

The Daily Tar Heel

97th year of editorial freedom

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Leaders lack dedication New trustees' no-show disappointing

For a state whose SAT scores have hit rock bottom in the nation, one would expect that people chosen to oversee our public education system would work more diligently than ever to improve education. But on a political board such as the UNC Board of Trustees, that commitment was sadly lacking at a recent important meeting.

board opinion

The boards of trustees for the 16 UNC-system schools, along with the student body presidents, chancellors and the Board of Governors, which oversees the entire system, were supposed to go on a retreat last weekend in Boone. The retreat should have been especially important as a training and orientation session for new board members. But only one of the three new UNC BOT members — David Ward — went on the trip, along with Student Body President Brien Lewis, an ex officio member of the BOT, and Earl "Phil" Phillips, who was just appointed chairman of the board. John Medlin and Arch Allen, Republican Party chairman for Wake County who was appointed by Gov. James Martin, failed to attend.

The meeting should have been mandatory for new members and old alike — this chance to get everyone together from the whole system comes around only once every other year. This year, UNC Chancellor Paul Hardin gave a major report to the conference on the financial state of the University. The suggestions Hardin made should spur some action from North Caro-

lina's legislators, who control the system's finances, the Board of Governors and the various boards of trustees.

But it will be difficult to touch off a debate on UNC's BOT if the board's newest members have missed Hardin's speech, the chance to discuss it with other members of the system's governing boards and a more general orientation. To have at least two of the BOT's 14 members not fully prepared to deal with the challenges of the University's future — creates a serious problem for the board.

In recent years, the board has approved the site and plans for the Alumni Center, turned down the building plans for the WUNC broadcast facility, made extensive recommendations on campus parking regulations and fines and created a search committee for a new chancellor. Obviously, this board has a lot of say over policy matters at the University.

Ideally, the entire board should have gone on the retreat. But since it is geared to orientation of new members, it won't prove to be as much of a problem as the new members' absence. It is their absence that suggests a lack of concern for and commitment to their new position. Granted, the choices for trustees are often made based on politics, but they should still focus on those people who care the most about higher education in this state — not those who give the most money to political campaigns. Last weekend's attendance showed a disappointing lack of concern. We hope the trustees will prove a stronger commitment to the board and to UNC in the near future.

Goodbye Dr. Seuss? Book banning limits kids' education

Imagine not growing up with the wonderful rhymes and creativity of Dr. Seuss' books. How about missing the river journey of Huckleberry Finn? Although these denials may seem unimaginable, conservative groups all over the United States are working to annihilate these and other "controversial" novels from the reading lists of public schools.

The latest battle against literature rages in Laytonville, Calif., where the chief industry of the area — the timber industry — accuses a Dr. Seuss book of unfairly condemning the industry. "The Lorax" is about a creature called the Lorax who unsuccessfully attempts to battle a family of environmental misfits. The timber industry claims the book, which is required reading for the second-graders in the school system, biases the children against the key money-making trade of the area.

The industry's demand to ban the book from the reading list is ridiculous and unnecessary. Seuss' environmental book may influence the children of Laytonville, but it will also point out the devastating effects of careless treatment of the land. During today's environmental education drive, this early teaching can only cultivate positive results.

A 1974 book called "Sociobiology: The New Synthesis" reignited the debate over how human behavior developed. Anthropologists labeled the book racist and sexist, claiming it was only trying to justify human-inflicted injustices like genocide and slavery. Although their drive to censor the theory from the classroom was defeated, it showed how a small group can dictate the education of many.

A radically conservative Texas group,

Educational Research Analysts, oversees which texts are used in the state schools, obliterating many of them from the list because of such subjects as the benefits of medical drugs and the differences of racial groups. Other books have created conflict because they are "too soft on communism" or are "pro-ERA."

Clearly, these differences are weak reasons to censor a book from a required reading list and from a child's mind. Education should not produce homogeneous

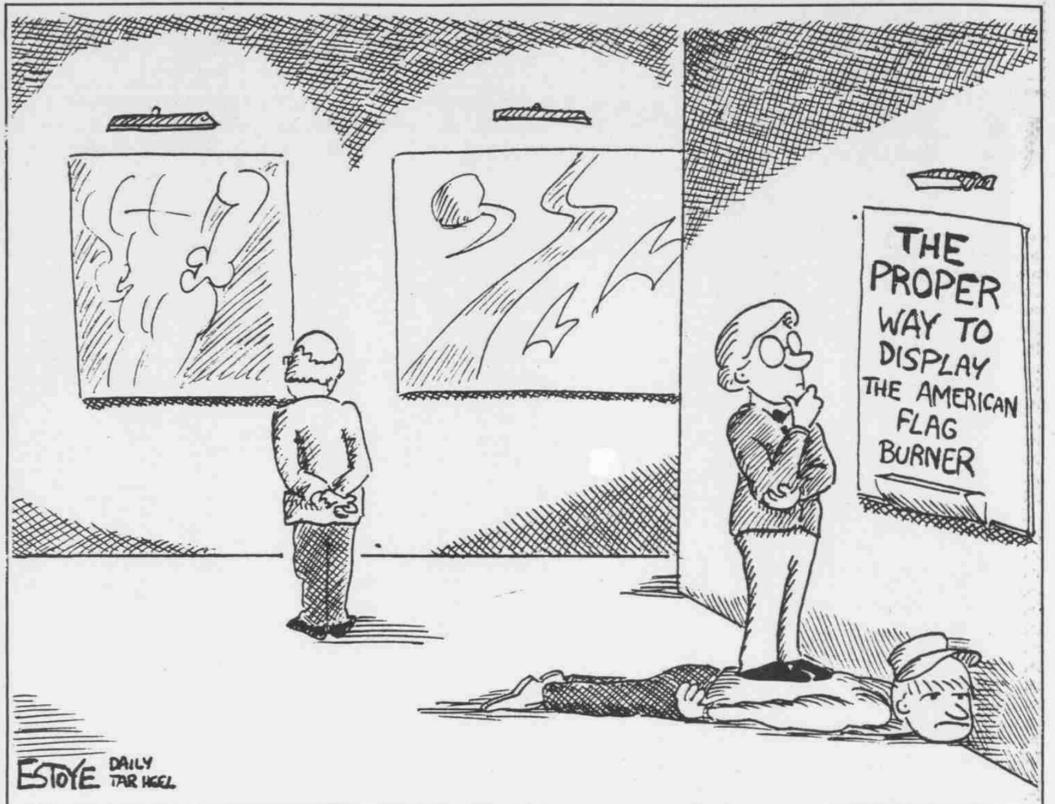
Education should not produce homogeneous kids who believe in the same principles.

kids who believe in the same principles, but rather should challenge their beliefs and present them with unique cultures and theories.

Libraries and school systems cannot bend to the outlandish demands and whims of this right-wing minority. Considering the recently published low SAT scores, the quality of education cannot be restricted as these groups are trying to do. Students need to learn how to think — they do not need constant reaffirmation of what they have been taught since age three.

The Supreme Court ruled in 1982 that banning books could be a violation of the First Amendment but would be allowed for some unspecified reasons. A certain group's tastes cannot be the yardstick by which this is measured. Groups countering those conservative movements are integral in the fight to reaffirm freedom of ideas as expressed through literature.

Most novels and theories are not created to agree with the masses. Rather, they provide a backdrop for debate and thought — a challenge to one's beliefs. Let's not replace green eggs and ham with Jane, Dick and Spot. — Jennifer Wing



Readers' Forum

Speculation about assault unnecessary

To the editor:
 It's certainly a shame that any person would assault another, much less someone who is handicapped. We speak, of course, of the unfortunate incident in the parking lot of Big Fraternity Court in which a handicapped student was assaulted very early last Monday morning.

It is also a shame that such a crime is presented on the front page of an award-winning student newspaper with obviously weighted implications.

The front page article ("5 attack, assault student," Sept. 13) announced that "Chapel Hill Police said ... they did not know if the assailants were members of the fraternities located in the court. The Pi Kappa Alpha, Sigma Chi and Sigma Nu houses surround the parking lot."

We question the journalistic integrity of such a statement. Though where the offense occurred is useful knowledge, it does not follow, as the article implies, that the stated offense can be so linked to fraternity members. For example, if a person were assaulted just outside of Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream Store, no doubt the DTH would report "... the Chapel Hill Police do not know if the cholesterol-stricken patrons of Ben & Jerry's were involved."

The circumstantial possibilities are endless. If someone were assaulted in front of the psyche lab, would the DTH postulate such criminals as deaf mice or drugged pigs? If someone were assaulted outside a church, would the DTH imply that we could expect half-crazed, grinning Friars fleeing from the scene, their dark robes sweeping the pavement? Perhaps the DTH should print more about what the Chapel Hill Police do know rather than waste print on idle inflammatory speculation.

Enough poorly written, obviously biased articles.

GREGG A. HECIMOVICH
 English
 Junior

BROOK WINSLOW
 Philosophy
 Senior

Non-Christians need to be tolerant, too

To the editor:

Ask questions before judging Christianity

To the editor:
 After reading Shilpi Somaya's warning on the dangers of Christianity ("Religious Groups Lack True Spirit," Sept. 11), I feel quite dismayed over such an unnecessary response to this subject matter. Somaya apparently felt it necessary to relate her new-found observations on Christianity with obvious disgust and repulsion. These attitudes seemed to root entirely from a Campus Crusade for Christ meeting she attended with an exploring and "open" mind. Somaya felt that the speaker's talk essentially preached closed-mindedness, ignorance and complete arrogance of all Christians. How one can draw such concrete conclusions and inferences with an open mind is beyond me. Yet I refuse to pick apart her specific interpretations as I consider it a most fruitless endeavor.

What disturbs me is that she suddenly forms complete contempt without ever approaching anyone, especially the speaker, with questions which might clear up her misguided

ence.

STEVE WILLIS
 Religious studies
 Senior

Focus social concern on important issues

To the editor:

In her article "Religious Groups Lack True Spirit" (Sept. 11), Shilpi Somaya wrote that she was disappointed that the speaker at the Campus Crusade meeting was closed-minded to other religions. She says that the meeting she attended "was not conducted in the true spirit of the beliefs they are trying to promote." Does she know then what Christianity is about? Is it an invention of man designed to help man to deal with the crisis of his existence? The evidence would point no, that Christianity is something more.

The Christian holy book is divided into two distinct sections, the Old and New Testaments. Part of the function of the Old Testament was to mark and designate the son of God for the time when he would come into the world, so that through the fulfilling of the prophecy he might be known.

In the Old Testament there are sixty major prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. Among these prophecies was foretold the lineage from which the son of God would arise, the town in which he would be born, that he would be a babe presented with gifts, that he would be called Lord, that he would be a prophet, priest, judge, and king, be preceded by a messenger (John), his ministry would begin in Galilee, that he would be betrayed by a friend for thirty pieces of silver which would be thrown at the betrayer's feet in the temple and which would be used to buy a potter's field, that he would be mocked, spit upon, and crucified, that lots would be cast for his garments, that he would be given vinegar to drink on the cross, that his bones would not be broken (as is wont in crucifixion), his side pierced, darkness would come over the land on the afternoon of his crucifixion, and that he would be buried in a rich man's tomb. These prophecies were all fulfilled in one man, Jesus Christ.

The Old Testament was being translated from the Hebrew to Greek about 250 years before Christ was born, so the body of prophecy was extant in its entirety before Christ's birth. That precludes any argument that the prophecy was revised to jibe with

Christ's life. Could it then have been a deliberate attempt on the part of Christ to make his life conform to prophecy? He had no control over many of the fulfilled prophecies, for example, that his side would be pierced or his betrayal. Was it merely coincidence that the entire body of prophecy was fulfilled in his life? The chance of one man fulfilling even 48 of the prophecies is astronomical, one chance in ten raised to the one hundred fifty-seventh power. Was then the life of Jesus, as it was recorded by the disciples, made to fit Old Testament prophecy? Doubtful, because the testimonies of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were written and distributed not many years after Christ's death. If their testimony as to the life of Jesus was not valid, the disciple's writings would have immediately been attacked and discredited. Christianity would never have made it. Yet it stands.

This is why Shilpi was not met with an attitude of openness to all philosophy, for Jesus has said, "There is no way to the Father but through me. I am the way, the truth and the light." If Jesus Christ was truly the Son of God then what he said is true. God would not lie. So if Shilpi would really be open-minded, then I would urge her to ask herself the question, "Is Jesus Christ who he claims to be, the son of God?" I would urge her not to take the question too lightly nor to answer the question before she had given it a fair hearing.

TOMMY BLANTON
 Psychology
 Junior

We goofed

In the editorial Friday "A hole in the curtain: E. Germany needs to learn tolerance," 1959 was given incorrectly as the date of the crushing of the democracy movement in Hungary. The correct year was 1956. The DTH regrets the error.

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 dated and signed by the author(s), with a limit of two signatures per letter.
- All letters must be typed and double-spaced, for ease of editing.
- Most letters run from one to two pages, but longer letters may be run as guest columns.

mind. Abusive editorials are not necessary and even hinder the possibilities of any agreement or understanding from occurring. I believe that if Shilpi had taken this alternate course of action, her fears would be put to rest.

In light of Shilpi's letter, it is true that it is necessary for all Christians to respect and keep an open mind to all beliefs and to focus on educational matters that we might practice our faith more effectively. This can be done without compromise to the faith in which we profess.

It was good for Ms. Somaya to exercise the right to voice her concerns, and I personally hold no bitterness against Shilpi or others who maintain what I believe to be unfortunately misguided conceptions of Christianity. It is, however, necessary to discuss such issues as this in a personal, less abusive manner.

In fact, Shilpi — let's have lunch sometime.

THOMAS COX
 Biology
 Junior

The Daily Tar Heel

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