

The Daily Tar Heel

98th year of editorial freedom

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Waging war with waste

Hazardous waste.

Those two words are enough to make anyone cringe.

Change "hazardous" to "low-level radioactive," and folks get panicky.

The process of selecting a site for a low-level nuclear waste disposal facility (state officials bristle if it is called a "dump") is not going smoothly. But then, no one ever pretended it would.

The choice for the site is supposed to be the location that best meets technical specifications, not a compromise among politicians concerned about the wishes of their constituencies. This is one of those unfortunate situations where the democratic process cannot be trusted.

No one wants this disposal facility in his county. "Not in my back yard" has been the battle cry of the residents of any county under consideration for this site or any other waste facility like a landfill.

It's a shame that nothing is perfect.

The production of nuclear power is a very clean, efficient process. The down side is that it does leave behind a very small amount of dangerous, radioactive waste that tends to stay with us for a long time — a very, very long time.

Until the day comes when it is cost-effective to blast the stuff into the sun or there are futuristic rail guns on the Bonneville Salt Flats capable of simply

hurling it out of the atmosphere, we're stuck with quite a few barrels of some very ill-tempered stuff.

So it is up to the independent N.C. Low-level Nuclear Waste Management Authority to decide where the site is to go. Political considerations are not meant to enter into the equation.

There seems to be a problem with this method. A site on the border between Wake and Chatham counties near the Shearon Harris nuclear power plant is a finalist for the facility. Foes of the Wake-Chatham site say the location was taken off the list in 1988 and that the authority reinstated it after facing pressure from the legislature's Joint Select Committee on Low-level Radioactive Waste in 1989.

The committee members claim this is not true and that the facts are being distorted. As with many political situations, it is almost impossible to tell the good guys from the bad guys without a program.

It is known that the authority hired a public relations firm to gauge political, community and environmentalist opposition to the sites on the original list.

Politics must not be a part of the process. The authority has to be free to choose a site based on whether or not it meets the technical criteria. The safety of many people, especially those near the site, is too important for legislators to play political games.

Touching the lives of children

Anyone who ever dreamed of a Cat in the Hat romping through forests of truffula trees should take a moment and recall how one author educated millions of children with his simple, whimsical wisdom.

The death of Theodor (Dr.) Seuss Geisel on Wednesday reminds us that in this video-dominated age, the printed word still can excite a child's imagination. Seuss led children through fantastical worlds where there was often a subtle lesson to be learned. His style and mission must not be forgotten by other children's authors facing tough issues young readers need to understand.

In "The Butter Battle Book," Seuss inscribed a parable for the atomic age. The story traces the conflict between the Yooks, who eat their bread with the butter side down, and the Zooks, who do the opposite.

As they face off, each group has the

ultimate weapon — a Big-Boy Boomerang bomb. A boy asks his granddad, "Who's going to drop it? Will you? Will he?"

"Be patient," granddad says, "We'll see, we will see."

Now the world wants to see if the United States will launch its "Big-Boy" Patriot missiles at Iraq. Soviet children wonder what their future holds, and a little girl may not understand that she could soon lose the right to choose what happens to her body.

Children don't need to be burdened with all the world's pressures, but they do need to grow up thinking intelligently about what goes on around them. Dr. Seuss made this possible — and he did so in a fun way.

How pleasant it would be if every serious issue came buried at the bottom of green eggs and ham. It definitely would give children more food for thought.

Keep laws out of bed

Editor's note: Believe it or not, the following editorial was published Sept. 16 in N.C. State's student newspaper, Technician. The original editorial (spelling errors and all) has been reprinted for your entertainment.

Technician believes premarital sex is a decision that should be made by the individual and the individual alone.

By no means do we encourage or discourage it, because, after all, who is to determine whether it is right or wrong?

Many people will argue that religion, personal experience and peer pressure all play important roles in influencing one's decision.

This may be true.

However, others argue that the U.S. legislature spends more time nosing around Americans' bedrooms than is necessary.

The fact remains that it is the individual who will reap the benefits or suffer the consequences of premarital sex.

As a result, no government nor organization has the right to infringe their beliefs on others.

For example, it is absurd that outside of Raleigh, cohabitation is illegal in North Carolina.

It is even more absurd that the Supreme Court continues to outlaw sodomy, anal or oral copulation between any two willing individuals.

Sexual practices are a personal choice. Just as sex is a personal encounter.

So whether it is morals or values that lead to one's abstinence or a "special someone" who arouses one's desires for sexual satisfaction, we, as a society, should not feel as though we need to pass moral judgment about, ridicule, criticize or condone the decisions of others.

Rather, we should respect others' rights to freedom of expression and freedom of choice.

"It's your thang, do what ya wanna do!"



Elk-beating to the metric system; Torch reveals all

I had a wonderful memory about my father. I was thinking about the hunting trips we used to take. Actually, I guess "hunting" is the wrong word for it, as my father didn't believe in killing animals. But that didn't mean he had to like them.

No, my dad didn't kill animals, but he had a score to settle with some of them. I'm not exactly certain why, but let's just say he had his reasons. Yeah, we used to go on trips all right — but we never shot a single deer or elk or yak or otter or whatever.

No, we'd stalk the forest, catch an elk, and beat the hell out of it. We'd take turns, one holding it down, the other punching it in the gut, slapping it around, giving it a serious shiner to remember us by. We figured two on one was fair since the elk had antlers. Then we'd send that punk elk back to his little furry wapiiti buddies just as an example. Sure, I never had any trophies or anything like that, but I did have the glorious satisfaction of knowing how a hard fist slamming into toned, furry flank feels. Cool alliteration, eh?

Those trips were some of my fondest memories with my dad. Then, one night while we slept, a herd of caribou broke into our home, dragged my father and me out of bed, tied me to my bike and my father to a gutter (I'd like to find that bastard who taught them knots!) and proceeded to beat us stupid. Yeah, they really laced into us that night, but, what the hell, we deserved it, and I remember how my father and I lay on the ground, surrounded by blood and hair and teeth, laughing ourselves silly about the justice of it all.

"What comes around goes around," my father said, though at the time it sounded more like "Whabth coonh aroonds thgoeths aroundth."

Yeah, that's my dad for you. Another thing I remember about my dad was that, like all parents, he was always complaining about how I don't watch enough TV. So, to appease him, the other day I sat down for a good 15 hours or so of MTV.

Almost immediately after I turned it on, I saw some public service ad for environmental protection. The ad had either Pia Zadora or Quincy Jones (my reception wasn't clear) telling me that if we took all of the discarded paper used in a single day in United States, we could build a 12-foot-high wall from New York to Los Angeles. A figure like that really makes



Jason Torchinsky

Turn Your Head and Cough

you think. Makes you realize that we are in a situation where something must be done. A 12-foot-high wall of paper from New York to Los Angeles? Dammit, let's do it! Enough of this coming on TV just talking and griping about what could be, hell, let's build that wall! The time for action has come!

At first I wasn't certain if this wall would be the best use for all of that discarded paper, but then I figured that if a 12-foot-high fence of trash bisecting this great land of ours wasn't the absolute ideal use for all of this refuse, then those fine men and women of MTV would never have employed the team of engineers it must have taken to work out the logistics for such a project. In fact, unless my bastard neighbors have torn it down while I'm writing this, I've already started my part.

This whole 12-foot-high continental wall of scrap paper and old Post-it notes made me think about something else, an action which usually requires me to take about eight Tylenol capsules. It reminded me of this astronomy class I had. The professor was convinced, as the concept of distances in space is far too vast and complicated for a normal human, and, according to some diagnoses, myself, to comprehend.

Okay. That's not so unreasonable an assumption. The concept of a light year is pretty hard to grasp, especially on an empty stomach. After all, a light year is the distance a chunk of light travels in one year. Or, in layman's terms, the distance a chunk of light travels in one year. This brings up some interesting questions. Where does it go? And when it gets there, where does it stay? Does it travel on business or for pleasure? Why does it never bring back souvenirs?

But back to my point. My professor, realizing the inability to grasp the concept of such vast distances, invariably described it by asking us to imagine a stack of sandwiches reaching to Mars and back. Oh. Okay. I can't ever hope to understand how far it is to Alpha Centauri, but a stack of sandwiches that en-

circles the globe six times? No problem.

I'll give you no problem, you. Why the hell does anyone entertain the thought that somehow imaging a stack of yummy reubens stretching out far past the limits of vision is going to make anything any clearer? Not that a stack of reubens miles long would be so bad. In fact, such a stack could go a long way in providing my life with some kind of direction.

Still, my point is that these analogies are silly. That same astronomy teacher also liked to use some analogy that likened the solar system to a series of sporting equipment strewn about the major cities of these 46 great states. I think the sun was a basketball in Cape Cod. The Earth was a racquetball in Memphis, and I think most of the rest of the planets were hockey pucks in the top dresser drawer of some geeky fat kid in Arizona. I think. No, wait, maybe that's how I had relativity explained to me. Yeah. Only the fat kid should be going at the speed of light. I think. Mmmm.

I guess the only one of these little analogous scale-explanation things, to use the technical term, that I would recommend keeping is also the only one that has really found widespread use: the football field. Pretty much anything larger than a couple of hearses will be measured in terms of the football field sooner or later. Airplanes, trucks, plots of land, amounts of food you can buy at Taco Bell for under \$8.00, bridges, that kind of stuff.

If it were up to me (and if it wasn't for that bastard John Sununu, it would be), I'd tell everybody to hell with metrics. Let's go with something we already know, something already established standard. Employ the football field for all measures. For example, I myself am about 0.0181667 football fields tall. And they said I wouldn't grow. Neat, eh?

Oh, well. I've taken enough of your time. I like to believe that when you, my dear readers, read my column, I make some sort of difference in your day — even if it's only that now you have to walk around with your hands full of the cheap newsprint that this newspaper uses, possibly staining some clothing. For this, if nothing else, I am happy. Solidarity.

Jason Torchinsky is a junior art history (aspiring to be shop) major from Greensboro and has had enough of your tip, you!

READERS' FORUM

Decorative bike racks would promote thefts

To the editor:

As I strolled home from class on Tuesday afternoon, I noticed something I'd never seen before outside Alumni Building. It was a new type of bike rack, or "group of slits," I guess you could call it.

It is very different from the iron bike racks that grace most of the rest of our campus. This was a low-to-the-ground brick structure, with several long spaces in which to place your front tire, so the bike can be free standing and locked merely to itself. Seeing this bothered me a great deal, especially after having my beloved bicycle stolen from underneath my sorority house this past weekend. (Yes, it was just locked to itself.)

My point is, I only hope that these new "racks" are not going to be replacing the traditional ones on the rest of the campus. Although they are certainly more pleasing to the eye than a bunch of bikes cluttered on an iron rack, they would most definitely promote many more bike thefts on this campus, as if there weren't enough already.

I do realize that locking your bike to an iron rack through the frame is not a guarantee against theft, but if someone would go to such great length and risk as to steal a bicycle from practically inside a sorority house, imagine the temptation a thief would feel to just walk off with one parked right in the middle of campus, not locked to anything except itself. One would hope that someday we will be ready for this type of structure in which to park our bikes, but unfortunately, I think that someday may be quite a while away.

I hope the school will carefully consider the probability of these "racks" causing an increase in bike

theft before building any more of them.

DONNA COOK
Senior
Pharmacy

Honor Code plays vital role in University life

To the editor:

I am writing in response to Jason Kaus' letter ("Court, codes play vital roles in University life," Sept. 24). I would like to take this time to thank Jason for his letter and to let him and the rest of the University community know that I am in agreement with his views of the Honor Code.

As I read The Daily Tar Heel on Sept. 19, I too was disappointed with "my" comment (it clearly did not reflect my intent). What should have been in print was that if one was inclined to cheat, the Honor Code should make them stop and think.

I believe that the Honor Code is a very important part of our University system and that it should be respected. The reason that we are students here in Chapel Hill is to learn. Learning cannot be equated with cheating. I agree with Mr. Kaus in that each person needs to be "aware of your responsibilities" to uphold the Honor Code.

DIANE DICKERSON
Senior
Speech Communications

Article misrepresents decision of Campus Y

Editor's note: The writers represent the executive committee of the Campus Y.

To the editor:

This letter is in regard to an article entitled "Campus Y marred by conflict" published in the Sept.

23 issue of The Daily Tar Heel. As the executive committee of the Campus Y, we feel that several issues were either misrepresented or inadequately addressed in the article.

We feel strongly that the article is untimely because it deals with last spring alone. The headline itself is misleading because it states that the Campus Y is currently rife with conflict. The conflict described in the article ended five months ago, and even then it only affected the executive committee, not the general body of the Campus Y. As any member of the Campus Y can tell you, the current Campus Y is brimming with harmonious social activists.

The Campus Y Executive Committee's decision to ask for Ted Teague's resignation came after almost three months of trying to work with Teague as co-president. It became increasingly clear that Teague's leadership style and vision for the Y were incompatible with those of the executive committee. Through his actions, he engendered a lack of trust and demonstrated a lack of integrity. As a result, the executive committee did not feel confident in his leadership and did not trust his ability to represent the Y.

As Teague himself states in the article, "I would've spent the whole term earning their (the executive committee's) confidence instead of being an effective leader." It was our opinion that Teague was making the entire executive committee ineffective. Our decision to ask Teague to resign was in the best interest of the Y.

Finally, we the Campus Y Executive Committee, support Zenobia Hatcher-Wilson as director of the Y, and are committed to working closely with her this year. We want to make it clear that it was the student members of the execu-

tive committee who decided to ask Teague to resign. The staff of the Y abstained from taking part in our action.

It would seem from the tone, style and journalistic angle of this article that the DTH is trying to create dramatic headlines and stir up controversy where it does not exist. Far from being "marred by conflict," the Campus Y is off to a great year. We are working closely with the Black Student Movement, the Black Cultural Center, student government, the Residence Hall Association, the Carolina Athletic Association and others in dedicating this year to Dr. Sonja Stone and ensuring that the BCC is named in her honor, an endowed chair is established in her name, and the African and Afro-American studies curriculum be given departmental status. In addition, the 29 volunteer, social issue and Y support committees of the Campus Y are in full swing programming, sponsoring and planning events on campus, working in our local community and finding tangible ways in which to address a diversity of social justice issues. We invite you to come by the Y and find out for yourself why we love it so.

HEATHER LYNCH
Senior
Biology/Anthropology

SONDRA MATTOX
Graduate
Psychology

Letters policy

- Letters should be limited to 400 words.
- Include your year in school, major, phone number and hometown.
- The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity.

The Daily Tar Heel

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