

The Daily Tar Heel

96th year of editorial freedom

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Hardin cares for day care

UNC faculty, staff and students with children can be heartened by Chancellor Paul Hardin's recent pledge to improve day care. Hardin's promise indicates his recognition of the importance of making quality child care available to members of the University community.

The University has not yet revealed any concrete plans for improving day care, although some administrators have toured Victory Village, a University-funded daycare center housed in a 48-year-old building on Mason Farm Road.

Because of the age and physical condition of the building, focusing on short-term improvements would be easy. Although \$9,000 was spent on maintenance last year, the center still needs paint, new floors and doors and a better fire alarm system. The center, struggling to meet its physical needs while maintaining decent employee salaries, has accumulated a substantial deficit.

Hardin could decide merely to allocate more money to the existing center to improve and expand its facilities. While Victory Village is a good place to start because of its 35-year experience serving the University community, looking closely at long-term alternatives would make more sense.

Telling ourselves where to park

Starting this fall, students will no longer be able to blame a faceless administration for problems with the allocation of student parking permits.

Student government leaders finally have been given the power to allocate student parking spaces. But while the action is a positive one, student leaders must realize the complexity of the task which now lies ahead.

Next semester, Student Congress will distribute parking permits in accordance with its own allocation process, rather than through the existing administrative one. The student body will be treated like any other University department, receiving a fixed number of permits to allocate as the congress sees fit.

The creation of a new and improved allocation process will indeed be a lengthy undertaking. The student body president will appoint seven students to comprise the Student Parking Committee. This committee will propose a process to the student body president, who will then make a recommendation to the the congress.

Real student representation

To understand why the University administration makes its decisions is to understand the bureaucracy that can produce them. This means committees, lots of them, devoted to addressing campus issues and finding solutions that can satisfy students, faculty and administrators alike. Of these, the most important are the chancellor's advisory committees, and students comprise a fair share of the memberships.

However, these students are not at the moment directly appointed by the student body president or any other student body representative. The system which was maintained by ex-Chancellor Christopher Fordham dictates that the student body president provide a list ranking recommended students to the chancellor, along with a short justification for each. From this the chancellor selects any student he wishes, or rejects the entire group altogether.

Student Body President Kevin Martin may have changed all that, however, with a proposal that the student body president be allowed to appoint a single student to a single position on these committees. Martin, who already has received unofficial support from the administration on the proposal, may have completely changed the political context in which students are appointed to the chan-

The center presently serves 64 children; another 120 are on the waiting list. With more than 8,000 employees on campus, as well as a significant number of students with families, the University's ultimate goal should be to substantially increase the space available. Turning away qualified professors, competent workers and bright students just because they have day-care needs does a disservice to the University.

At the same time, because the quality of the care must be of the highest standards, the center should not become too large. One logical — but expensive — proposal is to build several different centers, ideally connected to satellite parking lots. Parents could park their cars and drop off their children at the same location and then take a shuttle to campus.

Of course, any option that requires extra funding could raise the high cost of day care even further, and keeping costs as low as possible must be a priority. Providing quality care at a price which excludes parents on limited budgets would not improve the situation. While the chancellor's pledge is a good start, a serious commitment of time, money and resources must follow. — Mary Jo Dunnington

The ultimate decision will rest with the congress.

Members of the Traffic and Parking Advisory Committee and the chancellor's ad hoc committee on parking should be commended for their decision to relinquish this power to student control. The action was an appropriate response to student complaints that the allocation process was unfair.

But students must realize that they now have an awesome responsibility on their shoulders. Constructing an allocation process that is fair and responsive to student needs will not be easy, and student leaders should not underestimate the difficulty of the task. The parking crunch won't lessen next year — the total number of available permits will actually decrease due to construction of the Craig parking deck.

Active student participation in the process will be vital to its successful completion. Unfortunately, not everyone can park on this campus, and now the tough decisions will have to be made by students. — Louis Bisette

cellor's committees.

Under the old plan, the chancellor could eliminate students who might have been too resistant to administrative interests, simply by choosing another name on the list. Fordham took advantage of this in 1986, during a period of intense criticism of ARA, the campus food service, when he rejected the nomination of Marty Leary for a position on a food service advisory committee. He claimed that the outspoken Leary would have been difficult and disruptive.

If Martin's proposal becomes reality, such an occurrence would become far less likely. Instead of the student body president providing Chancellor Paul Hardin with an explanation of why a student deserves to be a committee member, the chancellor would have to explain why he believed a nominee was not qualified, should an appointee be rejected.

More significantly, however, the acceptance of Martin's proposal would make an important statement, allowing students to directly choose their representatives. When an advisory committee meets to examine an issue such as parking or grounds development, both sides can only benefit from the assurance that the students at the meetings are the ones intended to be there. — David Starnes

Bittersweet memories of the Reagan years

I was a little sad last week as I watched Ronald and Nancy Reagan, the former president and first lady, board a plane, formerly Air Force One, at Andrews Air Force Base to fly to their new home in California. After all, President Reagan was in office for over one-third of my life.

I have shadowy memories of President Ford pardoning some criminal; I think it was President Nixon. I vaguely remember Jimmy Carter as a man with a big smile who negotiated the Camp David Accords and was afraid of killer rabbits. Then came President Reagan. He was the first president that I was politically awake for. Looking back, it was a rude awakening on a dreary Monday morning.

I remember watching a man who held passionate convictions and was determined to see them acted upon. They ranged from the off-beat to the ignorant. Less government was better government. The homeless were not a problem; they wanted to live on the streets. Women shouldn't decide whether or not to abort their pregnancies. Prayer should be said in the schools. The contras were freedom fighters protecting Texas from armed invasion by the Sandinistas. A nifty space shield should be built to stop all nuclear weapons. Have I left anything out? Oh, yes, the Soviet Union was an Evil Empire.

This man frightened me. These convictions which he held so strongly seemed to be based on simplistic fears and quirky biases that took precedence over rational argument and basic compassion.

I don't know what I was expecting. After all, we had collectively elected an actor to our highest office. This fact came through the TV screens in every speech he made. His message was that it was better for America to look and to feel good than

Bill Yelverton Notes from the Abyss

to actually be good or work to make itself better. The Teflon surface effectively hid the decay underneath from eyes that did not wish to see it, especially the president himself.

There was plenty to hide. In the early days of the Reagan years, there were the unique conservation efforts of James Watt at the Department of the Interior. These were followed closely by the Superfund cleanup scandal at the EPA. Take the longer view, and the sagas of Michael Deaver and Ed Meese steal the spotlight.

But the best was yet to come. The Iran-contra scandal was waiting in the wings. It starred the four little rascals, Oliver North, John Poindexter, Richard Secord and Bud McFarlane, in a story of deceit, money and power. The plot was fast and furious. North and McFarlane would negotiate with the evil villain, the Ayatollah, for the release of American hostages in Lebanon. In exchange, the United States would secretly sell the Iranians weapons. North took the money generated by the sale and bankrolled contra operations in Central America. They flew supplies bought with the money down to Nicaragua via a private freight run by retired Gen. Secord. Poindexter's job was to keep the president in the dark — not a very difficult assignment.

When the script fell apart it threatened to bring down the entire administration. Reagan seemed oddly detached from the events surrounding him. He simply kept repeating that he didn't know or couldn't

remember. I wondered which was worse. He hoped to stay above the controversy and keep the Teflon shield intact, and to a large degree that is what happened.

Reagan will be remembered for his administration's problems and its heartless policies, but he will have some positive accomplishments to look back upon as well. The most notable is the first nuclear arms reduction treaty ever negotiated with the Soviet Union. The highly touted economic recovery will still have to test its strength against the looming deficit and the growing number of Americans living below the poverty line.

Substantive issues did not seem to bother Reagan, for he is a man concerned with image. From his carefully crafted speeches to his wife's obsession with fashion and china patterns, the Reagans exuded polish and glitz for eight years. Reagan would very much like to see this glitz immortalized in the history books.

Reagan has never seemed like the bookish type. One of my favorite jokes from his two terms was a description of the Reagan library consisting of a "Masters of the Universe" sticker book and a Mickey Mouse coloring book. Now it seems he wants to add to that library.

Originally Reagan seemed content to let the historians chronicle his time in office. But now he has decided to write his memoirs to clarify the motives and objectives of his presidency. The book will be interesting because for eight years he has hidden his thoughts behind a wall of rhetoric. Fortunately for all of us, this rhetoric is now powerless.

Bill Yelverton is a senior English major from Darien, Conn.

Readers' Forum

Inauguration obscene

To the editor:

It was with bemusement that I read Everett Langford's letter to the editor in the Jan. 24 DTH ("DTH insults grand party.") Langford's criticism of your recent editorial on the Bush inauguration proves only that Reagan Republicans like Langford missed the point of your words.

The issue is not the fact that the \$30 million spent to throw George a party he could be proud of was raised from private rather than public monies. It is rather that in the America of today, when family farms are crumbling and thousands go homeless and hungry, spending \$30 million for inaugural balls is an obscene gesture. If Bush really wants the kinder and gentler nation he allegedly espouses, he should have told the corporations to give the funds to charity and opted for a simpler affair.

Finally, Langford attacks the DTH for its supposed criticism of Bush the individual in its editorial. Langford should be reminded that this is the same George Bush who ran the most foul, vituperative and gutter-level campaign in modern history. His character assassination of a decent man like Michael Dukakis was heinous indeed. If George is going to dish it out, he'll need to learn how to take it as well.

DAVE LOHSE
Assistant director
Sports Information



Teach respect for firearms

To the editor:

I support a waiting period for the purchase of firearms — even though I am an ex-member of the National Rifle Association and a hunter in remission. A waiting period only makes sense. But I feel that Bill Yelverton's column ("Seven days could have saved five lives," Jan. 23) missed two important points.

First: There is no logical reason for military weapons to be marketed. Diehard NRAers might disagree with me here, but these weapons are simply overkill in the field. Most serious hunters wouldn't even

consider them viable alternatives to a more "standard" sporting rifle. Collectors might be the only group who should have legitimate access to these weapons, but this argument might dictate the establishment of a special "collector's license," entailing an intensive background check and waiting period.

Second: Since stupidity is already rampant in this country, I believe that mandatory firearm education classes should be developed and administered to anybody wanting to purchase a gun. These classes could be on a once-and-done level, earning the graduate a lifetime purchasing certificate, similar to driver's licenses and hunters' education

classes (which are required in Pennsylvania — I don't know about North Carolina). This methodology should have two results: 1) It should produce an additional waiting period between the decision to buy and the actual purchase; and, 2) It should reduce the number of accidental deaths by firearms.

I hope you will find my suggestions beneficial. People should understand that firearms aren't inherently evil; lack of intelligent handling is. As a gunsmith, my grandfather saw that guns were part of my life. I possess a healthy respect for firearms. I wish that everybody did.

JOHN MARTZ
Graduate
Social psychology

Definition of 'life' not open for debate

This week marked the 16th anniversary of the *Roe vs. Wade* Supreme Court decision — and it did not pass unnoticed. For since the debate on abortion began, both sides have loudly voiced their views. Pro-choice groups focus their arguments on a woman's right to choose to have the baby or to have an abortion. I wholeheartedly agree that a woman should be allowed to choose — but I think the choice should come before she is pregnant. She has the right to choose whether to engage in sexual intercourse and whether to use birth control. But, if she fails to take steps to protect herself from an unwanted pregnancy — her choice stops there. Sure, there are exceptions — rape, incest, birth control failure, health risk to the mother, etc. — but I don't wish to argue about the rights and wrongs of abortion. Instead, I want to show you that much more than the right to choose is at stake in the abortion issue — the value of life.

Life. No other word in the English language has come to mean so much. We strive to protect it, to enhance it and to lengthen it. In recent decades, however, the definition of life has become a source of controversy. People have decided that the notion that life begins when your heart starts beating and ends when it stops is wrong. Instead, this definition has been replaced with a list of qualifiers that distinctly outline when life begins.

Under this new system for defining life, a member of the human race must have certain qualities before earning status as a "human being." These qualities differ slightly depending on whom you talk to, but the following list from Beverly Harrison's article "The Right to Choose" summarizes the major components of this theory: The first quality a human being

Lisa Stockman Guest Writer

must have is consciousness of objects and events. Secondly, one must possess the ability to reason and the capacity to solve new and relatively complex problems. Moreover, the creators of this new definition wanted to ensure that in our society everyone does something of a productive nature. Therefore, the third criterion is the need to exhibit self-motivated activity. Finally, the need to communicate is the last stipulation that defines an individual as a "human being."

In the quest to weed out the undesirables in our society, such criteria would only award those worthy with the important status of a "human being." You might think it's absurd to test individuals who are medically considered living beings to determine their right to be labeled a "human being." In fact, the advocates of this ideology do not apply these "tests" to people already in existence, but use them to justify classifying unborns as non-humans. Medical evidence clearly indicates that the fetus has a heartbeat, and brain waves can be detected. Therefore, without new terms in which to define life, abortions could only be viewed as murder. It seems impossible for an unborn to meet the requirements to be considered a human, when many adults in this world would fail some of the tests. The question, however, is not how can we adhere to such unfair guidelines in denying rights to an unborn child, but what right do we have to classify life at all? You might feel as if you've been presented with an extreme, but the Supreme Court advocated this system

when it denied the right of life to an unborn child by permitting murder through legalized abortions. And people who support legalized abortion, although they might not have thought about it in this fashion, must support this definition, for without it abortion could only be viewed as murder.

Life begins when the heart starts pumping blood throughout the body, and ends when the organ ceases to function. It is marked by the detection of brain waves, and terminates when the brain dies. These are age-old ideas; but for the preservation of life as we know it, they must be the sole determinants of a human being. Life is not something you or I have the right to award those who pass a test; it is a gift that cannot be earned. Society's attempt to qualify the unborn as a non-human parallels the unjust treatment of blacks before Congress granted them status as humans. We realized the grave injustice done to blacks and are still trying to correct it today. The past is there to teach us valuable lessons about our future. We cannot overlook the injustice being done to unborns for as long as we ignored the problem of racial discrimination. Too many lives are at stake, and the value of life is rapidly deteriorating. But will it stop there? Is it not only a matter of time before our elitist society redefines life once again to suit a greater purpose? Life was stripped of all value when its definition was changed from the view that had prevailed for centuries. Many things in our world depreciate as time lapses. Can we afford to watch life lose its value? If so, then it's not worth the hassle of living.

Lisa Stockman is a sophomore journalism and political science major from Cary.