

Concerns or comments about our coverage? Contact the ombudsman at budman@unc.edu or call 605-2790.

ROB NELSON
EDITOR
Office Hours Friday 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.

The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893 • 106 Years of Editorial Freedom
www.unc.edu/dth

VICKY ECKENRODE & CATE DOTY
MANAGING EDITORS

Scott Hicks
EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR
Katie Abel
UNIVERSITY EDITOR
Jacob McConico
CITY EDITOR

Matthew B. Dees
STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR
T. Nolan Hayes
SPORTS EDITOR
Leigh Davis
FEATURES EDITOR

Robin Clemow
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR
Carolyn Haynes
COPY DESK EDITOR
Miller Pearsall
PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Thomas Ausman
DESIGN EDITOR
Megan Sharkey
GRAPHICS EDITOR
William Hill
ONLINE EDITOR

Whitney Moore
WRITING COACH
Terry Wimmer
OMBUDESMAN

BOARD EDITORIALS

Father Knows Best

On Monday, a Fla. judge ordered 6-year-old Elian Gonzalez to stay in the United States until March.

Waving a copy of the ruling, Lazaro Gonzalez, the great-uncle of the little Cuban boy, yelled "Victory for Elian!"

But the judge's ruling does not necessarily herald future happiness for the little boy, as Miami's Cuban exile community would like to believe.

The decision merely prevents a little boy who has been through a lifetime's worth of trauma in less than two months from resuming a normal childhood. It is, as a result, not in his best interest.

Ever since Elian was found clinging to an inner tube off the coast of Fort Lauderdale on Thanksgiving Day, people on both sides of the debate over whether he should remain in America have ignored the real issue at hand.

Instead, Elian has been turned into a political symbol. In America, he is viewed as living proof of the evils of Fidel Castro's communist regime. In Cuba, he has become a rallying point for nationalist sentiment.

In all the protests and media hub-bub, in all the passionate pleas of the exiles who wanted him to have a "better life" in America and the Cubans who wanted him to be sent "home," no one mentioned the child's welfare.

People here said staying in America would be in Elian's best interest, because his moth-

er died trying to bring her child to a country that offers him a chance at a better life. Mother knows best, they said.

But mother died. And if Elian had been an American boy, he would have been returned to his father, as U.S. law requires.

After all, despite the fact that Elian's parents were divorced, there is no evidence to suggest that his father mistreated him.

Last week, it looked like someone, namely the Immigration and Naturalization Service, finally had the boy's best interests at heart when it ruled that he should be returned to his father in Cuba by Friday.

But protests in Miami and a lawsuit by Elian's relatives, who are seeking temporary custody of the boy, have quickly taken the focus away from a little boy's future and put it back on political bickering.

As a result, a young child will not have a stable future for at least another three months. And in that period of time, he remains an orphan for all practical purposes.

This is not, and should not be, an issue of America versus Cuba, of democracy versus communism.

A child's future is at stake. For his sake, those on both sides of the debate need to put their political agendas aside and do what's right for the little boy.

Right now, Elian needs a parent, and he has one in Cuba. He must be returned to him as soon as possible.

SCOTT HICKS — EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

Find a Real Problem

People need real problems. Take "Felicity," for example. On last Sunday's show, she and best bud Julie were fighting over Noel. Or Ben. One of them; I don't really watch the show.

Point is, Julie had written a great song about Felicity that rhymed "Joan of Arc" with "whore of Washington Square Park." She was performing said melody in public, and Felicity was ticked.

The subway train where they had the bad luck of getting stuck together had the further bad luck of getting stuck in the tunnel, trapping them for hours. All that pent-up anger erupted into a fight, with Felicity and the would-be Alanis duking it out on the verbal wrestling mat.

A black man on the train finally got sick and tired of the arguing. He told them, in effect, to shut up until they had a real problem, alluding to the historic racism that black people have faced in America for centuries.

High school students in Chapel Hill could use a little bit of perspective as well.

On Thursday, the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education will vote on whether to start a process that would allow East Chapel Hill High School to stop using class rank.

At East Chapel Hill, the top 30 percent of the senior class has a 3.972 grade point average or greater. The class median is 3.306,

The Chapel Hill Herald reported Tuesday.

The problem, say school guidance counselors and teachers, is that with so many students at the top, dozens of bright kids are losing college admission offers and scholarships.

Dozens of students at both of Chapel Hill's public high schools get accepted to the nation's best schools — Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Cornell, Davidson, Duke and so on. That, folks, is not a problem.

What all these brilliant kids, their well-off, successful and college-educated parents and the local school board are forgetting is what a real problem is.

Need a real problem? Go up N.C. 86 to Orange High School, where I went. It's overcrowded, doesn't benefit from a special district tax and still tries to educate kids for the farm, the job market and college, all at once.

Better yet, talk to Chapel Hill and Carrboro's minority students. The district started a Blue Ribbon Task Force years ago to bridge the gap between black and white student achievement. Progress has been made, but there's still a long way to go.

Real problems, as Julie and Felicity learn on a stopped subway car, aren't always obvious to you when you're on the top. Chapel Hill's best and brightest need to stop whining about a good thing and start working on the real problems.

Want to Blow Off Some Steam?

Write a guest column for The Daily Tar Heel. Guest columns typically appear every Monday on the op-ed page. Submissions should be about 800 words in length. Bring typed copies to the DTH office in Suite 104 of the Student Union or e-mail them to dth@unc.edu. Include your name, class, hometown and e-mail address at which you can be reached.

For more information, call Editorial Page Editor Scott Hicks at 962-0245.



Spring 2000 From the Crystal Ball

So here we are, back for another semester at Carolina having survived the turn of the Millennium. Will2K didn't cause automated teller machines to dole out cash like it was their job, throw economic markets into downward spirals or even cause Caroline to magically eat your C- in chemistry 11.

I don't know about you, but I for one am glad to still be here. (Actually, after that Phish show, I'm more glad to just have retained the ability to utter semi-intelligible sentences.) But in any case, the passage into another semester got me wondering about what this next semester has in store for us.

So I looked into my crystal ball and this is what it showed me ...

Thursday — The University announces that all the floors at the business school will be ripped up and replaced with mahogany.

Meanwhile half of Murphey Hall is condemned by the town of Chapel Hill. The Undergraduate Library is shut down for its Mike Brady-designed architecture.

Jan. 19 — The communications studies department announces that it will have to reduce the courses it offers even further, forcing many in the department to graduate after six years of summer school.

Jan. 21 — A fraternity rush party is deemed unsuitable according to University policy because several of its 21-year-old members are seen drinking (Gasp!) alcohol. The police are summoned and any fun that was had is eliminated.

Meanwhile four armed robberies go unsolved in Carrboro.

Jan. 27 — A freshman in Hinton James Residence Hall finally realizes that he needs to register for classes and that nobody was going to do it for him like at C-TOPS. He tries to find his adviser in the upstairs of Hamilton Hall but he gets lost.

Jan. 28 — The freshman finds his way out of Hamilton only to find out that his adviser can't see him for two weeks.

Jan. 30 — The Rams beat the Colts 35-31 in the Super Bowl. The NFL announces that next year the Super Bowl will be called the 'Tostitos' Super Bowl presented by Coke.

Feb. 3 — The men's basketball team whips Duke at the Smith Center.

Ed Cota gets 16 assists to overcome Shane Battier drawing five charges by flopping



AMOL NAIK
FROM THE DANK CAVE

under the basket. Joseph Forte scores one of his game-high 24 points on a dunk over Blue Devils point guard Jason Williams, who is slapping the floor for the 72nd time of the night on defense.

Feb. 4, 12:45 a.m. — Madness ensues on Franklin Street as Silent Sam is mistakenly thrown into a bonfire by someone who mistook the statue for an old sofa.

Feb. 4, 11 a.m. — I conveniently have two midterms and a paper due.

Feb. 8 — Student body elections take place. The student body president elections result in a candidate from the Black Student Movement defeating a member of Chi Psi fraternity, or a Chi Psi defeating somebody from the BSM.

(Judging from the recent past, this prediction is as money as they come.)

Feb. 9 — The freshman finally meets his adviser only to find out that the last day to add classes was two weeks ago. The adviser sends the freshman to Hanes Hall.

Feb. 10 — The freshman gets to Hanes Hall after earlier getting lost going to Hanes Art Center.

He is given a series of eight forms to be signed by 14 deans, a U.S. Congressman and Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, to remain an active student. Disenchanted, the student enrolls at N.C. State University where he finds his true love of Waste Disposal Management.

Feb. 17 — Burger King cancels its "Pokémon Trading Night" causing an uproar at elementary schools across Orange County. Police are unable to respond because they are too busy writing parking tickets in half-empty parking lots at 4:58 p.m.

Feb. 23 — The Grammy Awards are held with the Backstreet Boys, Dixie Chicks, Ricky

Martin and Britney Spears taking top honors, showing us that just because we survived Y2K, that doesn't mean that the apocalypse isn't still upon us.

Feb. 28 — Riots occur outside of Davis Library as students demand that Club Undergrad is reopened due to overcrowding during midterms. The administration responds by opening two more trendy coffee shops to increase the "intellectual climate."

Feb. 29 — The leap year causes chaos with campus computers, raising everyone's grade point average above a 3.4. Nobody panics because this is standard practice at Dook.

March 6 — More than 5,000 students swarm the Student Recreation Center due to the realization that Spring Break is only a week away. They bear the crowds and improve their fitness, resolving to keep exercising after Spring Break.

March 20 — More than 5,000 students return home, tanned, fat and happy. The SRC is back to the same 12 people who have been working out every time anyone has ever been there.

March 29 — The administration announces that the business school will have its mahogany floors replaced by 24 karat gold as liberal arts classes are being taught in the rubble that is Saunders Hall.

April 5 — The University signs a deal with Chick-Fil-A where it is agreed that they will be the only food served on campus. Students are seen drinking Polynesian sauce and eating waffle fries for breakfast.

April 20 — Ricky Martin is spotted singing "Livin' la Vida Loca" at El Rodeo.

May 5 — Another larger riot occurs outside of Davis Library because of a lack of studying space. The administration deftly solves the problem by forcing all liberal arts students to take all their exams within the next 48 hours, thereby clearing up study space for the sciences and pre-professional undergraduate students.

May 13 — Exams end and you are another semester closer to the real world.

So there you have it. As you can see, it's going to be a wild ride, so brace yourself.

Amol Naik is a junior history major from Lumberton. Send all love letters to unc2001@hotmail.com.

With the New Year's Party Over, a New Chapter Begins

O.K, I admit it; I'm a journalism nerd.

Still battling my traditional Winter Break flu, I woke up about 4:30 a.m. on the morning of Dec. 31.

Intrigued by ABC's hype surrounding its New Year's Eve coverage, I wanted to see Peter Jennings open up the network's 24-hour, around-the-globe tracking of the "turn of the century." (relax, math folks, we've already heard)

Throughout the day, I found myself flipping channels back to the broadcast — to Paris, to Australia, to China, to Britain, and, of course, to Times Square.

Unfolding in front of me and 175 million other viewers was a once-in-a-lifetime show that the world was putting on together.

Call me sappy, but it was moving. For one day, it seemed as if everyone had forgotten about the problems, the politics, the imbalances and the



ROB NELSON
EDITOR

respective daily grinds — we are again faced with great uncertainty for what this much-anticipated future has in store.

For months, the media had bombarded us with images of our past. There were TV specials, commemorative issues, countdowns of "the greatest this" and "the best that."

The nation had almost a year-long history lesson, reliving and reflecting on the people and events that shaped the year, decade, century and millennium.

Again, such coverage was inspiring — a telltale sign that most of us still believe that moving on still requires taking stock of where we've been.

It's precisely this "moving on" that presents the uncertainty. We do a wonderful job tracing our history, but will we show the same passion in crafting our future?

I've wondered many times during the last few weeks what this world will

be like 100 years from now when it is bracing for the 22nd century.

Will there be the same frenzy that we have all just lived through?

Will there be another computer bug that sends the universe into a panic?

Will people still be glued to the Internet?

When the editors of TIME sit down to pick their next "Person of the Century" who will it be and how will they have changed the world?

Will scientists have found a way to genetically clone Peter Jennings to host ABC's broadcast again?

The beauty and mystery of life lies in that none of us know the answers. But what I do know is that I am thankful — to be old enough to understand and take part in this historic time but also young enough to shape what will come after it.

As college students, we will live the majority of our lives in this new era, and all eyes are now on us. It's a pres-

"As college students, we will live the majority of our lives in this new era, and all eyes are now on us. It's a pressure we must ... let motivate us."

sure and prestige we must recognize, accept and let motivate us.

In 100 years, when the nation undergoes another history lesson, it will be this generation they study in the first chapter.

It will be our work they critique, our accomplishments they admire and strive to surpass and our shortcomings they fight to correct and learn from.

And our children's. And our grandchildren's.

Every generation produces its heroes and its unforgettable moments

— the events that rightfully take their place in the history books.

Such icons of the 20th century have already had their day, and now we will have ours.

So let's remember in these early days of the year 2000 that while the buzz on New Year's Eve may have been great and the parties may have been packed, there are still contributions to make and destinies to define.

What will we do? Who will we become? What legacies will we leave behind? Could the faces on those commemorative issues and TV specials be ours?

How will we change the world? Let the confetti in 2099 fall where it may.

We have a chapter to write.

Rob Nelson is a senior journalism and political science major from Mt. Laurel, N.J. He can be reached at rnelson@email.unc.edu.