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The Daily Tar Heel

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BOARD EDITORIALS

Out in the Open

Moeser and Waldorf made the right choice by reversing their decision on the new town-gown committee meetings.

The new task force formed to discuss issues of mutual concern to the town of Chapel Hill and the University now has decided to open its meetings to the general public.

Making the meetings between representatives of the University and Chapel Hill communities open to the public was a smart move by Chancellor James Moeser and Mayor Rosemary Waldorf. Not only will the people now not have to guess about what goes on behind closed doors, but the newly opened meetings also will give more legitimacy to whatever suggestions the committee puts forth.

But now that Moeser and Waldorf are allowing the public into the meetings, those who are now permitted to attend the meetings must take advantage of the decision by doing so.

The people of Chapel Hill must convey the particular concerns they have in controlling the growth of UNC to the board. Within the University community, off-campus students especially should remain involved because the town previously has entertained notions of limiting the number of nonrelated persons that can live together, among other ideas to limit students' off-campus options.

Keeping these meetings closed would have been a great error on the part of local leaders. It would have resulted in people feeling alien-

ated from discussions of many issues that directly affect them. And when considering topics that place the town and University at odds, such as the Master Plan, it is best to keep these discussions in the public eye. Although public comments probably will not be allowed at the meetings, the open-door policy will allow concerned residents to make more educated suggestions to the committee.

Furthermore, opening the meetings has the benefit of saving the town unnecessary legal complications. The proposed closed meetings might have come into conflict with North Carolina's Open Meetings Law. A legal mess would further take away from the trust given by the residents of Chapel Hill and the University community to the Town Council and the University's representatives.

Moeser's and Waldorf's realization that public confidence in both leaders and the process as a whole will indeed be crucial while discussing topics such as affordable housing and the Master Plan was on target, and closing the meetings likely would diminish that confidence.

But both groups now have the well-deserved opportunity to know what goes down at these meetings, and they need to take full advantage of them.

Political Party

When elections such as this week's attract only slightly more than half the voters, the need for an Election Day holiday is obvious.

Regardless of Tuesday's elections results (or lack thereof), it is a given that on a good day, maybe half of the voting-age population actually will participate.

For the 1996 presidential election, the turnout fell below 50 percent for the first time since the early 1920s - when women had just received the vote and had not yet begun to use it as frequently as men. Last year not one of the eleven states that called their residents to the polls managed to get a majority to vote. Even this year, only slightly more than half of the voters turned out.

A simple but effective change, however, could be made in election timing. An ordinary act of Congress could move Election Day to a Saturday or make it a holiday, thereby giving more people more time to vote.

An 1872 law established the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November as Election Day. At that point in history it made little difference whether elections were on Saturday or Tuesday.

Only Sunday would have been a day free of work, but with elections in the late 19th century being occasions for drinking and gambling, that option was out of the question in such a religious country.

Unfortunately, if Election Day were changed to Saturday now, there probably would be some resistance from religious

minorities who observe it as the Sabbath.

A realistic and worthy idea would be to declare Election Day a national holiday. This probably would be resisted for economic reasons. A better solution would be to move Election Day to the second Tuesday of November and combine it with Veterans Day, traditionally celebrated Nov. 11.

This would send a strong signal about the importance our country attaches to voting. And what better way could there be to honor those who fought for democratic rights than for Americans to vote on their day?

But some critics welcome, rather than fear, the decline in turnout rates in America. If people do not vote, they say, citizens must be satisfied with the government. There is a certain logic to this view, because if nonvoters were extremely disgruntled with our leaders, they would undoubtedly take some political action.

However, to argue that nonvoters are content with government just because they aren't actively opposing it stretches the logic too far. One of the major reasons for not voting is many people simply don't have enough time in their daily routine.

Election Day needs to be a celebrated event, as it is in other countries. Business would not go under by suspending a single day of production, and making a national election holiday would bolster the democratic process.



Election 2000 Insanity Recapped

For the seven of you who read this column on a regular basis, you might recall a reference I made last Friday to wearing an ornate, scarlet letter "A" in front of a 17th century Puritan community.

That morning, my "Great American Novels" professor read the column aloud at the beginning of class. Upon completing the reading, Professor Zug smiled, looked up through his glasses and said how very pleased he was that his lectures obviously had influenced one of his students.

Frankly, however, I am still thoroughly baffled as to why my professor thinks he had anything at all to do with a reference I made to a bad Demi Moore movie.

If anyone can clear this up, please call me at home.

On an entirely different note, I would like to briefly discuss this past Election Day.

Tuesday was, quite simply, an amazing moment in the history of this great democracy. Certainly, I can envision myself telling my grandchildren about it in the future.

"Grandson, 60 years ago, while I was a junior at Carolina, the most amazing thing happened on Election Day, and I'd love more than anything to share it with you."

"Grandpa, can I go play Nintendo?"

"OK."

My family always has been a bit dysfunctional.

In any event, a quick recap of Election Day 2000.

As a New Yorker, I had two incredibly important elections to keep an eye on. Certainly, there was the race for the White House. There also was, however, the battle for the Senate seat left vacant by the retirement of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a man who has faithfully served his state and country since the War of 1812.

When I first got the news Tuesday evening that Hillary Clinton had beaten out U.S. Rep. Rick Lazio in New York, I immediately called my parents to see what they thought of our new senator.

"Hi Mom, it's me."

"Joey? Hi. Listen, we can't talk right now."



JOE MONACO
TRAILING AT THE HALF

Your father's on the phone with the real estate agent, and he thinks he's found a cozy, two-bedroom place over in Jersey. Anyway, we still have a lot of packing to do before the movers come, so we'll call you tomorrow when we get settled."

And then Mom hung up.

Well, that's just peachy. Thanks to this disingenuous, transparent, self-serving first lady of the United States, my parents and I have been forced to flee our homeland and our people, in search of a better life in the Meadowlands.

I feel like a Tutsi.

In fact, my folks are organizing an armed resistance movement in Uganda as we speak.

For the life of me, I cannot see how New Yorkers turned down an enthusiastic, local kid from Long Island and brought in a phony carpetbagger who never has lived in the state.

But that's what we did.

"I'm the first president in history with a wife in the Senate," said a smiling President Clinton on Tuesday night. "And I like it."

Of course the president likes it. It'll be a hell of a lot easier to pick up interns while the old lady is up in New York.

In any event, Tuesday evening was not a complete wash. In fact, with the exception of Hillary's invasion, I thoroughly enjoyed Election Day 2000.

Certainly, the drama surrounding the race for the White House was, in itself, enough to bring a dead man back to life.

However, the best part of the entire evening was, without question, the television coverage of the election.

Do not doubt for a single moment that Tom Brokaw, Dan Rather, Peter Jennings and Bernard Shaw absolutely live for presidential elections. Elections make them giddy. To these guys, Election Day is like Christmas.

Well, maybe not for Jennings - Canadians don't celebrate Christmas.

But when all was said and done, the big guns and their respective networks did not let us down. The television coverage was incredible. In fact, it was so entertaining that I had an extremely difficult time deciding which channel to watch.

NBC, for instance, had Russert diagramming the nickel defense on a dry-erase board. At the same time, Fox newscasters stunned the world by using multisyllable words and correctly locating Wisconsin on a map. And in what proved to be the most dynamic move by a network in recent years, CNN brought an orangutan into the studio to help Bernie Shaw and Jeff Greenfield analyze exit poll results in Florida. (Unfortunately, Shaw and Greenfield repeatedly ignored the recommendations of the orangutan.)

Certainly, we cannot overlook some of the pearls of wisdom provided by these media giants during the course of the evening.

Brokaw: "So what you're saying then, Tim, is that if Vice President Gore wins more electoral votes than Governor Bush, Gore will win the election?"

Russert: "That's correct. And oddly enough, Tom, if the governor wins more electoral votes than Gore, Gore actually will lose the election."

Brokaw: "Imagine that."
Russert: "Would you like me to draw a diagram on my dry-erase board?"

Brokaw: "No."
Russert: "Why not?"
Brokaw: "Call CNN. We need to consult the orangutan."

Joe Monaco is a junior journalism and mass communication and political science major who is looking for some good restaurants in New Jersey. E-mail him with questions or comments at jmonaco@email.unc.edu.

BAROMETER

Sweet Home ...
Alabama voters repealed a 99-year-old ban on interracial marriage Tuesday, bringing the state into the 20th century at long last.

Art or Science?
The creator of a glowing bunny whose genes were spliced with those of a jellyfish visited Duke University on Monday to debate the ethics of such a thing. Ethical or not, glow-in-the-dark pets are pretty cool.

'Indecision 2000'
Comedy Central's "The Daily Show's" name for its elections coverage was right on target. At this point, all we can say is "Can we get a president, please?!" We don't even care who anymore.

Sunshine State
Despite the fact that this election continues to be a pain in the you-know-what, you couldn't have picked a prettier place than Florida to screw it up.

TAR HEEL QUOTABLES

"When you think of the Republican Party, you think of Jesse Helms, and I don't think he's too well-liked in (the) black community."

REP. MICKY MICHAUX, D-DURHAM
Not to mention the public at large.

"This was the first time (the new online voting system) ran, and I don't imagine (problems) happening again."

ELECTIONS BOARD CHAIRMAN JEREMY TUCHMAYER

Predicting the future success of the online voting system that had its debut Wednesday. Don't speak too soon ...

"People will elect the candidate they want to sit down and have a beer with."

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR ALISON SCHAEFER
Yet another argument in favor of returning to the good old days of monarchy.

"We'll just have to wait and see."

POLITICAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR THAD BEYLE
Commenting earlier this week on the fact that this year's close race in the polls might or might not affect voters in the presidential election. Little did he know he would be summing up the outcome as well.

READERS' FORUM

Chancellor Moeser Thanks Supporters Of Bond Referendum

TO THE EDITOR:

On behalf of everyone at Carolina - faculty, staff, students and even future students - thank you for so overwhelmingly supporting the University when casting your votes Nov. 7 for the \$3.1 billion bond referendum. By placing your confidence and trust in both the university and community college systems, you have invested wisely in the future of North Carolina.

The voting tallies represent a remarkable vote of confidence in the work all of us do in Chapel Hill each day. I wish to commend Student Body President Brad Matthews and his chief of staff, Chris McClure, for their tireless efforts to shine the spotlight on the bonds. Those of you who took advantage of the experimental "no excuse" polling sites and voted early at the Morehead Building have senior Jessica Triche to thank for three years of hard work to make that convenience possible.

Carolina will receive nearly \$500 million to fund the renovation and repair of existing buildings as well as construct new buildings that are cen-

tral to our mission of teaching, research and public service. Now UNC can accept its fair share of the enrollment surge expected across the university system in the next decade. We will have the means to modernize 120 lecture halls and classrooms so that 21st century students can learn in a 21st century environment. And our faculty, whose research produces the new knowledge that will affect the life of every North Carolinian, will have the laboratory and scientific space they need to do their jobs even better.

You, the voters, have unlocked this University's future by supporting the bond referendum, which will return benefits to our state for decades to come. I reiterate my pledge to North Carolinians to take that investment and triple it with private support through future fund raising. Thanks again for your support of Carolina and public higher education.

James Moeser
Chancellor

Tuesday's Election Shows Importance Of Our Right to Vote

TO THE EDITOR:

As the election results come in and

the campus nervously watches CNN, we all realize that this is a moment that will go down in history books. There is indeed a tremendous sense of excitement to be living through a period that one day our children will study in government classes.

However, as we await the results, I think we should take a moment to reflect on this election and its possible impacts on elections in the future.

With the results in Florida only a few thousand votes apart, one can no longer say, "One vote isn't going to change anything." I am sure Tuesday at least 2,000 Floridians thought their vote wasn't really going to matter.

I hope they are kicking themselves today. Voter apathy disgusted me yesterday; today it makes me nauseous. The next president of our country will be determined with a margin of less than 1 percent of the voter turnout in Florida, a few thousand people. This should be a wake-up call to all those who said, "My vote won't change anything."

Whatever the results of this election, I'll be happy if it teaches Americans the importance of exercising their right to vote.

Katie Good
Sophomore
English



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