

The Daily Tar Heel

96th year of editorial freedom

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Money talks; it doesn't cheer

Aerial views of the Smith Center are great. When the cameras swoop down from the Carolina Blue sky to photograph the huge structure, television viewers from across the nation think how lucky those UNC students are to have such a great basketball arena.

Unfortunately, most students who are watching the game in the Smith Center also have an aerial view. It's from the upper level of the arena, since students occupy only 1,600 of about 8,000 lower-level seats.

Carolina Athletic Association President Carol Geer and other CAA officers have brought up the issue of seating because the new ticket distribution system used for the N.C. State game allowed them to count exactly how many student seats the athletic department has set aside.

The CAA certainly can't count on the athletic department to keep them informed about student seating. That fact became clear in 1986, when the athletic department began allocating all the seats in the three highest rows of the upper level to students without consulting any students. CAA officers didn't discover the switch until they looked up (and up and up) and realized that students were standing up to cheer from seats they weren't supposed to have. When approached by the CAA,

the athletic department relented and restored some, but not all, of the upper-level student seats. One of their excuses for the unannounced switch was that selling those seats — the worst in the house — was very difficult. How much student support do they expect when they give students the tickets no one will buy?

The Great Ticket Scandal may have begun. If students don't pursue the issue, it will die as quickly as the cheers that are lost in the rafters from the Smith Center's upper deck. And even if they do, their chances of obtaining better seats are still slim. The only thing left is for students to decide whether they'll accept this sitting down — in nosebleed territory.

There's no use questioning priorities here, because they are only too apparent. The realistic attitude the athletic department has asked the CAA to adopt is merely this: the rich guys who built the Smith Center get the best seats. This attitude requires students to accept the premise that the people who deserve to watch the games are the ones with the most money. Even at Duke, where fat wallets seem to be in every back pocket, students aren't dumb enough to buy that one. — Jean Lutes

Failing grades for this system

Distraught over the United States' rapidly declining educational system, voters are happy to see the Education President himself, George Bush, ready to take office. Loudly and clearly, Bush has proclaimed his resolve to radically improve the state of America's educational system. Read his lips, however, and Bush is also saying that he will not approve any new taxes. Given these two priorities, Bush's solution becomes readily apparent: pass the buck.

The political realities of this situation are nothing new; federal office holders don't want the stigma of voting to take voters' money, so they give the burden to state and local governments. These politicians have careers to think about, too, so they have found their own solution in the referendum. Let the voters decide at the polls if they really want to pay for better schools. On the surface, the idea makes sense, but some ideas of Dr. Harold Hodgkinson, a demographer and professor at the University of California at Berkeley, suggest otherwise.

According to Hodgkinson, less than half of the voting age population in the United States has a direct interest, meaning a child or job, in a public educational system. That automatically disadvantages any vote on an educational tax.

Even more alarming is Hodgkin-

son's claim that the middle class, which votes most often and bears the largest burden of any tax, is slowly breeding itself out of existence. The white middle class would need a fertility rate of at least 2 to maintain itself, but that figure stands at 1.7. The economic underclasses of the nation, which are essentially racial minorities, have a fertility rate of 2.9. Nor is this swelling underclass filling the void; the black and Hispanic middle class is reproducing at the rate of 1.4.

Politically, this means that the average voter is being asked to vote upon himself a tax for a school system which will not benefit him directly. Of course, he doesn't support such a tax, and the schools only get worse. As the number of those who can afford alternatives to public education continues to shrink, the majority of people will be forced to accept an inadequate education.

Obviously, for these reasons and others, reform in the educational system of America is critical. Bush's promise to address this problem is a hopeful sign, but he needs to come through with the money to educate the fastest-growing segment of American society. To do otherwise is to mortgage the future beyond hope, and to pay lip service to impending disaster. — David Starnes

A lesson for all the bears who worry

David Rowell
Pardon Me

I finally realized something the other day that I suppose I knew deep down, but had let the pressures of college and worries of post-graduation bury. Allow me to explain.

I've been troubled lately, if not deranged, because 1989 will probably be the most significant year in my life (with the exception of 2080, when I'll be eligible for free turkeys). So when everyone else was ringing in the new year, I tried to keep it from coming.

In a few short months, I'll be cast out into the real world to be treated as an adult. I'll be expected to act like an adult, and for someone who still enjoys making inappropriate sounds with his armpit, this is an unsettling thought. Time has flown by so quickly. It seems like just yesterday I was kissing a girl for the first time — hey, wait a minute, that was yesterday!

Anyway, I've been a nervous wreck because I don't have any real direction as far as my future after graduation. I've yet to find a career field that fits my intellect, my personality and still gives me plenty of room in the toe. Even as a kid, I have always strayed away from the concrete and remained in the undecided gray area. While all the other kids in kindergarten were painting cowboys or ballerinas or ships at sea, I was into abstracts.

In junior high it got worse. Our school used to sponsor Career Day, where 30 or so different careers were represented, and the students went into the different classrooms to hear professors discuss what

their jobs entailed. This was very traumatic for me, because I hated to commit myself to attending even one meeting. Instead, I wandered through the halls in limbo, invariably ending up in the broom closet to hear the custodian lecturing on unemployment.

And so, to make a long story short, I've already gotten my semester off to a bad start by worrying about matters that are still so far away (besides the other things that get a columnist down). But now I'm trying to do something I haven't done in a long time. We only go through college once, and the day we don that blue cap means we'll never get these years back. Thus, I present a fable in the hopes that none of us look back at our days at Carolina and say, "I wish I had . . ."

The Bear Who Worried

There once was a bear who worried about everything. He worried about growing old. He worried about being caught for the circus. He worried about everything.

It troubled his friends that he could never enjoy life, for as worrisome as he was, he was also very loyal and kind-hearted, and many bears considered him a good friend. But it worried the bear that his friends should be so concerned about him.

Years ago, the worried bear had dated

frequently. The females enjoyed his company, and he had been involved in several serious relationships, all of which eventually broke off. He would worry he was being taken for granted, or that they did not truly care for him. His constant worrying drove the female bears away.

One day, some friends invited him to go across the river for the weekend.

"I couldn't," he said. "Could be dangerous crossing the bridge. And there might not be anything to eat. How do we know what's over there? Besides, I've got financial problems that need sorting out."

They did not coax him any further, and left the worried bear to go across the river. The worried bear spent the day wondering where all his money had gone. He had at one time been considered a well-to-do bear, but over the years he had become virtually penniless, and it worried him.

While doing long division, the worried bear felt a sudden pain in his heart. It worried him terribly. Just as he thought it had gone away, the worried bear grabbed his heart once more and died just before daybreak.

When his friends returned, they were very sad to find that the bear who worried about everything was dead. They gave him a simple but honorable funeral.

Moral: The bear who doesn't live for the day won't be living tomorrow, either.

David Rowell is a senior RTVMP major from Fayetteville.

Readers' Forum

Mason-Dixon divides campus

To the editor:

I would like to applaud the decision of the housing department to guarantee rising sophomores "same room" housing. I think that this was long overdue. I wish that this policy had been in effect last year when I was forced to play bingo with my housing contract only to hear "That's all folks" before my name had been called.

I could not disagree more with RHA president Jimmy Randolph. He claims that the new policy is unfair to rising juniors and seniors with specific hall requests. Isn't it selfish for them to demand their choice of University housing for a third or fourth year? Why should we allow them to live on North Campus at all? Some people never get the chance to live on North Campus or mid-campus.

Here is a housing guarantee. Guarantee rising North Campus juniors a room on South Campus. And guarantee sophomores who have been trying to escape from South Campus for two years the right to a room on North Campus for their junior year. Why should they be denied the privilege of living within a half-mile of campus for their entire education? They deserve better. The current proposal makes their chances of moving even slimmer by decreasing the number of available spaces on North Campus.

My solution also alleviates Matt Bivens' concern that North Campus dorms won't contain upperclassmen. I'm sure there would be a plethora of rising juniors on South Campus willing to be "role models" in North Campus dorms. American history should remind us what can happen when the white mistreats the South.

BILL CRAVER
Sophomore
Economics



Housing results fail students

To the editor:

Congratulations to Dr. Kuncel and the Department of University Housing staff. You've finally won the battle of guaranteeing sophomores housing which you have waged so diligently for three years. Ultimately, those with better economic means and a stable pool of manpower emerged the victors. Why should I be surprised? It was naive of me to think that the students are entitled to any significant amount of autonomy on this campus. Please, don't insult me by telling me students were included in the process. I was there, and I watched as our voices were ignored. Had the students' opinion been given any consideration, this issue would have died three years ago. In this case, the issue was brought forth three times; each time the housing department never altered their proposal. It amazes me that in the face of overwhelming student disapproval, not once did the housing department change its proposal to even partially satisfy the students.

This whole issue leaves me bitter. The idea of guaranteeing

sophomores housing was first introduced in the fall of 1986. At that time, RHA had a committee set up which was the precursor to the current Housing Advisory Board. We, the student members of that first committee, worked long, exhausting hours to see the issue defeated. We talked to students individually, we held forums, we wrote resolutions, we talked to administrators and we worked closely with the DTH. We celebrated when the housing department decided to abandon the issue, but we knew it would only be a matter of time before housing officials found a way to railroad the issue past students. We thought they would at least wait until we had all graduated. I guess I hung around one year too many. At the very least, next year's Housing Advisory Board won't be wondering how soon the Department of University Housing will bring up the guaranteed sophomore housing issue.

My first inclination is to tell those I leave behind in May to fight this thing to the end. That was my first inclination. My realistic inclination after three years of personally working against this issue is to say this is the end of the issue and we have been beaten by those who

"know best." I find it tragic that in the end, this prolonged struggle resembles an argument in favor of student apathy.

RONI HARBERT
Senior
Political science/speech
communications

Letters policy

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticisms. When writing letters to the editor, please follow these guidelines:

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

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

■ All letters must be signed by the author(s), with a limit of two signatures per letter.

■ The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity. Remember, brevity is the soul of wit.

Housing disregards student opinion, needs

On Jan. 13, the Department of University Housing announced its intention to adopt its own proposal for guaranteed sophomore housing, a proposal which the Residence Hall Association and Student Government have opposed since its conception three years ago. After closely examining this policy, we conclude that it is not only inequitable to rising juniors and seniors but also ignores potentially superior alternative solutions. More importantly, the process by which the decision was reached failed to seriously consider student objections and counterproposals.

On the surface, the proposal seems like a good idea. The housing department is proposing that rising sophomore residents be guaranteed the right to return to their current rooms without having to participate in the lottery. Most rising sophomore residents would like this opportunity. However, this luxury should not be at the expense of residence hall diversity. We think that this policy will result in upperclassmen being all but eliminated from some highly popular residence halls as guaranteed sophomores take their spaces.

These juniors and seniors are a powerful resource drawn upon by the younger residents. They have already experienced many of the challenges which will confront younger students and can provide valuable

Student Leaders Guest Writers

insight. Removing them from these halls would be extremely detrimental to residence hall life for all residents.

It is clear from the housing department's explanation of their decision that many factors were taken into consideration beyond students' perception of their own best interest. We maintain that parental concerns, administrative convenience and cost effectiveness without regard to other student needs should not override the students' need for a diverse and supportive living environment. We acknowledge certain valid arguments for the proposal, but these are outweighed by the possible negative effects on residence hall life.

More disturbing perhaps, is the recurrent decision-making style of the housing department. A great show was made of soliciting student opinion on this issue. For three years, students have voiced their opposition to this proposal, and the housing department's final solution to this conflict of opinion is simply to "agree to disagree." This is not student involvement; this is a mockery of the students' ability to govern themselves and decide their own priorities. Not only were our arguments,

and those of the Department of Housing's own Housing Advisory Board, ignored rather than addressed, but the timing of the decision was such that students could not effectively oppose it. The decision was presented on the first day of drop-add, before the DTH resumed publication, and a memorandum was distributed to residents that same day. This makes the decision practically irrevocable.

Such decisions are not rare in the Department of University Housing. The same pattern was evident in the conversion of Teague to a coed dormitory, in the dormitory of Everett and Manly to female dormitories and in the elimination of residence spaces in Carr building. The timing of these decisions was such that students could not effectively address them.

The decision is unfortunate. The process by which it was reached is contemptible. The housing department cannot seriously maintain its loyalty to the interests of residents while simultaneously ignoring their voice.

Jimmy Randolph is the president of the Residence Hall Association, and Paula Zellmer is the RHA executive assistant. Kevin Martin is the student body president. Neil Riemann is the Speaker of Student Congress.

The Daily Tar Heel

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