

The Daily Tar Heel

94th year of editorial freedom

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Editorials

More counts than seniority

Why should longevity outweigh experience?

Republicans overrode party members on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Tuesday to vote in Jesse Helms, R-N.C., as the committee's ranking member. Originally, committee Republicans — in a unanimous vote — chose Richard Lugar, R-Ind., to be their chief spokesman. Lugar was foreign relations chairman for the past two years.

But Helms wanted the post. He won it — to the detriment of the committee, his party, and N.C. constituents.

Some people make the mistake of assuming Helms is not a politician, just a good ol' boy who stands on principle, regardless of the fact that he sometimes stands alone. In fact, that's how Helms has described himself.

But though he may lack the finesse of a conventional politician, the senator has tactics for getting his way. He's exercised his reputation as leader of the country's extreme right wing in such ways that even when he loses, he gains. (During his publicized opposition to the Martin Luther King Jr. federal holiday, Helms' rankings rose in pre-election polls.) And though it may not have been done with finesse, he has managed to convince senators that a vote against him would be a vote to undermine the seniority system used for committee appointments.

The understanding is that the party senator who has been in office longest

gets the desired appointment. Helms was elected four years before his opponent — but Lugar has served as committee chairman. Both men were appointed to the Foreign Relations Committee on the same day.

Lugar is much more likely to obtain bipartisan support for President Reagan's foreign policy than Helms, to whom compromise is profane. Helms' stands on principle and his personal integrity are admirable, but diplomacy is not his style. He has alienated many fellow senators.

Helms would have gained the Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairmanship in 1984 had he not promised farmers he would remain chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. One of Helms' strongest assets to constituents has been that position and his powerful lobbying on behalf of the N.C. Tobacco Program. Voters should watch that program's congressional support — Lugar, an opponent of the tobacco program, may become ranking member of the agriculture committee.

Lugar's qualifications and past experience as foreign relations chairman should have made senators realize the seniority system can be respected without being absolute.

No shrewd businessman, no research center and no university should promote individuals solely on the basis of longevity. Neither should Congress.

Drugs enter the fray

A few months ago, Lieutenant Colonel Oliver "Ollie" North was just doing his job as a staff member of the National Security Council. Today, he's the most controversial government official since Nixon. The press just can't seem to let Ollie live down his current celebrity status.

And if the Iran deal isn't bad enough, now members of the fourth estate have reported that Ollie is linked with a particularly nasty topic that the Reagan administration is very much adverse to — drugs.

Yep, that's right. It seems that last fall, federal drug investigators uncovered evidence that American plane crews carrying arms to the contras were smuggling cocaine and marijuana back to the United States.

Smuggling is an everyday occurrence in our country. But a member of one of the flight crews, when questioned by the Drug Enforcement Agency, claimed White House protection. He also mentioned Ollie.

It's no secret that Ollie was, at the time, in charge of the covert arms-

supply operation, and it certainly is no secret that Ollie is currently under intense congressional scrutiny.

But, when the drug smuggling discovery was made, Ollie enjoyed greater prestige than he currently holds, and the incident didn't receive much attention. However, given the current congressional investigative orgy taking place in Washington, the incident is belatedly receiving attention. It's attention that may be unnecessary and unfair.

Contrary to the crewman's warning, the White House didn't interfere with the smuggling investigation. Several government officials say the crewman's mention of Ollie's name was a bluff and that Ollie probably wasn't involved in the smuggling.

If true, this is comforting, because that's one less scandal that the executive branch and the nation must tackle. If by some chance Ollie was involved, then the press will need discretion to decide when enough is enough.

Ollie, we hope it's not true.

The Daily Tar Heel

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Tar Heel Forum

Let students vote with wallets

William Loeffler
 Guest Writer

As we once again approach student budget proceedings, we are confronted by the same old dilemma which has faced our elected student representatives in the past: which campus organizations should be funded by student fees and which should not.

Once the "worthy" organizations have been identified, the remaining task is to allocate the budget money among the groups in the way that the Student Congress deems appropriate. It all sounds so simple and straightforward that most of us probably do not think twice about the serious value judgments we leave in the hands of a small group of students.

But rarely do elected officials allocate the resources and funds of a given society in such a way as the society itself would do if permitted. The presence of highly vocal, special-interest groups, who can coerce officials into promoting their causes by threatening them with bad press, is one of the reasons for this difference. A hypothetical example on the UNC campus would be a representative against student funding of the Black Student Movement. He probably would be branded a racist, even if his arguments for defunding were based solely on economic or utilitarian motives. Thus, fear of damaging press might lead him to vote contrary to his own beliefs. In this we have two major problems, a distortion caused by the actions of special interest groups and the problem of effectively deciding which groups truly deserve money and in what amounts.

Some will say that we have elected our Student Congress precisely so that it can make value judgments for us, and this is true to some extent. It would not be feasible to have the entire campus vote on every issue. But in the case of student funded organizations, this is not only feasible; it would be both the most fair and the most

efficient method of allocating funds.

The students would simply vote with their wallets. All student funds presently allocated to campus clubs would be deleted from each student's bill. The student would be refunded the money which was previously distributed to the various campus organizations and would then be free to put his money towards whichever club or organization he wanted, or, if he wished, simply keep his money for some other use.

The fairness of this method is obvious. People would decide which groups are worthy of existing by allocating their money toward groups which fulfill their needs and wants, and they would remove their money from groups that do not fulfill their desires.

An example would be the Carolina Gay and Lesbian Association, which received approximately \$1,000 last year. There are hundreds of people on campus who are morally opposed to having their student funds allocated to this group. However, the members of this group also pay student fees and have a right to receive a sum that represents the student fees which they pay. By defunding all groups and refunding their money, the problem is solved. Those groups morally opposed to the CGLA receiving their funds are appeased, and the CGLA members have more money in each of their respective wallets to allocate toward their organization if they so choose.

Perhaps the most frequent argument heard in opposition to bringing the free market to student organizations is that the students themselves would not choose properly, that they are incapable of allocat-

ing their own money in a wise fashion. But if students at one of the most prestigious universities in the United States are not able to make socially redeeming choices with their finances, who can? It is especially distasteful that those on the Student Congress feel that they are in some manner more naturally endowed to allocate these funds than the student body at large.

What would be the results of such a radical change? There would probably be a realignment of influence of campus organizations. Those groups which are now receiving more from Student Congress than the market would allocate would experience a loss of influence. The opposite would be true for those groups now receiving less than students would otherwise allocate.

But student groups would be freer to fulfill their goals. Instead of having to prove to Student Congress every spring how useful their programs have been to the general campus, these groups will have the liberty to act in the manner that best serves the needs of their organizations.

Finally, the members of these organizations will learn efficiency and financial lessons. By having to raise all their own money, they will be much less likely to waste money on programs or projects for which there is not enough interest to justify the expense.

There will be serious opposition to such a proposal, but the students would gain. The losers would be those groups which are presently receiving more money than students themselves would allocate. It is time that Student Congress stop giving student money to special-interest organizations on campus and return the funds to the students so that they can utilize them in a manner that they consider beneficial.

William Loeffler is a senior economics major from Matthews.

Safety of children endangered

To the editor:

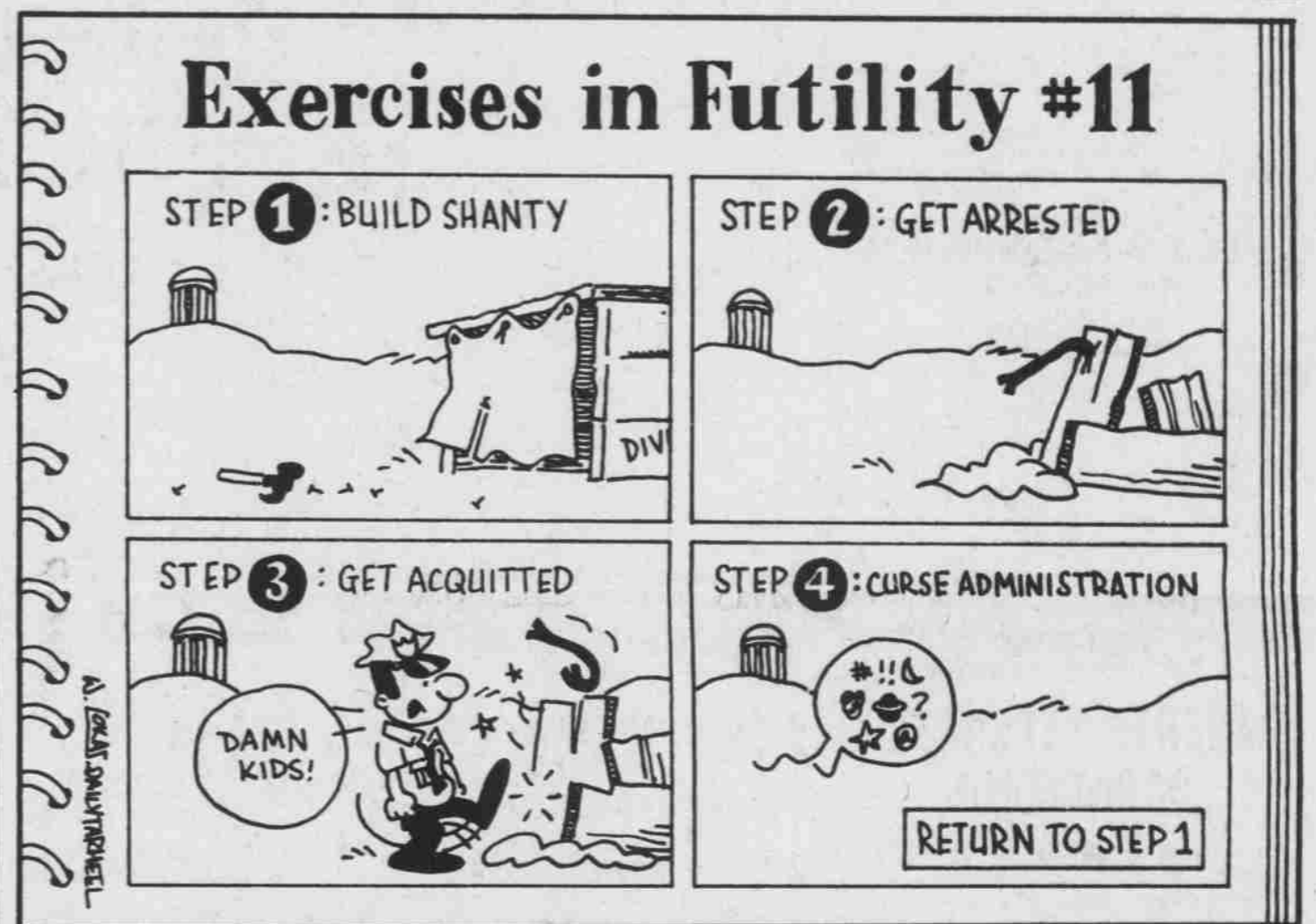
I am writing in opposition to the recent proposal of Kimley-Horn Associates, Inc. of Raleigh to construct, for the Educational Foundation, Inc., three new roads in the vicinity of Odum Village, the student family housing facility. I believe that the main concern of the Educational Foundation is to help alleviate the problem of long lines after events that take place in the new Dean E. Smith Center. Having been to a few of the events there myself, I understand this problem and have also been frustrated in not being able to easily bypass the long lines that usually occur.

I used to live on nearby Purefoy Road and often used Odum Village as a convenient passageway into campus. What I always noticed in walking, biking or driving through the area was the great number of small children who play there, occasionally running out into the street, innocently unaware of traffic, to retrieve a stray ball or other plaything.

The main concerns in this instance should not be how to make life easier for those of us who find a parking place close to the Center, but should instead be: (1) most importantly, the safety of the children living in Odum Village and (2) the quiet neighborhood atmosphere of the village. The area already has enough traffic, and adding any new roads can only jeopardize the marginal safety factor already existing there.

Another reason to reject the request is that, as I understand it, a large number of trees and are already in high demand, would have to be destroyed in order to have enough room to build the roads.

Some of those in support of the new request may argue that most of the events at the Smith Center occur at a time when most children would be in the safety of their apartments, some of the apartments, which



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- All letters/columns must be signed by the author(s). Limit of two signatures per letter or column.
- Students who submit letters/columns should also include their name, year in school,

major and phone number. Professors and other University employees should include their title and department.

- All letters/columns must be typed. (For easier editing, we ask that they be double-spaced on a 60-space line.)
- The Daily Tar Heel reserves the right to edit letters and columns for style, grammar and accuracy.

asleep. However, given the great number of reasons to object to such a proposal, I do not see how any such arguments justify building new roads when the roads are to be built only for the convenience of those lucky or wealthy enough to secure a parking place close to the new Center a small number of times a year.

DAVID WELLS
 Senior
 Biology

Less noise

To the editor:

Many of us may be familiar with the problems noise causes in the classrooms. Some might agree that noise is disruptive and takes away from class time,

but often it cannot be avoided. Take, for example, squeaky doors caused by late arrivals, sliding desks and flipping papers.

But there is the type of noise which can be avoided, and I am not referring to the girl beside you smacking her gum or the guy behind you clearing out his spiral notebook, page by page. This deals with the renovation of Venable Hall.

There is a high noise level maintained by the construction crews during class time — time we pay for. We should not have to strain to hear our professor speak, and our professor should not have to concern himself as to whether he is being audible or not. Many important and difficult courses are being taught in Venable Hall. It is important that stu-

dents do not miss important parts of any lecture.

Noise caused by the renovations is distracting and can affect student performance. I think the University should ensure that the loud, major construction jobs do not coincide with class times or perhaps have the classes moved to another, temporary location.

I understand the renovations are necessary, but if the University cannot find a solution and everyone starts pointing the finger elsewhere, it is going to be up to the students to do something about it. We pay for our education.

Next time, if noise outside of the classroom complicates or disrupts your class, complain!

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