

The Daily Tar Heel

94th year of editorial freedom

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Editorials

Martin's test a failure

"It seems profoundly inappropriate to think of the University's budget as though it contains millions of dollars of expendable items."

— Chancellor Christopher Fordham

Gov. Jim Martin and the State Budget Office don't seem to agree with this statement. Their order to prepare for a proposed 3 percent budget cut in the UNC system has caused an uproar among the system's academic leadership. And it may well be for naught.

Martin and the State Budget Office have requested that each institution in the UNC system present two budgets this Friday — one that includes all the funds needed from the state, and another reflecting the proposed 3 percent cut. Their reason is nothing more than to instruct the universities on how to exercise "fiscal management."

Professors are the ones who will be affected most. Department chairmen have already cited that the number of graduate assistants will decrease, as will time allotted research leave for professors. If a faculty member is burdened with an onerous workload, or has too little time to devote to

research, then the classroom performance will likely suffer also. This would surely have an adverse affect on students.

The search for the coming year's faculty must begin a year in advance. The hiring process fills positions vacated by professors who have retired or gone elsewhere. However, the University will not be notified until February if the budget cut will be levied. By then, many top-level professors will be headed for another university's classroom.

Subsequently, the quality of students UNC will attract may decline. There has been a rise in average SAT scores in the past year, indicating a higher caliber of students. These students are sought by many universities, and many will opt for a school with the financial support to provide the best education available.

Martin's request for a budget cut may only be a test, but it's a test with serious ramifications. The State Budget Office's cut-the-fat attitude treats the University as a private business. But the education of tomorrow's leaders deserves an approach that's concerned with more than the balance sheet.

Prisons create outside threat

A Central Prison inmate was recently sentenced for the fatal stabbing of a fellow prisoner. And while prison violence is almost expected, the testimony that came out in Mark A. Vechnak's hearing should concern those on the outside, too.

Vechnak, who was serving a sentence of life plus 14 years for rape, sexual offense and armed robbery, pleaded no contest to second-degree murder and received an additional six years behind bars. He stabbed inmate James E. Harris about 25 times Oct. 13, 1984. Harris died nine days later.

Vechnak's sentence was light because of circumstances which emerged during the hearing. He testified that Harris had repeatedly threatened to kill him or to rape him and make him his "boy." The testimony was supported by other inmates who said they had also been Harris' victims, or had heard him threaten the defendant. For Vechnak to seek help either from inmates or prison officials would have meant further harassment, he said. Finally, he couldn't take it anymore.

This is not a sympathy plea for Vechnak. But there is cause for concern which, ironically, was illustrated elsewhere at the same time as

Vechnak's hearing.

In a two-week period in Asheville, two women were raped, two others assaulted. The women later identified a suspect who was charged with two counts of first-degree rape, two counts of kidnapping, and one count of assault. The suspect had recently been paroled from Craggy Prison after serving eight years for rape.

Under the barbaric conditions described by inmates during Vechnak's hearing, such incidents are no surprise.

Violent criminals cannot be released and expected to once again become useful members of society after living under such conditions. Many would argue that violent criminals should be permanently imprisoned, but North Carolina is under federal mandate to reduce overcrowding now. That mandate makes the idea impossible, at least for the time being.

Whether or not the noble idea of rehabilitation is supported, North Carolinians must acknowledge the prison system's troubles. It needs immediate attention. And it will need money, whether for more prison facilities or for better conditions and rehabilitative programs.

But the funds would benefit those on the outside as well as the inmates.

Tar Heel Forum

Gravity: Newton never felt it like this

Ben Wysor
 Guest Writer

It has been over 80 years since man first flew, and boy howdy, things have changed. The Wright brothers' first flight lasted a mere 12 seconds. Nowadays airplanes can fly for hours and days on end, except when there are complications. And during the past few years, it seemed as if every flight had complications.

Last year was undoubtedly the worst year in aviation history, but it is not unexplainable. I can explain 1985's rash of air accidents in just one word: gravity.

From 1903 onward, planes became faster, heavier and more numerous, and began flying longer and higher. The skies became extremely crowded. At this time, gravity was thought to be a constant, something scientists can plug into a formula, like the speed of light. But little did scientists and aviators know that with each flight, precious gravity was being wasted.

As more and more gravity was destroyed, it became easier for such things as satellites and manned rockets to leave our planet. With these types of flights, huge amounts of gravity were destroyed. By 1985, it was taken for granted that flying was a simple and safe mode of transportation.

But during 1985, the earth was given a new and undetected dose of gravity. As Halley's comet made its way toward earth, it released shot after shot of gravitational force. It is obvious that Halley's comet is

a mass of unadulterated gravity, not dust and ice. It is powerful gravity, it is visual gravity, it is touchable gravity, it is gravity.

Because the gravity increase was unnoticed, aviators and such did not make the necessary adjustments for takeoffs and landings. Thus, as many final approaches were made, gravity sucked the planes down into concrete, fields, mountains and residential areas.

Another reason I believe gravity has become stronger is the increased number of diet plans that have been introduced in the past year. This is an illusion: people aren't getting heavier, they just think they are, because gravity is stronger and pulls on their bodies more than before.

According to anthropologists, man was short and fat up until the 20th century. (If you question this, refer to any art from centuries past and notice how corpulent the subjects were.) This chubbiness is understandable, for during this time there were no planes to diminish the abundance of gravity.

A question that some cynics might raise is how planes could have flown in the few years after 1909, considering the fact that

Halley's comet passed by the earth that year. Let me explain how the planes got airborne. It's simple: between 1903 (when the Wrights flew) and 1909, so few planes managed to get aloft that very little gravity was destroyed. Because of this, fluctuations in gravity had no effect on whether the planes took off.

Another point is raised here for the cynics to ponder: in 1909, when Halley's comet pelted the earth with another dose of gravity, how could man fly? Wouldn't it have been impossible for planes to get into the air if the earth received so much more gravity, even though it had not yet used up any? To these cynics I say imagine the earth as a beer mug and Halley's comet as a pitcher of beer. Just as the mug can hold only so much beer, the earth can hold only so much gravity. When Halley passed the pitcher in 1909, the earth's mug was full, so the extra beer — er, gravity — floated off into space. Kind of sporty, isn't it?

But there is really no reason to fear this new and improved gravity, because over the next year or so, many flights will be attempted and more gravity will be used up. Flight will once again be safe. That is, at least until 2063, when Halley's comet comes this way again.

Ben Wysor is a junior dropout who hopes to return to school and continue his studies in the field of gravity.

Airing concerns

To the editor:

If campus policies peeve you or if you are tired of the bureaucratic bump, the Grievance Task Force may have the solution for you. The GTF is an organization of the executive branch of Student Government that is designed to facilitate students in solving their own problems.

Our goal is to help students help themselves. The GTF will discuss the complaint with the student, offering him or her a plan of action. Depending on the grievance and the number of students it affects, the GTF may also work directly on the grievance. For instance, the GTF is researching the possibility of longer hours at Davis Library.

If you have a problem that you think is appropriate for the GTF, fill out a grievance form at the the GTF drop boxes at the Union desk, the exit of Davis, the Undergraduate Library and in Suite C of the Union. A member of the GTF will contact you within four working days to further discuss your grievance.

Last spring, members of the GTF met with key campus administrators and liaisons from various campus organizations. This served to lay the groundwork for this semester's grand opening of the GTF. If you would like to work with the GTF, have a grievance with which you would like our help or would like some more information on the GTF, stop by the Pit between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Wednesday or Thursday to talk to GTF representatives, or drop by Suite C.

KIM MCCOMBS
 Junior
 Sociology



Letters

Outrageous

To the editor:

I would like to point out a facet of the UNC experience which is only mildly amusing. The UNC Student Stores has some highly questionable practices besides the suspicious disappearance of book supplies in the more popular classes (done mainly to irritate students).

The stores sell used books for more than the new prices. These books might sell for a quarter at the local flea market. They also sell brand new books for more than the marked

prices with the excuse that the publishing firm increased the price. Sure, I'm positive that the firm will not take inflation into account and print the wrong price on every book they sell.

And finally, the stores are making a gross profit (excuse me) by selling complimentary copies of books (e.g. free copies) for used book prices. Take a look at the stamp under the "Another Quality Used Book" sticker on your Econ books. Does Waud know about this? Do the publishers see any of this money?

If anyone can answer these questions, please do. And if I can get a share of the profits,

I'll keep my mouth shut.

ROBIN MIZE
 Sophomore
 Journalism

For the Record

In the Sept. 23 issue of The Daily Tar Heel, an editorial said that the average SAT score for members of the 1986 freshman class, 1,085, is the highest in the University's history. It is the highest at the University since 1977; the highest was 1,150 by a freshman class during the 1960s.

The Daily Tar Heel regrets the error.

Pillow talk: respect your bedfellows

There is an issue that needs to be dealt with that lies on the lighter side of importance of our turbulent and not-so-soft issues today. It pertains to something that could be used to crack someone over the face with, but at the same time could hold the warm and delicate life of an infant on a brisk October night. And before sinking down into the treacherous breeches of poetic license while still hanging onto the subject at the same time, the issue here is, of course, pillows.

No one ever gives them a second thought. And very little respect is credited to their harmless lifestyle. But at the same time, a certain air of insecurity seems to come about whenever one brings up the issue of pillows within mixed company.

But everyone does have them. Some people have one, some have three or four. And I'm willing to guess that there are a few sickies out there that have five or even six tucked around them while dozing.

And what credit do pillows ever get? Wake up tomorrow and look around yourself. If a pillow is not tucked under the bed or crammed up against the wall, there'll probably be one or two folded painfully enough, four or five times over, wrapped under a knee somewhere.

The whole point of pillows is, of course, something soft upon which to lay your head. But there are some people that have these kinds that have about four or five cinder-blocks in them. Which I guess is fine, except you can always tell these people from others, because they walk to their 8 a.m. with half of their faces pressed in with a red tinge to their cheeks.

But apart from the context of the personal relationships people have with their pillows — taking them on trips, holding them in front of a movie on TV, etc. — there are those that feel the need to batter and abuse them, helpless as they may be. You may



Trip Park
 Staff Cartoonist

very well be a culprit also. Just think of the times you've punched them into the bedsprings after a swell exam or thrown them across the room after a spat with a date.

Yet, through it all, our pillows never get up and leave us. But what thanks do they get? They are left alone, disregarded by the world. And while some may have the decency to walk their dates home in the morning, pillows are neglected and never walked anywhere. In fact, some may never see outside the four walls of your bedroom.

And while comparing pillows to dates, there is another thing they have in common. While some girls can turn around on you and be just as cold as anything, I guarantee if a pillow is ever turned around, there is a coldness that we wouldn't trade for front row tickets behind Dick Crum during the Florida State game during the second quarter (if you know what I mean).

Maybe if we just looked at our pillows just a little differently the next time we slam face first into them, I think the world in general would be a better place in which to sleep. And when is the last time you woke up next to a pillow that had bad breath anyway?

Trip Park is a sophomore journalism major from Ithaca, N.Y.

The Daily Tar Heel

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Printing: The Chapel Hill Newspaper