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# The Daily Tar Heel

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## BOARD EDITORIALS

### Behind Closed Doors

The recently announced UNC-town committee should open its meetings to the public.

UNC and town leaders have taken a long-overdue step in improving town-gown relations, which have been rocky in recent months due to concerns about issues such as UNC's Master Plan for campus growth.

At the Franklin Street post office Thursday, Chapel Hill Mayor Rosemary Waldorf and Chancellor James Moeser announced the formation of a new committee composed of Town Council members and UNC representatives. The committee, which will start meeting regularly in November, will advise Waldorf and Moeser on issues of mutual importance to the town and the University.

But while the concept is great — it's about time the two sides started coming together regularly to air their differences and find some common ground — it comes with a big catch. The majority of the group's discussions will be held behind closed doors.

This infringes on the public's right to know and likely violates the state's Open Meetings Law. Without question, the meetings should be completely open.

Waldorf says that the public is welcome to forward discussion topics to the committee, but that community members will not be allowed in the meetings. The reason given for this decision was that committee members need to be able to speak candidly about

the issues. But the need to air opinions freely is not a reason compelling enough to justify closing the doors on discussions so vital to the future of the town and the University.

Citizens deserve to know whether and how their concerns are being handled by the committee. But with closed meetings, it is likely that much discussed in those meetings will never make it past Waldorf's or Moeser's desk.

If concern for public knowledge is not enough to convince Waldorf and Moeser to open the meetings, then perhaps the fact that their decision stands on questionable legal ground will. North Carolina's Open Meetings Law requires an appointed body with an advisory function to some level of state government to allow the public to attend its meetings. Other joint town-University committees, such as the Airport Advisory Committee and the Coordinating and Consulting Committee, hold open meetings.

But Town Attorney Ralph Karpinos told The News & Observer that the group does not have to abide by the law because it is not going to give advice to the Town Council as a group and will not make a committee report.

That is a very fine distinction to make, as Karpinos admitted. Instead of splitting legal hairs and risking a lawsuit, Moeser and Waldorf should do what's best for the groups they represent and open the meetings.

### Speaking Green

The N.C. gubernatorial candidates need to make environmental issues a top priority.

Amid the hype about prescription drugs and education this election season, environmental issues have gone virtually ignored.

This especially has been the case in North Carolina's gubernatorial race between front-runners Mike Easley and Richard Vinroot, and the state Sierra Club has taken notice.

Although the club has begrudgingly endorsed the Democratic candidate, Easley, many members feel as if their choice is simply the lesser of two evils, and based on the lack of attention the environment has been getting in this state, they're right.

In a region that is plagued by flood damage, urban sprawl, suspect hog waste regulation, bad air and mass polluting of bodies of water like the Neuse River, the gubernatorial candidates need to make the environment a major priority — both on the campaign trail and if they take office.

One of the main reasons that neither of the candidates has been talking about ecological issues is that to do so would alienate a percentage of the population. Vinroot or Easley don't want to be seen as too pro-environment because if they did, they would alienate themselves from the big purses of big industry and some pro-business voters.

On the other hand, the candidates also have been careful not to say anything against environmental regulations, so that they can present the façade of actually caring for the environment to the average voter. What this amounts to is a bunch of nothing, and the people of North Carolina are the big losers.

Another chief rationale explaining why the candidates haven't been forcing the issue of the environment is that they are busy courting the crucial votes of the elderly, thus explaining the emphasis placed on prescription drug prices in this election. Somewhat understandably, the environment doesn't rank among the elderly population's top priorities.

The candidates' lack of interest in the environment perhaps also is prompted by the fact that those who care the most about it, the youth, usually don't vote, giving the candidates no political incentive to address the topic.

Though this cowardly behavior isn't surprising from two politicians, their lack of attention to the environment is inexcusable. Environmental issues affect us all and should be among the top priorities for the next leader of our state. Easley and Vinroot seem to be forgetting that without a safe environment, all other issues are simply moot points.

### Potential Real World Commencement Speakers



"We (were) looking at candidates of diverse backgrounds and ideas. (We want) anyone that can convey a positive message to the senior class that charges them as they enter the real world." — Howard Tyler  
Chairman of the Senior Class Communications Committee

### Remember to Mind Your Manners

Last week I began this column and accidentally left my disk in an Undergrad computer. When I returned, I could only conclude that my disk had sprouted legs and run away.

But I'd slathered my name and phone number on the sticky tab in a billboard-sized font, and I was sure someone would return my intellectual property.

Yet, I still have no disk. Among other things, I decided to put socializing in neutral and immerse myself in that place with a lot of books called Davis Library.

Last Thursday evening I was diligently devoting myself to studying when this chatterbox sat down nearby and began a lengthy dissertation on her social life.

In all honesty, if you were like me and in the library on Thursday, you probably didn't have much of a social life to be talking about, anyway.

Several nights later it was the same thing again. You'd think common sense would be a given in this town; however, it's more like a Visa commercial: priceless if you can find it anywhere.

So let's begin with library etiquette. You do not need a loud mouth, a bullhorn or subwoofer to blend in. If you take a look around, you'll notice it's not a bar or Lenoir Dining Hall; it's a place to — oh my God — study. So if you need to talk about yourself for an hour, please avoid the library.

By the same token, people studying in Lenoir have no right to be aggravated; there's a proper place for everything.

Next up: the cell phone. It's OK to take a call every once in a while, if you can be quiet about it. I'm certainly guilty of the occasional ring, but if you look like you're auditioning for a 1-800-COLLECT commercial, then there's a problem. And despite popular belief, "coolness" is not measured by how long you can hold your phone to your ear. Cell phones



ANNE MARIE TEAGUE  
GLAMOROUS TRASH

have been around for about a decade, and I think most of us have one.

Besides cell phones being the newest fad in earrings, it seems that our cars have sped us into an ultimate race for rudeness.

My favorite people are the ones who plaster their social and political agendas all over the ass of their car in the form of bumper stickers. It always seems like the owners of bumper stickers I disagree with are the ones who slam on brakes and never use a turn signal. But it's the "tease" turn signal that really gets me. It's like, "I'm too cool to fully signal, so instead I'll just tease you and let you question whether you need glasses."

Regardless of what people think about this mini-metropolis, it is an obstacle course. We don't need impatient drivers, but this chaotic environment fosters it. The day that I don't have to play horizontal limbo between a series of orange-and-white barrels will be joyous.

But on the same token, drivers don't need to be toyed with. By who, you ask? By those power-wielding, panic-inducing pedestrians, of course.

Most pedestrians are either courteous or fearful of death, but there are always a few out to provoke me. So I'd like to help them be mindful of their manners.

Those white lines, painted about every 10 inches in the street, well, you walk in them. They are called crosswalks. Unless you want

to risk your life and my sanity, please don't continue to jump in front of my car like rabid jackrabbits.

But what really makes no sense is that the University graffitied roadways with crosswalks just about everywhere there isn't a bus stop. Apparently, the word "planning" is not in its working vocabulary. With the tragic accidents of recent years, drivers deserved to be punished, but now pedestrians have a runaway ticket to confidently fling themselves into the road while drivers get the joy of slamming on brakes and being choked by their seat belts.

What is most troubling is the undeniable increase in functional illiteracy. All over town there are these bright signs that no one reads. They say "don't walk," and would you believe it, translated in the English language that means, "don't walk."

Why is it so hard to be courteous? Are we simply too self-centered?

Or does it just not matter because it can't be given some screwy politically correct term? Does anyone remember Robert, the friendly U-bus driver who used to be a mentor like Chef is on South Park, saying, "Good morning to all the ladies and gentlemen on the bus?"

You freshman probably don't remember because it only took one schmuck to force the town to prevent the kindness of one individual who was a benefit to my daily U-bus ride.

And what's happened? We've forgotten how to be ladies and gentlemen.

You know, you can be a courteous person without tangling your hair or your social and political views.

So let's all see if we can't be ladies and gentlemen, hmmmokay?

Anne Marie Teague is a senior business administration major from Lumberton. E-mail her with suggestions on driving and how to spray her two-gallon Super Soaker at unruly pedestrians at [teague@email.unc.edu](mailto:teague@email.unc.edu).

## READERS' FORUM

### Pledges' Attitude Toward Rape Crisis Center Volunteer Disappointing

TO THE EDITOR:

As an Orange County Rape Crisis Center volunteer since 1997, I am asked each fall and spring to talk to fraternity and sorority pledges about date rape, sexual harassment and other related issues. These discussions help inform the prospective brothers and sisters about safety, prevention and community resources.

I have found these sessions to be productive and, at the very least, well-received. However, the Wednesday before last, I was appalled by the comments directed at my co-presenter and me.

The hecking was not restricted to one gender, for I was shocked to find the women in the group either indifferent or supportive of the sophomore remarks and outbursts during the presentation. The environment the pledges created totally undermined the purpose of this session and moreover, it ironically provided an occasion for precisely the kind of sexual misconduct that we were there to prevent. Although the pledges' comments might seem like harmless humor, it is exactly this kind of attitude that leads to stronger sexual harassment. Once these pledges are inducted into the fraternities and sororities,

it is common that groups breed violence.

These groups of students were tired and restless during the session, but by no means drunk. I am concerned that if these pledges' respect for others is so diminished by just being in a large group, the added effects of alcohol common in the Greek environment will compromise their already marred decision-making ability.

The Greek community must take action to ensure these volunteers are treated with respect and civility, but most of all, ensure the safety of the people who will come in contact with these future brothers and sisters. These pledges need to take responsibility for their actions, and if not, they should not have the "honor" of joining the group they so desire.

In the end, I am sorely disappointed at them for letting something like this happen. It is insulting, and I left that night feeling angry, but mostly violated, by these pledges. We must remember that soon these will be the older brothers and sisters of future generations of pledges. The fraternities and sororities must realize that if they allow this type of lurid behavior to come into their communities, they are only giving more fuel to their already tainted reputation.

Natalie Cheung  
Class of 1999

The length rule was waived.

### Get Your Sports Scores, Event Information In the Pit Starting Today

TO THE EDITOR:

Starting today, the Carolina Athletic Association will operate a sports ticker on the front right side of Student Stores facing the Pit. The ticker will recognize UNC's athletic teams and keep students informed of upcoming campus and athletic events.

Many of UNC's Olympic sports teams are among the best in the country. UNC regularly competes for the Sears Cup, which is awarded each year to the school with the most successful overall athletic programs. Last weekend, UNC's field hockey team clinched the ACC regular-season championship, the UNC volleyball team is currently in first place in the ACC and both our men's and women's soccer teams are currently ranked in the top five nationally. However, students too often are not aware of the accomplishments of many of our athletes. The sports ticker will recognize the accomplishments of our athletes and promote upcoming contests.

In addition, students can use the ticker to stay abreast of other activities and special events, such as the Homecoming concert and activities, basketball ticket distribution, Beat Dook Week and the Michael Hooker Memorial 5k.

Students, check out the sports ticker in the Pit for all the latest UNC sports scores, schedules, events and policies.

Michael Songer  
Special Projects Coordinator  
Carolina Athletic Association

### Errors in Israel Column Show Author's Lack Of Knowledge on Subject

TO THE EDITOR:

Anne Fawcett's Oct. 18 column "Ties to Israel Make America Poor Mediator" describing Israel's relationship vis-a-vis the Palestinian Arabs contains no fewer than five historical and factual errors, and reveals her poor knowledge on the subject.

The "original plan" for dividing the region today known as Israel and Jordan to which Ms. Fawcett alludes was approved by the United Nations in 1947 in the form of Resolution 181, and would have provided both Arabs and Jews with respective homelands. But this resolution was rejected by the Arabs (who objected to any Jewish presence in the region), not by the Jews, and the former, including the countries of Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq, launched a military offensive in order to abort the Jewish state at its internationally approved birth.

Approximately 700,000 Jews were expelled from Arab countries as a result of the fighting; this figure is equal to the number of Arabs who fled Israel. While Israel repelled the attack, Jordan obtained control of eastern Jerusalem, including the Old City. During the next 19 years, the Jordanian Arab forces demolished 58 synagogues in the Old City, uprooted Jewish cemeteries and prevented Jews from visiting their holy sites on the pain of death. Israel liberated the Old City during the 1967 defensive war, when it was again attacked by Jordanian, Egyptian and Syrian forces, but following the way allowed the Muslim Waqf (religious authority) continued administrative control over the Temple Mount.

Today, Jews are not permitted to pray there, and Israeli police arrest those attempting to do so. Further, the United Nation's current disapproval of Israeli defense policies is nothing new; of 690 General Assembly resolutions before 1990, 429 were directed against Israel.

For a state that resides in 0.0001 percent of the total Arab lands (it is smaller than the state of Maryland), Israel receives a disproportionate amount of the world's hatred.

David B. Hoffman  
Department of Biology  
Class of 1999



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).