

The Daily Tar Heel

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Dying to lose weight

■ The Food and Drug Administration ordered two prescription diet drugs off the market after finding that the drugs caused lethal heart damage.

On Monday, Redux, also known as dexfenfluramine, and Pondimin, also known as fenfluramine, were taken off the market after disturbing evidence was revealed about serious health implications. Both these drugs were immensely popular, even though doctors have suspected dangerous side effects for months. It is time we stop playing Russian roulette with our lives just to lose a few pounds.

The Food and Drug Administration urged all dieters to stop taking these prescription diet drugs. The FDA found in a study of those using the drug that one third of them had damaged heart valves without showing symptoms. Studies found that most of the valves leaked blood, a condition that could possibly weaken and enlarge the heart.

The only remaining diet drug on the market is phentermine, when combined with Pondimin makes up the popular diet combination known as "fen-phen." According to the FDA, phentermine appears to be safe when used by itself.

Possible risks began circulating in July, when the first case arose. People continued to take this potentially dangerous drug.

These diet drugs are intended for obese individuals with potential for health problems and not for those who are slightly overweight or unhappy with their appearance. The popularity of these diet pills poses problems about the way in which people view themselves.

At UNC, many students feel the need to

excessively work out, watch their weight and continuously diet. Why are they doing these potentially harmful activities?

Americans are bombarded with the ideal of the perfect man or woman. Both are supposed to be in shape and flab-free. No wonder Americans are unhappy with their bodies and go to extreme measures to change their appearance.

The diet market is very lucrative and makes millions in profits each year. It is saturated with diet pills and shakes, special diet food and exercise routines.

Instead of sending this message, society should be advocating one in which individuals are satisfied with themselves. We should encourage individuals to exercise regularly and eat sensibly. People need to realize that we were not meant to be carbon copies of one another but unique individuals.

Drug companies and the FDA are also to blame for this problem. Redux and Pondimin should have been more thoroughly tested before reaching the market. More tests should be conducted on phentermine. Currently, the FDA does not know whether heart valve problems associated with these two drugs can be fixed.

Exercise and a proper diet are important for longevity. Remember, do both in moderation. Be satisfied with your body and yourself. Have self confidence, and do not rely on others for fulfillment. Remember, dieting can kill you.

Death of democracy

Depending on who you ask, balance of power doesn't apply to U.S. senators.

With a single action Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., has brought the ire and wonderment of the rest of the country by denying William Weld a fair hearing before the Senate on his nomination as ambassador to Mexico.

Helms has again demonstrated his single-minded attempt to repress any thought that goes against his ultra-conservative beliefs.

As chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Helms has not missed a chance to effect change in American foreign policy. Setting foreign policy is the job of the president, no matter how important he thinks he might be.

In blocking the nomination of a fellow Republican chosen by a Democratic president, Helms struck a blow against recent attempts by both parties' leaders to work together to help the country. The recent strides by both President Clinton and Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, have been an example that should be followed by all of the leaders in Washington. While they may not agree on

everything, they have been able to work out a compromise on most issues recently.

Committees in Congress are there to study legislation, and if need be stop it before the bill has the chance to waste taxpayers' money. Even if the bill is killed in the committee, it has had the chance at a fair hearing.

Helms' actions have denied Weld an opportunity to be heard. Because Helms disagreed with Weld's position on drug-related topics, Helms decided that the former Massachusetts governor was unfit to become the ambassador to Mexico.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee is not a private fiefdom from the Middle Ages to be ruled like a knight of the manor. In denying due process to a well-qualified individual, Helms has again shown that term limits are a necessity for the people we send to Washington.

North Carolinians who did not vote for Helms last year still have a right to be heard in the Senate.

Jesse Helms represents us there, and it is his duty to at least allow opinions other than his own to be voiced. That is what democracy in America is all about.

Helms' actions legal, against constitutional spirit

For those of you who are less than constitutional scholars, perhaps it would be appropriate to give you a small lesson as to what the powers of the president are, according to Article II, Section 2, Clause 2 of the U.S. Constitution. The president shall have the power "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate to ... appoint ambassadors."

It seems to me, in the case of one William Weld, that the advice and consent of the Senate should be sought. Try as he might, President Clinton has not been afforded this opportunity for his appointment of the ambassador to Mexico. Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., in his infinite and aged — very aged — wisdom has decided to circumvent this process to the best of his ability.

As chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Helms has seen to it that the advice of the Senate is limited to one person — himself. While he has not done anything unconstitutional, due to the well-established Senate rules and traditions that allow him to set the agenda for his committee, he has violated the spirit of the Constitution by not allowing Weld's nomination to come before the committee to be debated and passed on to the full Senate.

Helms seems to think that the advocacy of the medical use of marijuana prohibits Weld from serving in a position as a representative of one government to another. This very well might be the case, but other elected representatives are allowed to comment and debate the issue of an appointment.

Constitutional law Professor Jack Boger was careful to point out to me that a citizen does not have the "right" to be an ambassador, thus there is no remedy outside a majority vote that will bring the nomination to the floor of the Senate. It also seems that the other Republican senators do not have the guts to sidestep Helms in order to see that

Weld has his spot in the limelight. So there sits Mr. Weld, on the sidelines, watching his appointment die for lack of discussion.

I have no opinion on Weld's appointment; I do believe that one person should not harness as much power as Jesse Helms. Or should he? While the Democratic Party is having a field day with the press replaying the footage of the decrepit slum landlord hardly able to give coherent answers to rapid fire questions about the nomination, is it true that Jesse Helms has this much political power? The fact that the federal docket is overloaded with cases is also attributed to Helms because he refuses to set the agenda for more judges to be confirmed.

He fears that any judges from the Clinton administration will be soft on crime and hard on senators who rent houses in Raleigh. While I am not one of Helms' biggest supporters, I must say that he seems to be a scapegoat for many of the problems that other senators refuse to deal with.

Jesse Helms is not all powerful and almighty. Other Republicans must take some of the flack for their failure to do their jobs. Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., would be a good place to start. He seems to know that what Helms is doing is wrong, but refuses to take Helms head on. I guess that's what happens when presidential hopefuls continue to serve as senators.

They begin to cower to the whims of one old man with one foot in the grave and another on a banana peel. The Republicans are in the majority, would it be unfair to say that



ALEXIA STACKHOUSE
BY ANY MEANS

they cannot control one of the many representatives of the Republican caucus? It might be fair to say that they prefer to let one doddering old man take the heat for much of what might be avoided if they had any where-withal about them. The rest of the Republicans realize that Helms doesn't care about opinion polls outside of North Carolina and sometimes doesn't give a damn about the ones inside his home state, either.

Even if I agreed with Helms on certain issues, I would have to be a bit embarrassed by his display of arrogance last week. He had the audacity to ask Weld if he had a plane ticket for Mexico yet. Helms made sport of the fact that he refused to do his job and represent the people of North Carolina. This probably doesn't matter to most of adult North Carolinians; I read somewhere that over half of the adult population in this state can't find the United States on a world map, not to mention finding Mexico.

Of course, if Helms would get out of bed with the tobacco industry, (notice I said industry, not farmers), and paid a little more attention to teacher salaries and standards that might not be the case. I guess that wouldn't help either, he also wants to abolish the Department of Education.

Whether you agree with me or not, call, write, or e-mail your elected representatives with your own opinions. Their phone numbers and addresses can be found any number of places, including the Internet. At most, Helms' office can hang up on you, at the very least though, they can ask you if you have your plane ticket yet? Needless to say, this discussion is moot, Weld has asked the White House to withdraw his nomination. I guess that Jesse Helms is the most powerful man on the Hill.

Alexia Stackhouse is a second-year law student from Nichols, S.C.

FUTURE ALUMNI PROJECTS AT UNC!

ARBORETUM TO BE DOZED FOR NEW PRIVATE ALUMNI PARKING LOT.

REASON: "IT'S TIME UNC STARTED GIVING BACK TO THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN TO IT."

STUDENT UNION TO BE CONVERTED INTO ALUMNI-ONLY FOUR-STAR RESTAURANT.

REASON: "IT WILL STIMULATE THE LOCAL ECONOMY."

HINTON JAMES, EHRINGHAUS, AND MORRISON TO BE RENOVATED/EXPANDED FOR SPECIALLY-PRICED ALUMNI CONDOS.

REASON: "NO ONE LIKED THOSE DORMS ANYWAY."

DESTRUCTION OF UNDERGRAD AND DAVIS LIBRARIES PLUS DEY, GREENLAW, BINGHAM, MURPHEY, PHILLIPS, AND OTHER LECTURE HALLS TO MAKE ROOM FOR NEW ALUMNI SUBDIVISION; HOMES START AT \$300,000.

REASON: "LOOK, WE'RE RICH AS HELL, AND WE'LL DO WHATEVER THE CENSORED WE WANT."

Column doesn't make sense; clubs have diverse purposes

TO THE EDITOR:
I'm writing in response to Sarah Corbett's column "After adding it up, Greek life doesn't make sense," in which she attacks fraternities and sororities. Due to the column's disorganized nature, I'm not sure what she was trying to attack. Was it that Greek organizations aren't doing enough charity work, cleaning up after parties, or that the cost of dues and housing cost too much? I really don't understand her point. I think that is partially because the column doesn't have one.

I am a member of St. Anthony Hall, the "shaved-head vegetarian" fraternity. Since Sarah Corbett mentioned us in her column by name, I thought it appropriate to respond to her accusations. One point that she failed to realize was the fact that not all sororities and fraternities are service organizations. St. Anthony is a co-ed literary and artistic fraternity. Whatever we do in the area of service, and in whatever form, is our choice, not our obligation. It's inappropriate to condemn any organization that gives its time and energy for a good cause, and especially ones that are not service-oriented. By the way, the only bottles you'll see in our front yard are in recycling bins, not embedded in your bicycle tire.

Was Corbett trying to attack Greek organizations for costing too much? I know St. Anthony costs less, with rent and food, than a dorm on campus. Let's not even begin to talk about the costs of living off campus. In essence, you're saving money. That makes sense to me, how about you, Sarah?

I really don't think that attacking 18 percent of UNC's student body using meaningless averages just because Corbett has a flat tire is terribly rational. If she is upset about fraternity party trash, then address that. If she's upset about hazing, then address certain organizations where it is occurring. If she wants everyone to do more charitable work, then how about commending charitable



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.

events instead of attacking the good that people have done. Greek life may not make sense to her, but frankly, her column doesn't make sense to me.

Steven Fairchild
SOPHOMORE
PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY

Flag plates foster memories of Confederacy, not hatred

TO THE EDITOR:
Kudos to the Sons of Confederate Veterans for being persistent in their fight to secure permission for license plates with the group's emblem on them. It's unfortunate that there can be so much controversy and debate, just over a symbol. Unfortunately, the battle flag of the Confederacy (the stars and bars) has been misused by many groups in the past, as well as present, but that should not stop a group like the Sons of Confederate Veterans

from displaying their emblem respectfully on the state's license plates. The N.C. Supreme Court did the right thing.

Those who take offense to the flag say that those of us who don't need "to understand the implications and why it's offensive." If they are arguing that the flag is offensive because it represents slavery and oppression, their reasoning is flimsy. What flag was flying over the White House when slaves were brought over on boats from Africa (referring to those after 1787, of course)? What flag flew over the White House when black students at Kent State University were shot by police and the National Guard? Whose National Guard was it that shot these students. And don't forget that U.S. Grant owned slaves while fighting for the stars and stripes.

If the Confederate flag symbolizes slavery and oppression, then that goes double for the Union flag. Let's ban the display of the Union flag because of it's shady past! Does that seem reasonable to you?

Sons of Confederate Veterans are concerned with preserving their heritage and should be applauded. North Carolina lost many young men in the Civil War, so why not have the Confederate Flag on its license plates to consecrate that memory? No one is being forced to buy these plates, so I don't see how any reasonable person could even compare a small flag on a license plate, to incorporating the battle flag into the state flag.

As for the article in Tuesday's ("Opinions differ on Confederate flag license plates") paper concerning the new license plate, India Williams either has her facts wrong or she was badly misquoted. South Carolina does not incorporate the Confederate flag into its state flag, although the stars and bars can be seen flying above the state house. South Carolina's state flag features a palmetto tree. The two states which have incorporated the Confederate flag into their state flags are Mississippi and Georgia.

C. Wesley Lindsey
SENIOR
BIOLOGY

THE DAILY TAR HEEL

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