would have it that the SUV phenomenon is the expression of an inferiority complex generated by the lack of a phallus.

In the "mine is bigger than yours" game, the winner now can be a woman, since middle-class, homebound wives have both plenty of disposable income and no other means of power.

As Simone de Beauvoir wrote in her book "The Second Sex," when a woman responds to being humiliated by men through "masculine protest," she masculinizes herself.

Those who own cars had better watch out.

Josh Fennell is a junior biology major from Charlotte. You can send hate mail to fennell@email.unc.edu.

Take Advantage of Safety Services

As we begin another school year, we all have a lot on our minds: buying books, getting those last minute classes, catching up with old friends.

But there is one more thing we should all think about. Over the past few days, two assaults have occurred on campus.

While we are all aware that these things happen, too often we think that they will not happen to us. Unfortunately, incidents like this can happen to anyone, even when you think you are being safe.

These things are not caused by the actions of the victim; they are the result of disturbed individuals who absolutely do not belong on this campus.

In light of all of this, we can all take precautions to better protect ourselves and others. The University has responded to these unfortunate assaults in several ways. After the incidents, we implemented an emergency alert system as soon as we could.

Administrators made the first calls to a pre-arranged residence hall phone tree, so that someone in each residence hall knew what had happened and alerted residents.

They also used a similar phone tree to contact all Greek houses, so that people living in the houses could not only take extra precautions themselves, but inform anyone who was coming over to the house for a social event or to visit friends.

NIC HEINKE AND MONIKA MOORE GUEST COLUMNISTS

Finally, University officials used a database to send a mass e-mail message to users of the University e-mail system informing them of what had occurred and listing certain safety tips.

University Police also responded quickly. Along with recruiting help from extra officers and informing Point-2-Point drivers to not refuse anyone a ride, they swept all of the bars and late-night establishments on Franklin Street and informed owners, bouncers and some club patrons of the incident.

These efforts were done in hopes that people on or near Franklin Street would make a special effort to see that no one was walking home alone.

Student government took a few steps as well.

We contacted all resident assistants in Granville Towers and asked them to inform their residents.

Also, we went door-to-door at bars and fraternity houses that looked especially crowded, reminding them of the incident and asking them to be safe when returning home.

The University is doing all it can to ensure our safety, but we must also play a part. While not foolproof, there are certain things which we can do to reduce our risk.

■ Ride P2P. If you are not near a P2P Xpress stop, call for a van to pick you up. While we all get in a hurry and sometimes do not want to wait, it is always worth a few extra minutes to get home safely.

■ Use SAFE Escort to get home if you are in the library late.

■ Use the buddy system. There is safety in numbers; do not walk anywhere alone!

■ Stay in well-lit areas, and know the locations of emergency call boxes near you.

■ Do not let strangers into residence halls — the main entrances are locked for a reason! While we have all heard these before, we must realize that this is not an arbitrary list.

Being on such a peaceful campus, we often fall into a false sense of security. But bad things do happen.

If you have questions, or suggestions of other things we could do, please call the student government office at 962-5201.

Remember, nothing is more important than your safety.

Reach Student Body President Nic Heinke at nheinke@email.unc.edu. Reach Student Body Vice President Monika Moore at monika1@email.unc.edu.