

The Daily Tar Heel

98th year of editorial freedom

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Leaving a lot to be desired Indispensable Guide needs more information

The first tangible accomplishment of the Hildebolt administration finally came through about two weeks ago. The Indispensable Guide to Classes is now available to anyone willing to spend \$2. Although the book does provide some valuable information, it's certainly not indispensable.

The book highlights one section of two or three classes in a department. Different students have written what they like and dislike about a class, mostly from personal experience. Students also give overviews of departments and highlight stellar teachers.

All this information is helpful, but it's only from one person's perspective, and the contributors usually write about classes in their major. Thus, some of the pieces are useful to some of the student body. And the book rarely suggests that a student should beware of a class or a certain professor — it never says anything negative. Compliments are always nice, but they are not always helpful. Especially if a student cannot get into a class with the Indispensable's recommended professor.

What the book needs, and what students need, is the dinosaur called Carolina Course Review. It was a tabloid publication that compared each professor and each class in numerical form. The information for the review came from students who filled out computerized surveys at the end of each semester. These publications were not only indispensable, they were priceless.

The review told how many people surveyed out of how many people were registered, so students had some idea how many people attended class regularly and how many people could register for the class. The review then rated the class on a scale from one to five (with five being the highest) in these areas: instructor's in-class performance, reading assignments, exams and grading, value of the learning experience, and the amount of student effort required. In the next graph, the review showed how students responded to certain questions (from strongly disagree to strongly agree): instructor presents difficult material clearly, instructor is actively helpful, amount of student effort required is reasonable, course was a valuable learning experience. Last of all, students were asked what grade they expected, thereby giving some sort of expected grade distribution.

The Indispensable offers that human angle, but what it really needs is the statistical parts of the Review: more people need to respond about more classes, many sections of a class need to be reviewed, the same information about classes needs to be communicated (not just whatever the writer chooses to write about), and it needs to be honest and thorough.

For the Indispensable to be truly indispensable, it should provide information to students that they can't get simply from their friends. Right now, it's a watered-down version. — Jessica Lanning

Educational roadblock

Bicyclists should not interfere with education

Moving bicycles have already been enough of a hazard on campus. Now, they are causing problems while motionless. Unfortunately, a lot of students are choosing to secure their bikes to ramps used by handicapped people or to chain them in front of the buttons used to open doors. Because of this inconsiderate behavior, many physically handicapped students are having a tough time getting to their classes. Taking this into consideration, students should be more careful about where they leave their bikes. If they don't, the University police, who never pass up a chance to write a ticket, should start ticketing bikes that block ramps.

This University has been dedicated to giving all students equal opportunity for an education. Blatant disregard for the needs of physically handicapped students interferes with their rights to an education. If handicapped students cannot have easy access to their classes, then the University cannot serve these students.

One handicapped student, who relies on her automatic wheelchair to get around campus, said she has noticed that the problem has become more serious this semester than last year. On one occasion, she wanted to enter Lenoir Hall, but a bike blocked the button she needs to reach to

open the door. Consequently, she had to wait until someone came along to open the door for her. The handicapped student, exasperated by the lack of courtesy, left a note on the bike informing the owner of his negligence. She expressed her sincere hope that the University would do something to rectify the situation.

Students who live far away from campus might say that they must use their bikes to get to class. They may also complain that there never seem to be enough bike racks near the classroom buildings. If it is really such an inconvenience to find a place for their bikes, they should consider riding the bus or simply walking to class. Those who will not accept taking the bus or walking should stay on their bikes long enough to find an open spot on a bike rack. After a while, spaces are bound to appear as other students get out of their classes. The effort required for a cyclist to find an open rack is minor compared to the hassle students in wheelchairs must endure just to get to class.

The current situation must not continue. If students do not act more responsibly about where they leave their bikes, then the University should require the police to leave parking tickets on handlebars as well as windshields. — H. Brock Page



READERS' FORUM

Students have chance to appreciate elderly

Editors' note: Daniel Peddle is co-chair of Youth for Elderly Service, a Campus Y committee. Youth for Elderly Service will have a meeting Nov. 8 at 5 p.m. at the Campus Y. There will also be an elderly awareness program in the Pit at noon on Nov. 13.

To the editors:
Earlier this month, at a local nursing home, a woman was found with maggots on her vaginal area. When questioned, the assistant director explained, "she had a history of kicking off her sheets."

She had a history. Now she is kicking off her sheets. She has a story to tell. Now she is kicking off her sheets. She used to have control of her bladder. She used to have friends. Now she is alone, infested, kicking off her sheets.

How could such a tragedy occur? The answer is simple — this woman is too wrinkled. We have no need of her. She wets her bed! Pudding slides from the corner of her mouth. Her skin is thin, her body frail. She has little hair. These could be descriptions of a cute, dimpled baby; but this woman is not a baby. She disgusts us; she can talk. She can tell us where it hurts. But we do not listen because she is too wrinkled. Let her kick off her sheets! She's already lived her life! She is fair game for the maggots!

In fact, the aged in America have lived their lives. But this is not a reason for forgetting them. This is a reason for remembering them. They are our mothers and fathers. Our history. They have stories to tell and we need to listen. A local social worker says, "These people are not finished. They still have a lot to give. They want to give. Every day that I work with the elderly, I learn something about myself. They have something special to offer and they need to know that there are people who will listen."

Listen. This is the decade environmentalism became trendy. This is the decade we became concerned with trash, with methods to unlock its stored energy, with ways to decrease its buildup. This is the decade we shouted "Enough!", the decade we stopped throwing it away. This is also the decade, according to the Census Bureau, we allowed 3,369,000 of our nation's elderly to drop below the poverty level. This is the decade that in the state of North Carolina, 98 percent of the 59,842 available nursing home, rest home and convalescent center beds were occupied. This is the decade we stopped throwing away our trash and continued throwing away our elderly, dumping them in rest homes.

What does it mean to live in a health care center? For many it means isolation. One local nursing home resident says, "I've never been under one roof with so many people and felt so alone at the same time. It's like everybody's always looking at me but nobody sees me ... most of the time there's a lot of noise ... everybody's talking but not with each other ... they talk at the walls ... but sometimes it's real quiet. People shouldn't be that quiet." Unfortunately, it is not just loneliness that plagues so many of the elderly. There is an even more haunting visitor — memory. Memories of family, friends. Memories of a time when they were more than just castaways, when there was more to do than kick off sheets.

There is something very un-

natural about our society's treatment of those nearing the end of life. There is something very unnatural about forcing our mothers and fathers to walk alone through the valley of the shadow of death. Surely death is a lonely endeavor, but dying should not be.

It is time that we alter our attitude. It is time we recycle these lives, releasing their stored energy, their stories. It is time we listen. It is time for a change because earlier this month, at a nursing home in our own back yard, a woman was found infested with maggots, kicking off her sheets.

DANIEL PEDDLE
Junior
Anthropology/RTVMP

Funeral home needs to hang more curtains

To the editors:
I realize that a lot of the letters you receive don't deal with life-and-death subjects, but I truly believe this one does. Has anybody else noticed that when you walk past Walker Funeral Home on Franklin Street in the evenings, about 50 percent of the time, you can see a corpse through the front door? Are the people of Walker's aware of this? Don't they realize that it's an affront on the dignity of the deceased and their families to leave corpses in plain sight of the public? This says nothing about the many evenings that I, and I'm sure others like me, have had spoiled by the sight of these corpses. Who wants to ponder their mortality on their way to a Friday night concert at He's Not Here?

Envision this. After enduring a frustrating week of picky tests and dull classes, you decide to spend a relaxed evening with a friend seeing a movie and then going out for yogurt. The movie was thought-provoking, exhilarating. And at the Yogurt Pump, ah, your favorite flavor, key-lime pie! What a lovely fall night! Crisp air, soothing winds. Why not amble towards the Cave to see what's going on down there? You pass Pizza Hut, then Kinko's, and then bang! You're at Walker's. "Look," says your friend, "if you stand just so, you can see a body in there! Good GAWD, it's Mr. Pipotski propped up on a cushion in a satin-lined casket!" The two of you stand agape as the drunks, rattle-rousters, and Chevy Chevettes with rap music blaring out at 200 decibels pass by. Neither one of you can believe your eyes, and at first your "Blue Velvet" quirkiness even tells you it's funny. Ah! But then you consider your own inevitable fate: you might be visiting the Walkers some day too. What began as an escape from all your troubles ends with you and your friend inauspiciously considering one grave woe: DEATH.

How many of us think we are going to see stiff when we go out for a night walk? Is a street lined with bars and late-night hot spots the appropriate site for a funeral home, much less for a funeral home that doesn't respect the privacy of its customers? I've noticed that Walker's has curtains on the windows. Why not get some of these for the front door too? My mother taught me never to dress in front of bare windows. The same holds true for doors. I suggest the Walkers take her advice and invest in some curtains.

CATHERINE C. OLSON
Former Chapel Hill resident

Columnist should not take insanity lightly

To the editors:
I am writing to object to Jenn Layton's column, "Aggravating others delivers sadistic satisfaction," in Tuesday, Oct. 30 paper, specifically to her stated purpose of manufacturing shallow humor from this statement: "I never realized just how easy it is to drive other people insane."

There are some 85,000 people in North Carolina alone who are insane, that is who are mentally ill. Typically, mental illness takes three forms: schizophrenia, depression and bi-polar disorder (manic depression). Schizophrenia causes one not to be able to distinguish between reality and delusional thoughts. It is a brain disease that impairs thinking and cognition and it most often strikes people in their late teens or early twenties. (It is not, by the way, "split personality," which is a separate type of illness.) Depression and bi-polar disorder are both diseases on the limbic system, a part of the brain that controls moods.

Being unable to decide between Reeboks and Nikes may be a neurotic joke to Layton and her friend (provoking that anxiety to get a cheap thrill is simply immature). To a mentally ill person those kinds of decisions can be genuinely scary and genuinely unmakeable. It is particularly repugnant to read that for Layton, "watching three salespeople strap him into a straitjacket and forcibly eject him from the store was the most fun I'd had in weeks." I invite Layton to ride with a sheriff's patrol when they take a person who is having a psychotic episode to the hospital. It's not fun. It's real human pain.

For the past week this paper has ballyhooed the furor about the putative stereotypes claimed to inhere in the Davis Library sculptures. At the same time, in this column — and in others in the past — the DTH evidently condones comparably invidious and plainly mean-spirited stereotypes about "crazy" people. In telling contrast, last Sunday night, WXYC broadcast a compassionate and intelligent two-hour call-in show that featured the director and two mentally ill members of Club Nova, a psychosocial rehabilitation club in Carrboro.

I call upon the editors to repudiate such puerile humor and to require the columnists to write thoughtful and tasteful articles, something that this one most emphatically was not.

MICHAEL BRADY
Institute of Government

Spectators should not have to sit with band

To the editors:
This was the first year my parents were able to attend parents' weekend; unfortunately it was the last time they will because I am a senior. I was so looking forward to their visit and going to the game with them. Much to my dismay our tickets placed us in the same section as the band, which meant we had to stand up most of the game. I felt terrible! I had invited my parents and sister to drive up for the game and pay \$51 for their tickets. Then they had to stand to see the game. I instantly felt embarrassed for my school because as supposedly intelligent people we failed to see the very rude situation created at the football game. I

spent part of the game wishing the people in front of my family would sit down. And the people in front of them, and the people in front of them, all the way down to the band. The other part of the game I spent apologizing for having such stupid fellow students.

I have had to stand up at football games before and hated it. But, hey, I'm young, I can take it. I also have never paid for my ticket so nothing was really lost. Words can not express the anger, embarrassment and guilt I felt during the game as my parents had to sit down to rest and missed part of the game. I also felt bad for standing up myself because it caused others behind me to have to stand.

I feel the band and Carolina Fever are taking advantage of hundreds of people at every game by being allowed to stand continuously. I demand an answer and solution to their blatant disregard for others!

AUDREY HARMON
Senior
Economics

Cartoonist did not make statement

To the editors:
The cartoon you displayed on Thursday, Oct. 25 by Jeff Maxim is the best d-d-doublespeak I have ever heard.

Case in point: Jesse Helms has two "S's" in his first name. To go along with those "S's," I would like to add an "A" in front of them, but that's not the issue.

By your definition of liberal, Jesse is one also. How can we be expected to vote for anyone named Jesse! He is supposed to be a conservative and is displaying double consonants in his name. Oh! If you hadn't noticed, Jeff has 2 F's when one would be clearly enough. I'll have to remember this if I see your name on a ballot.

In your next editorial cartoon, I propose that you draw good ol' boy Jesse hidin' behind the White House's rose garden with his tobacco company contributions. Put that in your p-p-pipe and smoke it.

JOHN PATTERSON
Senior
Speech Communications
PEGGY RAVITCH
UNC Statistics Staff

DTH responsible for spreading ignorance

To the editors:
Noticed that readers were quick to criticize Jack D. Voigt for his letter on Oct. 30, "Homosexuals infringe on rights of others." This criticism was misplaced. You, the editors, are to be criticized for providing a forum for something I can read on bathroom walls. I thought the letters section was intended for the airing of opinions, not for the spewing of ignorance and unreasoning hatred. Certainly you would never have printed a letter containing such spite toward other groups — e.g., women and blacks.

Or perhaps your purpose in printing Voigt's diatribe against homosexuals was to demonstrate the extent of narrow-mindedness and intolerance that exist in at least one person in the University community. I would like to credit you with the subtlety to do this — otherwise the DTH, and your work as editors, do not deserve to be taken seriously, if indeed they are in the first place.

EVA M. COYLE
Senior
Philosophy

The Daily Tar Heel

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