

The Daily Tar Heel

97th year of editorial freedom

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Crusade threatens freedoms

Thanks to Rep. Stephen Arnold, R-Guilford, the N.C. House of Representatives Education Committee is considering a backward-looking proposal that would limit the rights of homosexual students at universities within the UNC system. Such a bill is hardly unprecedented — the past two years have witnessed similar bills — but such proposals from elected officials represent our society's extreme narrow-mindedness.

Arnold is concerned that student-funded gay and lesbian associations on state university campuses force all students, as well as state taxpayers, to pay for the promotion of "immoral, illegal or criminal behavior." Thus, he wants to make it illegal for such groups to receive state or student funds or to be allowed use of campus buildings and facilities.

This proposal's most glaring fault, however, is not its unnecessary attempt to dictate morality. Policies for the UNC-system are set by the Board of Governors, whose members are chosen by the General Assembly. Given this system, legislative action to set or change university policies is completely without grounds.

Kenan law Professor Daniel Pollitt said that while the legislature has the power to change the system, "it should honor the existing system until it does so."

But honoring the system is not the only reason state legislators should avoid usurping the Board of Governors' authority. As Pollitt also pointed out, university accreditation — the symbol of a quality institution — is based in part on that institution's ability to remain free from outside

interests such as politics. Although Arnold called the possible loss of accreditation "ridiculous," Pollitt said the General Assembly's passage of a law prohibiting communists from speaking on state campuses called UNC's accreditation into question in 1963.

Loss of accreditation would be a painful blow to all schools in the UNC system. The value of a UNC degree would drop, and students would probably have a difficult time being accepted into graduate programs elsewhere. The sacrifice is one the University cannot afford, even for a less trivial cause, and the bill's supporters should take a closer look at such possible repercussions.

The proposal also questions a fundamental right of those who pay student fees — the right to control the allocation of that money. Through the budget process, student-elected representatives determine which groups to fund and for how much. Arnold's proposal implies that students aren't capable of making those decisions by seeking to unduly limit that right. As many UNC-educated legislators can attest, the University has a valuable, time-honored tradition of self-governance, and this bill oversteps the legislature's traditional bounds.

Even those who agree with Arnold's statement that "any such homosexual behavior is certainly immoral" should not support this bill, because such legislation would only undermine both student rights and the quality of the entire UNC system. Perhaps Arnold should do some additional research before beginning his next moral crusade. — Mary Jo Dunnington

Victims should not fear press

After a student was sexually assaulted last week, she called Student Health Service to ask where she could get medical treatment, saying she didn't want to come to SHS because she was afraid her story would end up in The Daily Tar Heel. While assault victims may understandably be afraid of the press, women in this town must know that newspapers will do their best not to add to their problems.

Neither the DTH, The Chapel Hill Newspaper, The Durham Morning Herald nor The News and Observer will print the names or precise addresses of assault victims. Because of the sensitive nature of the crime, that information is nobody's business, and newspapers will not feel they are neglecting the news by not printing the details. At the most, a paper may print the general area of the attack — if it happened at a large apartment complex, for example, or if it happens repeatedly on the same street — but only if editors think the area is large enough to keep people from figuring out who the victim is.

Newspapers have become more sensitive in recent years to the concerns of rape victims. Papers that at one time did print identifying factors about the victim no longer do so and are firmly

opposed to printing information that would harm the victim while adding little to the stories. The first priority for editors is always to report the news as fully as possible. Editors will be concerned with how much information should be withheld from readers, but they can keep details such as the name and address of the woman assaulted out of the article. Keeping back those details does not hurt a newspaper, and it certainly helps the victim.

Of course, women may decide for plenty of other reasons not to report the assault to the police or to seek medical treatment, such as if the attacker was an acquaintance or if alcohol was involved. In a college town, it may be easier for people to figure out who the victim is even without minor details. But if women give police as much information as possible about their attacker, newspapers are more likely to fill the story with those details than with any information about the victim. A fear of the press should never keep women from reporting an assault — newspapers will only release enough information to alert readers that they too may be at risk from an attacker. — Sharon Kepschull

A real woman's guide to male bonding

Laura Pearlman
Casting Pearls

As I stare into the screen of this computer terminal in the DTH office, I wince at the thought of lifting my sore arms to type. On Sunday, I was initiated into the inner sanctum of manhood. I got to "male bond." Yes, for one afternoon, I was given an inside glimpse of social interaction among the male persuasion. I went skeet shooting.

I couldn't pass up such a golden opportunity to observe males in their natural habitat, surrounded by the very stuff of manhood. We left Chapel Hill Sunday afternoon and drove to Durham, where the Great Skeet Hunt would take place. As we approached the club, I saw a yellow sign by the road warning: "Male Bonding Sanctuary One Mile." I hoped to emerge with all major appendages still intact.

I was kind of nervous about the whole thing because I had never held a gun before. Also, people took great glee in informing me that the kick of the gun would knock me over, so I'd probably be peeling myself off the ground the first couple of times I tried to shoot. Determined that I could bond as well as any man, I had foolishly shrugged off the warnings and forged ahead.

As the time for me to shoot my round drew near, an incessant barrage of instructions aggravated my nervous condition. There are many rules to which one must adhere when handling a firearm. "Hold the gun facing down always!" "Never load the gun unless you're standing on the cement square!" And on and on — all delivered with a note of panic in the voice. I guess it would be kind of scary to stand beside someone who is holding a loaded gun and has no idea what to do with it. Like me.

I was an accident waiting to happen.

After a battery of tests, my fellow skeet shooters decided that I was right-eye dominant, which meant I should shoot right-handed. Since I am left-handed, this was supposed to be a disadvantage. Holding the gun was awkward to begin with, and I kept trying to switch to my left hand, creating quite the image of grace and coordination. But the left-handed excuse made me think I wasn't a total incompetent in the world of men.

Finally it was my turn to try to kill a skeet. My first few efforts at annihilating a poor, defenseless skeet had fallen quite flat. Then Ralph entered my life. Ralph risks his life every Wednesday and Sunday to teach new shooters enough to prevent them from taking out innocent spectators. Ralph zeroed in on my problem immediately. "Well," he chuckled, "no wonder you can't hit these skeet, little lady — they're right-handed skeet. Heh Heh. I'm just teasing you." No kidding, Ralph.

Then Ralph corrected my stance and posture, a process which involved several swats to my rear end, accompanied by the instruction to "keep your butt tucked in." Ralph told me he had been slapped several times for offering that particular piece of advice and that it wouldn't upset him if I did the same. I told him I wouldn't slap him, but I was surprised no one had shot him for it. He just chuckled again. Clearly, Ralph is a man who loves his work.

After several more missed attempts and

another battery of tests, it was decided that I am in fact left-eye dominant, and I was permitted to switch to my left hand. Once this was accomplished, I managed to hit two. I considered this a major triumph.

I have since been told that with the kind of gun and ammunition I was using, I was essentially trying to hit an elephant with a cannon. Ralph approved, however, and he started calling me Annie Oakley. At this point, my arms felt like rubber bands, and I sat out the rest of the afternoon nursing my bruised collar bones and watching the males bond among themselves. Ralph was given to evaluating the missed attempts of my companions and commenting that "if that'd been a pheasant or quail, you'd a had it!" Apparently, it enhances the sport to imagine one is not aiming for a ceramic plate, but rather at a small woodland creature.

Back in Chapel Hill, the smell of gunpowder fresh in my nose, I expected we would sit around a fire swilling bourbon and branch water and smoking pungent cigars. Instead, I sat there watching the big, strong men clean their guns. It was then that I offered my analysis that guns are actually just phallic symbols and holding a gun beats a shot of testosterone any day of the week. My analysis was a failure with my shooting buddies who said that girls don't know anything anyhow. Then they told me to go get them some lemonade. I decided then that male bonding isn't all it's cracked up to be — all it takes is a little upper-body strength.

Laura Pearlman is a junior English major from Asheville.

Readers' Forum

Officer's style commended

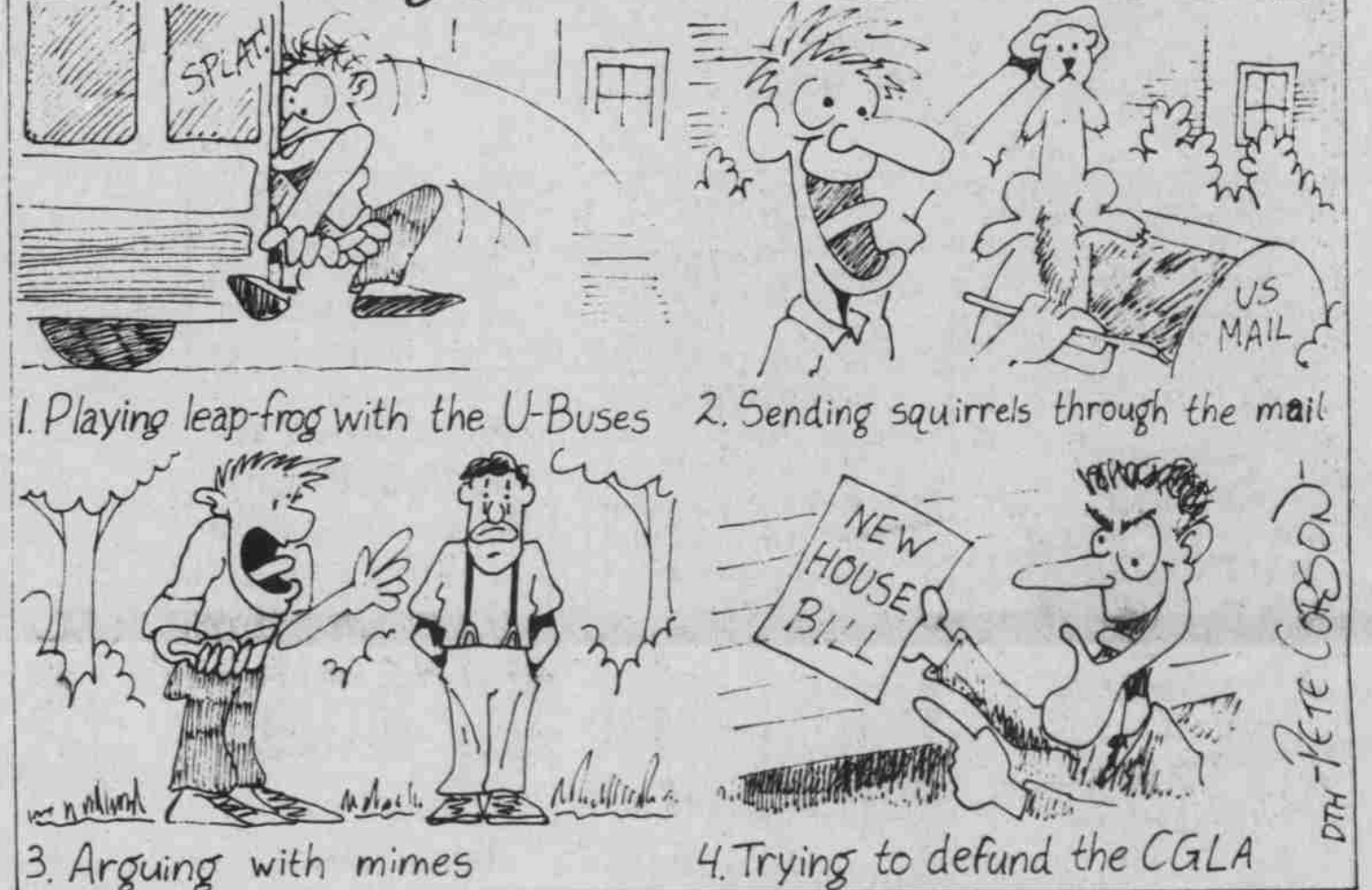
To the editor:
I read with considerable chagrin the letter from Ms. Abecassis and Ms. Ward ("Officer's point unclear," April 11) regarding their interpretation of the statement attributed to Sgt. Ned Comar, a statement which I took to be an effort to define the police investigative perspective of the alleged rape that took place at Burnout. I believe this letter is an unwarranted attempt to publicly brand as an insensitive sexist, a man whose record as an advocate of student safety and security on this campus is extensive and exemplary.

Here is my interpretation of Sgt. Comar's statement. Rape as a prosecutable crime involves sexual intercourse with another person without that person's consent. Maybe this is what actually happened. But being knocked down and kissed without consent, which is the way this incident was first reported in the papers, is at least an offense against human dignity and personal rights, is probably assault, and maybe sexual assault... but it is not rape and should not be investigated as such, with all of the potentially invasive evidence-gathering processes justified by that charge.

I would further add that the prerogative and responsibility of printing clarification of Sgt. Comar's statement may lie with the DTH, if his single statement was taken out of the context of a larger interview that could provide such clarification. Ms. Abecassis and Ms. Ward seem to think that we all have immediate access to the front page to clarify whatever isolated remarks we may make that are deemed fit for publication.

It is Sgt. Comar's business to be familiar with the legal definitions of crimes against person and property. It is his inclination to pass on his knowledge of these definitions in language which is clear and unconfusing, however graphic it may be. I, for one, have

Four Things Morons Do to Have Fun



always found this to be a refreshing tendency in a community too often characterized by obfuscated official statements. Perhaps we should admonish Sgt. Comar to carefully craft, in writing, his public responses to journalists' questions or to respond the next time with a simple "No comment." I must say that I am also thankful that the legal definitions of prosecutable crimes in this country are not determined by individual citizens, nor by individual police persons, nor by individual government officials at their whim, but by the laws that are created by our society, usually through a process that ensures objective detachment. If this were not the case, most of us would be doing time right now for something or other.

In my capacity as an instructional designer here for 16 years, I have observed Sgt. Comar spending considerable amounts of his own time and money on, and lending his unique colloquial style to, numerous educational efforts to improve student safety and welfare on this campus. I would like to thank him for those

efforts now, and urge those who would flippantly toss the label "sexist" in his direction, with little or no thought or evidence, to check the record, and better yet, go and talk to him a while.

RICK PALMER
Instructional designer
Center for Teaching
and Learning

DAVID GANZ
Assistant professor
Classics department

Cut repeats past mistakes

To the editor:
In 1920 the citizens of North Carolina marched on Raleigh to protest the choice of the state legislature to cut the budget of the oldest state university. It is a tragedy for those who believe that the state has advanced since 1920 to learn that such action is still necessary. I have seen the disastrous effects of such ill-considered cuts in the United Kingdom, where generations are being denied an alternative to unemployment and the nation is divided. In 1830 it was suggested that the legislature wished to keep its citizens both poor and ignor-

Letters policy

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

- All letters must be signed by the author(s), with a limit of two signatures per letter.
- Students should include name, year in school, major, phone number and home town. Other members of the University community should include similar information.
- Place letters in the box marked "Letters to the Editor" outside the DTH office in the Student Union.

Women must take initiative to get elected

To the editor:
In the April 12 editorial, "When a majority is a minority," Kimberly Edens makes several disturbing comments on the subject of women in the political arena. She presents a severely distorted view of how women should get involved in politics and government while also making several offensive remarks that are totally unjustified.

The remark made by former Gov. Jim Hunt can only be referred to as inexcusable. The fact that Ms. Edens feels that this is the attitude of most male politicians is also inexcusable. It is absurd to suggest that the remarks of one individual can represent the mentality of a whole gender. If this is so, then is Rosanne Barr's attitude of men the consensus of the female gender?

Later in the editorial she states that several female Democratic state legislators "urged that the party's executive council ensure that women are on statewide tickets in 1990 and 1992." Women should not be ensured to be on the election tickets at all. If a woman, or any person, is on the election ticket it should be because the

Democratic Party and the people feel that she is the best person to run for the office. Ms. Edens also states that North Carolina "has never elected a woman to a statewide executive office or to a full term in Congress." She fails to mention that the largest city in North Carolina — Charlotte — has a woman as mayor. Elizabeth Dole, from Salisbury, is now U.S. secretary of labor and is a former secretary of transportation. Neither of these women were ensured a candidacy but took the initiative to take the risk because they thought they were the best candidates.

Ms. Edens addresses the possibility "that there are more than a few men and women in this state that believe that women have no place in politics — only the kitchen." She boldly states that "those people are wrong. There can be no doubt about it." Well, North Carolina is not an oversized Mayberry where such prehistoric mentality dominates. The few people who actually believe that a woman's place is in the house, even though I believe the contrary, are entitled to believe whatever they like due to a piece of paper called the Constitution.

Ms. Edens also makes several presumptuous remarks. She states that North Carolina is "sexist" because Jesse Helms is a North Carolina senator. She also labels our neighbor Virginia "the last bastion of white supremacy." These unnecessary and unsupported statements do little but offend and insult the intelligence of the reader.

The fact that women should be in politics cannot be disputed. The political world should not be dominated by white men. If a person runs for an office, it should be because they are what the people want, no matter what race or gender they are. If women are to be ensured a candidacy, then what keeps us from stopping there? To be fair, we would have to ensure candidacies for everyone who claims to be politically excluded. The female majority can and should be encouraged by women who are in politics today, but the initiative to get involved can only come from within that majority.

DARREN SOLOMON
Freshman
Political science/economics

