

The Daily Tar Heel

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Smoke screen

Although the Residence Hall Association's efforts in seeking out student opinion regarding their proposed residence hall smoking ban are laudable, their concern does not change the fact that the plan is inherently unfair.

The current regulations imposed on smokers living in residence halls are already stringent, as the only area remaining where they are allowed to smoke is in their own rooms. Open-air balconies and stairwells are already off limits to smoking, and now the RHA is proposing to eliminate any alternatives altogether.

Residence hall rooms are the equivalent of a student's home; a private domain the student pays to inhabit. As long as they are not imposing on the rights of others, namely nonsmokers, what students do in their own rooms is their own business. Those smoking in their rooms are not infringing on the rights of anyone else, and if others in the suite are bothered by the smoke, the smoker can easily close the door.

The rights of the smoker are also just as valid. It seems apparent someone moving into an apart-

ment complex would not be required to "kick the habit" as the ban would ask all students in residence halls to do. By denying the rights of this entire segment of the student population, they are choosing to do away with a problem instead of resolving it. Are students less than equal members of the community, without the rights granted to the rest of society?

The argument against smoking is not an unreasonable one. In many instances it can and does violate the right of others to breathe clean air. There is a matter of civility involved as well. Some students disregard the rights of nonsmokers. If both smokers and nonsmokers recognized the rights of each other, the conflict would be much more manageable.

Perhaps the RHA could look into alternative measures such as smoking and nonsmoking suites, designated smoking lounges or lifting the smoking ban on dorm balconies. These changes would begin a process of accommodation for both sides, instead of persecuting smokers and labeling them as a problem.

Remedial advice

UNC could use some advice about its advising system. A recent Board of Governors' report found UNC-Chapel Hill's advising system had a 47.4 percent satisfaction rating with graduating seniors — the lowest rating in the entire UNC system. New organization within the system can deliver students the education that suits them and that they deserve.

While Associate Dean of the General College Donald Jicha said the report did not reflect the system's success, the numbers speak for themselves. At a large state university, research takes precedence over teaching, much less advising.

A remedy for this lamentable situation will take time and, yes, money. The most effective solution would entail creating an advising center with a full-time staff. This staff could handle much of the paperwork, such as drop-add decisions, which wastes advisers' time.

By cutting back on redundant advising in the College of Arts and Sciences, perhaps the Uni-

versity would have more professors in the General College, providing each with a manageable load of advisees. Students in the College of Arts and Sciences need only one advisor within their major, instead of one in the college and another one in each of their majors. This advisor would have the time and knowledge to advise students about which classes would benefit them.

Also, many students find themselves paired with advisers outside the discipline they want to pursue. Placing prospective English majors, for example, with English professors from day one of their college careers would automatically enhance advising quality.

Finally, the University can require better training for advisers in the basics of perspective, major and graduation requirements. Professors, understandably, are experts in their discipline, not in the art of advising.

With continued improvements, the advising system at UNC may be able to heal itself.

Don't boot Newt

A pending investigation into allegations of ethical misconduct has resulted in calls for congressman Newt Gingrich to step down as Speaker of the House. Such an action would be premature and, if pursued, would set an extremely negative precedent in American politics.

Many allegations of misconduct have been leveled against Gingrich. Though most have been dismissed as groundless, there are still several charges under investigation.

While it is possible that the pending investigation will turn up evidence of misconduct, the speaker should not be expected to step aside as long as he is presumed innocent. It may be true that the investigation provides ammunition for opponents, but it may well turn out that the

charges are themselves political motivated.

If the precedent is set that government officials are expected to step down in face of ethics charges, America can expect to see a proliferation of ethics charges filed with the purpose of crippling the opposition.

The speaker's position is important and controversial; no matter who fills it, the person will always have enemies. To have Gingrich's reputation ruined on the basis of media hype runs contrary to the best interests of the system — not to mention the American ideals of justice.

Most of the Republican party leadership has responded admirably by reserving judgment until the investigation is complete. Political leaders and media pundits should follow their lead

Busy schedules still merit occasional timeout

For someone who hates to run, I find myself doing a lot of it. No, not running in the physical exercise sense. Rather I'm, referring to the act of running from the world around me.

I don't feel that I hide in a hole or anything. However, when looking back at my time here at UNC, I find one of my chief regrets is that I ran from opportunity.

It seems I have always had somewhere more important to be. There was once a time when I'd swing through the Pit between classes and exchange pleasantries with friends, but those times have fallen by the wayside.

Now I always seem to be in a hurry. This hurriedness frequently entails an expressionless face, fast-paced walk and an avoidance of eye contact.

I bypassed opportunities to talk to friends because I en route to what seemed a more important destination. Where I was headed always seemed more important than where I was.

Early in the semester, my marketing professor observed that during the first two weeks of school, people were friendly. There were more smiles and "hellos" even to people they didn't know. However, he remarked, after this "grace period" most people became too engrossed with whatever else preoccupied their mind. He felt that Carolina was a much friendlier place when everyone took a moment to brighten someone else's day with a smile and a greeting.

Realizing this deficiency in myself, I want to learn to deliberately linger. That is, just hang out somewhere, letting something happen rather than running off to make it happen. Maybe hang out in the Pit more, or swing by some friends' places more often, maybe even a spontaneous lunch or dinner when I randomly meet someone I know.

Maybe realizing this now will enable me to

more fully enjoy my last semester at Carolina, though I can only wonder at the opportunities I have missed.

I wish I had taken the time to stop and listen to the Pit preacher, rather than running from his venom and the feverish crowds he whips into a frenzy. Maybe I could engage one of his listeners in a conversation regarding the show going on before us. Maybe I could convince them that a kernel of truth, albeit deeply veiled, lay in the Pit preacher's venomous, but assuredly well-intentioned attacks.

I would hope to show that the Pit preacher does care for people and wants them to think about the choices they make and how they live their life. But I feared an inability to answer any questions regarding his means of conveying his message. I feared an inability to prove that while the approach may be misguided, the purpose was not.

Once a friend did come up to me and ask me why the Pit preacher yelled, ranted and offended so much. She knew me to be a Christian and hoped I would shed some insight onto her frustration and confusion. She knew there was a difference between him and me, but didn't know why since we both proclaimed God and believed in the Bible.

But I didn't take the time to talk to her. Instead my self-styled importance pushed me off to The Daily Tar Heel to finish my column for the upcoming week. But what eternal significance would it have mattered had I taken the time to talk, right?



MATT OSMAN
OSMANIA

Many factors gave rise to my imagined busyness. Among them has been a genuine dislike for small talk. I hate meaningless conversation to the point where I would rather not talk than discuss the weather or how many exams I have this week. But how many opportunities have I missed to make a new friendship, or deepen an existing one?

My room has become a cocoon. It has everything I need: television, food, a computer. Why would I need to leave this insular and protected environment, save for class?

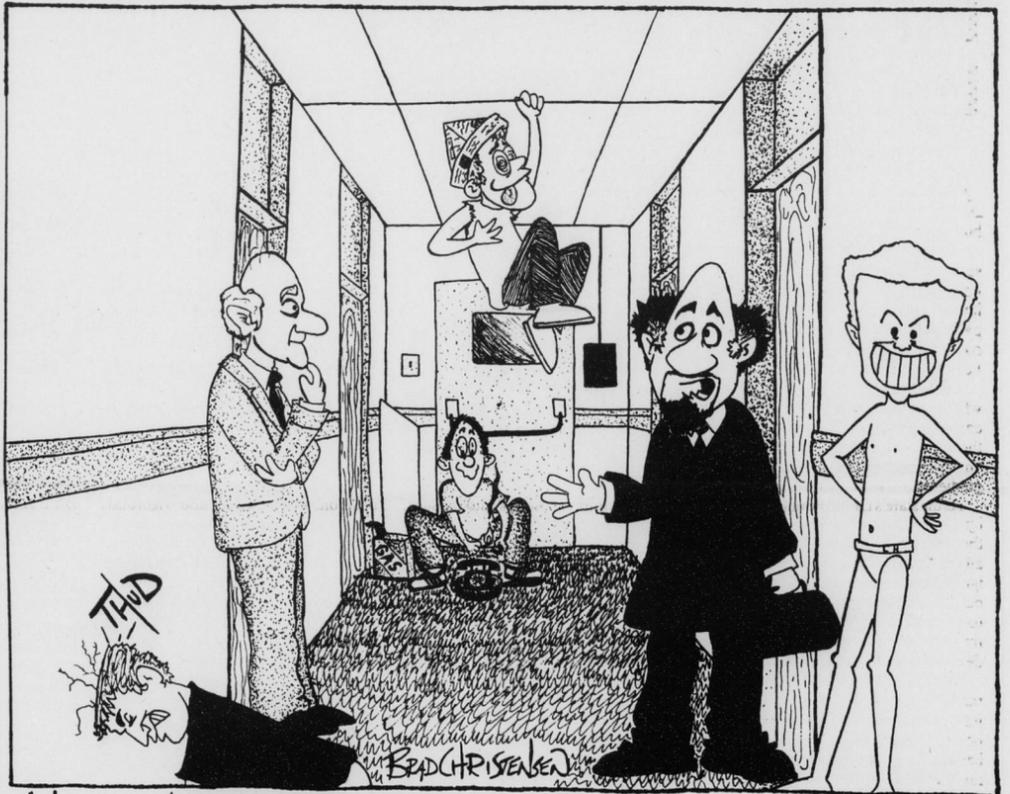
But I have recently been convicted by my self-imposed isolation and how its caused me to allow some previously important friendships wane. Last Sunday night I talked with two friends for the first time in weeks. We had all been complaining of being busy and of all the work we had to do. Now granted, some of this was true, but should we become so engrossed in our activities that we lose sight of our friendships?

I feel sorry for my friends who, unlike my imagined stress and pressure, are truly too busy for my friends. They are incapable of making times for the people who are important in their life because they have too much going on.

Fortunately I still have time. For the upcoming academic semester I have resolved to make better use of my time. This includes a heavy emphasis on "hanging out" and enjoying my friendships. It is not the first time I've made this resolution, but maybe this time will be the last. I hope that in my final semester I can re-establish some forgotten friendships and strengthen some others.

There is still time, both for you me and me. Get involved, but don't forget your friends. Don't make the same mistakes I have, you may not realize until it is too late.

Matt Osman is a senior history major from Charlotte



New ticket distribution policy benefits graduate students

TO THE EDITOR:
You may have noticed a number of letters to the editor decrying the current basketball ticket distribution process which no longer allows the practice of camping out. By randomizing the process to no longer assure better seating to individuals who have the time and ability to stand in line all night, the Carolina Athletic Association has recognized that this practice unfairly disadvantages individuals who cannot, for whatever reasons, participate in this type of distribution process.

I have been told by a number of graduate students — students with jobs, children or distant homes — that they greatly appreciate the change since, for once, they can actually get decent tickets — or just plain get tickets, in some cases. Since all of us pay the same \$80 per year athletic fee, it seems only reasonable that all students should have an equal (or at least equitable) opportunity to see athletic events, if they so choose. The CAA was encouraged to establish a distribution process that took into account the inability of a large number of students to camp out. The argument is that standing in line all night may have nothing to do with how much someone wants to see a game. This is especially true if, in order to stand in line, the student has to pay a sitter to stay with children all night or, in a different case, take time off from a job. The decision not to stand in line is based on the financial cost of that "privilege," not the enthusiasm the person has over the event.

Katherine Kraft
PRESIDENT
GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENT FEDERATION

Coverage of Sangam's efforts insignificant, misleading

TO THE EDITOR:
This year, Sangam, the South Asian Awareness Organization at UNC, has made it a top priority to promote communication between minority organizations. Unfortunately, our

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.

efforts are often misrepresented or unnoticed by the The Daily Tar Heel. Despite our efforts to ensure coverage, we feel the DTH has not adequately reported the contributions Sangam has made to promote race relations.

First, Rang-e-Sangam, our annual fall cultural show, attracted a diverse 650 member sold out audience. For the first time, instead of a completely South Asian show, three minority organizations came together for this event. While we made repeated requests to the DTH for extensive coverage, the event received a mere photograph on the second page.

Last week, Sangam and SARR co-sponsored a forum on interracial relationships. Not only was the coverage of this important event substandard ("Panelists talk on interracial relationships," Nov. 7), but the reporter did not even mention the sponsors.

Why is this recognition important? Because it helps the reader know who is making efforts to improve race relations at this university. We ask the DTH to look more carefully at the obligation it has, not only to Sangam, but the campus community as a whole.

Nina Athar
JUNIOR
MINORITY AFFAIRS CO-CHAIRWOMAN, SANGAM

Plausible explanations exist for UNC Democrat monopoly

TO THE EDITOR:
Stanley Ridgley ("Limp defense of Democratic monopoly does not stand up," Nov. 13) asserts that The Daily Tar Heel reporter's findings that 91 percent of UNC faculty are Democrats constitutes "de facto evidence that the UNC faculty has systematically discriminated against Republicans in hiring." I think there are other explanations for the findings.

To begin with, UNC is a public institution supported by government funds. It is understandable that employees who depend on the state for their livelihood would hesitate to join a party that questions the value of government institutions and proposes actions such as elimination of the U.S. Department of Education.

The original DTH article (Oct. 28) pointed out that the great majority of North Carolina residents are Democrats. It may be that people with the demographic characteristics of applicants for university faculty positions are more likely to be Democrats.

Finally, people who believe strongly in capitalist ideology and making money — often Republicans — are unlikely to enter the field of education when they can make more money working for private industry.

Robert Ladd
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER
SCHOOL OF NURSING

Join our happy family

Got an opinion? We want to splash it across the back pages of The Daily Tar Heel. That's right. It's that time of year again: Applications are out for spring 1997 columnist and editorial board positions. Applications will be available today in Suite 104 of the Student Union, otherwise known as the DTH office. They're due by 5 p.m. Dec. 2. Don't delay. Contact Editor Jeanne Fugate at 962-4086 if you have any questions.

THE DAILY TAR HEEL

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