

The Daily Tar Heel

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Office Hours, 2-3 p.m. Fridays
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Adam Bianchi ELECTRONIC EDITION EDITOR
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BOARD EDITORIALS

Experimental disaster

■ A recent change in the FDA's former ban on involuntary medical testing poses a serious danger to our safety and our fundamental human rights.

Last Friday, the Food and Drug Administration relaxed its regulations and allowed medical researchers to experiment on human beings without their consent.

This unbelievable action places a frightening amount of power in the hands of the medical establishment.

The U.S. ban on nonconsensual human experimentation goes back 50 years. The first principle of the Nuremberg Code, an ethical code written after the trials of Nazi criminals, states, "The voluntary consent of the human subject is essential." The FDA's action essentially says "not anymore" to this bedrock of medical ethics.

Of course, there are still guidelines when it comes to this kind of research, and the new rules are still very strict.

The research design must be approved in advance by the FDA, and the patients on whom these experiments will be performed must have an immediately life-threatening condition and must be unable to give consent. Finally, subjects could only be used if relatives could not be contacted.

Those who support the new regulations assert that doctors will now be able to test new treatments for many injuries and afflictions for which the current treatment is unreliable. Supporters stress the need for the development of new measures. They claim that a reasonable patient in a critical situation would want to be part of a study of experimental drugs rather than accept

the current, unreliable treatment.

This attitude reflects a mindboggling arrogance on the part of those who have presumably taken an oath to save lives and who purport to be working for the health of all people. There is a reason these drugs are called experimental: no one knows if they work.

Yes, they might be effective, but they might also have no effect whatsoever. They may even be harmful.

It is undeniable that many people would want their doctor to follow standard treatment procedures in a critical situation, instead of unproven, possibly even harmful experimental measures. Nonconsensual experimentation on a person such as this would represent an unconscionable violation of an essential human right.

If the FDA and its supporters are correct in their assertion that people would want to be part of an experiment in a life-threatening situation, a system by which people can give consent before the fact should be developed.

It could work like a living will or organ donor card: a signed form that would go with one's medical records.

The sanctity of the human body is absolutely inviolate. No one, even those who claim to work in the name of science, has the moral authority to experiment on another's body without that person's consent.

Thanks to the FDA, another of our fundamental rights has been eroded in the name of progress.

Cheating fate

■ An elaborate and extensive scam involving graduate school entrance exams highlights the need for standardized testing reform.

Nobody likes cheaters, especially those who almost get away with it.

Last week, federal agents broke up a three-year scam involving graduate school entrance exams such as the GMAT and GRE. Taking advantage of the three-hour time difference between New York City and Los Angeles, answers would be phoned in to ringleaders in Los Angeles and then doled out to customers at various testing locations. The "service" charged participants a hefty \$6,000.

As this intricately planned scheme demonstrates, standardized tests are regarded way too seriously, by the students who take them, and by the schools considering them.

One must question the tremendous pressure tests such as the GRE and GMAT exert, if students are willing to pay \$6,000 and compromise their ethics in order to ensure an excellent score.

It is true that standardized test scores are helpful for comparing students who come from different schools and different academic programs against a common baseline. These exams, however, give only a modicum of meaningful information about a candidate.

Experts can try to make these tests as fair and substantive as possible, yet invariably, it is those who know how to take tests - or those who cheat on them - end up doing well.

Everyone suffers the stress of taking these exams. Unfortunately, not everyone has \$6,000 lying around to spend on an improved score. For that matter, not everyone has the money to afford expensive books or classes which can give

rich students a 'leg up' on exams.

The educational system is competitive enough, pitting student against student for the choicest few spots in undergraduate programs, graduate programs and eventually, jobs. Why should poorer students also be forced to compete against wealthy ones?

Cheating is unjust because it rewards the undeserving while punishing those who have worked hard.

False high test scores have allowed a small group of incompetent students to gain admittance into graduate schools.

The injustice is compounded on a standardized test, as they are assessed on the basis of a bell curve. Thus, those who received unfair high scores bumped down everyone else's legitimate scores.

Now that the cheating ring has been busted, the students responsible for organizing and partaking in this scam must be punished. Undoubtedly, most are in graduate school, while some have used their duplicity to gain employment. Their punishment is simple: scores must be canceled, schools must kick them out of their programs and employers must be notified. These people do not deserve their degrees, their jobs, their prestige, or their placement in any graduate program.

The irony is that the time and money these people spent on the scam could have been better used in studying for the test. At least they would have received scores they deserved. Just like your teacher used to tell you: cheaters never win.

BAROMETER

Free at last

The seemingly endless barrage of campaign ads came to an end after Tuesday's election. Starting next week: Kemp and Gore begin their presidential campaigns.

Coming out

It's believed to be the highest turnout ever recorded at students' Fetzer Gymnasium polling site Tuesday. The obvious result of all those free stickers.

Old excuse

Bob Dole's failed presidential bid was attributed to his age by some at the GOP. In other news, Jesse Helms, 75, and Strom Thurmond, 93, were re-elected to the U.S. Senate.

Slick Willy, Chapter 2

Clinton reminds his supporters after reelection that there is still "work to do." His No. 1 priority: staying out of jail.

Out 'n' about

An accused child stalker staying at the Dorothea Dix mental hospital departs on a two-day freedom jaunt over the weekend. He later said he did it for Jody Foster.

Long count

Our friends at N.C. State had trouble coping with their football team's lopsided 52-20 loss to the Tar Heels on Saturday. It seems many students were unable to keep up with the score after running out of fingers.

'Wanted: brainy sperm. Nerds need not apply.'

A few of my friends used to get paid for sex. They had sex with beautiful women — models, movie stars, Playboy bunnies — who knows, they might have had sex with you. Physically, they were alone in a bathroom, but in their minds they could choose whoever they wanted. In this day and age, masturbation isn't just for fun, it's big business.

Masturbation has always been an ugly word. Every syllable is ugly. The word's ugly enough for most encyclopedias to avoid it. Masulipatnam, Mastoid, Mastiff and Edgar Lee Masters are all easier finds. Masterwort, a name for plants of the parsley family with unpleasant odors and acrid juices, and Mastic tree, a tree exuding a resinous gum, both frequent your average encyclopedia. Close in definition, but no cigar. Ditto for Mastoiditis, the inflammation of a spongy bone behind the ear, symptoms include dizziness and a discharge of puss. But where is masturbation?

At least one parenting guidebook says that if the subject arises, children should know that masturbation is acceptable, but that it's a private activity. Parents should be firm about discouraging public masturbation.

The view that masturbation is a normal activity is fairly new. In the past, physicians condemned masturbation, blaming it for headaches, fatigue, heart disease, epilepsy and insanity. Today's doctors say masturbation can indicate underlying psychological problems if adults prefer it to sexual intercourse or if practiced too frequently.

But the medical profession isn't openly vocal on the subject. And it's no wonder why. When Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders participated in a question-and-answer session at the United Nations after a speech about AIDS, someone asked her opinion on teaching masturbation. Her response was straightforward and lacked political posturing.

"With regard to masturbation, I think that is something that is a part of human sexuality and a part of something that should perhaps be taught," she said. After learning that the news media were publishing her response, Clinton's advisers stiffened up. "Fire her!" they demanded, and Clinton, who had first appointed

her the Arkansas health director in 1987, did just that.

Judaism and Christianity say masturbation is bad, pointing to the passage in Genesis when Onan spills his seed on the ground rather than complete the sexual act. According to Alfred Kinsey's study, masturbation must be the most common sin. It showed that 90 percent of men and 30 percent of women do it by age 20. By age 40, 95 percent of men and 80 percent of women have taken a hand at masturbation.

Perhaps this reflects a trend some journalists have started addressing: the rising popularity of masturbation. Articles like "Hand Jive in the 90's: Is Masturbation Coming Into Its Own?" and "Sperm Mogul" are just two examples of this new attention to self-stimulation.

The booming sperm bank industry goes hand in hand with this. Artificial insemination flourished after World War II, but required fresh sperm. In the '80s, frozen sperm storage was achieved. One of the largest banks is California Cryobank, which recently opened an office in Cambridge, Mass. It places ads in Harvard and MIT's student papers reading: "Wanted: Brainy Sperm. Nerds Need Not Apply."

Donors get between \$35 and \$75 a pop, but not just anyone can donate. A rigorous physical examination, a lengthy application (including info all grades, SAT scores, baldness in uncles and bone structures of aunts) and a full ancestral racial breakdown are prerequisites.

Of course, the sperm count and percentage of mutated sperm must be well above average quality. The company's founder, Charles Sims, says the company isn't elitist, but seeks donors a potential mother "would be proud to take home to her mother."

Potential mothers get catalogues of avail-



RICHARD RAY
HOBSON'S CHOICE

able sperm donors, complete with saucy descriptions of their physical and intellectual attributes. They must act fast. A Cryobank newsletter notes, "Many patients have been disappointed to learn that a donor is no longer available when two weeks earlier he had 20 or more vials in our inventory." Women pay between \$115 and \$375 for a vial of sperm. Most require three to 12 attempts, and 20 percent never conceive.

Cattle are more successful than humans. One sample of bull sperm can impregnate 500 cows. Humans require 300 million to 400 million sperm to fertilize an egg, although only one of them gets the job done. Honey bees scoff at our physiology; they need just 30 spermatozoa, and theirs survive for years in the female reproductive tract. Human sperm last a pitiful two days. Humans have some of the smallest and worst-swimming sperm in the animal kingdom. Our little guys are tadpole-shaped, but other animals have sperm shaped like stars, spheres or thin balloons. Some of the other tadpole-shaped ones have two tails or vibrating hairs to help them along. We don't.

Human donors, therefore, must work hard to maintain their sperm. Vitamin E, raw oysters and boxers boost sperm counts. Hot or cold showers, tight underwear, smoking (especially marijuana), exercise, bike riding and alcohol can lower the count and increase mutation.

Donors must find a rhythm, too. Ejaculating too often or too seldom kills sperm. My most successful friend, who for the purpose of this column, I'll call Peter (no pun intended), could either ejaculate or smoke before a successful day of donation. Wednesday was a day of rest, but he still pulled in \$140 a week. He bought himself a computer, and life was good. But eventually Peter got cocky (no pun intended). He smoked more, got a girlfriend, and lost his groove. His sperm failed more and more often, and eventually he was laid off. Such is life in the sperm business. At least there's plasma.

Richard Ray is a senior journalism and creative writing major from Greenville, who advocates going to Nebraska for Thanksgiving or any other occasion.



The search for the elusive Hamburglar ends in the biggest presidential scandal this side of Watergate.

Student volunteers make Carrboro Halloween a success

TO THE EDITOR:
On behalf of the Carrboro Recreation and Parks Department, I'd like to extend my sincerest appreciation and thanks to the many UNC students that contributed to another successful Carrboro Halloween Carnival.

Sponsored by the Carrboro Recreation and Parks Commission, this annual event provides a safe and fun filled evening for approximately 600 to 800 participants. We rely on many part time staff and volunteers and realize that they are the foundation to our successful programs.

I would especially like to thank the volunteers from the SeniorCorps, the UNC students in the Recreation Curriculum, and our part-time staff, many of whom are UNC students, for all of their hard work and enthusiasm. While others were preparing their own costumes for Franklin Street, this special group showed great student support for the community by providing a safe and happy Halloween for area children.

Barbara J. Fellmann
RECREATION SUPERVISOR,
CARRBORO RECREATION AND PARKS DEPARTMENT

Biased professors deny UNC students diverse education

TO THE EDITOR:
We would like to point out some discrepancies in the Oct. 28 article, "UNC professors lean toward political left," and make students aware of the dangers inherent in a campus so one-sided.



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. Bring letters to the DTH office at Suite 104, Carolina Union, mail them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or e-mail forum to: dth@unc.edu.

First, this piece of "news" reports that 91 percent of UNC professorships are held by Democrats. It then states that "Nationwide, Democrats and Republicans are registered in nearly even numbers," but it goes on to quote a UNC professor: "What we're looking for is openness." Here, "openness" takes the place of liberal, implying that UNC isn't looking for any "closed-minded" conservatives, even though they lack the representation present in society. Why, when the campus seeks to "mirror" the makeup of society in every way possible, is it only looking for Democrats? By printing such slanted, blatantly closed-minded quotations like this one, the DTH only serves to perpetuate stereotypes.

In addition, the article asserts that, "Affirmative action advocates say women and mi-

norities bring different voices into the classroom, but they question the value of adding Republicans to faculty ranks for the sake of political diversity." Are Republicans not the minorities on this campus? Also, since when did diversity, especially political diversity, mean exclusion of a specific group because of its beliefs? It never did. Unfortunately, discrimination is considered acceptable by some, including Department of Political Science Chairman Donald Searing, who contends, "In some categories, (diversity) is desirable, but in other categories, (diversity) is not desirable." While many universities across the United States have "sought to diversify ... by assembling faculties that reflect the composition of society in terms of race and gender," it seems that bringing conservative viewpoints to UNC is not a priority.

To this, we say students beware! A campus this politically homogenous can only produce liberal-minded graduates. Unless we seek to bring more conservative professors to UNC, we will never be the diverse University we so proudly claim to be.

Dan Palmieri
FRESHMAN
ECONOMICS

Shawn Frost
FRESHMAN
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Deadline

Applications for The Daily Tar Heel's editorial board are due in Suite 104 of the Student Union before 5 p.m. today. Questions about applications or the editorial board should be directed to Editorial Page Editor Ryan Norwood at 962-4086.