

Opinion

Housing's attitude leaves students out in the cold

Robert Ferris
Guest Writer

This is an open letter to Wayne Kuncel, director of the Department of University Housing:

I write in response to the very recent events concerning Teague Dormitory. To clarify my position, I have no desire to address that over which I have no ultimate control. Therefore, I do not presume to judge which Teague residents were at fault or what action should have been (or should be) taken in response.

What compels me to allow myself to be categorized as simply another reactionary, self-serving student are the logic and methods through which the decision to make Teague coeducational was arrived at. As you so directly stated in *The Tar Heel* ("Student leaders frustrated by lack of input," May 26) I, as a student government representative, do not "have a role in the final decision because (you) do not have to ask (me)

about administrative problems." In an institution of higher learning such as UNC-CH, which prides itself on its liberal arts education and its strong tradition of a university "community," this myopic viewpoint seems glaringly out of place.

It is ironic that such a horrific utterance comes from one whose title is that of director of housing and residential education, the most basic part of student life. Is this the type of education that is meant to be learned here at Carolina: to act according to one's own beliefs and desires regardless of those whom one's actions would affect? Is this how the students of this university can

expect to be treated and taught when we will be the leaders of a country priding itself on fairness and egalitarianism? I hope not.

During my years at UNC, I have been fortunate to witness and be a part of a steady strengthening of the relationship between the students and both the University administration and the town of Chapel Hill. These strides were accomplished through cooperation, respect and mutual understanding.

Since your decision to change Teague was made to send a message about housing's desire to control disobedience of its regulations, you can surely understand that my writing this is motivated by a quite analogous situation. Student Government cannot let this self-perpetuating wedge be driven between the administration and the students. We must work together for our goals, not against

each other. Thankfully, most other University departments actively recruit and consider student input in their decision-making processes, and this is as it should be, if not to an even greater extent.

As one who is elected to serve the students' rights, desires and best interests, I simply cannot let this go unaddressed. I am reminded of the situation last Christmas regarding the installation of air conditioning in some Scott Residence College dorms, when a moratorium agreed on with the area and dorm governments was practically ignored as the decision to install was made. I would venture to infer that the housing department strategically waited until summer to publicize a decision already made, when students, in their ignorance and absence, could not mount an active, united front to defend their personal rights.

As in the question regarding your department's legal ability to charge an entire hall or dorm for vandalism, the perpetrators of which cannot be proven, students and their elected representatives should have an earlier and greater voice in future decisions.

As the case often seems to be, it is too late for this decision to be reconsidered. On behalf of my constituents, however, I ask that timely enhancement be made in the sensitivity of the housing department to the concerns of the students through their representatives. Thank you for your consideration.

Robert Ferris is a junior chemistry major from Winter Park, Fla. He is the District 14 (Scott Residence College) Student Congress representative.

Young friendship lost to unfriendly silence

Bill Hildebolt
Staff Columnist

I have a friend named Reeves. He's going to be in the 10th grade this year, and he has learning disabilities, but I really like him.

He goes to private schools out-of-state, but he always initiates communication.

I met Reeves two years ago while I was dating his sister. I'd heard all about this "wild, uncontrollable boy," and his "antisocial demeanor." I was ready.

I gripped his hand firmly, but he didn't grip back. He looked determined, but his eyes merely pleaded, "Don't take away my sister."

I told her that I liked him, and from then on she talked about how she was his "protector and nurturer" even though he was hundreds of miles away. I asked if he had ever opened up to her. "No," she said.

I couldn't figure out why he wasn't at home. His disabilities were minimal, and his demeanor was crying out for love and attention, not delinquent.

Besides, his mother seemed to be the perfect authoritarian. A brilliant businesswoman, she humbles anyone in her way. The war between us over her "baby girl" stands in infamy.

Reeves and Mommie Dearest were different. She asked him to do something, and he mimicked her in a Donald Duck voice and laughed. I closed my eyes and waited for the shrapnel, but none came. I peeked and there was mom — teeth clenched, eyes flashing, smoke wafting slowly out of her ears, but saying nothing.

It all fell in place. Reeves wasn't in another state for learning problems, or for delinquency. There was only one person who couldn't control him, and that was the person who bought his plane tickets.

I noticed more. This kid who had grown up alone loved his family brutally. He was miserable and desperately wanted to belong to the family who took him skiing, only to wave good-bye from the concourse.

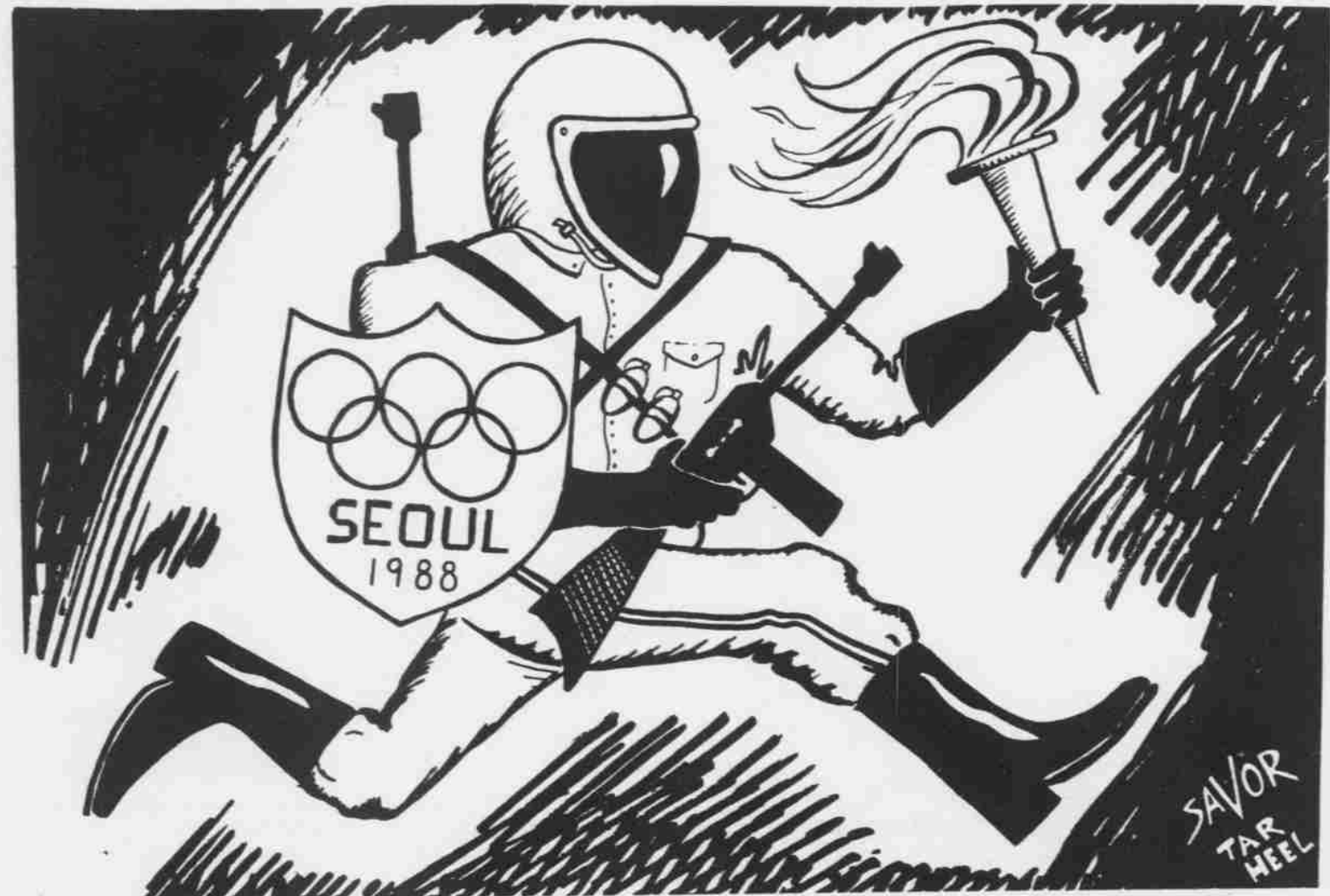
He tried to fit in. He made childish jokes, seemingly wanting to be so funny that they'd keep him around for laughs.

Finally, we got closer. Every young boy picks someone to emulate, and Reeves saw me as having what he wanted. (Our friendship was viewed with mixed emotions by the rest of the clan.) Finally, he asked me about, you know... sex.

I did my best to convince him to hold off because that one special girl (just look at sis and me) was worth waiting for.

He understood, and told me that he wished I was his brother and how happy he was that sis and I would always be together.

Unrealistic expectations rarely come true, and I got left with a shattered dream, and Reeves got left with shattered advice.



After sis and I broke up, his anger only deepened her belief that I'd purposely driven a wedge between them.

He started writing to me with letters full of pain — he wanted to be at home. He wrote about how much he loved his parents and how he missed the dog that really wasn't his anymore.

I encouraged him to study, to earn the right to come home. I told him that his parents loved him. But I was full of pain, since writing to him brought painful memories flooding to

the surface, and it showed.

There was no way, though, that I was ever going to let him get the message that I had befriended him, "just because of sis." I felt that the last thing he needed was someone else who loved him because they had to.

Then sis reappeared. "Stay away from him. It's perverted for someone in college to be friends with a 14-year-old. You don't understand him, only I do."

I couldn't deal with that kind of hatred, so I've stayed away.

But last week someone banged on

my parents' back door. It was Reeves, looking for me. I've heard that my name is a non-word at his home, and I guess if he didn't even know I was in Chapel Hill, that proves it. Anyway, the door was locked, and I wasn't there.

I wonder if he's gotten the message.

Bill Hildebolt is a sophomore political science/economics major from Winston-Salem who wonders every chance he gets.

Letters policy

The Tar Heel welcomes all reader comment. In exchange for access to the Reader's Forum, we ask that you follow a few simple rules:

- All letters and columns must be typed and double-spaced for ease of editing.
- All letters and columns must be

signed by the author(s), with a limit of two signatures per letter or column.

■ Students should include name, year in school, major, phone number and home town. Other members of the University community should include similar information.

■ The Tar Heel reserves the right to edit for space, clarity and vulgarity.

■ Letters should be mailed to the editor or placed in the drop box outside the Tar Heel office.

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