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Office Hours Friday 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.

# The Daily Tar Heel

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BOARD EDITORIALS

## Snow Common Sense

Tuesday's snowfall might not have been of such epic proportions, but with all the trouble and confusion it caused, classes should logically have been canceled.

The University just isn't used to seeing snow and really proved how ill-prepared it was to handle the situation adequately.

First, the majority of buses ran only sporadically due to the hazardous weather. The bus system in Chapel Hill might not be great, but many people depend on it.

It makes sense, then, to go ahead and cancel classes, seeing as how countless individuals, especially students who live off campus, literally could not make it to class.

Safety overall was compromised during the Tuesday storm, for roads around the area could not be cleared quickly enough. There just aren't enough trucks and snow plows in town to get the job done.

So all the people who did decide to brave the harsh weather found icy roads that hadn't been scraped. Police dealt with accidents all day. "We recommend that no one go out (on the roads)," said Chapel Hill police Lt. Marsha Gale on Tuesday. If police are telling people not to be on the road, UNC shouldn't expect faculty, students and staff to either.

And if people did get to campus, they didn't find things any better. Students slipped

and fell on sidewalks made slick by packed snow. Grounds workers weren't prepared with enough sand, salt or available help to make the sidewalks safe. That's grounds for a lawsuit - and completely preventable.

Many local school systems had the right idea: they wisely canceled classes. That in itself should have influenced UNC officials to do the same, as many graduate students and faculty have kids in school or day care.

How were they supposed to get to class themselves when they suddenly had to find baby sitters or other arrangements?

Most neighboring universities closed school for the day as well. Even Duke University canceled classes until noon! Does UNC really have that much to prove?

In any case, officials need to have a better plan ready in case of another blast of winter weather. Back during Hurricane Floyd, the administration did an excellent job of informing students about hurricane safety and cancellations via phone messages and a campuswide e-mail notification system. They should have done the same this time.

Administrators must cancel classes and better inform students the next time we get hit with such harsh winter weather. If today's weather is anything like Tuesday's, this could be their chance to redeem themselves.

## Tow That Idea

What a surprise: the faculty has come forward with a request for more professorial privileges.

This time, however, it's not their salary at stake, but that highly coveted parking space right in front of Hamilton Hall - with students once again potentially left with higher costs for professor perks.

The Transit and Parking Advisory Committee met Tuesday to discuss extending the hours when a faculty permit would be required to park on campus. Pending campus input, the group tabled a proposal to reserve most North and Mid Campus lots, excluding Cobb Residence Hall lot, for permit-holding faculty until 9 p.m.

If approved, students who dare drive to campus to, say, study before 9 p.m. would be ticketed and/or towed unless they had purchased a \$69 permit. That's in addition to any permit they had already bought.

Faculty say they need more time to research, which means they also need more time to park. But have they forgotten that students also need to return to campus before 9 p.m.? Many students who drive to campus return for study groups, research or club activities almost always in the evening.

Students' reasons for returning are no less important than professors' need for research. Junior faculty and teaching assistants need the library no less than tenured professors

do. Permits are distributed by departments, which often leave junior faculty to fight the Darwinian world of UNC parking all by their lonesome. While the current parking situation might not be ideal, at least they won't be towed for trying to research.

But all faculty have been increasingly dissatisfied with UNC, and this is one issue that the committee must compromise on. The Bell Tower lot is the most logical alternative. The committee should reserve the lot for faculty until 9 p.m. on weekdays. Currently accessible only through a gate, security officers need only reprogram the lot to be reserved for faculty until 9 p.m.

New requests for faculty privileges have become routine at UNC. An additional \$69 fee for evening student parking is outrageous, but professors have repeatedly demonstrated their need to be heard. Reserving the Bell Tower lot after 5 p.m. for faculty seems trivial, but if it validates their voice on campus, then it's a compromise worth making.

### For the Record

The Tuesday editorial "Silent Hatchet Job," incorrectly stated that Milly Barranger, former chairwoman of the Department of Dramatic Art, was fired. Barranger resigned in June 1999. Also, Tazewell Thompson was not a faculty member but a Playmakers Repertory Company employee. The Daily Tar Heel regrets the errors.

### Student Government Wannabe? Then Listen Up!

The Daily Tar Heel editorial board endorses candidates in all student races. The DTH will not consider endorsing any candidate who fails to fulfill all the requirements in the endorsement process, which might include an interview, a questionnaire, a platform or any combination of the three. Candidates should be aware that they should be able to provide that information to the DTH at any time from Jan. 25 until Feb. 8. For more information, call Editorial Page Editor Scott Hicks at 962-0245.

## READERS' FORUM

### Lessons in Ice Skating Would Have Helped Students Braving Snow

TO THE EDITOR:  
I didn't know UNC now required ice skating lessons on the campus walkways, stairs, parking lots, you name it. It would have been nice if they had supplied us with the ice skates so we could at least fall on our asses in style. Kudos to the geniuses who made the decision to have classes while buses didn't run in the morning so people couldn't attend class and some professors couldn't get to classes to teach them. Having that little blue snowplow thing was very reassuring as it acted as a skating rink Zamboni by removing the top layer of fluffy snow which helps give you traction when you walk on the ice underneath it. Next time, powers that be, please use your heads so people don't end up breaking theirs. Close the University when the buses don't run first thing in the morning so that campus doesn't become a haven for student lawsuits.

Terry L. Steckowich  
Senior  
Communications Studies

### Decision Not to Close Was 'Bone-Headed' Call On University's Part

TO THE EDITOR:  
Congratulations UNC! We beat Duke! Duke University was two hours late today while good ol' UNC stuck to its guns and remained opened.

What a bone-headed decision this was. If the University wants to argue that we can't have students missing classes, chew on this: Chapel Hill Transit shut down (much of) today, leaving a hefty portion of the student population stranded off campus.

Well, why don't I drive? Oh ... no four-wheel drive. Not to mention there is no parking and roads are slow due to wrecks and it is generally unsafe to drive with a bunch of other people who have little to no experience driving in snow/sleet/ice.

In addition, schools and day-care centers were closed, which prevents those with children from attending classes. Where are they going to find a baby sitter last minute?

It doesn't appear that tons of people are going to make it to class. It appears a lot of people are going to miss class, however.

Another issue is safety. I have walked across campus this morning and see cars that are driving too fast for the current weather conditions. Students have to cross roads with slush and cars that won't be able to stop very well.

On top of that, I have seen students walking from my apartment complex to school which is about two miles away on roads that are dangerous even when it is sunny and 72 degrees.

It's a recipe for disaster. Well, I want to wish everyone good luck with their classes. Let's all say a little prayer that nobody gets hurt or killed today.

Richard Conrad Zink  
Third-year Graduate Student  
Biostatistics

### Despite Fennell's Beliefs, Fraternity Member Says Column Deserved to Run

TO THE EDITOR:  
I agree with you. Despite the contemptible tenacity of your columnist Josh Fennell's column ("Fraternities Provoke Gang Rape," Dec. 3) and the incommensurate position I find myself in as a member

of the very fraternity he so callously defiles, I couldn't agree with you more.

You and your staff are not to blame for sending his column to press. You are right to tirelessly advocate the freedom of your writers to express themselves and their concerns publicly.

Should you feel any differently, should you champion instead only the accepted views, the warranted opinions of the establishment, feverishly silencing all those who rise in opposition, you will have failed as an editor.

In publishing Fennell's column, you acted as you thought the requirements of your office and the merits of your position demanded. And I support your decision.

Although others, some of my own friends included, might feel that Fennell's column should have been eradicated while still in its drafting stages, I am inclined to disagree. Our nation's enduring freedom is only guaranteed by the fervent opposition to all forces that would diminish it, censorship ranking prominently among them.

A blind and willful submission to an arbitrary and elusive system of judging what is proper and improper journalism resolves not our current plight but thrusts us only deeper into further strife.

No, the answer to this dilemma was not and is not forced suppression.

I am, in fact, not really sure there is an answer. I only hope that in the future, Fennell might acknowledge his enviable position as a journalist and come to better understand the responsibilities therein implied.

As a writer, I hope he chooses to embrace the editorial freedoms that are his constitutional right by attacking important issues in meaningful columns rather than exploiting and devaluing those freedoms by abusing the rights in columns that serve only to anger and offend.

And as a man, I hope he can also acknowledge his connectedness to others, even his enemies, and never again employ the pain and devastation associated with the loss of a human life, much less the loss of five of them, as a device to end with determination a column that began without taste.

Matthew W. Lazenby  
Senior  
English

Lazenby is a member of Phi Gamma Delta fraternity. The length rule on letters was waived.

## PLANNING "CAROLINE" REGISTRATION



## Try Web Sites for Fair Book Prices

In the name of private philanthropy, educated consumerism and a little friendly market competition, I'd thought I'd use this forum to share the names of some Web sites where you can buy textbooks, often at lower prices than at Student Stores.

Amol Naik's column in this space Wednesday dealt with the cost of the specialized textbooks and updates that students are required to buy. I'm not complaining about that; I chose a specialized program in English, and such books are useful, even necessary, for me.



TARA ROBBINS  
SMALL PRINT

Neither am I lodging an ethical complaint against Student Stores' prices. It is Student Stores' right to decide what to charge; it is ours to choose whether we want to pay that price or shop elsewhere.

I've given some thought to Student Stores' prices recently, beginning when I picked up my used copy of "The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance" a few days ago. I found myself intrigued by the black mark concealing the original price on the back cover.

Someone had crossed out the publisher's price the way you do when you give a book as a gift (this explanation seemed unlikely). I picked up another copy and saw that it had been similarly marked, as had all the other copies of the book on the shelf.

This effectively crystallized my stubborn determination to know the publisher's price. By holding the book up to the right light, I could see that the original price of the book, \$18.00, was less than its used price, \$18.75.

Now, the bookstore incurs costs associated with purchasing, organizing and reselling books. Hypothetically speaking, if the buy-back value of a book were high, the added cost of processing it for resale could push Student Stores' price above the publisher's price.

If this were the case, though, it would make more sense for Student Stores to purchase new copies of the book and sell them at a

lower price.

But perhaps the Student Stores staff wanted to buy back copies of the book at a high price for the sake of the students with used copies to sell. Nope. I checked (I told you I was stubborn and determined).

The maximum buyback value for that book would have been only half the cover price. I doubt that the cost of processing a single book would amount to nearly \$10.

It is possible that Student Stores charges higher prices in order to raise money for scholarships. I've seen the \$8 million check hanging over the cashier's desk on the first floor, publicizing the amount of money donated by Student Stores to student scholarships from its proceeds over 20 years.

This is a praiseworthy use of the profits from the Student Stores and one I admire a great deal. Still, I prefer (and, in fact, actually enjoy) choosing the organizations and causes to which I wish to donate.

So I'd rather pay a lower price for a book and then make my own choices about how I dispose of the money I give away. The purpose of this column is not to whine about prices in the bookstore, but instead to suggest other options for students like me who would rather manage their disposable incomes themselves.

Generally, buying books online is less convenient than walking into Student Stores and walking out with your text because you need

to wait a few days for your books to arrive. But it's easier than you'd think (if you can plan ahead), and its advantages are distinct.

Sometimes, besides paying a lower price, you also get a better book; new copies discounted by Internet booksellers are often cheaper than the used copies available on campus. Although you sometimes pay a dollar per book or a few dollars per order for shipping, you don't pay sales tax.

My favorite Web site for book-buying is a search engine called Vivasmart. At www.vivasmart.com, you can search for your books by title, author and keyword. The Vivasmart site will return a list of about 20 bookseller Web sites.

Vivasmart ranks available new and used copies according to price, including shipping. The final list contains a link to each site where you can order the book at the quoted price.

A couple of other sites that sell books directly also offer good deals for students. I've found that www.ecampus.com offers consistently low prices, in part because they ship your books for free.

Its service, however, is only fair; books are occasionally back-ordered, and it can be hard to get through on the toll-free number, especially at the beginning of the semester. It is a good bookseller to use if you know ahead of time that you will need an expensive book later in the semester.

If you're hoping to get your books fairly quickly, on the other hand, www.booksamillion.com has good prices and great service. Its selection is not always as vast as that of ecampus or the other vendors specializing in textbooks, but if it has your title in stock, it's tough to beat for reliability. It'll also special order nearly any book for you.

Happy book-shopping!

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