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# The Daily Tar Heel

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VICKY ECKENRODE & CATE DOTY  
MANAGING EDITORS

## BOARD EDITORIALS

### Reinvent the Wheel

Chapel Hill Transit often fails to meet residents' needs. Local leaders should heed Carrboro aldermen's suggestion for a total overhaul.

A proposal to make Chapel Hill Transit buses fare-free has degenerated instead into a wholesale debate on the nuts and bolts of the current system.

That's a good thing – and hats off to former Student Body President Nic Heinke and the Carrboro Board of Aldermen for igniting a debate that has needed to happen for years.

Here's hoping that UNC students and the Chapel Hill Town Council jump into the fray too. Council members, aldermen and UNC officials will meet Wednesday for more talks.

Last week, Carolyn Elfland, UNC's associate vice chancellor for auxiliary services, briefed the aldermen with a plan Heinke championed last summer that would make local buses fare-free to students.

Heinke's idea has since led local officials to re-examine the transit system overall.

There's no better time. With transit authorities searching for a new director, local leaders could use the opportunity to find someone who's got the smarts, experience and interest to radically redesign the system overall.

No one can deny that the transit system is outdated and inconvenient. Many routes don't run late at night, meaning students studying at the library or employees working overtime can't get home or to their cars.

What's worse, waiting for the bus wastes people's time.

Many buses come only every half-hour – meaning that valuable work or study time

gets wasted standing at the bus stop.

On top of that, the routes take too long. "Nobody would design the system we have now," Alderman Jacquelyn Gist told The Chapel Hill Herald. "Some days, I can walk to work faster than I can ride there."

Until transit officials fix the system's problems, a fare-free system isn't worth a dime. As Alderman Mark Dorosin put it, "It won't build up ridership for people it doesn't serve," he told The Daily Tar Heel. "All the people I've talked to about it say the problems are about the level of service."

To be sure, improving service and offering free fares are issues that need study. Changes will cost money – and who pays for those changes will be yet another kink to work out.

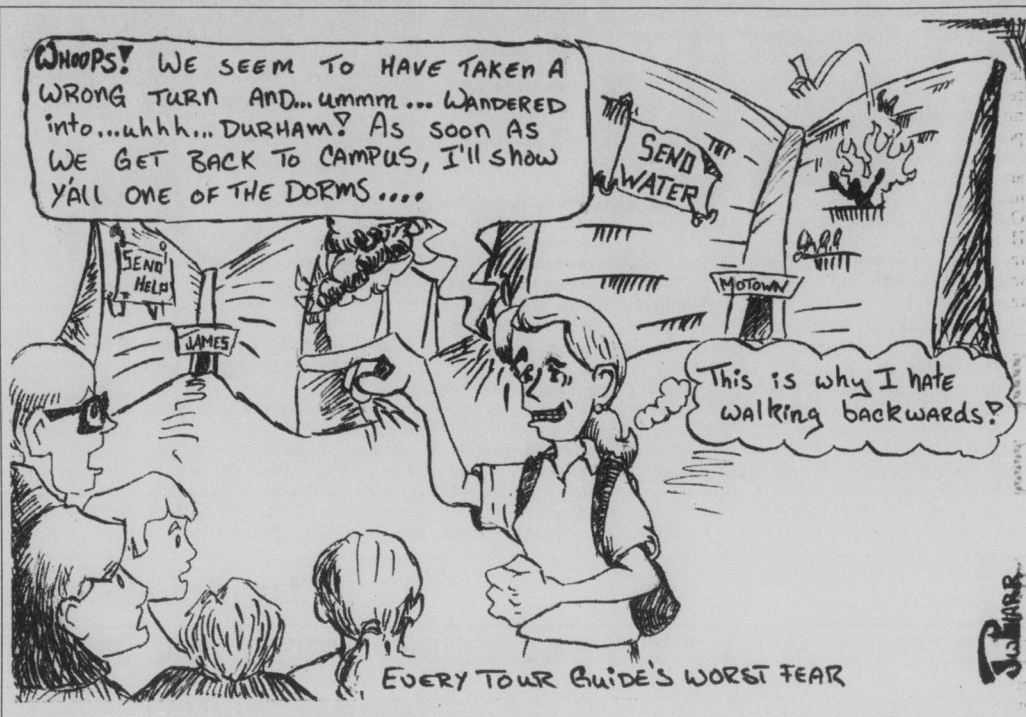
Just as local leaders need to re-examine the philosophy of transit service, Elfland said, they also need to take another look at the philosophy behind how they pay for it.

"We need to think of the transit system as a communitywide system," she told the Herald. "In the past, we've looked at the pennies. We've made sure that each of the three was paying all of its pennies. Then we looked at what is each group's fair share."

As Elfland acknowledged, it's more complicated than that.

The status quo be damned – local leaders owe it to their constituents to get into what promises to be a difficult, heated debate.

After all, the results could mean fundamental improvements in transit service.



### Housing Officials Need Decency

One of our brighter Tar Heels, no doubt an English major, had a little fun around here while most folks were relaxing elsewhere.

He – and it was no doubt a "he" – supplied an extra, artistically placed "SH" to signs near the Union that read, "This Summer, It Begins."

How clever, huh? Or rather, how dumb – and not on the part of the vandal. You would think University officials would have learned about that little trick years ago.

Surely there's a notation in the UNC Administration Handbook that says, "Employ caution when using the word 'it' on a sign." It's probably right next to the chapter titled, "Graft, Corruption and You."

More seriously, our graffiti pal has inadvertently coined what would be a great slogan for almost-Chancellor James Moeser, who will officially sit behind the big desk in August.

He ought to cover the signs' insignificant description of the Union renovation with a large picture of himself decked out in black sunglasses. That's the sort of "take-charge" attitude we need in a chancellor.

And the first item of business he needs to take charge of is the Department of University Housing, whose "sh-t" seems to begin every summer. We've all heard, or more likely experienced, the horror stories year after year.

The nightmares probably date back as far as the Civil War days when a few dorms were used as stables. Old East and Old West residents had to fight housing officials over the integration of horses long before women were even allowed on campus. They still haven't gotten rid of the smell.

Today, however, the department is in dire need of a new director. Last we heard, the applicant pool lacked a qualified yet charismatic candidate.

Forget charisma. We don't need someone who can shovel the BS along with the HS in Old West. We need common sense.

Common sense not to announce barely a month before graduation that many seniors



BRANDON BRISCOE  
VOICE OF REASON

would have to leave their dorms to give construction workers an extra week to handle jobs that they won't have finished by August anyway.

The Carmichael Residence Hall construction fell though, but you're up a creek without your dorm room if you live in Whitehead, Morrison or Hojo.

And we're now left to wonder what work is going undone in Carmichael.

Either it was important enough to evict seniors and needs completion, or students should never have been hassled in the first place.

Yes, we need common sense not to charge Morrison residents, who have suffered enough this year, for the water fountains ripped off the walls.

While such mayhem is hardly acceptable behavior, you can't very well hold the entire 1,000-person dorm responsible. And yes, call it a "dorm" – even that is generous.

Surely, money for such inevitable repairs is budgeted into the rental fees. If not, what the heck are we all paying for? And whatever happened to insurance?

Indeed, we need common sense not to hold annual open houses for dorms. I'm not making this up – the housing folks spent your money on food and materials for open houses so students could visit dorms to pick one out for next year.

As if we've never seen the possibilities. As if we could actually get into the dorm we wanted. As if anyone knew this was going on.

In fact, the program was so poorly adver-

tised that one resident assistant told me she didn't even learn that she was assigned to staff the open house until the day it took place in her hall.

And we could stand for enough common sense to realize that you can't very well expect students to come racing out of their rooms into freezing weather at 3 a.m. on a school night when the fire alarm sounds for the umpteenth time in the past week.

The widely spread rumor of a \$500 fine finally died, so officials decided the best plan was to hold criminal charges over our heads if we were slow to leave the building.

This, apparently, was a better plan than cleaning up wiring or encasing alarms in plastic cases to prevent technical false alarms.

This, surely, was better than sending an e-mail to residents explaining why each alarm was tripped. If residents had known there was a serial arsonist on the loose, they might have been quicker to jump ship.

No, the department doesn't have common sense, nor does it have a leader.

Instead, the current housing officials hide behind euphemisms like "residence halls" and "the Department of Housing and Residential Education" and "the Southern Region."

You can call things whatever you like, but that doesn't change the deplorable conditions many students put up with.

True, it's impossible to keep everyone happy.

True, students are largely responsible for the upkeep of their living conditions.

True, students must keep things clean and quiet and that not.

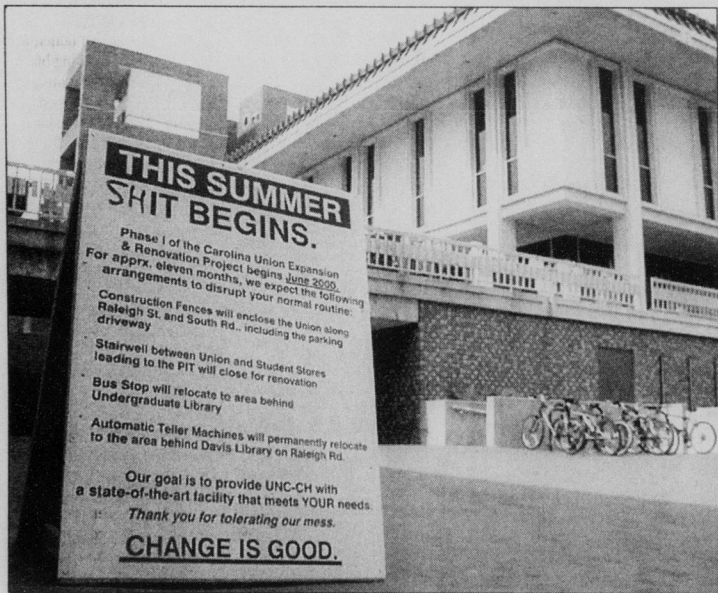
But this doesn't excuse the poor job administrators have done.

South Building once housed students. Let's hope it will soon house a chancellor who'll be embarrassed by the housing department he inherits.

Brandon Briscoe is a junior journalism and mass communication major from New Orleans. Send tips and housing horror stories to [brandon\\_briscoe@unc.edu](mailto:brandon_briscoe@unc.edu).

### Omen of Truth

We couldn't have said it better ourselves. We can't wait for a bigger, better Student Union, but meanwhile, life will be hellish.



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### READERS' FORUM

#### DTH Editorial Writer Should Re-examine Facts About Army

TO THE EDITOR:  
I am compelled to respond to Jonathan Chaney's April 20 editorial notebook, "Peace-Loving Noncents," in which he states, "Chapel Hill residents are hopelessly out of touch when it comes to the necessity of U.S. military spending."

Most advocating reducing the Pentagon's budget endorse higher pay for those in service and increased benefits for veterans that include adequate health care. However, those organizations seeking cuts want decreased funding for the research, development and deployment of weapons of mass destruction, produced by the U.S. military-industrial-political complex, and increased funding to meet domestic needs.

The U.S. budget of \$1.39 trillion for fiscal year 2001 allocates 23 percent for current and 24 percent for past military funding, with 33 percent for human resources.

Military spending for 2000 jumped \$20 billion over 1999, to

\$290 billion; \$325 billion is budgeted for 2001. Who are all the U.S. enemies with weapons to match our stockpiles? How secure is a nation that has up to two million homeless per year (22 percent estimated to be veterans) and where 31 million adults and children go hungry every day? Do thousands of nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert make the United States more secure?

I suggest Chaney and others interested attend the talk titled "America's Future: Confrontation or Cooperation?" by Eugene J. Carroll Jr., rear admiral U.S. Navy (retired) and deputy director of the Center for Defense Information, at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the School of Social Work in the Tate-Turner Kuralt Building and ask questions.

The Center for Defense Information is the nation's foremost independent military research organization, one composed of retired military persons who are called upon by Congress to testify on military matters.

#### Person Who Leaked Names of Candidates Should Be Punished

TO THE EDITOR:  
Now that we have a new chancellor, it is time to go after the miscreant who leaked the names of some top candidates last fall. This caused the search to be extended for several months and cost the University thousands of dollars which could have been better spent.

If the University does not already know who the culprit is, a serious investigation should be done and a civil action should be brought against him or her to recover actual damages plus punitive damages. I would imagine the culprit is badly disappointed with the results of the search.

J.E. Williams  
Class of 1950  
Carrboro

#### Stay Tuned ...

... to this space for more information on how to become a columnist, editorial board member or cartoonist at The Daily Tar Heel next fall.

Margaret Misch  
Member  
Peace Action



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](mailto:editdesk@unc.edu).

The editorials are approved by the majority of the editorial board, which is composed of the editor, editorial page editor, assistant editorial page editor, cartoon editor and seven editorial writers. The Daily Tar Heel is published by the DTH Publishing Corp., a non-profit North Carolina corporation. Monday-Friday, according to the University calendar.

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ISSN #10709436