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# The Daily Tar Heel

87th year of editorial freedom

## Election hypochondria

Most of us who ail from time to time know that it makes sense to seek a second opinion, especially if the first diagnosis is costly or unpalatable. Sometimes, though, the maxim of seeking second opinions can be carried too far. As most hypochondriacs learn, all the searching in the world often won't produce the desired verdict. But curiously enough, some continue to search.

It seems once again that election hypochondria has infected campus politics at Carolina. The first symptoms appeared the night of Feb. 5, when the Campus Governing Council hastily proposed a counter-referendum to the newly passed constitutional amendment guaranteeing control of certain student activity fees to the Graduate and Professional Student Federation. The student Elections Board responded quickly; its prompt attention, though, failed to prevent the wound from festering, and the infection spread to other parts of the student body elections held Feb. 13.

The latest symptoms were confirmed Friday when two University law students asked the Student Supreme Court to void the results of two referendums passed Feb. 13. The symptoms are peculiar; they have appeared only in the referendums (one calls for a new student fee to finance an expanded intramural and recreational sports program; the other allows the Campus Governing Council to increase its membership to as many as 30 representatives) and not in other election results. Election hypochondria is a strange affliction indeed.

But before the court can prescribe any treatment, it must first decide in a pretrial hearing Thursday if it can examine the complainants' arguments. It is unclear if persons other than candidates are constitutionally able to approach the court with complaints.

Whatever the diagnosis of the court, the newest outbreak of election hypochondria suggests that the court should take steps now to prevent future outbreaks—or even epidemics. It seems that it recently has become a tradition at Carolina to petition the court to decide the results of elections. Perhaps we are naive, but as we understand it, the whole point of democracy and elections is for everyone to accept the will of the majority. When irregularities occur in determining exactly what that majority is, there are avenues of recourse, like appealing to the Student Supreme Court. But the privilege of appeal should not be abused simply to make a final desperate try to recoup pet political losses.

The court has its hands full for the time being, and it will be hard pressed to devise a remedy for the election ills that promise to again plague Carolina. But a vital first step toward developing potent medicine for election hypochondria can be taken Thursday: The court should confirm the opinion registered by voters on Feb. 13.

## Some record

Now that the suspense is all over and the political smoke has cleared a bit, it seems that John R. Ingram is not running for governor, not running for lieutenant governor and not running for U.S. senator. He is running for re-election as insurance commissioner. It would be better for North Carolina if he were running for the hills.

As the state's commissioner of insurance since 1973, Ingram has made considerable progress in attracting a political following. He appears to have done little else. Although he managed to convey the impression of working in the interest of consumers by tying up insurance industry requests for rate increases in the state's courts, the record shows that the N.C. Court of Appeals allowed his rulings to stand in only one of 14 cases that were not appealed to or ruled on by the N.C. Supreme Court. On cases that did reach the high court, Ingram's position was upheld in only one minor case out of 10. By abusing his power, Ingram provoked the N.C. General Assembly into passing legislation that stripped the commissioner's power to halt rate increases until they are ruled on in court. In the long run, consumers probably will suffer from the effects of Ingram's two terms in office.

The scathing criticism of Ingram by his opponents in the insurance commissioner's race is politically motivated, of course, but the deeply personal nature of the campaign is indicative of the enmity that has characterized Ingram's relationship with his top aides. Nevertheless, seven chief deputy commissioners and more than 10 other top Ingram aides have quit or been fired since he took office seven years ago. Political loyalty to Ingram appears to have been an important hiring and firing guidepost in the N.C. Department of Insurance.

It will be interesting to see whether Ingram's considerable political savvy can make voters forget his record.

## The Daily Tar Heel

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## letters to the editor

# Will a stricter curriculum be stronger?

To the editor:

The editorial "Leadership 101" (DTH, Feb. 18) was right to recognize and criticize the dangerous opinions on student involvement made by Boston University President John Silber. However, we would like to object to what is implicit in the editorial with regards to the Thornton Report and student involvement with it.

Leadership development, while doubtlessly important, is far from being the only issue involved in this controversy. A curriculum and a curriculum change involves broader goals than that. Unfortunately, exactly what the goals of this university are for undergraduates are not clear nor are they well agreed upon. Without a clear and widely agreed upon statement of educational goals and an equally plain philosophical basis for those goals, any attempt to evaluate and change curriculum is destined to be a failure.

The point should be made that this is the level at which students must get involved with curriculum change and the Thornton Report. Students are already involved in the process of what the editorial called working out the details through seats on the subcommittees working toward a second draft of the report.

This is not enough, however. Individual students must ask themselves: What are the goals of this University for undergraduate education and what sort of a curriculum will best serve those goals?

Only after considering these questions can students, faculty and administration begin working toward reshaping our curriculum. Right now, however, it is not at all clear to us that the Thornton Report presents the answers to our supposed curriculum problems, nor is it readily obvious exactly what those problems are. It may not be the case that a stronger curriculum is a stricter curriculum.

J.B. Kelly  
Student Body President

Jeff Koeze  
Student Government Academic Procedures Chairman

### Priorities illustrated

To the editor:

According to supporters of the recently passed referendum calling for an increase in student fees for expansion of intramural and recreational sports programs, one of the benefits we can expect to enjoy is extended operating hours at Woolen Gym on weeknights and weekends.

If fact, with these new times, Woolen Gym will be open more hours each week than Wilson Library. For anyone who couldn't already see it, this illustrates the firmly established priorities of this fine institution: Athletics come before academics.

Timothy B. Brown  
Curriculum in Ecology

### Defending freedom

To the editor:

Barbara Olasov does not speak for all young men and women in "Not again," (DTH, Feb. 13)—or at least not for me.



Although we young men and women may not want to participate in a war, some of us have the loyalty, courage and love of our freedom and civil rights to do so if called upon. It is these rights that a totalitarian regime such as that of the Soviet Union encroaches upon—remember?

It is attitudes like Olasov's that have dropped our country from the position it holds (or used to hold) as a defender of freedom. I also am opposed to war—but not at the expense of endangering my freedom and my country's sovereignty.

Mark Carpenter  
102 Graham

### Thanks, Jane

To the editor:

Having just digested a little breakfast and the Feb. 18 issue of *The Daily Tar Heel*, I would like to commend Jane Morley for developing a feel for the nuances of good brinkmanship.

Having been in Chapel Hill for eight months now, I have not noticed any writers that have exhibited as wide a range of genuine personality and human flavor as Morley has in her contributions to the DTH. A sincere thank you, Jane, for the high personal and journalistic quality of your articles and the enjoyment and food for thought you give DTH readers.

John Kalmar  
E-1 The Villages

### Guaranteed housing

To the editor:

In reference to the letter "Just compensation," (DTH, Feb. 4), I sympathize with Russell Lookadoo on his views towards the quadrupled and tripled freshmen of the University.

However, I do not agree wholeheartedly with his idea of guaranteeing only this particular group room to live on campus next year.

I, being a student at Carolina, propose that the University do something concerning this overcrowded situation. Seemingly to have enough money to finance the building of new athletic facilities and for another library, I am sure the University can manage to find enough funds to build some new housing.

In my opinion the University owes the student body the opportunity to be able to live on campus. The University should take in view the fact that many students who attend Carolina cannot afford to live off campus.

In the future I hope Carolina becomes more concerned with the student need for increased housing quarters.

Gregory Jones  
207 Ehringhaus

### Chess club

To the editor:

I was dismayed to read "UNC takes College Bowl with win over Vanderbilt," (DTH, Feb. 19) and the vague reference to the UNC chess team also doing well in the tournament held over the weekend.

UNC sent four team members to the Region 5 ACU-I tournament and did extremely well. Maurice Dana, ranked third at the start of the tournament, was the clear winner in individual competition. Dana and Danny McKeithen combined to tie for first place in team competition, and Steve Williams tied for fourth place in individual competition and was instrumental in leading the B team to a fifth-place finish.

I believe that achievement in all areas should be recognized in *The Daily Tar Heel*, because it is the only source to tell how UNC students fare in all types of

competition.

Tim Galloway  
President  
UNC Chess Club

### Inform yourself

To the editor:

President Carter's proposal that both men and women be registered for the draft in the near future affects us all. Whether one wants to accept the draft, the situation warrants our attention. The possibility of women being in the military alongside men is something women here on campus need to research individually.

The Naval ROTC program is bringing Brig. Gen. Margaret Brewer, director of public affairs for the U.S. Marine Corps, to speak to midshipmen at 12:30 p.m. Thursday in 104 Howell Hall. Brewer, the first and currently only female general in the Marine Corps, will answer questions on the military. Take advantage of this unique opportunity to ask questions and become informed.

Ann Merrill Benjamin  
Alice M. Thomasson  
Association for Women Students

## Letters?

*The Daily Tar Heel* welcomes columns and letters to the editor. For prompt publication, submissions must be typed triple-spaced, typed on a 60-space line and signed. The writer's address should be included and each column should be accompanied by the writer's year, major and hometown.

# Hitching: World's second-oldest profession

By TED GOLDMAN

Hitchhikers, it seems, have been getting a bad rap lately. Attendance figures for interstate hitchhiking, dutifully compiled by the N.C. Highway Patrol and the Interstate Commerce Commission, show an average yearly decline of 2.7 percent per highway mile since statistics were first kept in 1924—the year that J.E. Hoover gained the throne of the FBI.

The figure is a net decrease; it obviously does not include those who had their careers struck short while in the line of duty—run over by drunken drivers, shot by robbers or killed by exposure in the deserts of Utah or in the snow of the Dakotas while waiting for a ride.

Hoover was not a man distinguished by rhetorical excesses, but concerning hitchhikers he evidently was driven to new heights of passion, resolving "to keep tabs once and for all on those pernicious parasites of the road." Remains of Hoover's somewhat biased views and quality alteration still can be seen in the ICC's yearly publication *The Hitcher*, subtitled *Facts about Society's Biggest Bane*.

Understandably intrigued that any federal organization actually would compile data on hitchhiking, I finally tracked down T.H. Speed, a sergeant in the N.C. Highway Patrol's Division of Highway Hazards. Speed was distinctly professional as he explained his mode of operation.

"Well son," he said, "I get in my car and drive around a few interstates and see how many hikers I see. I make two categories: them that look bums, tramps or students and them that look respectable."

But counting hitchhikers, the sergeant told me, was only a minor part of his job. "Mainly I deal with other hazards found on the road, like PCB's and dead cows."

Tell that to ace hitcher Alfredo Fettucini, however, and you might find a thumb sticking down your throat.

"Ignorance, ignorance, sheer ignorance," he fumes. "Why, most people don't know the first thing about hitchhiking, but they"—he stops to gesture emphatically with his middle finger—"they all got an opinion. 'No sir,



DTH/Scott Sharpe

they say, 'you won't find me stopping for anyone. If they're too lazy to own a car, hell, let them walk.'"

Alfredo crosses his arms defiantly, and then, seeing that I am sympathetic to his cause, relaxes. "You see," he says, lowering his voice and continuing more gently, "it's a little-known but well-documented fact. After prostitution, hitchhiking is the world's oldest profession." I told him that I had always assumed it was plumbing or door-to-door sales.

"But no fool, it's hitching," Alfredo fairly thundered. Years of hitching—Alfredo will have logged one million miles after seven more cross-country trips—have worn his nerves razor thin. But if you can tolerate his erratic disposition, typical for a seasoned hitcher who sees his spirits rise and fall more than 500 times a day as potential lifts approach and then-agh-pass him by, Alfredo is a world of information:

"Herodotus, you see, tells about the great Athenian Solon who traveled to the court of Egypt. How did he get there? Why, as Herodotus says: 'Solon found himself upon a ridge, tired and thirsty, he made to put his arm to a passing caravan, who, having nothing better to do,

stopped to pick him up! And Geoffrey and Moremouth, busy studying for the priesthood when the Second Crusade left for the Holy Land, hitched a ride with an Arab merchant two years later, and caught up with the Second Crusade, just as they were entering Jerusalem."

Alfredo's eyes were twinkling, but like the modern ballad goes, there was no stopping him now.

For hours I was regaled with tantalizing tidbits of what Alfredo called "the world's most misunderstood profession." Hell, I never realized you could enjoy hitching. I'd always seen it as a necessary chore, a way from here to there when one's pockets were lined with everything but cash.

At times Alfredo would wax rhapsodic, recalling his own past moments on the road when "an inexpressible floodgate of joy would well up inside of me whenever the driver and I achieved that most perfect communion of hearts and minds, which only the anonymity of the road can create."

Several years ago, Alfredo and a few other veteran hitchers had tried to organize a hitchhiking convention in Normal, Ill. The choice of location was no doubt intended to symbolize the

hitcher's most fervent hope: that he was, in fact, a normal human being and not some creature in a zoo to be gaped at by passing drivers.

But it was destined to fail. Hitching in from all parts of the country, the delegates all arrived at different times. Hitchers are naturally disinclined to stay in one place very long, being always told by the authorities to "MOVE ON!" and so there were never more than a dozen hitchers there at the same time.

It would have been a wonderful conference, Alfredo told me. Seminars were planned on every thing from the baggage controversy (suitcase or pack?) to the particular subtleties of nighttime hitching, to interpreting the bizarre gestures that many motorists make as they pass you by.

Most often, they simply mean, "I'm turning up ahead." But Alfredo knew one hitcher who swore that a passing driver gestured to him—in 2.6 seconds of eye contact available at 60 miles per hour—that "My wife is in labor, I'm on my way to the hospital, I would stop ordinarily, in fact I did stop the last time this happened, but we arrived at the hospital too late, and I'm not taking that risk again. Sorry."

I began to see that provincial attitudes towards hitchhiking—that it was parasitic, dangerous, even, God forbid, immoral—were dead wrong. The failed to appreciate the depth and variety of riches to be discovered in each driver and the unique sense of triumph that you, the hitcher, feel when you finally figure out what to talk about with the driver. Far from being the bane of the road, hitchers are its benison.

"For you see," as Alfredo so elegantly put it as he hitched a ride with me back into town, "Drivers don't stop to help you out, but rather to help themselves out, to have a free and captive body that will talk to them, cajole them, keep them awake."

"The hitcher-driver relationship," he grandly concluded, "is society's ultimate symbiosis."

Which sounded fine to me until, dammit, I ran out of gas, and learned another rule of the road: When the ride stops, the hitcher splits. I had to hitch to a gas station by myself.

Ted Goldman has hitchhiked to Durham—once.