



JEFF SMITH
OPINION EDITOR

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Welcome to the opinion page

I didn't really expect to have this job, to be honest. I certainly don't have the normal qualifications for it; I've only been on the editorial board for two semesters, I haven't met either mayor, and I just met the Chancellor for the first time Monday. I'm not a journalism major, and I'll be joining the freshmen recruits for basic reporter training this semester.

So when I applied, it wasn't because I thought I'd end up writing this column. I was more concerned with using my application to influence the future opinion editor's approach to the editorial board. I was concerned that the many positive changes my predecessor, Chris Cameron, made to the day-to-day functioning of the editorial board would be lost if I didn't make an argument for keeping them.

When Joe Schwartz wrote me to tell me I had gotten the job, I thought he had sent the wrong e-mail.

But here I am. And as long as I'm here — which, admittedly, may be not for very long given the average lifespan of a DTH opinion editor — I'm going to do the best I can to make reading this page worth your time.

So what can you expect? Well, most things will say the same, but a few things will change:

■ I have a firm belief that the editorial board has a higher purpose than telling people what seven college students think about the news. This year's board editorials will be better informed. Our goal is to make strong, convincing arguments for the best course of action. You might not always agree with us, but we hope to get you thinking.

■ There will be four columns this semester; the Wednesday space will be left open for guest columns. Anyone can submit one: Just e-mail 500 words to us and we'll print the best submissions.

■ Letters to the editor will continue as always, but we'll be replacing the normal letters column on Friday with a new feature that allows you to vent. You can e-mail one or two sentences about anything you want to editdesk@unc.edu and we'll run it in the paper. You can sign it, or we can run it anonymously ... it's your choice. We just want to give people a chance to get things off their chest without having to write a 200-word letter. Tell us whatever's on your mind, no matter how trivial.

■ Viewpoints will now run every other Friday. On the Sunday nights following the Viewpoints issues, Schwartz will be hosting a radio talk show from 5 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on WYXC, 89.3 on the FM dial. I'll be there along with the two guest writers to discuss the issue and take your calls.

■ The vast majority of you will remember that we had some ... controversy ... last year. In fact, between the Jillian Bandes affair and the Muhammad cartoon, some would argue that the back page earned a reputation for being downright inflammatory. Will we do it again this year?

I don't know, honestly. I'm not looking to offend anyone, but I support the columnists' and cartoonists' right to have opinions. If the opinion serves some purpose beyond merely inciting anger, even if I completely disagree with it, I will print it.

That said, I will also offer those with opposing opinions every opportunity to respond.

■ Finally, a plea: We need more cartoonists. So if you have a talent for drawing your opinions, draw up a sample cartoon and e-mail it to us or drop it off at the office.

That's what I have so far; if you have any concerns about the opinion page now or at any time in the future, feel free to e-mail me.

This is your opinion page. Between letters, guest columns, viewpoints and the radio show, there are plenty of ways to make your voice heard.

So get writing.

KNOW YOUR EDIT BOARD

JOSEPH SCHWARTZ
EDITOR IN CHIEF
CHAPEL HILL, N.C.
SENIOR,
JOURNALISM



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As DTH editor, Joseph Schwartz has a seat on the board but has chosen to waive his right to vote. He will sit in on editorial board meetings to better inform the board and act as a resource for members.

JEFF SMITH
OPINION EDITOR
SURF CITY, N.C.
JUNIOR,
POLITICAL SCIENCE/CLASSICS



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Jeff Smith is serving his third semester on the editorial board, and his first semester as opinion editor. Smith is responsible for all opinion page content. He is also a member of the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies.

JESSICA SCISM
ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITOR
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Jessica Scism is serving her fourth semester on the editorial board, and her first semester as associate opinion editor. She aids Smith in overseeing the staff. She is also a member of Campus Crusade for Christ.

SCOTT SPILLMAN
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Scott Spillman is serving his second semester on the editorial board. In addition to being a Robertson Scholar, he is also a former copy co-editor.

JESSICA JOHNSON
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Jessica Johnson is serving her first semester on the editorial board. She is also a member of Conservative Women's Voice and the UNC College Republicans.

BRANDON MAYNARD
BOARD MEMBER
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Brandon Maynard is serving his first semester on the editorial board. He is a member of both the Dialectic and Philanthropic Societies and Campus Crusade for Christ, and he is also a former DTH photographer.

MEGHAN MORRIS
BOARD MEMBER
RALEIGH, N.C.
JUNIOR,
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Meghan Morris is serving her first semester on the editorial board. She is the co-chairwoman of Feminist Students United.

MAGGIE REHEL
BOARD MEMBER
CINCINNATI, OHIO
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SOCIOLOGY/POLITICAL SCIENCE



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Maggie is serving her first semester on the editorial board. She is the chairwoman of APPLES and a member of Campus Y and Habitat for Humanity. She is also a former DTH summer columnist.

DTH needs your input to serve as campus advocate

I never really knew what a public editor was, and I should have known better than anyone. I used to write letters to the editor like it was my job, and now it sort of is. As public editor I am separate from the rest of the staff, and I'm a reader just like you. It is my job to simply take the thoughts and critiques of the readers and bring them to the newspaper staff members, enabling them to better satisfy their audience.

Last year one of my major gripes with The Daily Tar Heel came when then-editor Ryan Tuck proclaimed that he would print a middle school newspaper article in our pages because he thought the school administrators were depriving the students of their right to a free press. The article was being



REUBEN BAKER
PUBLIC EDITOR

kept out of the middle school's paper to protect the anonymity of a few students who had been charged with assault.

This might have been an interesting bit of news, but I felt that the middle school's article had no business on my front page taking up valuable space for a more important news story. That issue struck a chord with me, but I didn't feel like I could do anything about it.

Now I want to be that person

for you — no matter your gripe.

My point is that this is our paper. We should get what we want. Last year's paper at times lost sight of its duty to serve the readers. But I am assured that this year will be different.

This year brings an entirely new newspaper staff. Although many of them have worked here before, they are working new positions and under new leadership. And they are ready to improve The Daily Tar Heel so that it can once again be the best university newspaper.

But the paper cannot improve without two things. First, the leadership must be open to criticism, and see it as their opportunity to improve and become an even better paper. I have talked to Editor Joe Schwartz extensive-

ly and have become familiar with each desk's specific mission. They all have the goal of serving the readers and giving us what we want at the top of their list of priorities. I will do my best to make sure the newspaper staff stays on track and sticks to its goals. And I will do my best to express the opinions of the public to the staff so they can better serve us.

The other thing that is necessary is your criticism. No matter how insignificant you think your criticism may be, it is important that the newspaper staff works to satisfy its readers the best it can — because that's its job.

I will be doing my best to go around to different campus organizations to hear their opinions on the newspaper and on their representation in it. If you feel that the

paper's portrayal of your organization is unfair or your organization is simply not getting enough press, let me know. They want to be accurate and fair, but they can't unless they know how you feel.

To give the paper the criticism necessary for improvement, I need to hear from you — the readers. Whether you want to see more Sudoku, or you want to know where the Chipotle restaurant that the paper reported was coming to town is located, or you want to see an article about Wes Miller, tell me. I'll make sure your voice is heard.

Contact Reuben Baker, a junior public policy major at rbaker@email.unc.edu. He will write a column on the first Wednesday of every month.