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The Daily Tar Heel

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BOARD EDITORIALS

Incomplete Tour

The Joint Select Committee on Capital Needs got an eyeful of crumbling classrooms during their tour of UNC-Chapel Hill, N.C. State and N.C. Central universities last week. Allowing the lawmakers to see the schools' decaying facilities will hopefully result in a swift and effective remedy from the General Assembly this time around.

But the touring legislators got only a brief glimpse of the problems at UNC. Had a more thorough tour been conducted, they might have found more problems than they anticipated. Out of all the buildings on campus, the legislators saw two: the incredibly outdated Venable Hall and the flood-prone music library in the basement of Hill Hall.

Without question, these two buildings make an excellent case for an increase in funding. But several other areas on campus paint a fuller picture of just how dire the situation truly is. Here are just a few:

■ South Campus. Legislators did not look at residence halls at any of the three campuses on their most recent tour.

The decades-old high-rises on South Campus are not merely architectural eyesores; they are also public safety hazards. None of the residence halls are equipped with fire sprinklers, which is particularly disconcerting considering that five fires have broken out in Morrison this year alone.

Many of the residence halls also suffer

from deplorable kitchens and bathrooms, frequently malfunctioning elevators and furnishings that are spartan at best. Given the fact that hundreds of students reside in these buildings, the committee might have wanted to examine them.

■ Murphey Hall. Although it looks nice from the outside, the inside is a mongrel mix of modern technology and ancient equipment. A few classrooms have been outfitted with projectors and video screens, but most look much as they did 30 years ago.

Broken and mismatched desks sit in nearly every room, there is no central air conditioning system, and plaster is peeling off many of the walls.

■ Chase Hall. Rut Tufts, director of auxiliary services, has acknowledged that this dining hall is "hopelessly outmoded" and plans have been drawn up for replacing the facility. Had legislators seen the building (which is particularly antiquated and cramped in comparison to the recently renovated Lenoir Dining Hall), those plans might have gotten a financial boost.

The lawmakers' tour was definitely a step in the right direction of ensuring the facilities at all UNC-system schools, including UNC-Chapel Hill's, are up to par.

But if legislators are going to make the right decisions, they need to have all the pieces of the puzzle.

High-Risk Policy

Picture it: You're waiting inside BW-3 Restaurant for your buds. The guy with 20 piercings behind the counter thinks you look a little suspicious. He sees some sort of holster on your belt and believes it's a gun. In reality it's only a cell phone, but he calls 911.

So what happens in this scenario? Well, several Chapel Hill police cruisers surround you after you leave the restaurant, guns cocked. Police call it a "high-risk felony stop," with more than one officer involved and guns drawn for protection.

A letter from Orange-Chatham District Attorney Carl Fox sparked public scrutiny of the policy after his friend, ex-NFL player Maurice Spencer, experienced it firsthand.

On Feb. 27, police pulled Spencer on Franklin Street and asked him to step out of his car. Guns drawn, they asked him to slowly back up toward them and keep his hands away from his body. He was subsequently handcuffed. Luckily, Spencer cooperated, and a potential tragedy was averted.

But after recent questions of police brutality, Chapel Hill police should re-evaluate their policy of pulling guns first — on the basis of an anonymous 911 call — and asking questions later.

Fear would be a natural reaction to the aforesaid scenario. It is scary to think what might have happened if Spencer, panicked and confused, had fumbled in his pocket for his wallet. All it would take is one officer to fire a shot for the other officers present to follow suit.

This is not to say that police should respond to a suspicious persons call, especially when that person might be armed, without caution. But an ambush of cops is not the best approach to calming a potentially volatile situation. If anything, it makes an already tense situation even more tense.

In a state where it's legal to carry concealed weapons with a permit, the policy potentially infringes on the rights of law-abiding citizens.

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes submissions from its readers for its Viewpoints page every Monday. Guest columns should be about 800 words, written by no more than two people and should discuss an issue relevant to DTH readers. Submissions should be e-mailed to editdesk@unc.edu and are due by 6 p.m. the Wednesday before the column will appear. Publication is not guaranteed. For more information, contact Editorial Page Editor Scott Hicks at 962-0245.

READERS' FORUM

Organized Baby Drop Better for Infant's Future Than Full Abandonment

TO THE EDITOR:

This is in response to Jonathan Chaney's March 20 column on the practice of abandoning babies. He was far too quick to castigate the young girls who are (admittedly because of their actions) already anguished with the prospect of making such a decision.

I think most would agree that abandoning a baby in a garbage dump is far more inhumane than leaving it with an organization that has taken it upon itself to care for unwanted babies. Most would even agree (though this is a touchier subject) that letting that child live is more humane than aborting it.

Chaney neglected to take into account the fact that — and this is important — the child is not only the product of the female's actions.

Young women all too often are left with no help from their partner, making the prospect of raising a child all the more difficult. So by leaving the child with Operation Foundling (which might or might not put the babies up for adoption; we weren't informed in the column), the mother just may be acting more humanely than if she herself raised it, struggling to support it and herself.

Of course, open dialogue with parents on the subjects of abstinence and safe sex will always help, but once a young lady has

gotten to the point where she has to make a decision, usually without the support of her family and/or partner, keeping the life seems more in touch with "reality" and less a symptom of our "disposable society" than does abortion.

Noel Fritsch
Sophomore
International Studies

SBP-Elect Solicits Help In Filling Suite C Posts For Upcoming Year

TO THE EDITOR:

I am asking for the help of all students in making our University a better place. I am looking for interested students who want to make a difference at this University.

I need the help of anyone who has encountered problems at Carolina. Get involved in student government!

Applications for student government will be due at 5 p.m. today. In addition to these opportunities, Student Body President Nic Heinke has extended the application deadline for student body vice president. Vice president applications will be due 5 p.m. Thursday.

Pick up an application at www.unc.edu/student/orgs/studgov/exec.html.

These are great opportunities to get involved in fixing the problems that you encounter every day, sharing your ideas

about our University's future and making a difference for every Carolina student.

Please e-mail bwad@email.unc.edu if you have any questions.

Brad Matthews
Junior
Political Science and International Studies

UNC Hospitals Visitor Finds Dirty Conditions, Calls for State Probe

TO THE EDITOR:

Recently I went to UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill to the GI Med/Surgery floor of the main hospital. Here I received a terrible shock.

First, we all realize that bathrooms for visitors' use is a necessity. I went into a bathroom not far from the waiting room for patients and their families. The bathroom was filthy and reeked with bathroom odors. It looked and smelled like it had not been cleaned in weeks. Nevertheless, I "used" the bathroom. When I came out, I went to the receptionist's counter and told her about the condition of the bathroom. She shook her head and told me, "Yes, it's always like that." What could I say?

The halls in the hospital were littered with trash, and floors were not maintained in the usual "spic and span" shine of hospitals. The overall atmosphere of the hospital was dingy, rundown and uncared for. In one room I saw a piece of furniture

with very little of the vinyl left on it and the "insides" of the couch exposed, possibly harboring germs and varmint.

In the last few months I've visited the following hospitals: Richmond Memorial; Scotland Memorial; Moore Regional; both hospitals in Hamlet, old and new; and Baptist Hospital in Jacksonville, Fla. None of these facilities were in the dirty, unsanitary condition that I experienced at UNC Hospitals. In fact, they were all examples of cleanliness and were administered the way a health care institution should be administered, with the results being a healthy, clean facility for all: patients, employees and visitors.

I cannot believe that what I saw is the best they can do. If it is, the doors of the hospital should be closed until they can maintain a healthful facility. How long has it been this way? Why is it this way? Who is responsible for the conditions? Who should make the necessary improvements?

My compliments to the fine institutions that maintain a clean, healthful environment for all. Doesn't it seem strange to compliment a health care institution for what is the minimum we should expect ... cleanliness?

The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services has been busy at Dorothea Dix Hospital lately. Its next stop should be UNC Hospitals in Chapel Hill.

Barbara Thomas
Hamlet

The length rule on letters was waived.



Springtime Brings Out the Ladies

Arousal, thy name is Cobb Beach. That's right fellas, it's the week after Spring Break, meaning the ladies are tanned and trim, and — quite frankly — it's driving me crazy.

I don't know where all these girls came from, because I didn't see them in the winter, but they are just off the hook.

It's gotten so bad that I'm having trouble making it to class. No, it's not because of my usual reason of simply being physically unable to make it campus; it's just that once I get here there are too many distractions outside the buildings to actually go inside them.

Take, for instance, the quad. On normal days the quad has people playing Frisbee or walking their dogs, or if you're really unlucky you have to dodge some freakshow in running shorts acting like getting to class is an event in the triathlon.

These distractions were bearable, but now some have taken it to an entirely different level by laying out and acting like the quad is a beach.

Seriously, how do you expect me to try to dissect Italian literature when there is skin all in my grill?

The areas away from the quad are even worse. One of the most infested areas is surrounding Cobb and Connor residence halls. At "Cobb Beach", freshmen are flaunting their bodies like it's going out of style. But this activity isn't limited to the youngsters, as Mangum (Hizagum Square) is quite the party as well. The scene over there, with its beach volleyball, is right out of Baywatch.

The other day I almost missed a meeting with my adviser in Hamilton Hall because I thought I was at Ocean Isle.

If the emergence of all these girls isn't enough, various other sideshows are going on that make class attendance extremely difficult. Quite simply, our beloved UNC campus is



AMOL NAIK
FROM THE DANK CAVE

turning into a county fair. I'm just waiting for a bearded woman to open a booth boasting "The world's largest pig" in the Pit. The booth would be appropriate there, because its obvious that the Pit is the epicenter of Spring Fever.

What can you really say about the Pit that hasn't already been said? The place has more faces than Madonna. It is like a chameleon that changes itself to any occasion. This same location has been the home of solemn remembrance for Holocaust victims, mock executions in protest of the death penalty, a pulpit for the Pit Preacher and even a lounge for the NORML kids.

One of the more memorable events that I've seen in the Pit happened a few weeks ago.

On that day, there was a DJ pumping music to promote a blood drive. While the occasion was for a good cause, the scene was more like Slayers' than a charitable event.

It was actually pretty phat, as many decided to shake their collective asses in the middle of campus. I for one was enthralled with the whole thing, so much so that I think I want a part of the action.

Seriously, if everyone else can have a table in the Pit, why can't I? Just picture it ... a large crowd on a warm afternoon, huddled around my table while I lounge on a padded

metallic brown chair. The only snag in this plan is that I have limited resources, so we'll have to start off small.

But like they say, South of the Border wasn't built in a day.

To begin with, the table needs a name. Let's call it "Just Chillin'," because that's all I'll be doing. I'm not going to be selling anything or trying to get you to vote for any candidate in an election; I'm just going to be chillin'. So I get out a crayon and write the name of the table on the backside of a used piece of posterboard.

But I don't think that just this sign will be enough, because I want to attract a hip crowd. If the table is going to draw (in the words of Eminem) "hippies and wacky tobacco planters, who swallow limp roaches and light up like jack-o-lanterns," I'll have to pull out all the stops.

Yes, I'm afraid this means bringing out the beast of the Pit ... that's right, the boombox.

We've all heard the blaring music from tables that makes a walk to class seem like a sojourn through pop hell, so why shouldn't we add to the ruckus? The only problem is my boombox doesn't have a CD player, so the selection of music from tapes might get a little shady.

Not to worry though, because the box does have high-speed dubbing, which I'm sure will be a crowd favorite.

Yup, my table will be unstoppable. Just me, a used piece of posterboard and a boombox with high-speed dubbing. Watch out Loreleis, politicians and various other campus organizations, because "Just Chillin'" is going to revolutionize the Pit. Campus will never be the same.

Amol Naik is a junior history major from Lumberton. All feminists who need tanning tips can reach Amol at unc20001@hotmail.com.

Pa. Not Executing Mumia For Political Convictions But for Officer's Murder

TO THE EDITOR:

Gabriele Pelli's letter March 10 stated that "Mumia Abu-Jamal ... faces the possibility of being executed by the state of Pennsylvania for his political beliefs."

Ms. Pelli, shooting someone five times in the back and in the face is not a "political belief" — it's murder.

It's too bad Abu-Jamal believes against killing people weren't as strong when he was pulling the trigger as they are now that he's scheduled to be executed.

Ted Bell
Class of 1999
Chapel Hill

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