

The Daily Tar Heel

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Tainted Petitions

No local issue has fired up Chapel Hill and Carrboro in recent years as much as the sound and fury over school board member LaVonda Burnette.

But even Burnette's strongest critics maintain that the effort to remove her from office for dishonesty is not a racial issue. Former Parent-Teacher-Student Association President Madeleine Mitchell and the other community members who led the petition drive to recall Burnette acted as concerned voters who wanted to take an issue directly to the public rather than see the school board engulfed in a protracted legal conflict.

But the way the petition drive was conducted unnecessarily racially polarized the Burnette issue more than the issue itself already had. If the groundswell of criticism against Burnette, who lied about her status as a UNC student, reflects a sincere concern about honesty in politics, then her detractors should come from all political and racial backgrounds.

Placing petitions only in white-owned businesses and canvassing for signatures only in white neighborhoods presents the effort as a

white effort. The local chapter of the NAACP is justified in its complaint about the petition to state legislators, who now will investigate whether Mitchell followed the stipulations of the recall legislation. The recall legislation says petitioners must attend to the petitions and witness voters actually signing them.

The petitioners' approach unnecessarily taints the sincere hard work of Mitchell and her fellow residents. The petition effort should have targeted more of the diverse neighborhoods and ethnic groups that make up this community.

The startling lack of responsibility on Mitchell's part — witnesses say she left untended petitions in businesses for people to sign — violated basic ethics and rules about verifying petition signers. To ensure the integrity of the recall movement, Mitchell should have handled the drive with closer supervision.

Everyone in this community should be concerned about the racially divisive way the petition drive was handled.

There's no reason to discredit a recall effort based on a legitimate democratic ideal: putting issues directly in the hands of voters.

No Drop in the Bucket

After a sluggish beginning, the University's fund-raising campaign for the Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center finally has an asset to celebrate.

Hugh McColl, chairman and chief executive officer of NationsBank, has singlehandedly turned around the effort, which was slow and embarrassing at best. NationsBank is contributing a \$500,000 leadership gift and has pledged another \$500,000 in matching funds if the North Carolina banking industry comes through with \$1 million in donations.

The BCC still needs almost \$6 million before construction can begin. The leadership Provost Richard McCormick has shown in securing this significant gift should give the incentive to finish raising funds in step with the Bicentennial Campaign. There is no more time to waste — administrators should use the momentum McColl's

effort has generated to step up the BCC fund-raising campaign.

McColl himself has pledged to lead the effort to secure an additional \$1 million from the banking industry, showing the state of North Carolina that it should have confidence in a center that divided the campus and the state.

If the largest banking corporation in the state can support the BCC with such a lavish donation, the debate over the viability of the center can be put to rest.

Fund-raisers can't sit still on a project whose time has come. The center can't be built with \$2 million, and the search for a permanent BCC director will stay on hold until fund raising is almost complete. Now that NationsBank has set the BCC campaign in motion, administrators and development officials can put their own work in high gear.



JONATHAN JORDAN: AT HOME

'Dead Poets' Was Right: No Time to Watch Clock

After a long day of intellectual strain, I often flip through the various TV channels to see what mindless things I can find.

Last week, I caught a few minutes of an Oprah show.

I wouldn't admit to watching this crap, but Oprah was introducing a neat little gadget: a black marble clock in the shape of a pyramid.

A clock that counts down the number of hours, minutes and even seconds you have left to live.

Yes, this clock is set for the total amount of time allotted in 80 years, from which your age is subtracted.

You can set it on your desk and know, at any time of the day, how many more hours, minutes and seconds you have left to live.

The inventors of this handy, time-saving device (for who wants to sit down and calculate, at any given time, how many more hours, minutes and seconds they have to live?) said they had a point above and beyond making money.

They said they wanted people to realize that they should live for each hour, minute and second in the day because they don't have that many left.

Something's wrong with that logic. If I had a clock telling me that I had 324,000 hours left to live, no single hour would be that precious, and the clock would have the opposite effect on my philosophy.

I'd think to myself, "Should I go out and do today?"

But I wouldn't, because I'd know I had another 323,976 hours in which to do it before I die. Other people, Type A's, would freak out, thinking, "I only have 323,976 more hours left to finish everything ..." and be too upset to do anything. Either way seems a horrible way to live.

You've heard what I'm about to say before, but some of you have not listened. So I'll say it again.

The fact is, we're not all going to live to be 80

years old. Some of us won't even reach 30.

We simply do not know when or how we're going to die. Now's the time for me to impress you with my reading of Carpe Diem literature, by quoting Robert Herrick's "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may, / for time is swiftly passing," or scenes of Robin Williams in "Dead Poet's Society."

I lack the eloquence to write such memorable lines myself, but for Chrissakes, just get your thumbs out of your asses.

You don't need a clock to tell you that life is short; we all know that. I can't stand to walk around and see everyone looking so goddamn serious.

People have such intense, pained expressions on their faces; even the people who smile seem to do so with ulterior motives. What ever happened to living life for the moment? To sucking the marrow out of life?

I can only guess it's been replaced by thoughts in future tense and attempts to fill up résumés with laudable activities. How many people care more for what's happening around them now than what they think will be a "better" future? Not enough.

It's so wrong to let life pass you by. Think what a cool world this would be if everyone did the thing they loved the most. I'm not talking about the bitterness that has overtaken us at this late stage in life, like "I just wanna get (rich, drunk, laid)."

I'm talking about the dreams we had as kids. Like I wanted to be a female Indiana Jones or Wonder Woman or Princess Leia. I knew many aspirant firefighters and ballerinas and Broad-

way stars. Everyone had their dreams of being something Great, something far and beyond what they eventually settle for.

All of these dreams seem to dry up after we've discovered love and work and alcohol and responsibility.

And they shouldn't. At times, I want to slap someone in the face. I want to shout, and wake up the living dead around me. "Do what you want!" I hate to see people constrained from living life, sleepwalking through it, because their Mama wouldn't approve, or because the Rev'nd might send them to hell or because people would talk.

If you want to have a one-night stand, do it. Using precautions, of course. If you want to stand up in the middle of class and recite a poem you've written, do it. If you want to tell someone you can't stand them or that you love them, do it. If you want to write "shocking" letters to this paper, do it.

Just don't get old and tired and full of regrets. Don't wait until you only have 10,000 hours left to live to try to make up for lost time.

I have a reason for my solemn tone today. This weekend, I celebrated a birthday. And I looked at my life and thought how very "old" I had become.

I have my own washer and dryer, I pay insurance, and I'm monogamous. I find myself buying more expensive beer and wine, for the taste rather than for the drunkenness. I've even started to clean the apartment.

I might as well have two and a half kids and live in Charlotte.

Seeing the pyramid clock on Oprah's show did make me stop and think, as to whether I'm living life or whether I'm letting it slip through my fingers. But I've got 525, 552 hours and counting left, so I won't panic. Yet.

Jeanne Fugate is a junior English major from Ocala, Fla.



JEANNE FUGATE
STRAIGHT,
NO CHASER

THE PICTURE SHOWN BELOW IS...

A) A SCENE FROM "RETURN OF THE SWAMP THING."
 B) A LIVING QUILT.
 C) THE TYPICAL COLLEGE STUDENT RETURNING HOME FOR FALL BREAK WITH A LITTLE BIT OF LAUNDRY TO DO.

ANSWER: C (C is always the answer for these multiple choice questions, so if you don't know, always guess C.)

THE DAILY TAR HEEL

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Director Clarifies Service Mission of Student Health

TO THE EDITOR:

Recent coverage in The Daily Tar Heel has helped to clarify a fact which Student Health would certainly wish students to understand: no student will be denied services because of lack of available money on the day services are given. However, the repeated statements in DTH coverage that the new procedure required payment on the day of service were inaccurate.

The statement made by SHS was that payment was encouraged and expected but students were being told they could make arrangements to defer payment if necessary.

Two changes in the computer system at Cashier's Office are particularly relevant to students' health care dollar:

1. New computer systems do not permit large numbers of daily charges to be prepared by the Student Health computer and "batched" to the Cashier's Office as was the case previously.

2. The former practice of crediting Student Health accounts with revenue at the time of transfer (in effect borrowing from other University funds) is no longer possible.

A study of the financial ramifications of these changes for Student Health showed the loss of student dollars in two ways:

1. Charges could be sent to the Cashier's Office; however, they could not be automatically sent electronically but would require rekeying into the cashier's system, significantly increasing expenses. During the previous year, between 250 and 425 charges were sent daily without handling a second time.

2. Since credit would be given only for cash deposits, the sum available for the University to invest with interest credited back to Student Health would be reduced, thus decreasing an important nonfee source of revenue that helps keep fees low.

In developing a procedure to minimize the impact of the changes, SHS made every effort to ensure that no student would be denied or discouraged from seeking care.

The protocols developed to carry out the change were designed to convey to all students that payment at time of service was expected, but that no student would be refused service for financial reasons; that alternate forms of payment by check or credit card were available, and that those approximately 4,500 students and postdoctoral fellows carrying the UNC group insurance plans would not be affected by this

READERS' FORUM

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticism. Letters to the editor should be no longer than 400 words and must be typed, double-spaced, dated and signed by no more than two people. Students should include their year, major and phone number. Faculty and staff should include their title, department and phone number. The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity.

change.

Their charges would continue (and are continuing) to be filed automatically.

We estimate that with the new system, continuing to send charges to the cashier in the numbers sent last year would require additional staff, probably one position dedicated to data entry and time from other personnel to hold and organize the material to be entered.

Coupled with the loss of interest revenue, this could readily result in an additional burden to Student Health of \$25,000 to \$30,000 annually, solely for the purpose of handling large numbers of small charges (\$50 or less). This would be a drain on the SHS budget with no positive impact on health care.

In this day when health costs are increasing, when health fee increases often are not approved and when emphasis on cost effectiveness is expected, this use of student dollars is not wise and that needs to be clearly stated.

It also needs to be clearly stated that most medical practices, including other student health services, are now requesting or requiring payment at time of service for reasons of decreasing administrative costs and assuring revenue.

At SHS, we have devoted time and energy to increasing efficiency and have not discontinued any service to students.

In fact, we have made additional services available at significantly less cost to the student than is the case in the surrounding community.

When you recognize that such services as confidential HIV testing and the Contraceptive Health Education Clinic combined cost about the same amount as the increased data entry expense and the associated interest loss, the

choice seems clear.

Student money should go to health care and not to unnecessary data entry.

For Student Health, financial concerns are ever present.

In the face of decreasing reserves, we are struggling to maintain all services and need student help to do so.

We operate with student funding, we seek means to have students actively involved in their own health care and to have students play a definite role in the allocation of resources. The Student Health Advisory Board is the body which provides for official student input, and these issues will be discussed there.

We will continue to encourage payment at the time of service and will work with students unable to pay at the time of service in working out satisfactory arrangements.

We will not turn away any student for financial reasons. Bills incurred at SHS may be charged to student accounts, and we are investigating the possibility of a UNC ONE Card payment option.

In the long term, we expect these adjustments to accrue to the overall benefit of our student patients.

We believe we will have their cooperation in cost containment as we continue to work to provide quality care at a reasonable cost.

Dr. Judith Cowan
DIRECTOR
JAMES A. TAYLOR STUDENT HEALTH SERVICE

South Asian Philosopher to Explain Ideas for Students

TO THE EDITOR:

A rare event is to occur on the UNC campus today — Mr. V. Ganesan will speak on ancient Indian philosophy in lucid terms suitable to any audience.

He brings with him experiences from the ashram of the well-respected sage, Sri Ramana. Taking part in this evening discussion will encourage a higher level of cultural awareness, truly allowing the "world to be our campus" at Carolina.

As a representative of Sangam, the South Asian Awareness Organization on campus, I strongly encourage all students to join us today at 8 p.m. in Union 212.

Neelam Patel
SOPHOMORE
UNDECIDED