

Concerns or  
comments about  
our coverage?  
Contact the  
ombudsman at  
budman@unc.edu  
or call 605-2790.

ROB NELSON  
EDITOR  
Office Hours Friday 3 p.m. - 4 p.m.

# The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893 • 107 Years of Editorial Freedom  
www.unc.edu/dth

VICKY ECKENRODE & CATE DOTY  
MANAGING EDITORS

Scott Hicks  
EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR  
Katie Abel  
UNIVERSITY EDITOR  
Jacob McConico  
CITY EDITOR

Matthew B. Dees  
STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR  
T. Nolan Hayes  
SPORTS EDITOR  
Leigh Davis  
FEATURES EDITOR

Robin Clemow  
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR  
Carolyn Haynes  
COPY DESK EDITOR  
Miller Pearsall  
PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Thomas Ausman  
DESIGN EDITOR  
Megan Sharkey  
GRAPHICS EDITOR  
William Hill  
ONLINE EDITOR

Terry Wimmer  
OMBUDSMAN

## EDITORIAL SERIES

# Treat 'Em Right

Luckily for UNC, most staff workers say they like working here.  
But officials should work harder to give them a good reason to.

UNC officials must do more to improve working conditions for staff. Workers deserve better pay, but UNC officials should work harder to make working here a more rewarding experience.

### Double the Work, but No Pay Raise

Every day for the past few years, there have been about 500 unfilled staff jobs at UNC. Despite variation among different departments, empty positions can be found in nearly every area.

For example, 21 positions are open for accounting technicians, 24 for housekeepers and 44 for office assistants. These jobs are essential to University needs.

The work still must be done, and other staff members have to pick up the slack. Many do essentially two jobs while their department waits to fill empty positions. Their reward for the extra work? Paycheck for job one and a pat on the back for job two.

But this manic work craze comes at its own costs. It often leads to increased job stress, which in turn leads to more resignations — compounding the original problem.

The employee shortage is partially a result of the robust economy and low unemployment in the Triangle, but UNC administrators should launch a concerted advertising effort to attract more potential workers.

Officials also should consider better recruiting here on campus, as many graduating students look for jobs that allow them to stay in the area. In the meantime, administrators should publicly thank the hundreds of workers who are each filling two people's roles.

Extra incentives such as increased pay and benefits, of course, would attract more people to UNC ... and keep them here.

### Struggling in Benefits

Staff are at a disadvantage because they often get lower pay and fewer benefits than their peers in private industry. While some workers make close to market value, others — such as high-tech staff — make much less.

On average, UNC's benefits package represents 19 percent of each employee's gross salary. Nationally, that average is 25 percent.

Child care is just one of the benefits where UNC just doesn't match the private sector.

When women began to enter the workplace in large numbers 30 years ago, businesses began to offer child care for working mothers. But UNC straggled, and the care that it offers is expensive and not enough for workers who are on call 24 hours a day.

Administrators should take a hint from former Graduate & Professional Student Federation President Lee Conner, who has set in motion a study by the Carolina Population Center that would put his constituents' needs for child care in hard numbers. UNC should re-evaluate its child care programs to make sure they're up to par.

When it comes time to making changes, UNC should look to Research Triangle Park, where many companies boast award-winning child care centers on-site.

Likewise, parking — or more accurately,

the lack thereof — is a headache for workers. The primary problem is that each department has its own parking policy.

In some cases, a secretary who has worked at UNC for 20 years might still be taking the bus while 30-year-old professors nab parking spaces in their first year of teaching. A lack of close parking has even deterred some staff applicants from taking jobs at UNC.

Policies that pit staff against professors don't help morale on either side. Officials should implement a campuswide parking policy that finds a better way to balance the need to compensate for low faculty salaries with the need to maintain staff dignity.

### Bureaucratic Run-Around

But the underlying problem that exacerbates all the others is the unwieldy bureaucracy workers must deal with to effect changes. Because staff are state workers, they don't have a clear, two-way line of communication with their ultimate superiors.

Only the governor — not the chancellor — can lobby for their needs to the General Assembly. UNC employees are lumped into the same categories as all other state workers.

An office clerk employed at UNC makes the same amount as one employed at Fayetteville State University, despite the fact that a worker making \$25,000 in Fayetteville would need to make \$31,147 to enjoy the same standard of living in Chapel Hill.

The rules that define and govern staff jobs are often outdated, overly rigid or hopelessly complex. UNC employees are classified under state job codes, but some jobs (such as animal care technicians, various computer-related positions and research jobs) exist only in universities. Problem is, these jobs are wedged into generic categories that don't represent what they do and can hinder pay. What's more, rigid classifications often prevent staff from moving up the staff ladder from, say, a maintenance job to a tech job.

On issues like these, state lawmakers need to do a better job representing their constituents. Lawmakers should relax their iron grip on staff and classify them with a smarter policy that encourages promotion and provides fair pay that takes into account local cost of living and private sector pay.

But UNC officials shouldn't kick back and wait for that to happen. Administrators should work now to take care of the little things that make or break what staff think of working at UNC.

### For the Record

The Monday editorial "Workin' 9 to 5" should have attributed the following quotations to Aimee Gevedon, main office assistant in the Department of Psychology: "The staff here is the most understanding staff I've ever worked with." She said faculty treated her with a degree of respect that she had not seen in previous years. The staff, students and faculty treat me as one of their own, not someone who does a lot of grunt work for the department."

The Daily Tar Heel regrets the error.



# Racism Not a Word to Use Lightly

The past week's exchange of letters to The Daily Tar Heel editor hotly debating whether Amol Naik's critic was a "racist" because she told him to "meditate" highlights the University community's attempts to resolve a problem plaguing American society: the ease with which accusations of racism are leveled against individuals and organizations.

Racism is a serious issue, and charging someone with racism is equally serious.

In a recent case, a bar owner in Massachusetts found himself facing the loss of his license to serve alcohol in light of charges of racism ... brought apparently by no one at all.

Tom English, bar owner, regularly displayed stuffed cartoon characters, clowns, fish and other animals in his bar. The Boston Herald published a story claiming that a bartender employed by English had joked with a patron that the monkeys currently on display were put in place in mockery of Black History Month.

According to the Herald, the bartender suggested that the monkey wearing a crown represented Martin Luther King Jr.

After the story appeared, the Massachusetts Anti-Discrimination Commission got involved.

On learning about the claims of the Herald reporter, the commission sent an undercover agent to English's bar to listen for racist comments.

The agent heard some discussion of the Herald story but was unable to overhear enough to discern whether the story itself was accurate. The commission nonetheless brought charges against English to the licensing board, arguing that English's liquor license should be revoked.

In the ensuing hearing, the bartender claimed that he had not made the racist statements attributed to him. The Herald reporter did not testify. Tom English's attorney argued vigorously for his client, whose livelihood and life's work was at stake.

Three patrons, including one black woman, testified that the display was not racist. The



TARA ROBBINS  
SMALL PRINT

licensing board exonerated English of the charges but could not undo the damage to his reputation. English fired the bartender.

Racism is a bad thing, but the handling of these accusations was worse than bad. The stated aim of the Massachusetts Anti-Discrimination Commission is "to ensure equality of opportunity," a noble objective.

But its strategies are questionable. It sends undercover agents to places of business to listen, listen to conversations and report potentially racist comments. If an agent hears something objectionable, the commission pursues any possible avenues for redress.

In other words, working men and women of Massachusetts pay people (and presumably provide them with expense accounts) to sit in bars and coffee shops listening to other people's conversations.

Not only does this strategy seem wasteful of the state's power and financial resources; it also seems like a poorly designed way to combat racism.

Leaders of the multicultural movement need to use their influence responsibly and attack racism strategically.

Last fall, a school board in Decatur expelled six students for provoking a fight at a sporting event in which other students were injured.

Prior to the incident, the school board had established a zero-tolerance policy mandating that any students provoking violence would be expelled, and videotapes of the event proved these students' participation unequivocally.

In the aftermath of the event, however, the

Rev. Jesse Jackson denounced the school board's expulsion of the six students, who were black, as racist — even though the point of a zero-tolerance policy is that it is enforced without considerations such as the identity of the perpetrators.

Particularly when a child's life is in question and color weighs down on one side of a delicate balance, such an accusation must be treated seriously.

If Jackson really believed that certain school board members had acted out of racist motives, he should have called publicly for their resignations because those school board members should not have been permitted to make decisions about the welfare of students.

But Jackson did not call for any resignations or name any names. One cannot help but wonder why a moral crusader like Jackson, if he knew names, would not divulge them publicly. Certainly he would not have refrained because of his respect for these racist individuals or their practices.

It seems instead that Jackson was accusing the school board of the problem of racism afflicting all of society, rather than a particular act of racial discrimination. But such broad-based accusations are absolutely unacceptable; accusations should be made based on specific evidence and communities should follow through with relevant social sanctions.

Racism is one of the most destructive ills that has plagued American society, and purging it from our culture is not easy. But even when making any headway at all seems impossible, we continue to struggle against racism because the alternative — to ignore the problem — is equally impossible if we are to continue to call ourselves civilized.

The word racism should immediately command the attention of all honorable people. Trumpeting it around indiscriminately dulls the ears of listeners and, even more destructively, creates an atmosphere of distrust among racial groups.

Tara Robbins is a graduate student in the Department of English from Millville, N.J. You can reach her at trobbins@unc.edu.

# DTH Handling of Out 'N' About, CAA Policy Screwed Readers

My first publisher, a West Virginia firebrand named Ned Chilton, was one of journalism's good guys.

His life honored his deeply ingrained belief that the press has an ethical responsibility to challenge politicians and champion the cause of the disenfranchised. "Screwed" was his favorite verb for what politicians and greedy capitalists did to the little guy.

His paper lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in advertising because his staff pursued cash-gouging auto dealers. "The god-damned First Amendment is not to guarantee the advertisers so many sales," he said.

I idolized Chilton because he stood for something essential in journalism, and I share his view of the world to make a point about two seemingly unconnected events here at The Daily Tar Heel.

The first concerns an advertising supplement published March 23. The second involves a student-elected representative who failed his electorate.

Both illustrate this paper's failure to



TERRY WIMMER  
OMBUDSMAN

responsibly serve its constituents.

"Out 'N' About" is the supplement touted as the paper's 4th annual issue "chosen by YOU the readers of the DTH." The DTH logo appeared on every page. Inside, between the advertising, are dozens of "best of" category winners, selected by readers who either completed a form in the paper or answered an online ballot.

One of those categories — Best Class to Do Crossword In — upset Professor Charles Mitchell. He teaches Drama 16, the winner listed in the paper.

His questions focused on responsibility: How was the choice made? How

many students voted? Did the DTH investigate whether it was true that his class was crossword-puzzle heaven? (It didn't.)

What he didn't know, and could not have known from the publication, is that the DTH editorial staff had nothing to do with the contest. It was the work of the paper's advertising staff. Such advertising product is not uncommon in daily newspapers. It produces badly needed income.

What is common in real-world newspapers is that editors insist such publications be labeled plainly throughout as "advertising copy."

It is a widely held belief that readers have a right to know the difference, and it is the responsibility of the newspaper staff to be certain they do.

It didn't happen in "Out 'N' About" because neither the advertising director, nor the general manager, nor the editor thought of it.

They also didn't think to explain how the poll was taken, how many readers responded (about 500) and that as a poll it was as scientifically sound as

creationism.

In hindsight, they wish they had, and the general manager promises to do so in future years.

Little good that does Mitchell. He's in his second semester of teaching at UNC and took control of Drama 16 to erase the perception that it provided the way to an A.

(He said out of 294 students in the first semester, only 27 As were given. In my opinion, that doesn't make the class a cakewalk.)

After the publication, his boss sent him a critical note. Not a good thing if you're seeking tenure. What bothers him more, however, is that the DTH is perpetuating a myth. How, he asked, is that responsible journalism?

It isn't. He got screwed. Editor Rob Nelson said he doesn't believe it is the paper's duty to correct perceptions. But it is this paper's responsibility to be fair, in both its editorial and advertising content, and that "best of" category certainly wasn't.

It was a case of responsibility shirked. And that's the connection to

the NCAA ticket flap.

When Tee Pruitt was running to return as Carolina Athletic Association president this year, he pledged a fair and equitable ticket distribution policy for all students. So what did he do when the Tar Heels made the Final Four? He let his staff send out limited e-mail about how to snare the tickets to Indy. He did not send out a mass e-mail to all of the student body.

He says he didn't have time. I say the DTH staff had the responsibility of demanding he explain why he didn't make time.

Last Thursday, more than two days after the tickets were handed out, Nelson interviewed Pruitt about the issue. He failed to demand that Pruitt answer the hardest of questions: Why? Why did he not live up to his pledge and spread the word to all?

As an elected official, Pruitt deserves hard challenge from reporters. His excuse that time constraints limited publicity was buried at the bottom of the DTH story.

The reporting by this paper let him

skate, and in so doing the DTH failed to serve the John and Jane Does of UNC who depend on the DTH to serve their interests.

Nelson said he believed the focus of the story needed to be that students were upset, and that Pruitt's alleged failure was best addressed on the editorial page. I disagree. It was a time for hard reporting and hard questions.

The more amazing failure, however, is greater than Pruitt's transgression or the after-the-fact story in the paper.

The evening after North Carolina made the Final Four, it never even crossed Nelson's mind to push for a story about how tickets would be distributed.

That's a basic question. It was more than a failure of practicing responsible journalism. It was shabby work.

This paper ignored the little guy. And he got screwed.

Ombudsman Terry Wimmer, a doctoral candidate in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, can be reached at budman@unc.edu.