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The Daily Tar Heel

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BOARD EDITORIALS

Complicating the Issue

Chapel Hill's plan to annex University-owned land would hamper the University's independence. The town should back off.

In the latest example of a situation that is sure to worsen strained town-gown relations, the Chapel Hill Town Council is considering a proposal to annex the Mason Farm Tract, a 144.9 acre piece of land in Durham County owned by the University, effective June 30.

This plan is completely one-sided and would benefit the town to the detriment of the University's independence.

If it passes, the University will have to have ask the town for permission whenever it wants to develop the land.

In other words, the University would have to jump through Chapel Hill-imposed hoops before it could even touch its own property.

The land is already subject to oversight from Durham County. If it became part of Chapel Hill, the University would have to deal with the extra bureaucratic red tape that comes with town government. This would only complicate an already cumbersome process.

And at a time when the University is facing the prospect of a huge enrollment increase and is trying to develop and carry out a Master Plan for growth, it cannot afford to be hampered when deciding what to do with its property.

Besides, annexation offers no tangible benefits to the University.

Aaron Nelson, coordinator of local and University relations, said many municipal services that the town would provide, such as police and fire protection and garbage collection, would be provided by the University itself, meaning UNC would get absolutely nothing if the land added "Chapel Hill" to its address.

Of course, the town has a legitimate interest in what its most powerful resident is doing right outside its borders, and the University should be courteous enough to let the town know of any plans for the land beforehand, giving concerned leaders the chance to express their opinions.

But that is where the town's say should end.

The University needs to retain control over its own land to be able to best meet its needs.

There is no way the Town Council would be able to do as effective a job evaluating what's best for the University as the University's own leadership.

For the benefit of its most famous resident, the town of Chapel Hill needs to back off.

Keep 'Em Separated

A Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education proposal to integrate gifted middle-schoolers into regular classes won't benefit students.

When gifted students at Culbreth Middle School go to school next year, the classroom might hold quite a different experience if members of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education get their way.

And if that occurs, the quality of the students' education will be in serious jeopardy.

Gifted seventh- and eighth-graders at the school are currently taught separately from other students, but if a proposed plan is passed, the students would be integrated into the regular classroom.

Similar programs are being cut nationwide, but that does not make it a good idea for local students.

Imagine being one of the "smart kids" in the seventh grade. In a classroom of intellectual equals, it's no big deal that you pick up concepts quickly or that you seek academic challenges.

But in an integrated classroom, you stand out from other students. At age 12, do you want to be labeled as different?

Of course, that scenario presumes that already burdened teachers will take the extra time to cater to the students' intellectual needs and create an appropriate curriculum for them. In an integrated classroom, teachers will likely focus more time on slower learners to catch them up to the class, not in ensuring that more advanced students aren't

boored.

And many teachers aren't trained to deal with gifted students - they don't know how to tailor work to meet the students' needs. As a result, gifted students often receive busy work or extra work instead of *different* work.

In other integrated classrooms, gifted students forgo the role of learner and instead are forced to serve as additional teachers, especially during group work.

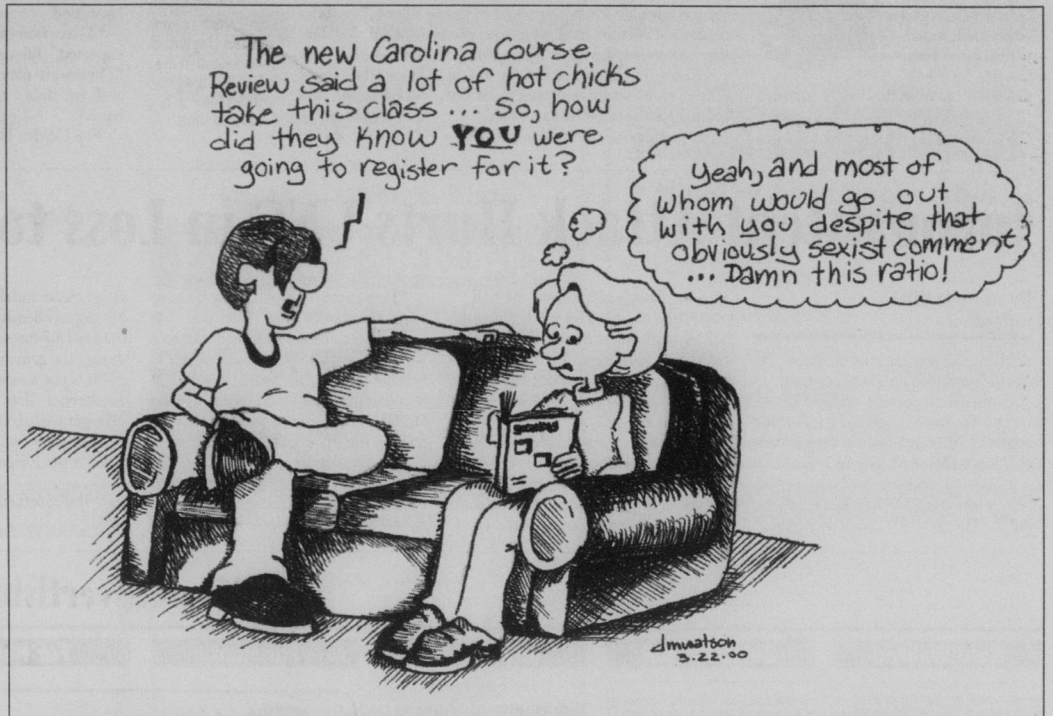
Educational theorists have professed that by integrating gifted students into the classroom, the overall performance of the class will be elevated. Even if this were proved true, it would still come at a tremendous cost.

In an integrated setting, an appropriate class pace is difficult to find. If a teacher accelerates the pace to meet gifted students' needs, the rest of the class suffers; conversely, if the pace decelerates to meet slower learners' needs, gifted students suffer.

The board's plan fails to realize where integration breaks down and does not create a mechanism to ensure that accelerated students' needs will be met.

The best way to do so is to leave gifted students in a separate classroom.

Let them learn with each other in an environment that meets their needs rather than thrusting them into a classroom where they don't belong.



NATO Made Bad Situation Worse

March 24 marked the one-year anniversary of the commencement of NATO airstrikes against Serbia.

Curiously, the very media that once championed American involvement in the conflict don't seem to be celebrating the occasion, perhaps because the situation in Kosovo is worse than ever before.

Brace yourself for disillusionment. You might already have been aware of certain NATO blunders during the air campaign that, due to sheer magnitude, the media could not bury.

These included the bombing of two hospitals, an embassy, a power plant, a prison and numerous ethnic Albanian refugees leaving the territory.

But you might not be aware of how the violence continued even after the NATO attack stopped.

In the first seven weeks of NATO's occupation after the cease-fire, Human Rights Watch reported there were 198 confirmed homicides and 573 confirmed arson attacks, mostly at the hands of the Kosovo Liberation Army. In addition, more than 80 percent of the Serbs in Kosovo left or were driven out by ethnic Albanians hungry for revenge.

State Department spokesman James Rubin said such violent incidents were the result of "rogue elements," and not an organized campaign on behalf of KLA leadership. Ironically, that is what Slobodan Milosovic said about Serbian government attacks on Albanians.

Now, a year later, the KLA has taken control of Kosovo, establishing a network of self-appointed ministries and local councils, seizing businesses and apartments and collecting taxes and customs payments.

In addition, independent Macedonian newspapers report the existence of KLA-like formations and say the units are waiting for an opportune time to link up with units in Kosovo and Albania.

There are also reports now coming from Western and independent media inside Yugoslavia telling of KLA infiltration into Serbia proper.

The Washington Post reported that senior U.S. officials have privately dropped their opposition to Kosovo independence, and the Clinton administration sees the secession as inevitable.



JONATHAN TRAGER
THE LIBERTARIAN LETTERS

In sum, Kosovo is now a possession of the terrorist KLA, and NATO involvement is what made that possible.

How did we in American society contribute to the current state of Kosovo?

The path to destruction was inevitable when many citizens allowed themselves to be seduced by official propaganda that claimed NATO wanted to intervene in the conflict because of "humanitarian concerns."

If those concerns were enough to warrant NATO involvement in Kosovo, why didn't America attempt to stop the Rwandan government from claiming the lives of almost a million minority members (more than the number killed by Milosevic in Kosovo) just a few years earlier? Why didn't America intervene in the Krajina region of Croatia when the government killed 300,000 Serbs? Why didn't America stop the brutal suppression of the Kurdish minority in Turkey or the Chechens in Russia?

Even though our proclaimed interest in international ethnic minority affairs didn't square with NATO inaction elsewhere, many media members and academics gladly swallowed it wholesale, especially after war hawks claimed a moral obligation similar to what caused our intervention in the German Holocaust.

In reality, the two situations were fundamentally different.

At the time of the Holocaust, most Jews had lived in Germany for generations, obeyed German laws, voted in German elections and paid taxes to the German government.

The National Socialist Workers Party (Nazis) used the financial success of the Jewish minority as a tool to incite the jealousy and bitterness of other citizens and cement Nazi authority.

In contrast, the relationship between the Serbs and Albanian citizens has always been riddled with mutual violence. When ethnic Albanians became the majority in the Kosovo region ruled by Serbs, the KLA made clear its goal of autonomy, and the Serbian government was faced with the prospect of losing its territory permanently.

Basically, the Serbian government set out to crush a legitimate political threat, a threat that did not exist in Nazi Germany.

It seems now their fear of KLA domination was aptly warranted.

As one intelligence officer with the U.N. Mission in Kosovo said of the KLA, "We are their tool, and when we stop being useful to them, they will turn against us."

Horribly, it seems as though that nightmare is already coming true.

Last month in the city of Mitrovica, Albanian snipers shot and wounded two French peacekeeping soldiers. The French then killed one rooftop sniper and wounded at least four others.

Consequently, about 150 soldiers from the British Royal Green Jackets, who have extensive experience in civil unrest by patrolling Northern Ireland, are now stationed there. Experts have said that Kosovo is quickly becoming the "Belfast of the Balkans."

It's time to face the facts that idealists would rather ignore. When a government sends its military to intervene in a deeply entrenched cultural conflict, it breaches its obligation to protect the individual rights of its citizens.

As NATO alliance commander General Sir Mike Jackson recently told the London Telegraph, "We are doing all we can, but attitudes can't be changed, thinking can't be changed, with a soldier."

Maybe our government should have realized that before killing dozens of civilians and tacitly condoning a KLA takeover.

Make no mistake; all we accomplished in Kosovo was help one gang of thugs beat up another.

How humanitarian.

Jonathan Trager is a lover, not a fighter, and a senior journalism and mass communication major from Long Island, N.Y. Send hugs and kisses to trager@email.unc.edu.

READERS' FORUM

CUAB Looking for New Leaders to Head Variety Of Campus Committees

TO THE EDITOR:

This letter goes out to all students interested in shaping life at UNC. We are the Carolina Union Activities Board, and we would like to introduce ourselves.

You might know of us because we brought Vertical Horizon and Stroke 9 to Memorial Hall. You might recognize us from our recent support of Sister Helen Prejean. You might have noticed that we sponsor every movie that shows in the Student Union. Perhaps you enjoyed (or endured) one of our Karaoke Nights in Lenoir Dining Hall.

You see, we did all those things, and it's really about time that you became involved.

CUAB needs new leaders to chair a plethora of various committees during the 2000-01 school year. Whether you wish to plan next year's film schedule, bring in big-name musical groups, seek out notable per-

sonalities to speak on campus or plan and promote the performing arts at this University, CUAB has an opportunity for every interest.

Or if publicity or public relations is your thing, we have that, too. So come check us out!

Pick up an application at the Union Desk (due Wednesday), and feel free to e-mail cuab@unc.edu if you would like to know us better.

Tony Arcese
Carolina Union President-elect

Lawmakers' System Tour Included Both Student, Faculty Voices

TO THE EDITOR:

Thanks to The Daily Tar Heel for expressing strong interest in the University's urgent building needs in the March 22 editorial "Incomplete Tour." Improving the facilities on our 206-year-old campus is one of the most important

issues facing the University.

I am pleased that the DTH is articulating such needs from the perspective of students.

Nonetheless, your readers need to know more about the tour, part of a fact-finding effort across the 16-campus university system so committee members can see firsthand what a consultant has documented: outmoded buildings, mounting deferred maintenance and a shortage of key science, technology and study facilities.

First, the committee visited three, not two, UNC buildings: the Medical Sciences Research Building, Venable Hall and Hill Hall. In all of those settings, members heard very poignantly from faculty and students alike about the detrimental effects of substandard classrooms, laboratories and learning spaces.

Second, committee members heard about a wide range of facility concerns campuswide, not just in those three buildings. A PowerPoint presentation, viewable online at www.unc.edu/news/newsserv/facilitiesneeds/, showed the legislators some of the same concerns cited in the edi-

torial: a classroom in the aging Murphey Hall, for example.

Your student body president, Nic Heinke, took time during Spring Break to address these legislators, too, along with key administrators and professors. Nic spoke eloquently about how having a class in a building like Murphey can harm a student's ability to learn effectively.

He also discussed the obstacles faced by a friend coping with a recent injury in trying to get to her chemistry class in Venable Hall. Legislators saw for themselves why that building is difficult for any student to navigate and heard of our plans to ultimately demolish it because more renovations will not be cost-effective in the long-term.

It is important for the community to know that both student and faculty voices were heard by this committee, which is co-chaired by two loyal UNC alumni: Sen. Tony Rand of Fayetteville and Rep. George Miller of Durham.

Their reaction was heartening. They said they were embarrassed by the problems and poor conditions they saw here

and hoped to persuade their colleagues in Raleigh to help us address this issue.

I am counting on the University community to do its part by staying engaged and informed.

William O. McCoy
Interim Chancellor

The length rule was waived.

Fan Suggests 2 More Lessons to Be Learned In Basketball 101 Course

TO THE EDITOR:

"Basketball 101" revisited - We've learned to be happy that the Tar Heels and Coach Gut didn't listen to what has been said during most of this season.

We will pass the course as fans when we learn to follow this team's example and exhibit great heart.

Resa Coleman
Chapel Hill



The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments. Letters 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. 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.