

# The Daily Tar Heel

97th year of editorial freedom

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## Preserving the village Council should create historic district

The town of Chapel Hill, along with the University therein, has long had a national reputation for beauty and tranquility, but several factors that accompany a large college town contribute greatly to the slow disintegration of such beauty. Unsanitary construction and developments and near-condemned fraternity houses on rundown lots are just two threats that can spoil the "village atmosphere" of Chapel Hill. In response, the recent proposal before the Chapel Hill Town Council to grant historic district status to a local neighborhood is a wise protective measure for one of the town's finest residential areas. Despite some complaints from residents, the plan would benefit both homeowners and many UNC fraternities in the long run.

The proposed historic district, tentatively scheduled for a Dec. 12 council vote, would include the neighborhood around West Cameron Avenue and McCauley Street — the site of several homes and fraternity houses, one sorority, the Carolina Inn and the UNC power plant. The historic status would prevent physical deterioration of the area and its older houses and prohibit the construction of new buildings which would be out of place.

The fraternities in the proposed area would undoubtedly benefit the most from the proposed district, as many town residents have pointed out. But those same residents would also benefit. Many of the included fraternity houses need fixing up. While most financial support for fraternity house renovations comes from alumni, such contributions probably would increase because any donations to historic district

### board opinion

buildings are tax-deductible. There are drawbacks to the proposed historic area, but the importance of preserving the town atmosphere outweighs the drawbacks, as most residents seem to realize. Of the 23 residents who voiced their support and concerns with the plan at a Nov. 20 public hearing, only eight were against the idea.

The most common complaint comes from homeowners who dislike the idea of having to receive approval before making changes to their houses' exteriors. As part of the historic status, residents must first apply for a certificate of appropriateness from the Historic District Commission. While this may be inconvenient for many property owners, it is an inconvenience that will not occur very often and one that, in the end, upholds and protects the appearance of the community — something all residents want.

The two University buildings in the proposed area should not be included, however, because additional guidelines on these public buildings would only add to the already complex system of channels that characterizes the construction process within the UNC system. In this case, the town and University are better off retaining their separate existence.

A similar, successful historic district already exists around East Franklin and Henderson streets, the location of a neighborhood much like the one now being considered. In this area and others, Chapel Hill residents should recognize the unique quality of this town and strive to preserve it through support of the historic district; as it stands, the "village atmosphere" is the responsibility of the villagers.

## Choice or copout? Schools of choice don't solve problem

As part of President George Bush's effort to reform the nation's schools, the U.S. Department of Education has been promoting schools of choice. Under the school choice program, parents would have a choice in where their children went to school, and they would be able to choose from specialized schools that cater to different academic interests. While schools of choice have worked in some areas of the country, the United States, and especially North Carolina, needs to attack the "education deficit" at the root of the problem — education budgets, teacher salaries, drop-out rates and children and adults who cannot read.

Giving students a choice in what they want to study probably will not improve drop-out rates and certainly will not increase student-teacher ratios or increase teacher salaries. The nation's children are failing in the basics, as the high illiteracy rate in the developed nation of the United States shows only too clearly.

The magnet schools in Wake County use a version of the choice system, but the choices they offer students are limited. The program was designed to lure white children into predominantly black schools to balance the schools racially with less mandatory busing.

### Teachers need higher salaries, kids need more attention, and citizens must be able to read.

A few weeks ago, U.S. Education Secretary Lauro Cavazos visited Charlotte to promote the schools of choice program. A panel of education experts, including former Wake County School Superintendent Walter Marks, traveled with Cavazos. Marks now works with an urban school district on the San Francisco Bay; the district implemented the System for Choice, intended to improve a 31,000-student district that was stagnant and low-achieving. And while the system in California has been successful in some aspects, similar programs in Philadelphia, Chicago, Boston, New York and Little Rock, Ark., led to segregation of races and of the rich and the poor.

In Marks' school system in California, elementary teachers are complaining after only two years of the program that their students are not getting the basics they need. Some of the students are not at the reading level they should be, and the teachers union there has negotiated a reduction in the number of electives taught in the primary grades.

Wake County's limited-choice model has been successful and shows that schools of choice may work when they give students a way to concentrate in the areas in which they are interested. But until the federal and state governments can find it themselves to be truly committed to education in this country, the choice offered to students can only be limited. If not, it is easy to see how the children of doctors, lawyers and professors could end up at one school, while the children of blue-collar workers could end up at another school that specialized in vocational skills rather than in more academic pursuits. A badly-handled system of choice could create a new American underclass, and segregation would again be a problem in the next century.

Education in this country simply needs more funding to improve its quality. Our teachers need higher salaries, our kids need more individual attention, and our population needs to be able to read. Creating schools of choice does nothing to address those problems, and those problems are eating away at the very core of our nation. — Tammy Blackard

## 6 Ways to Disguise a Keg at Dry Rush



"Hey! Kool Aid!" "It's our little sister." "It's our mascot." "It's our composite." "It's a recycling bin." "Annh...who cares? Want a joint?"

## Cooke brings melting pot to a boil

Alistair Cooke became a favorite of mine back in junior year of high school. I had a demanding AP U.S. history class that year, but about once a month the teacher would replace the usual lecture with that greatest of high school treats: a movie. The movies in this class were all hosted by Alistair Cooke. The class would file in on a movie day. We'd see the telltale movie projector, and smiles would break out all over. We'd softly chant, "Alistair! Alistair! Suh-weet!" Soon we'd all be watching Alistair, overdressed and on location, as he strove to put a human face on the events we'd been studying.

Alistair always struck me as a pretty on-the-ball kinda guy. His insights on America and Americans were always clever, and he had a knack for describing us to ourselves that I admired. Since that class, I have read two books by Alistair about America, and with those books my opinion of him rose another notch.



Matt Bivens  
Rat Salad

But now Alistair has let me down. A friend of mine got a letter from Alistair recently, part of a mass mailing. Alistair has attached his name to "U.S. English," which bills itself as "the new national organization formed to combat the divisive bilingual movement in America."

In the mailing, which included a newspaper clipping and a "survey," U.S. English says the federal government requires 375 U.S. jurisdictions to provide ballots in languages other than English. It also charges that bilingual education programs, instead of helping immigrants make the transition to American society, are being used by certain groups to resist the pressure of the great American melting pot. Apparently it's some sort of plot, led by "leaders of ethnic blocs, mostly Hispanic." U.S. English supporters argue that American society is in danger of becoming a "polylingual babel," and they point to "the political upheavals over language that have torn apart Canada, Belgium, Sri Lanka, India and other nations."

To combat "the insidious pressure from ethnic groups to displace English as our na-

tional language," U.S. English wants to outlaw bilingual ballots, restrict government funding for bilingual education to short-term transitional programs, and adopt a Constitutional amendment making English the official language of the United States.

U.S. English hastens to add that the study of foreign language should be encouraged and that the right of people to use other languages should be respected. "U.S. English is no refuge for red-necked chauvinists," according to the mailing.

But most of the arguments U.S. English advances are chauvinistic — even if couched in flowery speech. Reading between the lines, it sounds like the people of U.S. English don't care much for immigrants in general. The immigrants pouring into this country are, it seems, plotting to make a farce of *E Pluribus Unum* — out of many, one. To quote the mailing: "This anti-assimilation movement (a more accurate name than bilingualism) comes at a time when the United States is receiving the largest wave of immigration in its history." The message is clear: The immigrants are coming, and we need to let them know who's boss — if we let them in at all.

The main thrust of U.S. English can be seen in this quote from its guiding principles: "In a pluralistic nation such as ours, government should foster the similarities that unite us, rather than the differences that separate us." It's an interesting idea, isn't it? That the government should work to make us all more alike, so that we can live in greater harmony?

But why stop with enforced English? The government could do so much more to foster similarities. What about all those divisive religious feuds around the world; why not make us

all attend the same church? If similarity is so great, why not make us all wear the same clothes? Or listen to the same music? Read the same books? THINK THE SAME THOUGHTS?

This isn't what U.S. English advocates. But it is the logical conclusion of their stated philosophy. So I have a suggestion for them: why not let government worry about governing, and leave the similarities and differences of people to chance?

Normally, I just would've shaken my head and thrown away this mailing. I'd have chalked it up to white-collar ethnocentrism, another misguided cause for people with too much time on their hands and a skewed sense of priorities. But in deference to Alistair Cooke, I read the mailing and I thought long and hard about it. And in addition to what I've already said, I came up with a conclusion and a question:

The conclusion: Alistair Cooke has let me down for the first time since 11th grade history, by actively supporting such a ridiculous campaign.

The question: Why is it that when two or more people gather together to support some rinky-dink cause, they inevitably start talking about amending the Constitution?

Every time I hear dingbats talk about pasting another unnecessary amendment on the Constitution, I get a little more cynical. One of the hallmarks of our Constitution is its stability, its resistance to whims and fads. (Incidentally, we almost witnessed the end of that resistance with George Bush's push for an amendment on flag-burning.) I'm much more worried about the day we start amending the Constitution with impunity than I am about the Asian-Hispanic language bloc.

That's a conclusion I reached while studying U.S. history in high school. I can't help thinking that maybe Alistair should have spent more time studying and less time lecturing.

Matt Bivens is a senior political science major from Olney, Md.

## Readers' Forum

### Backlash against drinking age likely

To the editor:

I would like to comment on the recent articles in Omnibus concerning facets of the drinking problem, primarily the first installment concerning the legal aspects ("The law affects everyone: Chapel Hill nightlife: Fake IDs and underage drinking," Nov. 9). Although I found the article informative, I felt it was a bit propagandistic, for it left out several key legal issues relating to the raising of the drinking age in North Carolina to 21 in September 1986.

I would like to remind everyone that the raising of the drinking age from 19 to 21 was mandated by the federal government in P.L. 98-363 by requiring the U.S. Department of Transportation to withhold first 5 percent and then 10 percent of federal highway funding from any state permitting legal purchase or public possession of any alcoholic beverage by anyone under 21. Let's not kid ourselves — that money is critical to our highway program. North Carolina essentially had no choice in the matter. A quick reading of the preamble of N.C. House Bill 141 from the 1985 session — the bill that actually raised the drinking age — makes this point clear. It mentions nothing about drunk driving, alcohol abuse or other related problems; all it mentions is the highway money North Carolina would lose.

A clause was added to the state law stating that upon certification from the secretary of state of North Carolina, if the federal mandate is repealed by Congress or invalidated by a court (the latter of which not being likely given the U.S. Supreme Court's *Dakota v. Dole*

### DALE T. MCKINLEY

Graduate student  
Political science

The tickets being distributed today are for the seats which are being added in sections 109, 110 and 111. Students who already have seats in the upper level for the Central Florida and Towson State games may go to the ticket office window at the Smith Center today between 7 a.m. and 12 p.m. and exchange their upper level tickets for the new lower level seats. Each student may exchange up to two tickets.

From 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. today, students who have not yet picked up upper level tickets for the Central Florida and Towson State games may do so. (No exchanges will be permitted at this time.) Starting at 3 p.m., normal rules for ticket distribution will apply: Each student may get up to two tickets and proper identification is required for each ticket picked up.

We at the CAA hope that the method of distribution used today will give first priority for the new seats to students who took the time to pick up tickets earlier. We also hope that by starting exchanges at 7 a.m., no student will have to miss class to get a chance at the new seats. More information will be provided early next week concerning how tickets for the new seats will be given out for the rest of the games which have already been distributed.

### LISA FRYE

Junior  
History

Editor's note: The author is the president of the Carolina Athletic Association (CAA).

To the editor:

This letter is to clarify how today's special ticket distribution for the Central Florida and Towson State games will be handled.

### DTH needs to give all students access

To the editor:

It seems that of late the DTH has consciously chosen to fill its editorial page with a plethora of conservative tripe that does not even deserve to be placed in any respectable newspaper. While there have been countless denunciations of the CIA Action Committee, ignorant letters concerning the insidious scourge of communism, and most recently out-

### Ticket distribution needs clarification

right lies and misinformation about the situation in El Salvador gracing the editorial pages of the DTH, letters and editorials that have sought to respond to this garbage have been silently pushed under the tables at the DTH's office.

I am not exactly sure why the DTH has chosen to allow its editorial page to be filled with such one-sided, and in most cases, historically and factually incorrect nonsense, when there have been numerous pieces offered to balance the picture. If the DTH wants to pass itself off as a student newspaper then it should respond to the opinions of the student body equally. Even though the DTH has always been thought of as a "liberal" newspaper, its recent, highly selective editorial policy makes it appear as the sister paper of the reactionary Carolina Critic. The "alternative" editorial pieces are certainly needed to counter the trash of people like Sharon Sentelle, whose recent piece on the FMLN is nothing but a litany of lies justifying the death squad, U.S.-supported ARENA regime. Let's have equal access to our student newspaper, and then let the readers judge for themselves.

### Letters policy

■ All letters must be typed and double-spaced, for ease of editing.

■ Letters should include the author's year, major, phone number and hometown.

**The Daily Tar Heel**

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