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# The Daily Tar Heel

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## BOARD EDITORIALS

### Victory for Victims

If former Virginia Tech student Christy Brzonkala has her way, the U.S. Supreme Court will uphold the Violence Against Women Act, a 1994 federal law aimed at improving justice for female victims of rape.

The law, which allows victims to sue their attackers in federal court for monetary compensation, is a step forward in protecting rape victims' rights.

But opponents of the law say it is an intrusion into matters that should be handled by state governments.

Regardless of who should be making such laws, raping a woman is essentially a hate crime and, as such, should be considered a civil rights violation. The Violence Against Women Act recognizes the unique problems faced by a female rape victim.

While men also can be raped, the problem is especially significant for women. For instance, men on college campuses can usually walk alone at night without fear that someone will attack them, while women find themselves constantly fearing for their safety.

And rape's effects are many and long-lasting. Women have long been suffering more than just the physical and mental consequences of rape, and the Violence Against Women Act can help ease some of those problems.

Brzonkala became the first person to sue under this act in 1995. She claims that football players Antonio Morrison and James

Crawford raped her in a residence hall room. She did not report the rapes for several months, and the men were never charged with a crime.

The former Virginia Tech student says she suffered such psychological damage it forced her to eventually drop out of school. She now works as a waitress.

If she had completed college she could have ended up in a better paying job, she contends.

And that is why she, and other women in a similar position, have a right to compensation under the Violence Against Women Act.

Long after any physical wounds heal, a victim may be afraid to trust any man (in the case of date rape in which the woman knew her assailant) or even to leave her house (in the case of a random attack).

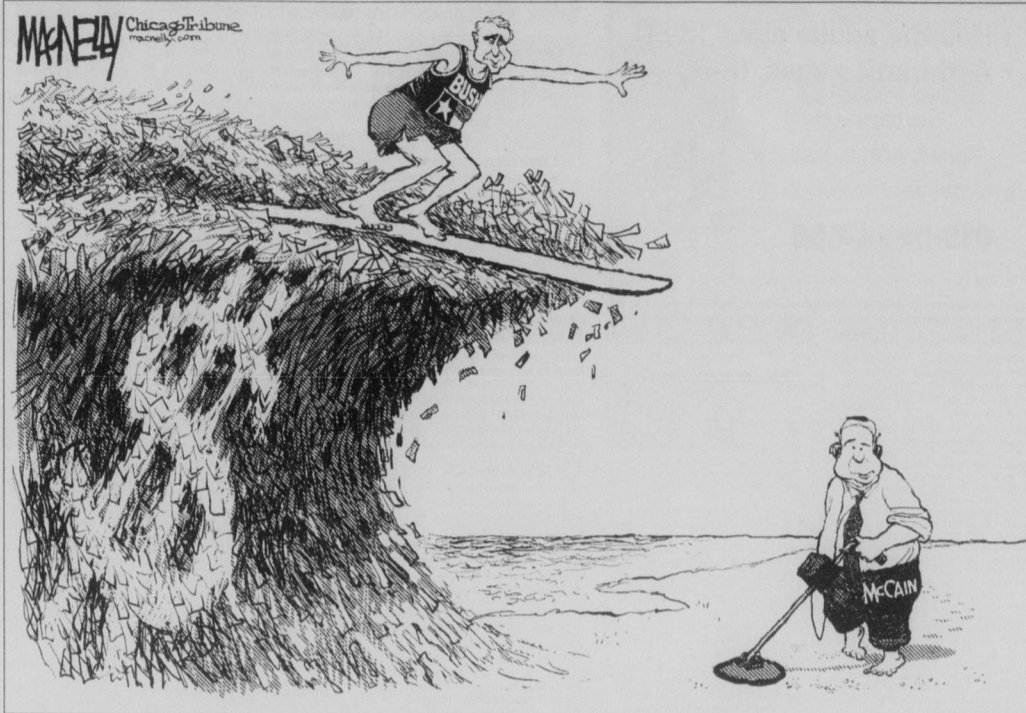
These psychological effects can take an even greater toll when an attack results in a pregnancy and subsequent abortion.

And psychological problems can become financial problems resulting from the high cost of therapy or not being able to work.

As a result, rape victims should be able to sue their assailants.

If the Supreme Court strikes down the Violence Against Women Act because it violates states' rights, states must pass their own similar legislation.

It is imperative not to keep victimizing the victims.



### Soft Rock: Simply an Oxymoron?

"All I can remember about the last two months is giving a guest lecture at Villanova. Or maybe that was a street corner."

—Barney Gumble

It's a 16-hour drive from Lawrence, Kan. to Chapel Hill. Somewhere just east of Nashville, I began to sober up. The demons of four weeks oozed out of my pores and circled around the inside of my Jeep before being sucked out the 1-inch crack in the window.

Just when I was beginning to enjoy eastern Tennessee, a giant billboard smacked me in the face and hurled me back into the month-long endless night at the Bourgeois Pig. The sign said, "See Rock City."

Among all our barstool attempts to save the town, save the world and save our friends, the only conversation I remember from the last four weeks back home is a conversation about rocks.

"It's like a soft rock," my friend muttered one night at the Pig. We were quick to correct her.

"There's no such thing as a soft rock," we argued.

And the Great Rock Debate had begun. Now, I'm not a geologist. Nor am I a genius. I've often been accused of having rocks upstairs. But let's examine some different rocks and put an end to the Great Rock Debate once and for all.

Gravel immediately comes to mind. Ever removed pieces of "soft" gravel from parts of your body?

Diamonds. Despite their beauty, there's nothing soft about their price.

Molten lava. You check if it's soft.

Salt. Is salt a rock? It's mined, isn't it?

Even a brimming bowl of Quarry cereal doesn't go soft in milk.

Mythologically speaking, there's no evidence of soft rocks. Hercules either split one mountain into two or built two separate mountains, which are called the Pillars of Hercules and lie on both sides of the Strait of Gibraltar. The pillars are still there.

Biblically speaking, Acts 7:59, which says,



BRIAN FREDERICK  
ON TAP

"While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,'" might instead say, "While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, 'Throw the soft rocks, please.'" And David would have received a quick burial had he thrown a soft rock at Goliath.

Ireland has the Blarney Stone, which was once hard, but may be softer after years of being kissed/urinated on.

I never really learned the story of Plymouth Rock, since these days we hold the Pilgrims in contempt.

But I believe the hull of the Mayflower smashed into Plymouth Rock (it must have been hard), spilling the Pilgrims' luggage, cured meats and slaves.

Crack rocks. I can't speak from experience, but there seems to be nothing soft about these white rocks, except the people who smoke them.

Pop Rocks. One might be fooled into believing that these are soft because they dissolve in your mouth, but don't forget they killed Mikey from the Life cereal commercials.

Rock candy. There's nothing soft about this sugar on a stick. I ate some in third grade and it's still in my teeth.

Rock lobster. "It wasn't a rock. It was a rock lobster."

Alcatraz, a.k.a. The Rock. Like the criminals that once lived in it, this structure is tough. Soft, however, are the Russian Hill residents with a view of Alcatraz.

The wrestler known as The Rock. You go

ahead and tell the World Wrestling Federation's poster boy that he's soft.

Ad-Rock. OK, so he's getting softer in his later years. He was hardest on "Licensed to Ill." But he's still much harder than ...

Kid Rock. The best argument yet.

Rock 'n' roll. There's no such thing as soft rock 'n' roll. Ah, ah, ah. Think Stones. Think AC/DC.

Now tell me that there's such a thing as "soft rock."

Billy Joel? Damn right he's soft. But he ain't rock.

Now, lest you think I am content wallowing in my ignorance, and since you might be, too, I have consulted Kevin Stewart, assistant professor of geology.

"Geologists use the term 'soft rock' informally. It refers to sedimentary rocks," Stewart said. Examples of sedimentary rocks are sandstone and shale. And I thought Shale was the name of an American Gladiator.

"Hard rocks" are igneous and metamorphic," he said. Igneous rocks form when molten lava solidifies.

Metamorphic refers to rocks that change under intense pressure or heat. Weren't Igneous and Metamorphic failed grunge bands from Seattle?

"But no rocks are really soft in the sense that non-geologists use the word," Stewart finally conceded.

And that is victory enough for me.

My friend Angela has just informed me that talc is a soft rock. Fellas, talc is used in facial powder and on babies' bottoms. She has probably just defeated my argument with that example. If it's worthy of a baby's bottom, it must be soft. And since I'm having drinks with her tonight, I'll admit she's right. I'm not made of stone after all.

I need a drink. Make it a scotch. On the rocks.

Brian Frederick is a graduate student in journalism and mass communication from Lawrence, Kansas. He can be reached at brifred@yahoo.com.

### Dot-Commercialism

Tucked away amid the snowy peaks of Oregon's Willamette Mountains, the tiny, picturesque village of Halfway hardly seems the likely subject of an Internet advertising campaign.

However, that is just what the mountain community has become.

Recently, the city council of Halfway, an economically challenged town of 362, agreed to change the community's name for the year 2000 to Half.com, after the Internet company of the same name.

The Philadelphia-based company sought the name change as a publicity stunt prior to launching its Web site.

Exactly what's in it for Halfway remains unclear. However, it appears that the town has been offered several perks, including computers for the schools and free or discounted Internet access for residents.

On one hand, the situation is quite amusing: City-folk whiz-kids want to promote their Web site with Oregon residents, many of whom wouldn't know a modem if they ran over one with the family tractor.

On the other hand, this seemingly harmless advertising gimmick inevitably leads one to wonder if there remains any person, place or thing not considered potential advertising space by corporate America.

Can corporations be blamed for finding new and exciting media to promote their

products? Of course not. And while it may be slightly irritating to watch college football teams with Nike swooshes all over their uniforms gathered in the FedEx Arena to play in the Micron PC Bowl, such sponsorship poses little serious threat to established institutions and traditions.

However, the name of a town is different. If Halfway can be bought, what's stopping some Internet start-up from turning San Francisco into SanFran.com, or New York into NY.com?

How long will it be until the people in these dot-com cities and towns are individually bought out as well? Is it that ridiculous to imagine motorists converting their cars into mobile billboards and millions of dot-com commuters going to work each morning?

Heck, if the price is right, perhaps people will begin naming their firstborn children after Web sites.

Then, these dot-com families can load Junior.com into the family minivan and take him to the Ebay.com Arena to watch the Tar Heels with their Nike uniforms ... which can be purchased at mj.com, of course.

Perhaps Half.com's gimmick is just that — a gimmick — and does not indicate the beginning of any disturbing trend.

However, the possibility still exists.

And ChapelHill.com sure sounds pretty lousy.

## BAROMETER

**Suck 'Em Dry**  
Not to be outdone by the Board of Trustees, which recommend a hefty tuition hike in October, UNC-system President Molly Broad recently introduced her own increases. At least she's not asking for \$1,500.

**Changing Tastes**  
Wicked Burrito closed its doors for good, ending an era of fine pseudo-Mexican food. Fortunately, the Rat, a Franklin Street bastion of cuisine, reopened.

**Shooting Bricks**  
After impressive wins over Clemson and N.C. State, the Tar Heels lost to Wake Forest on Wednesday, shooting a dismal 38.2 percent. The object is to get that little orange ball into the net, guys.

**Goodbye2K**  
Come out of your bunkers: We made it to the year 2000 safely. Thankfully, we won't have to utter — or hear — the m-word for another 999 years.

## TAR HEEL QUOTABLES

"Everybody always knows where Chapel Hill is. People who don't know where Raleigh and Durham are know where Chapel Hill is."

**DOWNTOWN COMMISSION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ROBERT HUMPHREYS**  
Commenting on Chapel Hill's possible removal from the Triangle metropolitan region. Who wouldn't be able to locate the southern part of heaven?

"If we'd kept scoring there, we'd be in good shape."

**UNC BASKETBALL COACH BILL GUTHRIDGE**  
Generally that's the way things work. Gut.

"The only question before the board is how much (money for financial aid) to request, when."

**STUDENT FINANCIAL AID TASK FORCE CHAIRMAN GARY BARNES**  
We thought the BOG was also considering the question of how much money to take from the students, when.

"Without class rank, you don't lose anything."

**EAST CHAPEL HILL HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL DAVID THADEN**  
That might be true, but you sure create problems for college admissions officials who then have to calculate it.

## READERS' FORUM

### Fennell's Column Had No Factual Basis, Was Hypocritical

TO THE EDITOR:

As a graduate of UNC and an alumna of a sorority, I am absolutely appalled by the lack of intelligence and integrity that was displayed by The Daily Tar Heel and columnist Josh Fennell in his illogical and baseless column Dec. 3.

Fennell's attitude and position not only have no factual basis but also make him a hypocrite. Fennell labels fraternity members as perpetrators against outsiders. It appears to me that it is Fennell who is paranoid against outsiders and makes the quick assumption that anyone who is different from him is wrong and worthy of judgment.

Did Fennell ever talk about the contributions the fraternities and sororities make to the community? Did he ask about the fund-raisers, the volunteering and involvement fraternities and sororities have in their surroundings outside of Fraternity Court?

No, Fennell made judgment calls

and placed outrageous stereotypes on a small group of men and decided that they were the cause of all evil in society.

I must have missed all of those gang rape invitations and been totally oblivious to all the fraternity members getting women high and raping them when I attended fraternity parties during my four years in Chapel Hill.

Has Fennell ever attended a fraternity party? Does he even know anyone in a fraternity? He asserts himself as the authority on sexual violence and society's ills, and his conclusion, based on preconceived notions, is that upper-class white men in fraternities are to blame.

This type of behavior only supports hatred and discrimination, dividing the community. Fennell is not the solution, he is part of the problem. His failure to make any attempt to get to know or become familiar with something that is obviously outside his environment or realm of reality displays his ignorance and unwillingness to accept or understand the diversity and differences between all individuals.

In addition, Fennell, where were

you that Sunday in May 1996, when families and students were told the devastating news that five people were dead? Fennell might not have been there, and he might not care about that day because it doesn't affect him, but I was there and I certainly do care.

These were people's children and friends. Fennell's lack of respect for the memory of human beings whose lives were innocently and tragically cut short is offensive and completely tasteless.

Jacqueline Fields  
Class of 1996

### We're Looking for a Few Good Opinions

The Daily Tar Heel wants you to write a guest column. 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 editdesk@unc.edu. Please do not send Microsoft Word attachments. Include your name, class, hometown and e-mail address.

Questions? 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 300 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: editdesk@unc.edu.