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The Daily Tar Heel

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BOARD EDITORIALS

Necessary Delay

Seniors living in residence halls that will be renovated this summer must not be forced out early.

If the hustle and bustle of graduation week wasn't hectic enough for seniors, the University has presented some with an unnecessary new worry: where they'll be staying.

Due to summer renovation plans, several residence halls will close at 6 p.m. May 13, the last day of exams, and seniors living in these halls are urged to move home for the week leading up to graduation.

But considering that seniors have been able to remain in their rooms in the past, as well as the fact that they only require housing for one week before graduation, the Department of University Housing should allow all seniors to stay put, if they so choose.

And if the planned renovations, which were not finalized until the last minute, must begin the day after students vacate the residence halls, interim Chancellor Bill McCoy and Vice Chancellor for Student Services Dean Bresciani must tell seniors why the timetable cannot be pushed back for one week.

The University will provide interim housing for those seniors unfortunate enough to live in one of the targeted residence halls. But if you are one, you'd better hurry. If your

area director isn't notified by Friday that you'll need interim housing, housing officials will assume that you already have plans in place for that week and will wipe their hands clean of the matter.

But there has to be a really good reason why you can't leave. As Lynn Ellison, area director for Morrison Residence Hall said in an e-mail message to her residents, in order to receive interim housing a senior must be "involved in Commencement in an OFFICIAL capacity or have other special circumstances" and must "live far enough away to make driving in for the ceremony unreasonable."

That's a ridiculous rule. Who are housing officials to decide what distance constitutes an "unreasonable" drive or what circumstances are special enough to merit an "extended" stay?

Students who are approaching the end of their college career should be spending their last few days in Chapel Hill with friends and visiting family, not packing up their belongings and shipping out a week early.

For most students, college graduation is a once-in-a-lifetime event. Housing officials should respect that.

Precious Time

Capital Broadcasting Co.'s practice of giving politicians free airtime could help keep campaigns focused on the issues.

Six minutes a day can make a difference in cleaning up political advertising.

That's the thinking behind Capital Broadcasting Co.'s recent experiment with free airtime for political candidates. Capital, the television company that owns WRAL and several other stations, has begun airing two-minute segments featuring each of the five major gubernatorial candidates. Three are shown daily during WRAL's newscasts.

Goodman's efforts offer a welcome alternative to politics as usual. Studies have shown that the majority of voters get their information about candidates from television. That makes television the most potentially powerful weapon in aspiring officeholders' political arsenals. Buying airtime for advertising, however, is highly expensive. Candidates therefore spend most of their time trying to raise money for advertisements.

When candidates do raise enough money, they must then decide how to best appeal to voters in 30 seconds or less. Frequently, they conclude that attacking their opponents is the most effective use of their time. The result is a spate of mudslinging ads that are generally misleading, uninformative and repugnant to many voters.

Providing free airtime to candidates to discuss issues offers at least a partial solution. WRAL allows the candidates to state their views clearly on three issues - the proposed state lottery, the Smart Start preschool education program and a third issue of their choice - and make their ideas known to people who otherwise wouldn't hear them.

The candidates are not allowed to attack their opponents in their two-minute spots and instead have to argue the merits of their positions. This experiment could go far in keeping the candidates focused on the issues.

Just as voters get what they want - useful information free of character assassination - the candidates get what they want - free exposure to thousands of individuals across the state. While all of the candidates will no doubt continue to rely upon the 30-second attack ad, Goodman's plan perhaps allows them to spend less time sniffing out prospective donors and more time getting to know prospective voters.

Goodman admits that his efforts are only part of the answer. Nevertheless, he said he hoped that Capital's actions would set an example for other media outlets to provide more responsible information.

Let's hope he's right.



Golf and MTV: Yes, There's a Link

So I wake up Sunday morning in my boys' living room, on what used to be the back seat of a Blazer, wondering exactly why I had decided to use this shoe I was curled up with as a pillow the night before. (Don't ask; it was after a real phat show featuring Sankofa - "Exposure," an AIDS benefit concert, was the first time I've seen them, but after their stellar performance it definitely won't be the last.)

After shaking the "I can't move because it feels like a rat died in my mouth" feeling, I waded through the entangled bodies around me, looking for the morning newspaper.

Unfortunately it was being used as a pillow by someone else, so by the time I was finally able to wrestle the paper away, some of the sports page had been submerged in drool. Luckily the drool spared the good news I was hoping to see, "Singh leads the Masters going into the final round."

That's right: I'm a huge Vijay Singh fan, and I've never even played a round of golf in my life.

In fact, the only time I've even been on a course was in high school when some buddies of mine bribed me with a six-pack to be their caddy. Although I never drove the golf cart into a lake as was alluded to in Brian Frederick's column on Friday, my performance behind the wheel that day pretty much canceled out any chances I had of totting a bag down the back nine of Augusta National.

I'm a fan of Vijay, who went on to win the Masters Sunday, because he's the unluckiest of sports stars.

He was born in the tiny Pacific island country of Fiji, a place that was so underdeveloped that it didn't even have live television when he was growing up. As a youngster he wasn't even able to watch legends like Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer perform, but Singh has now defeated all the odds and joined them as a champion of golf's most prestigious tourna-



AMOL NAIK
FROM THE DANK CAVE

ment.

This rise is all the more remarkable when you consider that as recently as 1985, he was making less than \$200 a week working as a golf pro. That is certainly a far cry from the eye-popping \$828,000 winner's check that he claimed Sunday.

As a long-time Vijay observer, the best part of the whole day for me was watching a good ol' boy from the Masters committee awarding Singh with the fabled green jacket that goes to the winner of the tournament. The thought of Roscoe P. Coltrane yanking it up with the son of Indian immigrants in the clubhouse was one that would have been laughed at 50 years ago.

Singh's success is refreshing on a PGA tour that is too often the haven of embarrassing prejudices from this country's past ...

Speaking of embarrassments, has anyone else been watching MTV's Spring Break coverage for 10 hours a day like I have? Half the time you're watching you can't believe it can even get away with putting this stuff on cable.

The craziest show has to be "Springer Break," where among other things, nude couples cover each other in whipped cream. The show is racy even by Springer-standards, which is saying a lot.

MTV on the whole is turning into one big issue of Maxim; the only time they even play music anymore is when it's accompanied by

models in swimwear. Even reality-based shows like "Road Rules" and "The Real World" are falling victim to the beautification of the network.

Seriously, how "real" is a world where nobody is ugly? The whole process is setting a standard of beauty that is unattainable to teens, leading to self-esteem problems ... or not.

Don't worry, ya'll, I'm only kidding; you should know by now that I'm not going to write something like that. I for one feel that all television should follow the route of MTV, thereby eliminating all programs that have any intellectual merit whatsoever.

In this dumification movement, the nightly news would be anchored by Fabio instead of Peter Jennings, and PBS would play "Animal House" all the time to replace those weird British dramas. The world would simply transform into a happier place, as everyone would look like a model and have the intelligence of a chewed-up piece of gum.

At least in this society, maybe some network would actually play a wide variety of music videos. This certainly isn't the case right now, as picking between VH1 and MTV is like choosing between a death from burnt-out rockers or cracked-out *NSYNC wannabees.

Who ever would have thought anyone would miss the days of Bill Belamey and Daisy Fuentes? Better yet, who would have ever thought that there would be a column in this paper that would begin by talking about Vijay Singh and then end up discussing MTV?

The Dank Cave: "Taking talking about nothing to a new level." ... Why don't you go meditate on that?

Amol Naik is a junior history major from Lumberton. Reach him at unc2001@hotmail.com.

READERS' FORUM

Combatting Underage Drinking Wastes Time, Taxpayer Money

TO THE EDITOR:

Alcohol Law Enforcement's recent "crackdown" on underage alcohol consumption is a complete waste of our police force and our tax money.

Chapel Hill residents are lucky that the crime rate is so low that they can afford to pay undercover ALE officers to bar-hop, slapping young adults and hardworking bartenders with outrageous fines.

In any other country in the world, authorities wouldn't look twice at a 20-year-old student drinking a beer at a bar. Here, the same 20-year-old runs the risk of being busted by an undercover agent for this alleged "crime."

What makes 21 the magical age to drink? I know plenty of 21-year-olds that still can't drink responsibly. And may I point out that most, if not all, ALE agents had the right to drink alcohol when they were in college. Personally, I could never take my job seriously if I had to arrest someone for something I did in college that was perfectly legal.

I refuse to believe underage alcohol consumption deserves to be treated as misdemeanor, on the same level as a hate crime or domestic assault.

The ALE's new office and latest crackdown efforts are not going to stop or even

stifle, underage drinking. Unfortunately, Chapel Hill's nightlife is based on bars, and there is not much else to do at night.

The ALE's presence does nothing to lower crime or enhance our quality of life. Are we any better off now that the ALE watches over the bars, protecting impressionable college students from consuming alcohol? Do you feel safer while walking at night as a result of "Operation Saturation?" Are there less homeless people who ask you for money when you stumble out of the bars? I don't think so.

Let's use our energy and our tax money to work on some real problems - and then we'll go uptown for a drink.

Lauren Miura
Sophomore
Journalism and Mass Communication

Concern Over Pedestrian Safety Not Permission To Ignore Right-of-Way

TO THE EDITOR:

In the recent concern over pedestrian safety at UNC, and in the subsequent police crackdown on motorists who fail to stop for people in marked crosswalks, an important point has been overlooked. Namely, that pedestrians do not have the right-of-way in all crosswalks at all times.

N.C. law (sections 20-172, 20-173 and 20-174 of the N.C. General Statutes) distin-

guishes between three types of crosswalk:

1) Those crosswalks, either marked or unmarked at controlled intersections (i.e., intersections having signs or lights controlling traffic and/or pedestrians)

2) Those marked or unmarked crosswalks at uncontrolled intersections

3) All other marked crosswalks

Pedestrians only have universal right-of-way in the last two types of crosswalk, and most of the attention at UNC during the past few months has focused on these types of crosswalks.

What has not been emphasized is that at controlled intersections, pedestrians must obey walk/don't walk signals as well as the traffic lights themselves. Unfortunately, there seems to be a discernable rise in the incidences of pedestrians strolling across large intersections against the traffic signal, and one can only assume that they are operating under the belief that they have right-of-way. For a time, even the Department of Public Safety was guilty of fostering this misapprehension by placing "STOP for pedestrians in crosswalk" signs at major, signal-controlled intersections (it even put one such sign in the middle of Manning Drive in front of Hinton James where there was not only no intersection, but no crosswalk).

Certainly, the heightened concern at UNC over pedestrian safety and motorist awareness can only be beneficial. However, pedestrians should avoid misreading this recent concern as tacit license

to ignore both common sense and the law while crossing roads. Motorists and pedestrians alike have responsibilities to uphold in this regard.

David Rinker
Office Assistant
Department of Pharmacology

UNC Should Prohibit Smokers From Lighting Up Until Lunchtime

TO THE EDITOR:

Some people say waking up to a cup of coffee and a cigarette is the most refreshing way to start the day. We say hold the smoke with our breakfast.

How enjoyable is it to come to campus on a beautiful spring morning, sun shining bright and birds singing, only to be rudely interrupted by a deep breath of second-hand smoke?

This morning smoking cult is not confined to a single area of campus, as they can be found on the steps of most buildings and on the footpaths walking to class.

Our choking on their exhalations have caused us to propose the following plan: A campuswide ban on smoking of any kind before noon. Options to enforce this regulation include equipping the UNC house-keeping staff with stun guns to enforce the \$25 on-the-spot fee or the formation of a committee to train stray dogs to attack

offenders.

Everyone knows smoking makes you look really cool, but smoking before noon just makes you look like an addict. We like to smoke in the afternoons and evenings just as much as the next guy, but please, know when to say when.

No morning smoking!

Jeff Rose
Junior
Sociology

Daniel Brown
Junior
Psychology

Get It Out Of Your System

Is yelling at your wall, your dog or your roommate just not cutting it lately? Maybe publishing your rant will help. The Daily Tar Heel welcomes submissions from its readers for its Viewpoints page every Monday. Guest columns should be about 800 words in length, written by no more than two people and discuss an issue relevant to DTH readers. Columns should explore an angle of the topic that has not already been written about in the DTH.

Please e-mail your submissions to editdesk@unc.edu 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.



The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments and criticism. Letters to the editor 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 for space, clarity and vulgarity. Publication is not guaranteed. 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.