

The Daily Tar Heel

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Why Postpone the Inevitable?

When the Chapel Hill Town Council approved the town budget Monday night, their quick vote came after months of wrangling, proposed cuts and reversals on those proposals.

The Council did town residents a favor by not raising property taxes to meet growing town needs; but throughout the budget process, the council avoided confronting harsh financial realities the town must face sooner or later.

The bottom line is that budget requests will always pour in, federal subsidies are shrinking and no one wants higher taxes — in short, not a welcoming setting for a budget process reluctant to make hard choices.

Many of the decisions made this spring could be viewed as victories. Students can be happy that bus fares weren't raised.

Fans of the outdoor and nature program can revel in knowing that the council postponed cutting their program for at least six months. And all property owners are probably relieved that the council held the line on property taxes, at least for another year.

But reality mandates that something has to give. Everyone, including council members, acknowledge that at some point, bus fares will have to rise to meet the increasing costs of public transportation. The federal government is giving less and less money every year to subsidize the town's bus system, while ridership remains steady.

And by next year's budget process, the town will either have to drastically cut programs or

raise taxes.

It took the council over four years of consideration to cut the unprofitable trolley program, that lost money every year it operated.

That kind of ponderous decision-making process reflects a lack of will and backbone that doesn't provide the leadership necessary to keep the town strong and growing in time of fiscal strain across the nation.

During Monday night's budget wrap-up, a council member asked the town manager if the Parks and Recreation Department could be re-adjusted to accommodate a \$12,000 program the council had originally intended to cut.

"I believe so, but I assure you, someone will see it as harm," the town manager retorted. His comment drew laughs, but highlighted the council's inability to make choices. Last week the council wanted to cut the outdoor education program.

This week, after pleas from representatives of the program, the council changed its mind. But it wanted to keep the program without actually wanting to increase the cost of the program to the town.

This particular program may have merited restoration. But the council needs to learn how to say "no," and say it without years of studies, reports and deliberations before coming to any conclusions.

Otherwise, a few years down the road, the town may be faced with more difficult financial choices than it can handle all at once.

Mention the Unmentionable

There's a new four-letter word that people — or at least high school students — aren't supposed to say. Salutatorian Megan Cryer wrote her speech about this taboo word, "rape."

A star football player at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School raped Cryer when she was 14 years old. Cryer wanted to use this incident to illustrate that people can live through traumatic events.

Principal Gregory Scotten asked Cryer to change the word "rape" to a "terrible thing," as he thought it would be more appropriate for a welcoming address. Cryer refused to edit her speech and remained silent during commencement.

High school administrators must necessarily exercise control over what students can and cannot say.

However, when this control becomes unreasonable and oppressive, rather than supportive of the school's educational atmosphere, everyone suffers.

Cryer had a message that could have altered the lives of her audience. Instead of delivering a rousing, inspirational speech, she was silenced by an administration that didn't want to deal with controversy concerning the "inappropriateness" of Cryer's subject.

Rape isn't a pleasant word; it conjures images of violence and desecration.

Parents don't want to think about their graduating children as possible rapists or rape victims,

especially not on the day which symbolizes their entrance into the real world. If Cryer had suffered through a different "terrible thing," like the deaths of her parents, the administration probably would have allowed her to talk about it openly.

The administration at Cryer's high school, by forbidding her to talk about her experiences truthfully, asserted a negative value judgment on the victim of rape.

Their action was not the silencing of one woman, but the silencing of every other rape victim who will no longer feel confident of their ability to discuss their situation.

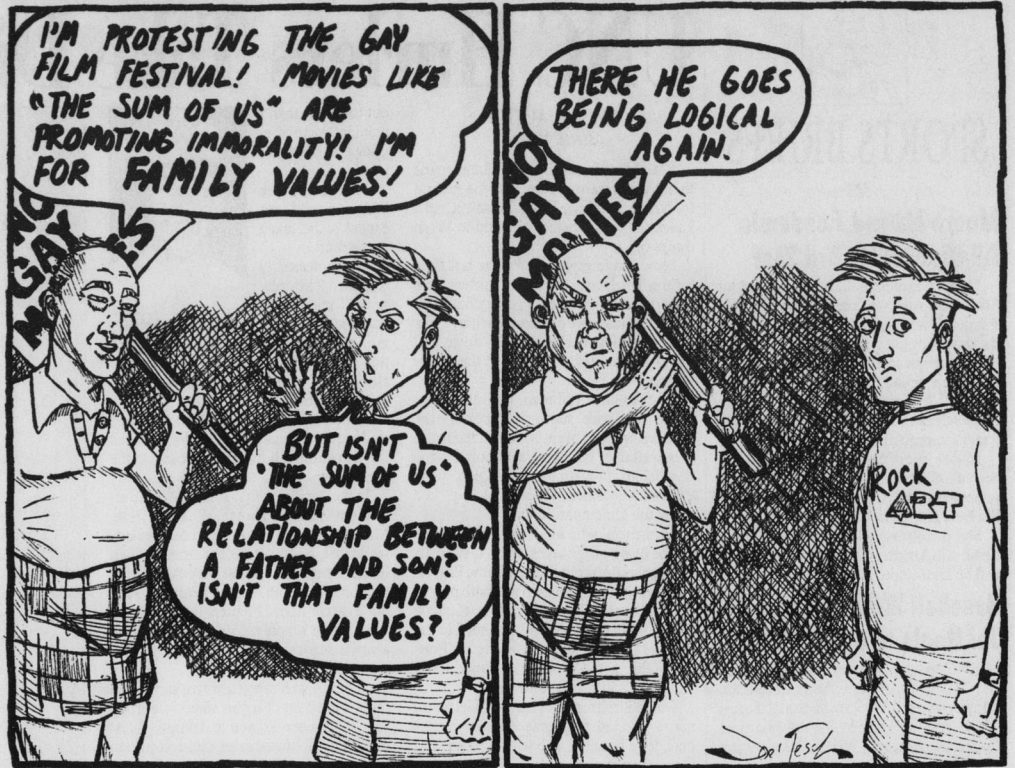
Their actions silenced any high school student whose ideas are distasteful to their administrators.

First Amendment law is still murky at the high school level.

The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the right of high school principals to censor student newspapers.

But Scotten crossed a moral boundary when he, in effect, censored a student's speech about a very personal and very important issue. High school students and administrators together should fight a climate — and policies — that stifle free speech in the high school setting.

Societal problems can only be tackled if people are willing (and able) to talk about them freely. Using censorship to ignore an unpleasant problem, such as rape, leads only to greater problems.



Minority Scholarships Raise Complex Questions

The national debate over affirmative action is about to hit the University. And if UNC officials are talking straight, the University might get caught with its pants down.

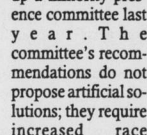
The U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision to not hear a case about a scholarship for black students at the University of Maryland has direct bearing on UNC's race-conscious scholarships. Critics of affirmative action hail the recent decision as a landmark in their fight against "set-aside" programs. The truth is, we need minority scholarship programs; but we need a lot more than that, too.

If UNC had never faced target percentages for minority presence, the University never would have implemented a host of programs that try to change attitudes and circumstances in addition to numbers. Without real efforts to fix the root causes of racial inequality, affirmative action amounts to little more than a quota system. But North Carolina would never have taken steps to integrate its universities without an affirmative action program the federal government struggled 10 years to implement.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a predominantly white university, has yet to meet the target percentage for minority enrollment that the federal government set in 1981. North Carolina's population is 22 percent black; the University only recently raised its black enrollment to 8.5 percent. Student recruitment at UNC-CH shows a persistent problem. The University is still 2 percent away from a target enrollment of 10.6 percent black students. And while the guidelines have existed for 14 years, only within the last few have programs begun to address the causes for low black enrollment at predominantly white UNC-CH.

The administration now sponsors programs that bring black high school students from all over the state to visit the University and encour-

age them to apply here. The Board of Governors finally set up a minority presence committee last year. The committee's recommendations do not propose artificial solutions; they require increased race awareness programs starting in junior high school and going through the university level, more funding for minority students, and better retention programs for black students once they enroll. The University is weak in all these areas, and can continue to build departments like the fledgling office of student counseling.



THANASSIS CAMBANIS
EDITOR

After decades of foot dragging in the 1960s and 1970s, the UNC system finally seems to want to diversify its 16 campuses. And now that the leadership of the university system sincerely wishes to create a group of racially balanced schools, one of their best tools — scholarships that target specific racial groups — is being threatened by federal courts. The outcry over affirmative actions programs has led many previous supporters to question the wisdom of programs that give special consideration to minorities.

Most nobody who supports affirmative action does so with blind devotion. No one wants affirmative action to be a permanent part of the American landscape. Supporters like myself want to see the gradual elimination of race-conscious scholarships, target employment percentages and college admissions; but we also realize that as long as discrimination continues to handicap minorities from the fair consideration caucasian men take for granted, we must continue making

an explicit effort to integrate U.S. institutions.

The times necessitate a more complex solution than the limited — and sometimes legally questionable — programs on the table. We cannot just discard programs like minority presence grants without creating a better alternative. It is too simple — and false — to say discrimination no longer exists. But as affirmative action grows less politically viable, the time has come to reconsider and temper an approach that continues to remedy more race problems than they create.

The question of race-conscious university scholarships raises all the troubling issues around affirmative action. The University's appalling record of attracting black students demonstrates that we still need programs like minority presence grants, which support black students at predominantly white UNC schools and white students at predominantly black UNC schools.

Rather than simply bemoan the direction the courts are taking, the University needs to prepare itself for a challenge that is sure to arise within the next few years. Someone will sue the UNC system on account of the minority presence grants, or a race-conscious scholarship like the Pogue, which is not limited exclusively to minorities but gives them preference. If the courts continue to rule as they have in the last decade on affirmative-action type programs, UNC's current scholarships could be ruled illegal.

We shouldn't just wait for that time; the university system should start acting now to make a case for their scholarships, and develop new programs to encourage minority recruitment and retention. Alternate programs will provide a fall-back if and when minority presence grants come under the eye of the court system.

Thanassis Cambanis is a senior history and creative writing major from Chapel Hill.

Reciting Pledge of Allegiance Teaches Valuable Lessons

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing concerning Robyn Tomlin Hackley's article: "School Prayer and Pledge Laws Violate Constitution." I agree with Ms. Hackley about the mandatory moment of silence being unconstitutional. However, in regard to the reciting of the Pledge Of Allegiance, I do not see the problem she is trying to illustrate.

I went to a public elementary school in Walker County, Ga. While there, every morning at 8:05 am the entire school recited the Pledge Of Allegiance. I recited it every morning, as did my teachers and my classmates. Now I understand what Ms. Hackley says about "young children rarely have the interpretive skills to fully grasp the concept of the words." But, as these children grow older they will start to understand and realize what these words mean. I will not tell everyone by reciting the Pledge, everyone will turn into a great citizen. I will tell you, however, that reciting the Pledge makes you ultimately think about what it is you are actually saying. Also, Ms. Hackley states that: "It is not the job of the state to teach morality in the schools. Teaching morals is the responsibility of parents. These days teachers have their hands full combating the educational deficiencies of their students." This is absolutely true, it is not the role of the state to dictate the morals of its people.

Nevertheless, many parents do not take the time to spend with their children teaching them morals. Some parents even set examples for their children that have completely no morals at all. What about these children? Are they damned to live a moral-less life? It is very hard for teachers to worry about "combating the educational deficiencies of their students" when their students do not understand right from wrong, and responsibility to themselves and others. Therefore, the parents have (unconsciously) chosen to forfeit their "right" to place morals upon their children; and the state has to take over, which just adds to the work load of teachers.

The state is forced to take the role of "parent" because many parents do not assume their roles. It is not the purpose of the state to produce "mish-mash [which] only serves to confuse and to further cloud the mind of kids." If parents, like Ms. Hackley, are being good role models for their children, then reciting the Pledge in class should help to reinforce the lessons they are learning at home. Where is the problem that Ms. Hackley tried to scare us with? Is it too much to ask someone to pledge their allegiance to the country in which they live?

Will Leonard
ENGLISH/DRAMATIC ARTS
MOORESVILLE, NC



READERS' FORUM

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Asians Must Cope With Racism, Unfair Quota System

TO THE EDITOR:

Recently there has been a lot of discussion about affirmative action. Many people falsely believe that Asians benefit from this practice, when in fact it leads to reverse discrimination against us. It is ironic how Asians are not considered minorities for admission, scholarships, etc. despite making up less than one percent of the U.S. population.

The medical school admission process is just one example of academic racism. These figures were obtained from the annual report of the AAMC. The average GPA of an accepted Asian student was 3.54 with an MCAT score of 9.8; White GPA 3.5, MCAT 9.6; Black GPA 3.05, MCAT 7.3; Hispanic GPA 3.22, MCAT 8.3. Despite Asians having the highest scores they have the lowest acceptance rate of the total number of applicants at 35.2 percent, white 41.7 percent, black 39.6 percent, Hispanic 44.7 percent.

It is obvious to any person with common sense that something is wrong with these figures. I realize that there is more to gaining entrance to medical school than grades, but not volunteering for the local Easter Egg Hunt can hardly begin to explain the discrepancies in these figures.

That would also be implying that only Asians are lacking in these other areas.

As a side bar, it is funny how Americans like to imitate Asian accents when we are the ones who score the highest on the writing sample and reading comprehension sections. Evidently we understand English better than they do.

There ARE quotas against Asians gaining admission to all professional schools and colleges despite the adamant objections of the administrators whom I have asked. Is there any-

thing that we can do about this? Unfortunately, we can't do that much since the administrators don't particularly want us there. Bringing attention to the issue is the only constructive thing that I can think of.

I don't want preferential treatment, just to be treated fair and judged by my qualifications relative to everyone, not just Asians. I am very fortunate to be going to Duke University Medical School, but undoubtedly there are many Asians who were denied acceptance at schools because of restrictive quotas or the affirmative action programs requiring entrance of other students despite being less qualified candidates.

I have had to deal with racism ever since I can remember, subtle and not so subtle. I've learned rather than dealing with a situation in a violent manner (and sitting in jail) it's better to fight it with personal success.

Yes, we will always have to work twice as hard to obtain the same position in society as a less qualified person. We will have quotas put in our way and have to overcome regular discrimination. If this is the way it is, then so be it. Work hard to become the person you want to be, achieve personal success however you measure it, take care of those who mean the most to you and you will have won the fight despite the obstacles put in your way.

Samson Lee
RESEARCH ASSISTANT
PHYSIOLOGY

How Do Young Republicans Justify Their Legislators?

TO THE EDITOR:

What are your Young Republicans writing or saying about their current colleagues in the N.C. House in Raleigh, as they attempt to strip the University of North Carolina system of needed finances?

It would be interesting to know what students who defend Republican conservative financing think, if they think.

John Foster West
EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH
APPALACHIAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Campus Visitor Wonders Why Students Aren't More Polite

TO THE EDITOR:

A man with an orange barrel does the daily litter pick-up in the Pit area. I asked him if people thanked him for his work. He said, "Sometimes a professor will."

"How about the students?" I asked.

"Nope," he said.

John Sweet
PITTSBORO



THE DAILY TAR HEEL

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