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The Daily Tar Heel

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Gift of Life

Cancer patient Vincent Curasco's plea for matching bone marrow should spur people to consider donating the vital substance.

An article in The Daily Tar Heel before Spring Break about UNC Hospitals' Dr. Vincent Curasco, who is in need of a bone marrow transplant, hopefully left many readers wondering how they could help. Every year, thousands of people need bone marrow transplants to help their bodies fight a fatal disease. Of these people, cancer patients like Curasco are the most likely to be in need of a speedy bone marrow transplant. Information about bone marrow currently available to the general public doesn't do the need for bone marrow justice. Very few people actually know exactly what it is and why it is so vital for those who need it. Bone marrow is a soft, spongy tissue that fills the insides of the bones. Most blood cells, including red blood cells, platelets and some disease-fighting white blood cells, are produced in the bone marrow and are then released into the bloodstream as they become mature. When your bone marrow is damaged, fewer white blood cells are produced, and your ability to fight off infections and disease is impaired. As the DTH reported, there are close to 3 million bone marrow donors registered in the United States. But this is hardly enough. Bone marrow is highly difficult to match

from one individual to another, making it difficult for those who are in need of a transplant to find help. Millions of people donate blood every year, and still we see pushes for more donors such as the recent competition between UNC and Duke students, "Duke vs. UNC: This Time We Are Out for Blood." Bone marrow, while just as vital, isn't nearly as abundant as blood. Much like blood donors, bone marrow donors must first register and be tested for their specific type. But unlike blood, bone marrow cannot simply be stored until it is needed. Therefore, the push for individuals to register and be tested is far more critical. It would be a considerable step if universities and other institutions would unite to inform and organize more people to help this cause by registering to donate bone marrow. In Curasco's case, as in many others, no bone marrow match has been found. This means that many more people will have to register as donors before Curasco, and others, can be helped. If you are interested in registering to donate bone marrow to help save lives, visit the International Bone Marrow Registry online at www.biostat.mcv.edu:80/IBMTR.

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK — ERIN MENDELL

Gays Are Taking Over

That's what a misguided but outspoken Pennsylvania school board member thinks. Parents — teach your kids to hate before it's too late!

Parents, an unspeakable evil is invading our public schools. It is not the evil of children killing children; it is not the evil of children having children; it's not even the evil of children doing drugs. No, this evil is much, much worse. It's gay people. They're taking over. But one Pennsylvania high school is finally fighting back. Joe Hare, school director for the Marple Newtown School District in Delaware County, is nobly crusading against the homosexual agenda. Last week, The County Press reported Hare was concerned about the Gay/Straight Alliance Club at Marple Newtown High School. He said the club was nothing more than a smoke screen for forcing tolerance and acceptance at an age when children are impressionable. And I say a firm "Amen!" to that. If we do nothing as parents, educators and community members, we must teach our children to be intolerant and unaccepting of others before it is too late. Before they are taught it's OK to be different, we must tell them it is wrong. Hare is challenging the club because a teacher filed the original application and the school's policy requires that all clubs be started by a group of five or more students. It does not matter that the application was later

amended. It is obvious that the teacher who filed the application coerced students into becoming gay and filing their own application for a special gay club. Parents, you no longer need to feel powerless against this impending gay Armageddon. You can take matters into your own hands. Take that Barbie out of Billy's hands (especially if he likes to style her hair). Don't let Jenny play soccer. They are your children. Get to them before the homosexuals do! As Hare told The County Press, this is "a simple recruitment issue." The gays need numbers to fill their ranks. And they can't reproduce themselves. They want your children. Fathers, do you want your sons speaking French and crying in public? And mothers, do you want your daughters throwing the shot put and knowing how to change the oil in their cars? If you are good, God-fearing American citizens, you will answer those questions with a resounding no! Keep the perverts out of our high schools by making them feel worthless and alone. Don't let them get to your babies, too. And for God's sake, keep your children away from the gay Teletubby.



High GPAs Not the Real Problem

Sad to say, we've now hit the homestretch of the school year. It's time to reminisce about the passing year and prepare for the next. And worry about grades. In fact, students would be wise to stock up on high grades this spring as they might be more difficult to come by next year. Apparently, we've become too smart for our britches, causing folks like the Faculty Council's Educational Policy Committee to call for a drop in the school's average grade point average.



BRANDON BRISCOE
VOICE OF REASON

Yes, some of the same people who brought us salary inflation in the fall are stirring up trouble again, this time complaining about the supposed "grade inflation." It's getting ridiculous. Since February's Faculty Council meeting, there's been much ballyhoo about the perceived problem of higher grades. To even the casual observer, the term "grade inflation" seems like an oxymoron. After all, have your grades ever been too high? Actually, the debate itself is fascinating. When economics Professor Boone Turchi presented his report to the Faculty Council, he might as well have dropped a match in a fireworks factory. A lively, often humorous, sometimes heated discussion ensued among professors who like to presume their discipline knows best. Even a lone student braved the crossfire to offer his wisdom. True, the accusations of grade inflation raise a number of questions. Why do teachers grade in the first place? What do individual letter grades mean? Why have grades risen recently? Why aren't students satisfied with a B these days? The list is endless. And although the Faculty Council long ago tried to answer some of these questions in now-ignored legislation, professors still vehemently disagree. Things can get interesting when English professors and chemistry professors realize they don't see eye to eye, as they rarely do. And heaven forbid the philosophers enter the fray. But while it might be entertaining to dis-

cuss grades on a University level, it's not a joke in the world outside the confines of academia. Ivy League schools and their private-university cohorts already boast even higher grades than UNC. Duke University, for example, has an average GPA of 3.3, compared with Carolina's 3.0. Turchi suggests that after grades are lowered, an aggressive publicity effort could alert the world that Carolina's GPA is deflated. Again — ridiculous. Lowering the average GPA hurts Carolina students. Thousands of people will review résumés of UNC alumni for jobs, internships, graduate schools, honors, awards and the like. It is absolutely impossible to explain to everyone that our GPA is "worth more" than Harvard's because we have deflated grades. People don't have time to play games with the figures — a 3.7 will always look better than a 3.4. After all, the numbers don't lie. Indeed, a more accurate GPA will be of little comfort to the Carolina graduate when the Duke alumnus lands the higher-paying job, a situation that is clearly wrong on so many levels. It's more important and useful to compare ourselves with other schools than with the past. Deflating the grades has other drawbacks — like implicit quotas. But I'll yield to more verbose folks like those on the Student Advisory Committee to the Chancellor, which has already compiled a lengthy list of flaws with the measures proposed to combat inflation. However, don't be fooled — the report does highlight two problems that demand atten-

tion. First, there are students at UNC who don't belong here. Too many people slide by, leaving here with a degree they don't deserve. Teachers must not fear handing out an F to prevent these people from passing along. More than an inflated average GPA, these people give UNC a bad reputation when they enter the work force unprepared. Rest assured, readers of this column have nothing to fear. You're safe. But we all know people who don't belong here — either because they can't handle the work or don't have the discipline. They ought to go somewhere more suitable, for both their benefit and ours. Second, many courses need improvement, and an overhaul of the course review system is long overdue. Undoubtedly, some classes are too easy, others too difficult, and plenty are nothing more than a waste of time. Case in point: Drama 15. Students learn as early as C-TOPS that it's a "slide" class. The current evaluation system is weak and ineffective. Professors and, more importantly, administrators need to know what classes aren't cutting it. When caring teachers are forced to create their own surveys for students to suggest class improvements, it becomes obvious that the University's system is failing. Working on these problems would ease the "grade inflation crisis," as some hot-headed faculty members like to call it. Fail students who don't belong here and eliminate weak teachers and classes that are responsible for unearned grades. That will create a better university and a lower GPA, if that's what you want. We should attack real problems, not perceived symptoms. And in any event, we shouldn't penalize Carolina students who work as much as students anywhere in the country to achieve success in an increasingly competitive world. Now back to studying.

Brandon Briscoe is a junior journalism and mass communication major from New Orleans, La. Send him your tips and extra GPA points at brandon_briscoe@unc.edu.

The Daily Tar Heel

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READERS' FORUM

DTH Owes Apology To Christians at UNC For Tasteless Remark

TO THE EDITOR:
The March 10 Barometer item about "Jesus Awareness Week" was deeply offensive on at least two levels:

- 1) Have you learned nothing from your own columnist, Tara Robbins? For the last two weeks she's eloquently explained that religious people have the same civil rights in this country as do nonreligious people. Would you have published such a blurb mocking Jews? Muslims? Wiccans?
- 2) Jews and Christians both believe that God is present everywhere. Christians, additionally, have the promise of Jesus that wherever two or more of them are gathered, Jesus will be in the midst of their meeting. How dare you say that he didn't show up! Is the only reality that which you can see? Did it ever occur to you, as it did to a mere hack like

Shakespeare, that there may be "more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy?" You owe an apology to every Christian on this campus.

Loretta Bohm
Secretary
Division of Student Affairs

Pep Band Members Work Hard to Arouse Smith Center Crowd

TO THE EDITOR:
This is in response to R. Sterling Perkinson's letter to the editor March 9. His comment was "Wouldn't the seating situation in the Smith Center be resolved if we gave the marching band's seats to students and played Kansas and the Doobie Brothers albums over the public address system?" Not only is this statement ridiculous, but it's also insulting to that organization.

Does he not realize that the band is made up of students? Exactly what does it solve to take seats away from students to give to students — especially when the group you want to do this to is arguably the most spirited section in the Dean Dome? The band cheers just as much, if not more than, anyone else there. They start cheers that carry throughout the rest of the student section, and they play music to try to pep up the crowd... which leads to the insulting part of his comment. The members of the marching band put forth incredible amounts of time and effort to do what they do, and claiming that they can be replaced with albums over the PA is insulting to those individuals as well as the organization as a whole. The band is vital to the spirited atmosphere of the basketball games and they deserve more respect than Mr. Perkinson gives them.

Laura Lineberger
Sophomore
History



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