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The Daily Tar Heel

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BOARD EDITORIALS

Garbage Out ...

... common sense in? Here's hoping the Chapel Hill Town Council soon makes the right call to stop offering backyard trash pickup.

Is keeping up appearances really worth more than \$400,000? Chapel Hill residents have long had the luxury of leaving their trash in their backyards for sanitation workers to pick up weekly. That policy is now up for review in the Town Council, and it should be axed. By Town Manager Cal Horton's estimates, cutting the service in favor of a once-a-week curbside pickup would save the town more than \$400,000 over the next six years. Residents should feel guilty about taking advantage of a service that costs their town so much, knowing that money could be used in so many better ways. Indeed, the backyard pickup is a luxury few other state residents enjoy. According to recent statistics from the N.C. League of Municipalities, 77 percent of N.C. cities pick up garbage at the curb. Carrboro residents have taken their trash to the curb for years. Durham stopped backyard pickup in the early 1990s, but disabled and elderly people there can apply for backyard service if they need it. In Chapel Hill, though, all residents have to do is leave the garbage in their backyard. It seems to go with the belief that the elite shouldn't have to worry over actually walking their trash bags all the way out to the

curb like most normal Americans. After all, some town movers and shakers think seeing all those green trash cans on the curb make their precious village look bad. Wait a second. Being elite is all good, but surely Chapel Hill can rely on its countless other better-than-average qualities to survive in the upper class. This whole thing with backyard garbage collection is just a blatant waste of cash — more than \$400,000 to be exact. That money would be better spent, for example, in helping to keep school resource officers (police who patrol local schools) working. Thanks to a budget crisis, the town manager recently proposed cutting back on the funds paying for these campus police. Or the town could spend more money on affordable housing or mass transit. However the Town Council decides to spend it, it's at least a step in a better direction. While the town should ensure that disabled or elderly residents still get backyard pickup, the rest of Chapel Hill can walk those extra few steps to the curb. Mayor Rosemary Waldorf supports installing curbside pickup for trash. Now, all other Town Council members should put on their thinking caps and vote to trash the elite practice of backyard garbage collection.

Smoking Bad Weed

How else can you explain the flagrantly unconstitutional law protecting tobacco companies that state lawmakers recently passed?

State lawmakers met in a special session of the N.C. General Assembly last week to pass a law that is unquestionably unconstitutional and a ridiculous waste of time and resources. The law limits the amount N.C. tobacco companies will have to pay in order to appeal lawsuits — whether that lawsuit is being conducted here or Alaska. Members of the General Assembly unconvincedly claim that the law is a strong stand for the little guy who is going to get screwed when tobacco companies start going broke under the weight of exorbitant lawsuits. But they aren't fooling anyone. Gov. Jim Hunt called the session at the special request of cigarette manufacturing companies, and that's certainly who will benefit from this law. Supporters claim that helping these companies will have a trickle-down effect and aid the common farmer. But they apparently didn't care enough about that little farmer to support gubernatorial candidate Rep. Leo Daughtry's attempt at a sunset clause on the law. His law aimed to make cigarette companies buy more N.C. tobacco, a move that really would have a significant impact on the little guy in this whole big mess. But no, God forbid the General Assembly actually demand something of cigarette companies in return for a bill that might as well have been written by Phillip Morris himself.

And God forbid the members of the General Assembly actually have some basic understanding of the U.S. Constitution. North Carolina has absolutely no legal right to place a cap on an appeals process being conducted in the Florida court system. Lawmakers might want to brush up on the section of the Constitution known as the "Full Faith and Credit Clause." The stupidity of the General Assembly is so overwhelming it's almost unbearable — until you remember who's financing their campaigns. The law doesn't really matter because it will undoubtedly be overturned, but lawmakers were just ecstatic at the chance to show their appreciation for their patron saint, Big Tobacco. Cigarette companies are being pounded with lawsuits all across the country. The average tobacco worker is going to bear the brunt of that financial cutback sooner or later. But instead of exploring constructive ways to begin to address the very uncertain future of tobacco in North Carolina, the legislators wasted another session by kowtowing to tobacco's demands and looking like idiots. In plain English, the law is unconstitutional, and state lawmakers already know that. But with elections right around the corner, it sure can't hurt to get in another few points with your biggest donor.



DTH in Search of Diverse Opinions

Diversity itself is not inherently a good thing. Certainly there was some diversity of opinion in Topeka in 1954 as to whether Linda Brown, a black child, should be permitted to attend Monroe Elementary School with a lot of white children. Similarly, there was diversity of practice among business owners under the reign of Jim Crow, some of whom chose to serve blacks and others of whom did not. In a diverse environment, both the best and the worst in human nature has the chance to surface. Though not intrinsically good, diversity — or more specifically, intellectual dissent — is nonetheless absolutely necessary. We need diversity not because people's instincts are comprehensively trustworthy, but because they are so frequently corrupt and so easily confused. In theory, if right and wrong were always self-evident, we wouldn't need a forum for debate such as this opinions page; The Daily Tar Heel could simply report facts for readers to absorb. But because right and wrong, and better and worse, are often difficult to discern, it is important for many people to lend their voices to the expression of their convictions and for many debates to carry on at length until issues become clear. Efforts toward diverse representation occur not only in national politics but at the University level as well. On Friday, several DTH columnists and editorial board members met to discuss the need for the newspaper, especially the editorial page, to express more diverse perspectives — not simply to print more ideas, but better to reflect the variety of convictions held by members of the University community. Our convictions must be evaluated through the reasonable debate and thorough investigation that can (and sometimes even does) take place on the editorial page. Sometimes, however, a natural human eagerness to take the moral high ground leads people to silence dissent rather than to per-



TARA ROBBINS
SMALL PRINT

freely conducted research will demonstrate its absurdity. As evidenced in the meeting about increasing diversity, the DTH takes seriously its role in supporting this kind of interchange, and it offers opportunities for involvement. Each semester, the DTH editorial page editor solicits applications for columnists and editorial board members. If you have ever complained about the content of the back page or about a University issue you wish would receive a little more press, watch for information in the coming weeks on how to apply for some of these positions: **Editorial Board.** The DTH editorial board meets several times per week and discusses news items. **Board members** take turns writing the unsigned editorials that appear to the left of this column. **Columnists.** Columnists have it much easier. We write our columns at home each week and send them to the editorial page editors. Writing for the opinions page entails some commitment and discipline, but of course, there's your picture in the paper to send to mom and dad. Besides that, as Brandon Briscoe and I discovered when talking about the feedback we've gotten on our columns throughout the semester, nearly all of the mail each of us received has come from readers of the opposite sex. **Go figure.** Frivolous commentary on glamorous perks aside, my point is that the DTH opinion page should reflect the varied experiences, perspectives, and hopes of the University community. Dissent is absolutely critical to an intellectually stimulating environment, so if you've got something to say, you should consider yourself invited to join in. Tara Robbins is a graduate student in the Department of English from Millville, N.J. You can reach her at trobbins@unc.edu.

The Daily Tar Heel

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READERS' FORUM

Chancellor Invites Students to Recognize Award-Winning Peers

TO THE EDITOR:
Today some of Carolina's most talented students will be honored at the annual Chancellor's Awards Ceremony. The ceremony is truly a special time for our University community. Although departmental awards are not uncommon, the Chancellor's Awards Ceremony is the only campus-wide gathering to honor students for their outstanding academic and leadership abilities. In addition, the ceremony also recognizes the student-selected teaching award winners. Please consider attending this important event and showing your support for the award winners. The ceremony begins at 3 p.m. in the Great Hall of the Student Union. A reception will follow. I hope to see you today.
Bill McCoy
Interim Chancellor

Ombudsman Correct In Criticizing Paper For Drama 16 Slight

TO THE EDITOR:
In response to Ombudsman Terry Wimmer's column "DTH Handling of Out 'N' About, CAA Policy Screwed Readers," April 6, I am in complete agreement with his assessment of the situation with Professor Charles Mitchell's Drama 16 class. Currently a student in his 1 p.m. Drama 16 class, I was disturbed by The Daily Tar Heel's supplement "Out 'N' About," which deemed Mitchell's class as "Best Class to Do Crossword in." As Wimmer explained, there is no sufficient evidence suggesting that Professor Mitchell's class is indeed a "flake" class. As a student of Mitchell's, he issued his ground rules the first day of the semester to the entire class. One of his rules stated that students could not read or take out a DTH while he is lecturing out of respect for him (which is justifiable). On a couple of occasions, he has

thrown students out of class for violating this rule. So when looking around in class, the majority of students can be seen paying attention to Mitchell. Also, the perception of class being an easy A is false. The tests are harder than those given by an ex-Drama 16 professor (whom I will not identify). The additional coursework (papers, quizzes, etc.) is relevant to Drama 16's status as an introductory course. This course is not Chemistry 61. Trust me, achieving an A is not easy in Mitchell's class. I find it disturbing that a newspaper seeking journalistic integrity would cause harm to a professor's reputation among superiors and peers in his community for a useless category that was not determined by students in his class. I call for the elimination of the category in future editions of The Daily Tar Heel.
Godwin Ogunmefun
Junior
Exercise and Sport Science

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.