

The Daily Tar Heel

97th year of editorial freedom

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Students need a say in study

"Excellence in research greatly adds to, (rather than detracting from) the teaching mission of the University. The research function at Chapel Hill is outstanding and of immense benefit to the teaching of both undergraduates and graduates..."

So concludes the Board of Visitor's Task Force on Research's preliminary report, a summary of which was released at the board's Friday meeting. While it sounds like a glowing endorsement of the status quo at UNC, the summary neglects to mention that no students were interviewed before the task force drew its conclusion. Perhaps if some were, the report would be a little less rosy.

The Board of Visitors is a 120-member service organization established to advise the Board of Trustees and the chancellor. It set up the task force to investigate how research affects teaching and to discover what impact the University has on North Carolina and the nation.

Part of discovering how research affects teaching should automatically be to interview students on their concerns. Susan Culp, a member of the task force, said the committees would speak to students before submitting a final report to the Board of Trustees in June, but it's a bit late to

ask their opinions now, when the report is essentially finished.

Of course, it seems unlikely that the BOV would have submitted a report criticizing the research function of the University, and maybe that's why student opinions were left out. As the task force notes, research brought in revenues of \$130 million in 1987-88. The board would certainly have a difficult time finding those funds harmful to the University.

But students could probably give a radically different view. Undergraduates especially are less concerned with how much money the University can bring in through research, and they are likely to be candid about the problems they've encountered with professors who focus on research. While research helps keep professors up-to-date in their fields, it detracts from the amount of time they can concentrate on advising and teaching.

It would seem that in this case, as is often the case with much of UNC, the board lost track of the main reason the University is here — students. Without their opinion, the BOV's report means very little, although it will likely impress the Board of Trustees and make them unjustifiably proud of the way the University operates. — Sharon Kepschull

At last, fresh out of opinions

I don't know how to write a "last edit." When I started this job, I assumed that I would have plenty to say by the time I was finished, but I'm quite exhausted of opinions. I'm sure that many of you are quite exhausted of mine as well.

The problem seems to be that I haven't angered anybody. Here's a typical response to one of my edits, usually encountered on my way to class:

"Hey, I loved that editorial last week. It was really well-written."

"You liked it? Which one?"

"Um, I'm not sure, but it was really good."

"Was it the education edit or the one on the Alumni Center?"

"What were the choices again?"

They won't have my name on my tombstone, but the epitaph should read, "He was really well-written."

Sometimes I despair of ever making an impression on the campus as a whole. Success for an edit writer seems to be measured in his or her capacity for the outrageous; if I were burned in effigy in the Pit by the College Republicans, I would be a hero. They refused, however, so I remain just a bi-weekly "opinionist." No glamour, no fame, not even infamy.

To tell the truth, I'm not that disappointed with my performance. I've talked to several people who changed their minds on Blue Jeans

Day after reading my editorial. And I have received notes all year from people expressing surprise that they had taken time to understand a different viewpoint. To some that may sound trivial, but it is all I have ever wanted to accomplish.

And in deference to edit-great Sandy Dimsdale, who once told me to "write something, anything," here's why.

In three years at Carolina, I have met many wonderful people with some very ugly opinions. From personal experience, I can understand how it is possible to believe yourself to be free of prejudices and still have them, a dangerous combination of self-righteousness and ignorance.

Telling people who believe they are free of prejudices to realize they are wrong is a difficult, unproductive process. If, however, I can demonstrate that my argument is as valid as their own, then the task becomes much easier. I only have to show how one opinion can benefit others, while another might not, to prove one opinion "better" than the other.

It may not be as confrontational an approach as some would like, and I can't really say that I've generated as much understanding as other writers have letters. But I'll always be able to say that I was well-written. — David Starnes

Readers' Forum

SAFE Escort deserves a chance to succeed

Editor's note: The author is director of SAFE Escort.

To the editor:
This letter is in response to Leigh Pressley and Cheryl Allen's article titled, "On-campus groups offer preventive help, support" (April 19). I was very disappointed with the overall negative tone of their article. Leigh and Cheryl seem to voice two main complaints in their article.

The first is that SAFE services have been undependable this year. This may be a valid criticism of our program. I apologize if this has indeed been the case. However, I would propose that this lack of reliability stems not from within the SAFE organization, but from a larger problem. This problem is a lack of student concern toward personal safety as evidenced by the large number of girls who walk alone on campus along with minimal utilization of SAFE Escort.

If the demand for SAFE was higher, more guys would be willing to work as escorts. No one likes to sit for two hours and only walk one or two girls. On the other hand, I think some guys could get really excited about volunteering knowing they would meet around six girls per night.

Having their service needed should solve the problem of unreliable escorts, while a series of dry spells surely leads to escort apathy.

The second claim is utterly ridiculous. This was presented in a statement by Karen Radford, a senior from Asheville who happened to be quoted in both articles in the Focus page on rape. Is Karen some sort of Nielsen box reflecting all student opinion on campus safety that she gave testimony for both articles? Anyway, she is "really paranoid" about a "mad rapist" getting into SAFE Escort. Please let me put her irrational fears to rest. The stupidest way to assault someone would be to work for SAFE. If an escort so much as looked the wrong way at a girl, anyone could call and find out exactly who escorted her. Only someone who wanted to go to jail that very night would ever assault someone under the guise of SAFE Escort.

Leigh and Cheryl seem to think this potential threat of mentally disturbed escorts could be avoided through screening interviews. I long for the day that interviews are possible. As it is now, we have to beg people to become escorts. As the

person who would surely be given the task of handling these would-be interviews, I would love some advice on how to detect these dangerous tendencies. Should I ask for a Xerox of his criminal record, or maybe he'll have a scarlet "R" on his shirt from "Rapists-R-Us?" Perhaps someone will just come out and tell me he's a perverted sexual assaulter. It's against the Honor Code to lie for what that's worth.

In conclusion, Cheryl and Leigh have pointed out one legitimate problem, but they offer no solutions. Let me pick up where they left off. We need volunteers badly. It is not too early to sign up for next semester. I implore girls to help with recruiting. Ask a guy you know to sign up, or even get a girlfriend to be your partner as an escort. And please, give SAFE a chance next fall. Let us show you that we can be a reliable organization and provide a much needed service if we have student support behind us.

BILL CRAVER
Sophomore
Economics

Debate forgets women, poor

To the editor:

I must say that I was stunned upon reading Jake Washburn's letter to the editor ("Both sexes ignore responsibility," April 17). He says that the pro-choice movement is "women being mad as hell that men can have sexual intercourse and not pay the biological consequences." Well, I am afraid that his interpretation falls short. First, there were quite a few men in Washington on April 9 to fight for the right to choose, and the women that were there did not drool at the mouth (perhaps a bit angry, but certainly not mad). But there is a shred of truth in what Mr. Washburn says. There was a man in Washington who held up a sign saying, "If men could get pregnant abortion would be a sacrament." But this is certainly not the basis of the pro-choice movement.

One reason that I feel so opposed to taking away a woman's right to an abortion is that I can see that the only people who will end up suffering would be poor women and the babies themselves. Wealthy and middle-class women would not encounter any real financial barriers to go to a doctor to perform an illegal abortion, and there really would not be that much difficulty in affording to bring the child up. But poor women would not be able to pay for a safe, illegal, sanitary abortion (I am not saying that this is good, or even a reason to keep abortion legal — I am just stating a fact).

And if the right to an abortion was taken away, and this woman below poverty level was forced to have her baby, she would require more welfare, and would have another mouth to feed and take care of. This brings me to my favorite sign I saw in Washington, "If I can't, will you pay and care for my baby." Pro-lifers want to interfere in women's lives enough to make them have a baby, but not enough to follow through with it, because, believe it or not, a child is a lifetime commitment.

Pro-lifers seem to also have forgotten one important thing in the abortion battle — the mother. The woman seems dehumanized in the struggle; she is lowered to the status of a mere incubator. Women are less important than the fetus that they carry. By making



abortion illegal, it is making child-bearing a punishment for pregnancy. Amazingly, however, I do agree with Mr. Washburn on one point, and that is that I believe that child-bearing is a wonderful thing. But, by making it mandatory for a woman to have a baby when she does not want to, these women will deem child-bearing a curse, and they will resent the child. And as for the issue of adoption, I am not going to go through nine months of hell for another couple.

While abortion may not be the right choice for me, I believe that only that individual who is placed in those circumstances and who can weigh her morals can truly choose (hopefully with the help of the father). I am not "anti-life," "pro-murder," nor "pro-abortion." I am pro-choice.

MINDY FRIEDMAN
Sophomore
Education

Entertainment excludes blacks

To the editor:

Sunday, April 9, Springfest Weekend. I was awakened by the sounds of a band called Chairman of the Board. I forgot it was Beach Blast, a time when Carolina students take time out to "drink, drink, and be merry." Well, I have no problem with that. Students should have a time where they can enjoy themselves, especially when final exams are so close at hand.

Knowing all this, I still question the actions taken by a member of Hinton James dorm government, when a young man was requested to dismantle his turntable that he set up by the Hinton James basketball court for the entertainment of perhaps those residents who did not desire to attend Beach Blast (a.k.a. those residents who aren't hip to clogging and shagging). What could have been the reason for him having to stop playing the music? Surely it's not quiet hours as they don't normally go into effect until 7 p.m. during the semester. During finals, they are in effect 24 hours. Maybe he just didn't get permission. Suddenly, five minutes into writing this letter, the music came back on. A small victory for the dorm disc jockey.

The granting of permission for him to continue was but a small victory in the microcosm of the struggle for blacks on this predominantly white campus. This year as well as previous years, there have been no entertainment events scheduled for the black students on this campus. In lieu of scheduling acts such as Bobby Brown, Kid n' Play, or Luther Vandross, etc., those individuals in charge of Smith Center activities take it upon themselves to book acts like John Denver, of Grape Nuts and Muppets fame (sorry John Denver fans — the truth hurts).

We are continually being ignored by those individuals who claim such acts will not

draw enough interest to these concerts. How can such a claim be made when it is evidenced at Great Hall that students from Duke, Central, N.C. State, A&T, as well as ECU, attend parties here. This almost seems ludicrous! I have no doubt that a "black" concert will draw crowds from all over the state. It seems the only freedom blacks have on this campus is the music they provide for themselves. If the organizers of the Smith Center or student groups, besides the BSM, would organize events that blacks as well as whites could enjoy, then students who choose to entertain themselves would not have the plug pulled on their stereos. The University needs to stop making excuses for itself and provide entertainment for all students — blacks included!

SHARON TAYLOR
Sophomore
Medical technology

Letters policy

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.

Death penalty violates basic human rights

Steve Bayliss
Guest Writer

In the words of Coretta Scott King: "An evil deed is not redeemed by an evil deed of retaliation. Justice is never advanced in the taking of a human life. Morality is never upheld by legalized murder."

On April 25, Amnesty International's worldwide campaign against the death penalty will begin. In more than 25 years of experience documenting human rights abuses, Amnesty has seen that the death penalty does not make society safer. People who favor the death penalty often believe it helps reduce violent crimes, but this assumes incorrectly that people who murder rationally assess the consequences of their acts.

In reviewing 25 years of analysis of crime statistics for evidence that capital punishment affects the crime rate, the U.S. Supreme Court found in 1976 no conclusive evidence that the death penalty deters violent crime. In fact, the death penalty brutalizes the society that imposes it, and there is evidence that the homicide rate actually increases in the aftermath of executions.

Racial, economic, geographic and political factors often play a more important role in determining who is sentenced to death than do the particular facts of

the crime. Throughout the world, capital punishment is usually applied in a discriminatory manner against minorities and the poor. This is also true in the United States, where 90 percent of those executed have had white victims, although half of all homicide victims are black. The death penalty will continue to impose a greater threat to non-white offenders as long as racism exists in American society.

Those on death row are also overwhelmingly poor — if a defendant is going to stay away from the electric chair, he or she must have money for the best legal defense investigation and expert witnesses. And capital punishment is not an inexpensive way to deal with the problem of violent crime. A 1982 study in New York concluded that the average murder trial and the first stage of the appeal process cost taxpayers \$1.8 million — more than twice as much as it costs to keep a person in prison for life. The lengthy trial and appeal process are necessary to avoid the unacceptable mistake of executing an

innocent person, but despite the precautions, in the 20th century our legal system has convicted 349 innocent people of offenses punishable by death, and 25 were actually executed.

But perhaps the most harmful cost of the death penalty is the false assumption that it helps fight crime. Although the death penalty has no effect on reducing the crime rate, politicians often advocate executions to show that they aren't "soft on crime." This empty gesture distracts society's attention from the very real challenge of finding effective solutions to the problem of violent crime. The death penalty teaches that killing is sometimes acceptable while denying the fundamental humanity of all people — including those who commit atrocious acts. The United States was founded on a respect for those fundamental rights each individual is entitled to for no other reason than because he or she is a human being. Everyone has the right to life, and under no circumstances should anyone be subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment. No one should be sentenced to die.

Steve Bayliss is a first-year law student from Charlotte.

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