

Editorial

Frats should clean up their act

After years of neglect, several fraternities have received their just rewards. During July the town of Chapel Hill began inspecting fraternities to check for housing code violations. At the time of this writing all of the fraternity houses that were inspected failed. The town inspector condemned each house.

During previous inspections the town issued warnings; evidently, these fraternities ignored the warnings. The necessary repairs were not completed; the brothers continued to allow the houses to rot.

Many fraternity members view the town's actions as authoritarian. What these guys fail to recognize is the town's legal right to require safe housing. They also fail to acknowledge fraternities' roles as representatives of the University.

Half of the fraternities are on Cameron Avenue, within two blocks of the historic entrance to the University. Frequently, a visitor's first image of the University is that of a dilapidated fraternity with a lawn littered with beer bottles and cans.

At a time when the Greek system is experiencing a resurgence, the structural integrity and appearance of most of the fraternity houses is worsening.

The buildings are old. They are frequently the site of huge parties; non-members trash the places. Daily maintenance is difficult. Repairs are prohibitively expensive. These excuses are frequently cited to explain the deterioration of fraternity houses.

The buildings are old, but generally repairs are possible. If a house is too dilapidated to be reparable, then no one should live in it. It should be demolished and a new one constructed on the site.

Repairs are expensive, but not impossible. The Sigma Phi Epsilon house was recently replaced. Both the Chi Phi and Phi Gamma Delta houses are currently undergoing renovations.

The fraternities must repair their houses or the town will step in and order the houses vacated, but money is needed. Many of these houses require over \$100,000 in repairs. Alumni should take the lead in fundraising drives, and funds should be raised to provide for maintenance as well as for immediate repairs.

If a fraternity does not have a respectable-looking house it is sorely lacking pride. It lacks respect for the University and town of which it is a part. It does not deserve to be associated with this University.

Veto the trade bill

Competitiveness is the newest buzzword in American politics. America's burgeoning trade deficit prompts frequent calls from politicians, business leaders, and labor officials for new trade laws to protect American industries. Competitiveness is the newest euphemism for protectionism.

Presidential candidates from both major parties frequently opine that U.S. corporations need to be more competitive; labor needs to be more productive; and government needs to foster more cooperation between business, labor and education.

If implemented, these goals would enhance the economy's performance — but intrinsic in most of these calls for action is an often under-stated desire to increase protectionism.

While the protectionists, led by Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-Missouri), claim the trade deficit is the result of unfair or even illegal actions by foreign governments, they overestimate the impact of these actions.

Simply put, American companies have an increasingly difficult time selling goods at home and abroad because "Made in America" is no longer universally recognized as a symbol of quality.

Numerous successful business leaders have challenged the effectiveness of the business establishment. H. Ross Perot, a self-made billionaire, personally challenged the stodgy mindset of General Motors. While he was a major stockholder and director of the corporation, he called on it

to produce quality products and to improve its marketing and service divisions. General Motors answered Perot's suggestions by telling him that he did not understand the automotive industry.

That may be true, but Perot understands business — he knows how to develop a quality product, produce it, sell it, and service it. And he knows how to make money in the process.

Perot and his fellow mavericks insist that if companies produce a better mousetrap, the world will beat a path to their doors. That is their solution to the trade deficit.

Business leaders, labor officials, and politicians frequently choose another solution. They decide that foreigners are guilty of unfair trade practices — so they push for protectionist measures.

Protectionist measures severely harm the American economy. For their incompetence, corporations are rewarded with a closed market. Prices increase. Quality decreases. Corporations, which need to improve their products and services, become less and less competitive. In the end, no one wins and the consumer is robbed.

The Congress is currently considering trade legislation. A protectionist bill is sure to come out of the House-Senate conference committee discussing the issue. Such a bill is widely supported in Congress; however, President Reagan has threatened to veto any protectionist bill. Let us hope he carries with this threat and puts an end to this foolishness.

The Tar Heel

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Off the Record

Will a new phone-in system heal the registration blues?

We all know that semester registration can be hazardous to mental health. Seasoned upper-classmen can tell horror stories about the ordeal — most of them having to do with long lines and unreasonable clerks.

There's a terrible sinking feeling that hits the pit of your stomach when you stop for cashier clearance (after standing in line for over an hour) and the cashier tells you that you've got an unpaid parking ticket and won't be allowed to register until you've paid it. This means, of course, another long line you've got to shuffle through at the cashier's office in Bynum Hall. And after that, it's back to the first line and the second attempt to get cashier clearance.

And we've all experienced the misery of getting closed out of crucial classes, and the nightmares of that bastion of futility, drop-add.

We all know the whole system is inefficient. We all dread it every semester.

But hey! University officials are saying they're going to fix everything. They've announced that they're going to get a revolutionary phone-in registration system . . . and there was

much rejoicing. No more registration headaches, no more drop-add woes. Right?

Wrong.

Imagine that it's fall of 1990, and the University has finally got this phone-in system all hooked up and ready to go. It's your week to register. You pick up the phone and call in.

The line is busy. Are you surprised?

After repeated calls, you finally get through. And the computer calmly informs you that the class you need to take in order to graduate is closed out. That's that.

This is just like picking up your schedule, or getting it in the mail. The results are the same. You didn't get the class you need, and now you'll have to go through drop-add . . . or find the course instructor and beg him to give you a place in the class. Nothing has changed, has it?

At least you don't have to stand in line — unless you've got an outstanding account. Then you've *still* got to go to Bynum Hall before the computer will accept your call.

If the pain persists, see your doctor.

