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The Daily Tar Heel

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Mr. & Ms. Out-of-Date

Homecoming has become an outdated and useless tradition. Let's get rid of it.

Toto, I don't think we're in high school anymore. This being the case, we ought to abandon shallow high school practices - like, say, the UNC Homecoming elections that foster racial division more than school spirit. In our younger years, the selections of homecoming kings and queens were in most cases little more than popularity contests. At least with student bodies that usually totaled no more than 2,000 students, popularity was something that could actually be judged. But with nearly 25,000 students at this University, no one holds that sort of notoriety. The candidates for Mr. and Ms. UNC remain largely unknown to most students until their names appear on the ballot, which might explain the traditionally nonexistent voter turnout. In short, the few folks who do vote are either voting for their pals or taking a shot in the dark - or maybe they're taking advice from munchkins and scarecrows. Indeed, the heart, courage and brains of the candidates are rarely considered by voters in these contests. Even worse, the yellow-brick roads of UNC have forked in recent years with the contest becoming a racial issue. Last year's debacle, for example, springs to mind faster than you can click your heels three times. In a whirlwind of troubles that ranged from minor campaign violations to allegations of students voting multiple times, the

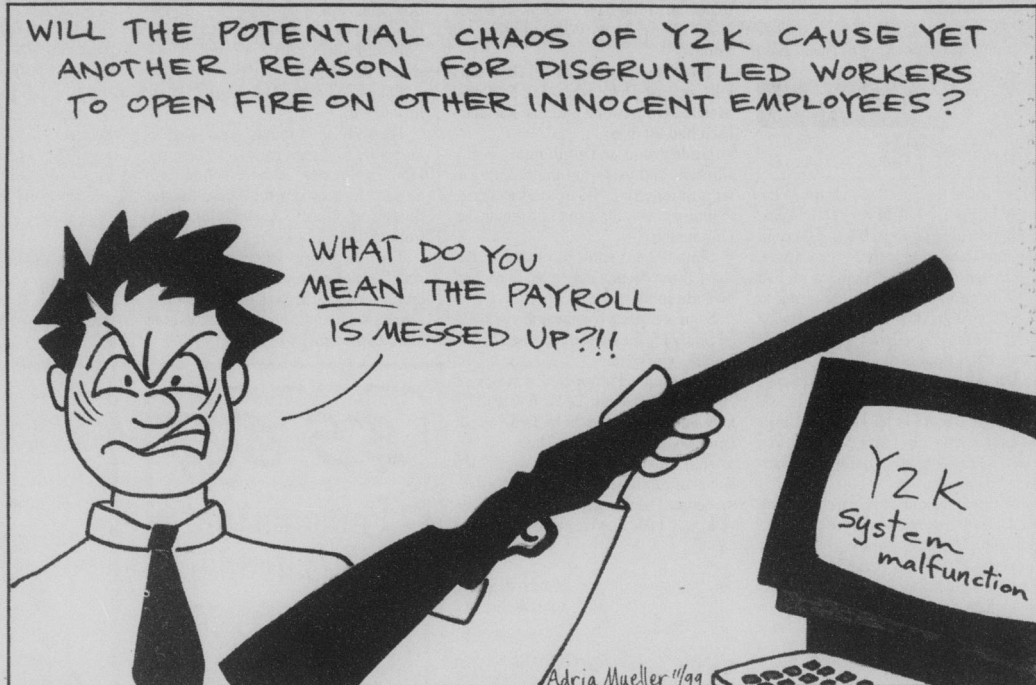
event finally melted into death threats against Carolina Athletic Association officials. The Black Student Movement flew to the center of the controversy, charging The Daily Tar Heel with racism after the newspaper reported that the contest's winners for the past 10 years have been black. Let's be crystal clear, however. The candidates and winners of the election are no doubt outstanding individuals with nothing but good intentions. Their enthusiasm should be applauded. Furthermore, the BSM, whose nominees have a habit of winning, is also in the clear. If students have a gripe with the track record of the races, they can only blame themselves for not voting differently. But electing a Mr. and Ms. UNC is about as ridiculous as the sashes and crowns they wear. At a school that prides itself for its diversity, how can we possibly crown anyone as the "ideal" student? So while it's fine to acknowledge that there's no place like home, let's grow up a little. The institution of Mr. and Ms. UNC is an absolute farce and should be dropped faster than a Kory Bailey punt return. Homecoming should celebrate alumni and school spirit, neither of which are promoted by these silly elections. It's about time we woke up from this childish dream. The opinion in this editorial was determined before Saturday's announcement of Mr. and Ms. UNC.

Keep On Rollin'

Rosemary Waldorf's re-election as mayor of Chapel Hill means that a state group keeps one of its biggest defenders of public transit.

Public transit advocates in North Carolina should be thankful to the voters of Chapel Hill. Not only did local residents keep a solid supporter of mass transit in the mayor's office, their votes made sure a state coalition kept one of its most vocal leaders. Incumbent Chapel Hill Mayor Rosemary Waldorf defeated challenger Susan Franklin 4,429 to 2,795. By remaining in office as a public official, Waldorf was able to accept a recent nomination to become vice president of the N.C. Coalition for Public Transportation. The coalition is made up of elected officials representing different municipalities with public transportation systems. The group lobbies state lawmakers to increase funding for local transit systems. With Waldorf in a position of leadership, the coalition aims to promote sidewalks, transit stops and parks. That has to be a hard-sell in North

Carolina, where road-building projects often outstrip education funding. State Department of Transportation policies make sure that road construction takes precedence over mass transit. Chapel Hill officials, for example, have long tried to convince the DOT to allow it to put its money into mass transit - something many locals support - rather than new highways. If public transit ever hopes to overthrow King Highway, it'll take articulate, impassioned and well-informed people like Waldorf to get it done. With her experience in regional transportation issues - she and Durham Mayor Nick Tennyson recently visited Ottawa, Canada, to explore its bus system - she shows she understands what it takes to drum up support and cooperation for mass transit across city lines. That's the kind of knowledge the N.C. General Assembly takes seriously, and it'll help public transit's future in the state.



Bank Cheapens UNC's Integrity

Do you ever see a cluster of gray-haired alumni strolling through campus, shaking their heads disapprovingly at a new building where a quaint patch of woods once was? Do you hear them mumbling about how much finer Carolina used to be, how much more pleasant and purer it was when they were here? I've always vowed not to grumble about such things when I come back. After all, progress is inevitable. But lately I get the feeling I might eat those words some day. I doubt I'll loathe new classroom buildings or residence halls, as long as the new structures don't resemble anything currently on South Campus. Instead, I fear what these future buildings might be named. Sometimes in my nightmares I dream about returning to campus only to find the Comfort Inn Residence Hall. Or the Amazon.com Undergraduate Library. Or the Phil Knight Student Recreation Center. It's too bad that the University these days isn't solely in the business of educating students. It is in business, period. This school has become an institution willing to sell its soul to any corporation as long as the price is right. UNC shamelessly hawks everything from credit cards to Coke to class rings. The latest example of this commercialization will appear soon after Thanksgiving in the form of a Wachovia minibranch on the edge of the Pit. The University agreed to enclose an overhang on the Union side of Student Stores and let the bank set up shop. Campus administrators say the branch will be a "service center" to meet students' financial needs. In truth, the branch will be there to help meet the school's financial needs. In return for such a sweet location, Wachovia will pay the University \$48,000 a year, plus \$1 for each new account opened by students and \$10 for each account opened by employees. And according to a six-year contract signed in July, Wachovia also will chip in a one-time



BRADY DENNIS
BREAD & BUTTA

fee of \$25,000, another \$40,000 each year for in-kind marketing and promotional services and \$50,000 for initial giveaways and direct mailings. And soon, UNC ONE Cards will double as Wachovia bank cards. What a sweet sight it promises to be in the Pit: the Clef Hangers humming a tune, the Hare Krishnas beating drums, Gary Birdsong preaching his heart out ... and Chet the Wachovia representative blathering about mutual funds. Don't get me wrong; the University needs all the financial help it can muster. But selling its good name for an occasional wad of cash compromises the school's integrity. Catering to a corporation is an insult to the academic mission of the place. It's bad policy. What's worse, the Wachovia deal isn't the first time that UNC has sold itself like a cheap whore. It seems like everyone from the intramural badminton team to philosophy graduate students sport Nike logos on every article of clothing. The University pays Bill Guthridge a base salary of \$155,000 a year and a \$25,000 expense allowance; Nike pays him roughly triple that figure. You tell me, who does he work for? But it doesn't stop with the Swoosh. In August, UNC signed a five-year contract with Classic Food Services of Durham, an independent Coca-Cola bottler and distributor. The deal guarantees the University \$695,000 annually for campus rights. But in return, campus dining halls serve only Coke. Pepsi is absent from campus vend-

ing machines, too, and Coke occupies 60 percent of shelf space in campus snack bars. I don't know about you, but I certainly enjoy the prestige of having Coke as the official soft drink of UNC. Let's all have a Coke and a smile. Back in August, the General Alumni Association mailed letters to thousand of alumni, announcing its new "alliance" with the Liberty Mutual insurance company. Granted, it was sweet of the University to look out for its alumni insurance needs. But it doesn't hurt that the GAA got about \$20,000 from Liberty Mutual. In addition, some professors' job titles have become corporate billboards. We have the Wachovia Professorship in Banking, the Glaxo Distinguished Professor of Management, the Arthur Andersen Distinguished Tax Scholar, the Ernst and Young Professorship in Accounting and the NationsBank Honors Professorship to name a few. And apparently we've added the BellSouth Chancellorship this year. To be sure, UNC isn't the only school to bow down to corporate money. Nearly 600 companies, for example, are licensed to use Indiana University's logo. Hundreds of other public universities are doing the same thing. But that doesn't make it right. I know we are strapped for cash. An important bond issue died in the N.C. House of Representatives last summer, and a chunk of this year's state funds will go to Hurricane Floyd victims. But in a world of shameless commercialism, institutions of higher learning should be immune. Call me old-fashioned, but it seems to me like a simple matter of integrity. With each new corporate label that pops up on campus, a little more of that integrity disappears. I just hope there is some left when I come back gray-headed and grumbling. Brady Dennis is a senior journalism and mass communication and history major from Hickory. Reach him at bdennis@email.unc.edu.

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READERS' FORUM

Athletics Department Already Holds Players To Higher Standards

TO THE EDITOR: It's certainly debatable whether or not student-athletes should be held to a higher standard than others simply because they represent the University in athletic competition. What is not debatable is the fact that UNC's student-athletes are held to a very high standard by the University, the Department of Athletics and, indeed, the student-athletes themselves. There are more than 700 student-athletes on this campus, many of them on full scholarships; most of them, however, are on partial grant-in-aids or receive no athletic aid at all. Contrary to what your editorial board wrote Friday, they do not receive academic leniency. They earn their degrees like anyone else. When The Sporting News ranked us the No. 2 sports program in the nation, it did so in large measure because of UNC's academic integrity. Annually, Carolina's student-athletes rank among the top schools in the conference in the ACC Honor Roll, which

requires a 3.0 grade point average. Student-athletes from all sports on this campus participate in charitable and outreach programs that hardly get a mention in The Daily Tar Heel. When a student-athlete makes a mistake, legal or academic, it's front page. If they raise money in a charitable walkathon or donate clothing in flood relief efforts or visit the children's ward at UNC Hospitals, it gets a paragraph in the back of the paper, if at all. The "perks" they might receive, like athletic equipment and apparel, are within NCAA rules and regulations. Often, you hear that student-athletes should be treated just like every other student. But, if they do make mistakes, it is important that the consequences should be fair and comparable to those that would be handed out to nonstudent-athletes. However, the editorial argues they should be held to a higher standard. Well, guess what? They are already held to a higher standard. They are the ones on this campus who get drug tested, whose academic failures get reported in the press, whose class attendance is monitored, who have mandatory evening study

halls after a three-hour practice, whose social behavior is monitored 24/7 and gossiped about in Internet chat rooms and who are occasionally booed for their athletic performance. There is no question that student-athletes are role models. At UNC, that is a measure of respect our student-athletes have earned over the years. And a few off-the-field mistakes aside, our student-athletes have measured up quite well through the years.

Steve Kirschner
Director of Media Relations for Football and Men's Basketball Department of Athletics

The length rule on letters was waived.

Stay Tuned ...
It's that time of year again, when The Daily Tar Heel invites readers to apply to become spring 2000 columnists. Applications will be available Wednesday in the DTH office. They'll be due Friday, Nov. 19. Columnists will be notified before Thanksgiving. For more information, call Editorial Page Editor Scott Hicks at 962-0245.

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. Publication is not guaranteed. 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.