

The Daily Tar Heel

97th year of editorial freedom

SHARON KEBSCHULL, Editor

MARY JO DUNNINGTON, Editorial Page Editor
JUSTIN MCGUIRE, University Editor
KAREN DUNN, State and National Editor
TOM PARKS, Business Editor
DAVE GLENN, Sports Editor
MELANIE BLACK, Design Editor

TAMMY BLACKARD, Editorial Page Editor
WILLIAM TAGGART, University Editor
JESSICA LANNING, City Editor
CARA BONNETT, Arts and Features Editor
KELLY THOMPSON, Omnibus Editor
DAVID SUROWIECKI, Photography Editor

JULIA COON, News Editor

Fraternity 'fun' Greek hazing dangerous for pledges

Last week three Phi Delta Theta fraternity pledges were caught streaking behind Morehead Planetarium, an act that may have been related to fraternity hazing. One of the men who fell and hurt himself contained an alarming .27 percent blood-alcohol level — almost three times the amount considered by the law as inebriated. These and other reports of sorority and fraternity hazing — which are done in the name of fun — are not only dangerous for participants, but are also ridiculous and unnecessary.

According to the fraternity, the pledges did the streaking on a personal "whim" — but it is difficult to believe such a high alcohol-blood level results from a "whim." Witnesses of the event reported that men in a jeep following the streakers were calling them "pledges" — suggesting that the activity was related to the fraternity.

Other Greek organizations have been accused of hazing. Rumors of sorority girls asked to take off their underwear in front of men and putting condoms on men while they are in the shower are a few examples. According to other rumors, some fraternity pledges are asked to be at the fraternity house whenever they're out of class, made to drink large amounts of alcohol in a short period of time and even take certain drugs. Even more shocking is that these horrible acts are done in the name of fun. But pledges and members are very reluctant to tell on the fraternity or sorority, which makes the problem of hazing very difficult to solve.

But why do certain Greek organizations haze their pledges? Some fraternities and sororities do it to have fun and to bond

board opinion

members together. But in reality, these acts of physical and mental cruelty are embarrassing and unnecessary, not a bonding experience. In some instances around the country, hazing activities have led to death, making the risk too high to continue. Even silly, seemingly innocent activities are usually performed under pressure. There are other means to get to know the members of the organization without the pressure and the embarrassment of hazing.

The Student Attorney General's office circulated a letter to all Greek organizations addressing the problem of harassment or hazing. According to N.C. General Statute, anybody convicted of hazing can be fined up to \$500, imprisoned up to six months and can be expelled from the University. The Student Instrument considers hazing an infraction of the Code of Student Conduct, and a person convicted of it can be expelled or suspended and the organization can have its charter revoked.

The national organizations of some fraternities and sororities have taken a strong stance against hazing. And this year UNC's Panhellenic Council launched a campaign to educate sisters and pledges about the problems associated with hazing. But even such measures will fail to be completely effective, as long as these rumors and incidents still persist. The national chapter of Phi Delta Theta is investigating last week's streaking incident. Whatever the outcome of the investigation, we hope that Greek organizations will realize how severe the consequences are for hazing and that the practice will be discontinued, instead of being carried on behind closed doors.

A numbers game Jobless figures disguise real poverty

The federal government announced Friday that the N.C. unemployment rate in October fell to 3.2 percent. While this is the lowest rate of any of the nation's largest states and more than two percentage points below the U.S. jobless rate, these optimistic numbers are misleading. Slow growth and high poverty are the true indicators of the sad condition of the state's economy.

According to economic experts, the state's rate of economic growth has not kept pace with a steady population growth caused by a streams of people drawn by North Carolina's glowing reputation. This population increase has forced many people to accept jobs that pay wages forcing them to struggle just to stay above the poverty line.

These low unemployment numbers hide the fact that large numbers of workers in North Carolina have jobs but do not have the economic means to survive. Local officials reported this summer that Orange County had a poverty rate of 15.2 percent, but a jobless rate of 1.9 percent. This discrepancy between the jobless rate and poverty statistics show the sad condition of the economy.

N.C. residents are being forced into poverty because they would rather accept a low-paying job than a welfare check. This high rate of poverty can be attributed to low wages and the high cost of living in North Carolina.

State officials must not interpret these federal figures as a clean bill of good economic

health. Standing on false statistics and ignoring the source of the problem is not assisting the more than 880,000 state residents living in poverty. Only through an increased focus on education and job training can the state hope to improve workers' quality of life. To save the future of the N.C. worker, it is time for "Excellence in Education" to become more than a slogan.

While industry in North Carolina is becoming more technologically advanced, only 55 percent of the state's adult population has graduated from high school, and one in five adults can't read. Increased future automation in industries will force low-skilled workers out of the picture and result in increased unemployment. It is true that there have been an increase in the number of available low income, service-related jobs, but these positions are not the miracle cure for poverty that will improve the workers' quality of life.

Statistics and surveys are helpful, but state officials must look at the people and the problems that lurk behind the numbers. With the announcement that the state's unemployment numbers have dropped, it would be easy to ignore the underlying problems that are threatening the future of this short-term prosperity. An aggressive education program and active job training are needed to prepare our workforce for the 20th century. Have you ever tried to make ends meet by flipping burgers 12 hours a day? — Charles Brittain

the last word

The morale of writers and editors is never very high at a daily paper.

Newspeople tend to be dedicated, but not happy. While a newsroom is not exactly the depression ward at a psychiatric hospital, it would be fair to say that few copy editors here at one in the morning whistle while they work, and writers on deadline do not pack their troubles in their ole' kit bag and smile, smile, smile.

There are exceptions. Some can remain cheerful in the face of getting the runaround from sources, putting in long hours for a story they fear no one will read and dreading the gaping lack of job opportunities after graduation.

Last week, Jenny Cloninger stepped down as university editor, a post she shared with Justin McGuire. Cloninger was putting in more than 40 hours a week, and the stress became too much to handle. It's also hard to keep up a GPA. "I was quickly losing my sanity," she said.

Desk editors are chosen in February by the newly-elected editor of the DTH. Since last February, more than five desk editors have stepped down or moved to other jobs at the

paper.

The time commitment involved with writing and editing makes keeping up the class work difficult, and it's especially easy to blow off classes in favor of work at the paper. Many of us live our collegiate lives praying that interviewers will place more emphasis on our writing than on their grades.

Chuck Brittain went from city editor to editorial page assistant in September. While he wanted to stay with the city desk through tomorrow's town elections, he said he's glad he made the move. He estimated that his grades are about a point above where they would have been had he stayed on as editor of city desk.

This is not to say other students who are involved in extracurricular activities do not suffer the same fate. And certainly there are moments of sheer joy involved with working at the paper.

And those moments make the paper, despite the frustration, one of the more interesting places on this campus to waste a college career. —Tom Parks



Readers' Forum

Going against conventional wisdom

David Tucker
Guest Writer

Sometimes I really get fed up. I mean flabbergasted. Let me tell you just such a story.

A few days ago I wrote a letter to my friend Sergei in Moscow. He is a graduate student in French from Astrakhan, studying at the Pushkin Institute of Languages. Sergei is an intelligent, thoughtful, genuine and gentle fellow and a fine teacher. It was he who first taught me Russian, first showed me the land that he loves. When he taught me and my fellow Americans, it was clearly more than just another job to him: He went above and beyond the call of duty, sometimes taking us through museums after classes. His patience with us was great, and his enthusiasm still shines in my mind. It was quite a gift he gave me, this, my first key to Russia.

I had a hard time writing the letter. Imagine you are writing a letter to a good friend you have not seen for 15 months. You invite him to come visit you, and he wants to do so. Great, no problem, right? Well, for Sergei and myself there are many problems. Neither of us has the money to bring him here simply as a tourist. And even if Sergei has a million rubles, Soviet citizens are not permitted to exchange more than a few hundred rubles for foreign currency for a trip abroad — not enough to spit at.

I was envious of my friends who have studied German in the Federal Republic of Germany. Visits are so much easier to arrange for them and their friends in the FRG. Communications are so much more efficient than the Soviet mail. I despaired. What to do?

I didn't give up. I tried to find alternatives. Would colleges or universities in North Carolina be willing to sponsor him as a visiting lecturer in Russian? I talked to a teacher of

mine once about this. My teacher was rather discouraging, even cynical. What if Sergei came here and decided to defect? Would you then be able to ever return to the USSR? (This is something I most devoutly want to do, to polish my Russian and study the culture.) What about his motives? How well can you get to know someone in two weeks? What if he just wants to use you, to come here and buy a lot of stuff and go home and sell it for a tidy profit? And I thought to myself, what would the culture shock be like to him to see my country? The message seemed clear: Don't make trouble, don't rock the boat. Surely this counsel of long experience was wiser than my own.

I seethed in frustration. But then ... what if I did indeed contradict the voices of authority and doubt? What if I went against the almighty conventional wisdom? I mean, I just can't take this whole thing seriously anymore, it's a bunch of malarkey. Here we have this ridiculous system on both sides where people stride around so full of themselves, spouting ideology, saying, "You're naive, son. You don't understand the political realities, you don't understand the real truth. That's just the way things are." Ha.

Too many people want to see things solely in black and white. We do not want to take on the responsibility of making more subtle discriminations. It's so much easier to set up a group of people as the enemy and establish a system to dehumanize them and impede real

contact with them. Remember the letter a little while back on the threat of communism being greater than was that of Hitler? We take the easy way out and surrender ourselves to a system of fear and mistrust, which alleviates the risk of reaching out to trust.

Americans like to talk about how great glasnost is and how much U.S.-Soviet relations have improved. I worry that the unspoken afterthought is "OK, there's nothing more to be done here, so let's just go wage the drug war!"

Even with all the changes among the not-so-superpowers, it is difficult to bridge the chasm of decades of societal paranoia and simply see a friend. You see, people are very different indeed from one another, but I've learned the secret that's not a secret — the one that breaks down the walls of fear and the pompous rhetoric of isolation.

People are basically the same everywhere. We all have the same fundamental desires: the opportunity for full and free self-expression, to make a positive contribution to our society, to love and be loved. We manifest these dreams in such different ways, but they are so deeply human, they cut across cultural and ideological lines across the globe.

I believe in my friend, Sergei. I believe I've seen and learned enough to make an informed choice, to reach out despite discouragements. I am determined to see him again. Is this naive? Can you look me in the eye unblinking and say it is? If so, I wish there were more in this world as naive as I.

David Tucker is a junior Russian and East European studies major from Rocky Mount.

McKinley stands against oppression

To the editor:
My travels to Central America and Mexico over the past several years have changed my belief system of the current state of human affairs. In particular, out of scores of human atrocities that I have listened to, this one grotesquely reveals how close to the "beast" we still live. I was in Managua a year ago last spring, hanging out with my new Nicaraguan girlfriend talking about revolution. Her voice suddenly trembled as she told me about her cousin who was picking coffee beans and got his eyes gouged out with a knife by a contra. Of course we can get philosophical about this and ask important questions like, "Would eye surgery by a Sandinista be less painful?"

It is the human condition — the leaky faucet that does not stop dripping the blood of our brothers and sisters. No matter how hard we try to stop the bleeding, the ground still oozes forth the hurt, pain and tragedy of the struggle to become human.

In South Africa, El Salvador, Cambodia, Nicaragua, in Tinseltown, USA — in the ground here also bleeds — in Appalachia, in the nation's capitol, in Harlem ... everywhere the wound of oppres-

sion swallows another victim, another martyr, a soul in the struggle for justice and survival.

The privileged, those of us who have made it here thanks to Citicorp, daddy's Visa card, and/or our own blood, sweat and tears, are put in an unusual place. A place where we can literally make policies that build or destroy human relations.

Dale McKinley symbolizes that leaky faucet we want to shut down and shut up, because we hope that enough verbal abuse and/or punishment will make him go away. And maybe it will eventually, but the bloodshed will not, nor the injustice, fear and prejudice that festers within our bodies, minds and spirits.

The voice is against institutionalized violence, both the written word and the acts of violence that the CIA is responsible for both here and abroad.

And if you have ever witnessed the cruelty of these policies like Dale, myself and others who have travelled to countries where the CIA operates, or worse yet, have been a victim of the policy, the stand Dale makes in comparison would be but a whisper.

But when that whisper falls upon the powerful and mighty, it begins to stir one to consciousness and being, or instead to the process of rationalization, business as usual, don't let the buck stop here. Hey,

I am not my sister's keeper; I just work here.

PEG GREGSON
Graduate student
Public health

Threshold motivated students to act

To the editor:
A few weeks ago one of my housemates asked me if it was okay if we kept a few environmentalists in our backyard for this SEAC thing that was going on during some future weekend. Sure, we all said. We can have a party, cook up some lentils for these environmental people and have a grand old time. It didn't put us out any, and just for housing them, we'd get trendy T-shirts so that we could wear them and look environmentally conscious. What could we lose?

Then they got here and had two people in their group who had registered but not come; would we like to take their places? Sure, we said. They had prepaid, and we already had our own housing. What could we lose?

We got up last Saturday, and stumbled into the first really big meeting. Wow! This was no two-bit seminar that some students had thrown together. I sat and listened as speaker after amazing speaker

spoke on the imperative Earth problems and of the students' need not only to treat the environment nicely so that we and our children can live, but of the students' need to stop what's going on now, in the United States, the South American rainforests and the Soviet Union. The speakers told us the problems. They told us the solutions. And they told us that we were the enthusiastic group of people that realizes the problem and cares enough to find a solution.

I would like to believe that. But as I looked around, I saw very few people that I recognized. Yes, there were 1600 people there. But out of a whole country, that number is dismally small. Maybe the people who did attend were the right ones; the ones who will make a difference on campuses throughout the country. But as I walk around on campus, I see myself as a major minority. And I know that if those extra registrations hadn't turned up, I wouldn't have gone to the conference either.

SEAC, our student environmental group, organized and hosted a great weekend. They have big plans for setting up an East coast coalition, so I hear. Congratulations. Good job. Good luck. You've convinced me.

KATHERINE L. OGBURN
Sophomore
Russian language and literature

Wellness center not negative aspect of SRC

To the editor:

As coordinator of the Wellness Resource Center, I would like to clarify incorrect information given about the wellness center in the Oct. 31 article, "Students called on to fight SRC." Professor Silva made erroneous statements about the following: 1) the current use of the wellness center and 2) the proposed space in the Student Recreation Center (SRC) which will be allocated to the wellness center. I think Professor Silva should become familiar with the differences between the Student Wellness Resource Center and the Employee Health and Fitness Program before making the Wellness Center an issue in his opposition of the SRC.

The student Wellness Resource Center is a free student service jointly funded by Student Health Service and the Department of Physical Education. Services available to students are:

individual consultation and referral in wellness topics such as nutrition, fitness, weight and stress management; outreach wellness programs provided to dormitories and campus organizations; a wellness-oriented browsing library; and the FIT STOP which tests physical fitness levels. This center is not used by the faculty, but rather by students.

Last year the Wellness Resource Center reached over 5,000 students via programs and individual consultation. The Employee Health and Fitness Program has separate facilities and is a separate program. The Wellness Resource Center to be housed in the proposed SRC is a center for students, staffed by students (mostly volunteers), and there has never been any mention that the faculty program would be moved to the SRC.

Secondly, Professor Silva made the incor-

rect statement that the "whole second floor will be devoted to the wellness center." The discussion so far has been that the student Wellness Resource Center will be located on the first floor of the SRC, utilizing approximately 7 percent of the total square footage.

Before making the wellness center an issue in the opposition of the SRC, I encourage all students and Professor Silva to visit the current center. I think you will see first and foremost that it is a program for students, and secondly, that it could benefit by being moved into the proposed SRC by having better visibility and less crowded conditions, as well as being able to expand the student services it is currently providing.

SUSAN CHAPPELL
Coordinator
Wellness Resource Center