

COMMUNITY VOICES

Kids are first in charters Reform Party will return

It's interesting to see people's reactions to the proposed charter schools in our area. Supporters of charter schools say they give parents more choice — and input — in their kids' education. Although it's too early to fully assess the schools' effect on learning, a recent article in Investor Business Daily titled "Unshackling Nation's Schools — Liberated Charter Schools Get Results, Win Kudos," shows that first results from other states are encouraging.

GENE GALIN
GUEST COLUMNIST

Charter schools are public schools released from many government rules. They are run by an independent board that includes parents, teachers and principals. But with greater freedom to make rules and set curricula comes greater responsibility. If schools fail to perform, their charters are revoked.

"Liberals and conservatives, Republicans and Democrats have decided that this is a really good idea," said Joe Nathan, author of "Charter Schools: Creating Hope and Opportunity." "Charter schools bring together three very powerful, central concepts of America: freedom and choice, accountability and entrepreneurship. That is quite a winning combination."

Charter schools matter because they are redefining what a public school is, said Chester Finn Jr., senior fellow at the Hudson Institute. "The charter school idea says you can be a public school if you're open to the public, paid for by the public and accountable to the public — but you can be run by anybody," he added.

While charter school legislation varies from state to state, a common theme is greater freedom and competition. Charter schools may not discriminate, may not be religious and can't charge tuition. But they can structure programs as they wish.

Arizona passed one of the strongest charter school laws in the country in 1994. Today, 118 of Arizona's 1,200 schools are charter schools which draw from wide areas. The greater choice has created a more competitive environment.

"We have seen several examples of new charter schools opening near public schools and then enrolling one-third of the kids," said Jeffrey Flake, executive director of the Goldwater Institute, an Arizona think tank. "Too many public schools have ignored parents, and charters are responding to the public's needs."

This happened at Queen Creek Elementary School in Phoenix. One-third of the parents were fed up with a weak "whole-language" reading curriculum at their schools. So the parents put their kids into a new charter school in the area.

At Vaughn Street Elementary in Los Angeles, students scored in the 10th percentile before it became a charter school. Now students are scoring in the 40th and 50th percentiles.

But not all charter schools work. California and Arizona have each seen a charter school close down.

But that's the point, says Finn, a former U.S. Education Department official. "It's a sign of strength that charters work because when one fails we don't keep it on life support."

"Please tell me how many regular schools have been closed for cause," said Finn.

The results are forcing districts to change. One Phoenix principal is trying to lure kids back to his school. He's visiting each parent to find out what his school needs to do to compete.

Charter schools' opponents say the movement would create a two-tier education system where affluent parents send their kids to charters while leaving poorer kids in decaying schools. That hasn't happened so far.

A survey by the Hudson Institute points out that 63 percent of students in charter schools are nonwhite. Nearly one-fifth are black, and 30 percent are Hispanic. Most charter students are poor and eligible for subsidized federal lunch programs. Many have limited English proficiency (19 percent), and one in every five charter students has a disability.

Another study by the Education Commission of the States found that half of charter schools serve "at risk" youth — disabled, delinquents, dropouts and others with special needs. Two-thirds of charter schools are designed to serve a cross-section of students. Some serve the deaf, home-schooled students or juvenile criminals. Choice 2000, a California charter school, serves students online via computers. And New Visions in Minneapolis targets inner-city kids.

Many teachers like their freedom and accountability. Charter schools empower individual teachers.

Some 62 percent of Arizona charter school teachers chose to teach at charters because of the school's mission, curriculum and students. More than three-quarters plan to return next year. Some six teachers in 10 negotiate their contracts directly with the school director. Fully 95 percent of charter school teachers have benefits. Three-fourths of charter schools have computers in the classroom. And 35 percent of the teachers have parent volunteers in their classrooms.

Parents seem happy, too, even though most charters require parents to be involved with the school and their children. Another Goldwater survey found 92 percent of Arizona's charter school parents were satisfied or very satisfied with their school.

In conclusion, I hope that our area school boards do not see charter schools as a threat, but as an opportunity to find out what our schools need to do to compete with local charter schools. There isn't any good reason why our public schools can't offer the increased accountability and greater parental input which seem to be keys to charter schools' popularity.

Gene Galin is a former Chatham County School Board candidate from Chapel Hill.

I am absolutely ashamed, appalled and disgusted with my generational peers. Again, the 18- to 35-year-olds have cast their ballots this year for Bill Clinton. In 1992, many political pundits believed Generation Xers were responsible for electing Clinton. My generation voted for Clinton on the premise

SCOTT SANDERS
GUEST COLUMNIST

that he was bringing "change" to government and that he would ensure that our government be prepared for the next millennium.

While Clinton and his supporters point at certain areas in which government works better (and in some cases, this is true), we still have a dying patient on the table — our federal government — and our president has made no efforts to stop the bleeding. We're only repairing the patient's broken pinkie toe and ignoring the stake in its chest.

Yes, the deficit has been cut 63 percent. Meanwhile, Clinton's own budget reports predict an ever-increasing deficit after he leaves office. By the year 2020, the deficit will reach about \$1.5 trillion per year, and in 2030, we'll have a \$4.1 trillion deficit. (Keep in mind that our national debt is only \$5.3 trillion today.) This is a burden that Bill Clinton will never have to manage. It will be on my generation's shoulders.

Government overhead has been trimmed. But government operations only account for a small sliver of our government's budget — about 0.9 percent of the federal budget. We need to get serious if we want to balance the budget. We waste our time with discussions on cutting aid to schools, reducing environmental protections and slashing aid to farms. Education and training services occupy only about 3 percent of our federal budget, environmental protection gets 1.5 percent and agriculture accounts for 0.6 percent.

No major elected official has touched the third rail of politics: entitlements. Our deficit will amount to about \$110 billion next year, or about 8 percent of federal spending. If we need to permanently cut 8 percent of our budget in order to balance it, we need to begin looking at the largest area of spending: entitlements, where our government spends 57 percent of its \$1,519 trillion budget.

Our entitlement programs are large now, but what's frightening is that our entitlement programs are projected to grow exponentially into the next century. While we may not want to cut benefits already promised, we must rethink our programs for the next generation. If we cut tiny programs that will hurt our country, we might temporarily balance the budget.

However, if we don't get our entitlement programs under control, we will never have a chance to permanently balance the budget.

No one talks about this. I'm still waiting for the discussions to get serious. I seriously doubt any current politicians will stop the runaway growth of entitlement programs. It will be my

generation that will have to deal with it.

The current administration gave us the largest tax increase in history. And a child born today will pay an 82 percent tax rate, according to page 25 of Clinton's own 1995 budget report. We're building a bridge to the 21st century, but we're borrowing the money to pay for it at the expense of my generation.

Trade deals with Mexico have sent thousands of jobs across the border. The creators of the North American Free Trade Agreement promised a trade surplus with Mexico, but we've accumulated \$70 billion in trade deficits with Mexico since NAFTA's inception. My generation worries about the environment, and NAFTA dealt a giant blow to environmental protection in the South by loosening controls in Mexico. Pollutants stream across to the United States via the northerly air currents that blow from Mexico. When my peers graduate from college, will they need to move to another country to find a job?

I feel the need to mention campaign financing. Clinton's campaign and the Democrats have accepted millions in illegal contributions. (And the Republicans certainly aren't innocent either.) In 1995 Clinton shook hands with Newt Gingrich, and they promised we would receive real campaign finance reform. Instead, all efforts were stifled. Now that Clinton's illegal practices have been exposed, he has called for reform again. Will we get it? Any bookie will give you odds against it.

My generation will owe more than any other in American history. Already, each individual's share of the national debt is \$20,000. According to government reports, our government officially has a negative net worth to the tune of \$2,983 trillion. Unofficially, when you add Social Security, federal pension liabilities and other government "promises," the government has between a \$14 trillion and \$17 trillion negative net worth.

Fellow Generation Xers, you now know what you got for your vote. Was it a fair exchange?

Over the next few years, the Reform Party will continue to research issues and develop solutions. The National College Reform Party is taking a giant step by planning several forums called "Workshop for the Next Generation." These workshops will feature well-known political figures and participants from groups such as Concord Coalition, Third Millennium, Economic Security 2000 and U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce.

Is Clinton the president who will prepare our country for the next generation? Only if we want more of the same.

The Reform Party is in its infancy. The Reform Party will grow so that it will have strength for the presidential election in 2000, when it will have a presidential candidate who can give my generation and other Americans true change, renewal and reform.

Scott Sanders is the deputy coordinator for the National College Reform Party. He is a junior political science major at Rutgers University.

UNC fans should learn lesson from UVa. students

TO THE EDITOR:

I wish to comment on the letter by Sabrina Walton ("Conduct of UVa. fans after game inexcusable, dangerous," Nov. 19).

I'm glad you got some exposure to the real world of college football on Saturday. I'm not condoning the "obscenities and obscene gestures" that you had to endure after the Virginia come from behind victory (heaven forbid that you did anything to stimulate these fans), and I sincerely regret that one member was hurt, but maybe there are a few things that Carolina fans can learn about supporting a top football team from this freak incident of (gasp) overenthusiasm.

Let's face it, North Carolina is a basketball state. It always has been, and always will be, and as long Dean Smith coaches hoops here Mack Brown's team will always be No. 2. Now Virginia on the other hand is a football state, and that title makes things a little different up there. As opposed to students at UNC, students at UVa. stay until the end of football games, do not need a "Mike Man" and the drum line pounding "Stick it in!" to find a reason to cheer and tear down the goal posts at the end of big victories. When was the last time the goal posts at Kenan Stadium came down?

As "wine and cheese" crowds rule Kenan Stadium and the Smith Center, it is a shame that students here miss out on the true big time college sports experience. Granted the UNC football (AP poll No. 13) and basketball (AP poll No. 7) teams are truly top level, it is a shame that the fans lack far behind in their truly unbridled and raucous support of the blue and white.

Perhaps we are all just too busy binge drinking and worrying about the intellectual climate on campus to get plum crazy at sporting events.

Floriss King
FRESHMAN
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Letter writers' cONcEpt (of fashion) needs work

TO THE EDITOR:

This is in response to both of the Nov. 20 letters to the editor ("Masala Fashion Show receives inadequate coverage" and "cONcEpt (of colors) fashions at Masala Show in poor taste"). First, in regards to inadequate coverage, I cannot say anything in defense of The Daily Tar Heel's coverage of cultural issues as a whole, but I must bring out that the Nov. 18 article covering the Masala show ("Diverse Masala Show features spicy cultural fashions") was a fashion review, as indicated below the byline. It was not meant to be a sales pitch or promotion of the involved multicultural organizations — nor was the writer responsible for quoting any of the organizations' own promotions. A fashion review is to review fashion — being the opinion of the

reviewer, the exact same concept as that of book, movie, music and theater reviews.

How many quotations does one find in these reviews? The accusation that the review's writer "did not even get the gist of the purpose of the show" was completely off base, considering that a quote by members of the Masala steering committee was included that explained clearly the educational and expository purpose of the event. The fact stands, though, that the event was called the Masala Fashion Show and was intended to be an exhibition of culture through fashion — it was a fashion show, and it was intended to turn the Great Hall into a catwalk. The designs that so disgusted you were the product of the multicultural collaboration group cONcEpt (of Colors). In fact, they were the debut line of the fashion design team, cONcEpt Couture. Their designs represented multicultural influences beyond the specific ethnic dress presented by the rest of the show; they were the result of a multicultural effort. They played an important part in the entire picture of world culture and increasing multiculturalism in the future. Yes, few of their designs could be termed practical, but fashion is more than just Guess? jeans and Gap shirts: it is a true art form, and innovative fashion design takes talent and deserves credit. To call it a "disrespectful display of fashion," is an attack on the cONcEpt (of Colors) organization. The cONcEpt Couture designs warranted respect, should have been taken more seriously by the audience, and were certainly an appropriate part of the "cultural outlet" provided by the Masala Fashion Show.

Now, I turn to the second letter dealing with the "poor taste" of cONcEpt Couture. Ladies, I celebrate your right to express your opinion, but this was a fashion show, and it was intended to turn the Great Hall into a catwalk. The designs that so disgusted you were the product of the multicultural collaboration group cONcEpt (of Colors). In fact, they were the debut line of the fashion design team, cONcEpt Couture. Their designs represented multicultural influences beyond the specific ethnic dress presented by the rest of the show; they were the result of a multicultural effort. They played an important part in the entire picture of world culture and increasing multiculturalism in the future. Yes, few of their designs could be termed practical, but fashion is more than just Guess? jeans and Gap shirts: it is a true art form, and innovative fashion design takes talent and deserves credit. To call it a "disrespectful display of fashion," is an attack on the cONcEpt (of Colors) organization. The cONcEpt Couture designs warranted respect, should have been taken more seriously by the audience, and were certainly an appropriate part of the "cultural outlet" provided by the Masala Fashion Show.

As "wine and cheese" crowds rule Kenan Stadium and the Smith Center, it is a shame that students here miss out on the true big time college sports experience. Granted the UNC football (AP poll No. 13) and basketball (AP poll No. 7) teams are truly top level, it is a shame that the fans lack far behind in their truly unbridled and raucous support of the blue and white.

Perhaps we are all just too busy binge drinking and worrying about the intellectual climate on campus to get plum crazy at sporting events.

Floriss King
FRESHMAN
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Football team not only deserving activity at UNC

TO THE EDITOR:

In response to David Wessel's letter, "Football fans at UVa. game spoiled, unsupportive of team," (Nov. 22): You know what gets my goat? Whiners. They contribute to noise pollution, they don't make much sense and they tend to be some of the more hypocritical individuals you will ever meet. I have a couple of questions for you.

First question: How many student events have you attended this year, Dave (not including football games and various parties)? I am talking about such events as student band/orchestra/choral

concerts, student theatrical productions, multicultural events, etc. These people put in a good deal of work, and I would go so far as to say that none of them receive the support they deserve.

Second question: How many times this year have you woken up for a class and thought to yourself, "I'm still tired. I'm going back to sleep." David, these teachers put in a lot of time and effort to see that you receive the education you will need to make it in the world. Most of them don't get paid for half the work they do. They deserve our support.

I'm not trying to say that this school is possessed of the nation's best fans. Yes, we should be packing the stadium for every home game. If the football team wants to (complain) about our shortcomings as a cheering section, they can. They have earned that right. But, hey, I'll be the first to admit that if I wake up on a cold and rainy Saturday morning, and I am a) still tired, b) hungover or c) both, I am going back to sleep, football game or no. That's just common sense.

What I am trying to say here is that none of the student organizations on this campus receive the support they earn through their extensive extracurricular work. In fact, the whole word "deserve," in general, just doesn't have much meaning anymore. You may have been to a few football games and know a cheer or two, but that gives you no right to go riding around on some kind of "I'm the good fan" high horse. Instead of complaining about the situation, why don't you do something constructive? Become a cheerleader.

Wes Baker
SOPHOMORE
PSYCHOLOGY/DRAMA

Commissioner candidate gives thanks for support

TO THE EDITOR:

In this season of Thanksgiving, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the citizens who supported me in my candidacy for Orange County Commissioner. I appreciate the calls and remarks made to me and my family members. I can assure you, I will continue to be involved in the county. I will continue to speak out



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.



on issues. I hope you will do the same because collectively we should affect the decision making process.

Even though I did not receive enough votes, we made an excellent showing. I am proud I ran a clean, honest campaign. In fact, if you remove Chapel Hill Township, Mr. Carey and I swapped places. This points out the weakness of our current at large system. We need to seriously consider a true district or proportional representation, which will yield a more diverse and better county commission.

In Orange County people want to wear the progressive label. A number of these "progressive" folks discriminate against others because they are Republicans. As a Republican, I experienced this first hand. If that is a progressive characteristic then I will never wear that label. I vote for the individual. The data shows that 21,519 voters or 47.6 percent voted a straight Democrat or Republican ticket. Almost three to one, straight tickets went Democrat. I have voted in 10 general elections and have split my ticket nine of those 10 times. One friend told me that if Jesus Christ was running as a Republican in this county he would lose. Ellie Kinnaird says she wants campaign reform. I suggest that if she is truly committed to this task to begin by introducing a bill that would include outlawing straight party ticket voting.

Patrick Mulkey
CHAPEL HILL

UNC's beauty threatened by growing garbage pile

TO THE EDITOR:

The DTH headline "Recycling rises as town waits for new landfill" (Nov. 20) might have been restated as "Landfill rises while town waits for recycling." The landfill is rising because the recycled garbage now goes in a big pile, rather than being buried.

At present the garbage pile remains below the treetops, but it is rising steadily toward them. The staff has advised that the pile is projected to grow to the 100-foot level by 2004, meaning that it most likely will be above the treetops by 1998 or so, visible for about 10 miles in every

direction. Once built, the pile is likely to be there forever, becoming a permanent part of the skyline. Landfill management has also proposed a second bigger pile, beginning in 2005 and rising thereafter.

One wonders what the visual impact of these garbage piles will be, particularly since they will be within sight of all of downtown Chapel Hill and Carboro, the University, its Hospital and much of I-40, wherever the view towards northern Chapel Hill is unobstructed.

Will UNC-Chapel Hill become UNC at Garbage City? That's not been evaluated, but certainly the manicured image of the village is likely to be affected.

Roger Barr
CHAPEL HILL

Kinnaird thanks students for hard campaign work

TO THE EDITOR:

I want to thank all of the students who worked so hard on my campaign for state Senate, especially the Young Democrats, Student Environmental Action Committee and Students for Choice. Your help was invaluable to winning so decisively.

I also appreciate the help of many others on campus who made my victory possible. The State Employees Association and the Housekeepers, whose endorsements meant so much, put in many hours on my behalf. And thanks to all the others who supported me in our common quest to bring the important issues to this campaign. In addition to the environment and campaign finance reform, many issues directly affect our University. Graduate students need permanent funding for health insurance, our libraries need adequate support to maintain the high standards required for a great university, research must be kept competitive and salaries for all, from housekeepers to staff and faculty should not be sacrificed in a political battle.

I pledge to work hard for our outstanding institution and thank you for joining me in representing our shared goals in the Legislature.

Ellie Kinnaird
N.C. SENATOR-ELECT

Diversions: magazine's sinister source for news?

TO THE EDITOR:

In light of recent events, we feel we cannot hold our tongues any longer. Over the past 12 months, we have noticed something sinister: a conspiracy which involves our own beloved Daily Tar Heel. Specifically we refer to the Diversions "Weekly Entertainment Section" and one of its contributors, Dean Hair. We both subscribe to Entertainment Weekly and have been appalled to note their blatant borrowing (dare we say plagiarism) of Mr. Hair's work. A recent example involves information on a forthcoming Laverne and Shirley movie — information which appeared in EW a week prior to its publication in the DTH. Not only

has EW used Hair as an uncredited source, they've actually used a time machine to make it seem as if they had the inside scoop.

In investigating this temporal thievery, we stumbled across an even more alarming example. The EW review of "Toy Story" (Nov. 24, 1995) contains no less than 14 suspicious word choices/sentences from Mr. Hair's review in the DTH — a review published six days later (Nov. 30, 1995). What are the possibilities of two different reviewers describing the "anarchic impulses" of the film? Both reviews are available on the World Wide Web: EW's at <http://www.pathfinder.com/under/movies/review/section/>; Mr. Hair's may be found in the DTH archives online at <http://www.unc.edu/dth/archives/113095/art.html#art02>. We encourage you to examine them yourselves.

It is our hope that by breaking our silence the DTH can stop these Time (Warner) Bandits before they strike again.

Kevin Hanna
JUNIOR
COMMUNICATIONS

Brandon Orsallo
JUNIOR
COMMUNICATIONS

DTH should look in mirror, feature intellectual events

TO THE EDITOR:

While The Daily Tar Heel's intellectual climate articles were interesting, I was disappointed that the DTH did not take the opportunity to examine its own role in the visibility of extracurricular activities on campus. As the school's most widely received medium, the DTH must balance questions of profit with its obligations to the community it serves; but features such as "twenty-four seven" and the Campus Calendar are inadequate resources because they only deliver information to those people who are already looking for it. If the DTH is really serious about improving the intellectual climate on this campus, it must work hard to prominently feature important campus events.

Case in point: On Nov. 13, the Bull's Head Bookshop's Youth Angst Society series staged a joint reading with the campus literary magazine, Cellar Door, on the occasion of its fall release and honoring the winners of a literary contest co-sponsored by the magazine and Bull's Head. The DTH included a small blurb in the University Briefs section the day of the reading and a photo the following day — nothing else.

On Dec. 3, Cellar Door will co-host a reading with Sauti Mpya, the Sonja H. Stone Black Cultural Center's literary journal, in the Union Cabaret. I hope the DTH will show a stronger interest in promoting the event. In the meantime, the magazine is available free of charge in Bull's Head.

Jonathan Farmer
EDITOR
CELLAR DOOR