



ERIN MENDELL

School Board Mustn't Dodge Growth Issues

The best way to deal with any problem is to just ignore it. At least that's the example the Chapel Hill-Carrboro and Orange County school boards are setting.

A proposed ordinance, the Schools Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, would require developers to get school board permission to build before taking their requests to town boards or the Board of Commissioners.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro Board of Education and the Orange County Board of Commissioners are the only boards considering the ordinance now.

The goal of the proposed ordinance is to alleviate school overcrowding.

I can't argue with the goal.

Under the ordinance, school boards would consider whether the schools serving an area a developer wants to build in have enough space to support the new students that new homes would bring to the schools.

While the goal of the proposed ordinance is a noble one, giving school boards power in determining development is only avoiding the problem of overcrowded schools.

It's not the best solution.

One of the attractive things about living in Orange County is the school systems.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro is arguably the best school district in the state, and Orange County Schools is also a high-quality district.

Halting development to try to stop overcrowding of those school systems is like hoarding two good school systems and not letting new people use them.

People are going to want to move here so their kids can get a good education, and the school district should be able to grow and change with the community.

Running away from the problem by just not letting too many people in is too passive.

School overcrowding is a problem everywhere.

If Orange County's districts deal with it by keeping people out, they're just pushing the problem elsewhere.

In North Carolina "elsewhere" is most likely a school system under much more financial stress than one of our local ones.

The proposed ordinance seems almost like an elitist attempt to save a good school system from experiencing the same problems the rest of North Carolina's schools are experiencing.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools has an overcrowding commission that is considering other solutions as well. The school board presented a list of options Thursday night at its meeting.

As The News & Observer reported Thursday, the options are changing the schools children in certain neighborhoods go to, relocating some kindergarten and exceptional education classes, increasing class size at Scroggs Elementary School (which has a lower student-to-teacher ratio than the other schools in the district) and adding mobile classroom units to overcrowded schools. There also are the options of moving the fifth-grade students at McDougle Elementary School to Seawell Middle School, leasing outside space for classrooms or programs for overcrowded schools and creating incentives at schools with open classroom space.

None of these options are entirely desirable. No one wants to go to school in a double-wide. And God knows middle school should take up as little of someone's life as possible.

But at least they're options, and at least they're not aimed at keeping people out.

That said, town planning is always a good idea, and it would be valuable for the school boards to act as consultants when developers ask town boards or the commissioners to let them build.

But they shouldn't have official power over it. Giving school boards the power to deny developers' requests to build is giving them power outside their jurisdiction.

Developments do get political, so board members should stick to dealing with school problems and stop running from them.

In a gesture that demonstrates both his gratitude and strength, Tolchin related his experiences with the recent publication of "Blow the House Down"

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Community, Campus Dance in 'Wonderland'

By JENNY MCLENDON
Staff Writer

The winter weather outside was cold Thursday night, but at Carolina Campus Civitan's "Winter Wonderland," the dance floor was hot.

The dance was one of two hosted each year by CCC in cooperation with The ARC of Orange County, formerly known as The Association of Retarded Citizens. It aimed to give the mentally handicapped and UNC students the opportunity to interact.

About 80 guests from the two organizations had an opportunity to showcase their dance moves in the Union Cabaret while enjoying food and friends.

CCC, the UNC chapter of Campus Civitan, boasts 65 members and is involved in community service projects on campus, around Chapel Hill and Durham, and in eastern North Carolina.

Members said CCC dances in the past have been well-received by participants. "We've been doing this for several years, and we've had a great response," said Kevin Chapman, CCC co-president. "It's a really great way to bring mentally handicapped members of the community to campus."

Organizers said many of the adults affiliated with The ARC live in group homes and don't always have an opportunity for social interaction. "A lot of these individuals really look forward to and enjoy getting dressed up for these events," said Kim Costello, community relations coordinator for The ARC.

"CCC is a wonderful group, and what they are doing is important because they are not just doing something for the community but providing friendship and a social outlet as well."

And social is definitely the right word to describe Thursday's dance.

"It's really fun to sit back and watch everyone having such a great time together," said April DeCatsye, a junior art history major from Angier.

Erin Potts, a sophomore biology major from Salisbury, said she was impressed by the turnout as well. "Everyone said this was Civitan's biggest event and not to miss it, but I had no idea it would draw this many people."

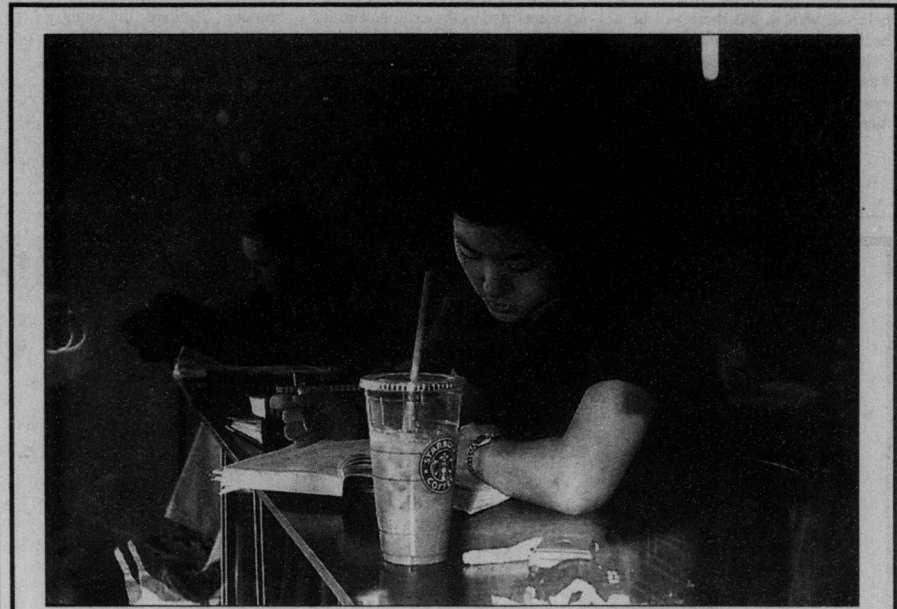
The crowd responded energetically as a DJ played everything from "Grease" medleys to The Jackson 5. "I'm having fun - and I'm the best dancer here," said Chris, an ARC member, as he did a very convincing Michael Jackson impersonation.

Party onlookers reflected on the successes of the evening and said the open nature of the event should set an example for service to all UNC groups.

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Chris Walzer and girlfriend Brenda Spivey get down Thursday night at a holiday dance party thrown for The ARC by Carolina Campus Civitans.



Sophomore Taena Kim studies for her Political Science 54 class in Starbucks on Thursday afternoon. Many students choose to study in coffee shops for the casual and relaxed atmosphere.

Are You Final-ly Ready?

By SARA PARSONS
Staff Writer

Your palms sweat, and your heart pounds. Your eyes droop lazily as they focus on page after page of material you should have started to study weeks ago. Facts and figures swim in your head while distractions float in and out of your thoughts.

The hours remaining before the exam dwindle as you drown in a choppy sea of anxiety and stress - with no lifeline in sight.

Chances are, you aren't alone in this predicament. William Knaus, a psychologist, estimates that 90 percent of college students procrastinate. Of that number, 25 percent are considered chronic procrastinators and might eventually drop out.

And with finals approaching, more and more students are looking for a life preserver in effective, last-minute study methods to keep their heads above water.

UNC professors discourage cram tactics but say they realize there will always be students who put off studying. So, they have their own ideas on which study tactics do and don't work in those final, crucial hours.

"I remember cramming when I was in college," said biology Professor Kerry Bloom. "It is not the best way, but if they can pull it off, more power to them. It is just one of those things that is always going to happen."

Bloom posts old exams on the Internet for his students. He said practicing previous tests reduces anxiety by presenting a picture of what can be expected on the real final.

Bloom also said his old exams highlight major points covered in each chapter and could be especially helpful to those who might not have the time to study details.

Students in a time crunch also are likely to skim their class notes. But economics Professor Boone Turchi said a little extra effort with notes can help in the long run.

"The best thing you can do is religiously recopy your lecture notes," he said, noting that this process allows students to identify gaps they might have in understanding concepts and discover where they need help most.

Cramming Made Easy

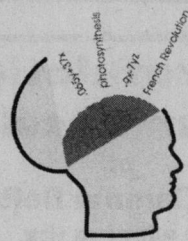
A four-step process that will help students who procrastinated this semester make the most of their last-minute studying.

■ **Make choices.** Don't attempt to take in all of the information for the exam. Take the new material and the most important sections of the class, and devote your study time to them.

■ **Use self-made study devices.** Create flash cards, review sheets and illustrations, and make good use of them. These devices help consolidate information and make it easy for repetition.

■ **Recite, recite, recite.** Drill the information into your brain by reviewing the material over and over.

■ **Chill out.** Be sure to take some time to yourself while studying.



DTH/CAROLINE GOBBLE AND KRISTEN HARDY

Relying on their own notes might not be an option for students who have been absent from class or inattentive during lectures. But there is still hope.

Ram Book & Supply sells class notes for almost 50 large lecture courses. The notes cost about \$35 for an entire semester.

Store manager Steve Thurston said he has received positive feedback on the notes, though professors stress this should not be considered a substitute for going to class.

"For the most part, virtue is rewarded," Turchi said. "Virtue is not using someone else's notes."

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N.C. Voting Process Under Examination

Many officials are pushing campaign finance reform, while smaller parties are advocating ballot changes.

By LESLIE BUMGARDNER
Staff Writer

Officials from across North Carolina are stepping up efforts to change election processes throughout the state in light of Florida's voting problems in this year's presidential election.

Everything from ballot design to campaign finance reform is being scrutinized from different angles as political officials search for ways to improve future elections in North Carolina.

One change being considered is the reorganization of the ballot - a reform supported by the state's smaller political parties. The Green Party has been working to make it easier for third parties to get on the ballot and make sure all write-in votes are counted.

In the 2000 presidential election, Green Party candidate Ralph Nader could not get on the N.C. ballot because

he did not get enough signatures in by the deadline. Even write-in votes for Nader were not counted.

"We're fighting restrictive ballot access and trying to open up the ballot," Green Party volunteer Chris Hinch said. "It is a democratic principle that people have the right to vote and somebody should count those votes."

Hinch said the present system lists the Democrat and Republican candidates at the top of the ballot, which is unfair to other candidates.

"It is human nature to want to vote for the top candidates," he said.

Marc Basnight, D-Dare, president pro tem of the N.C. Senate, has proposed meeting with two of the state's other influential political leaders - N.C. House Speaker Jim Black, D-Mecklenburg, and Governor-elect Mike Easley - to discuss how campaign landscapes have changed in recent years and to consider possible reforms.

"The intention is to have a wide-ranging discussion about the changing face of political elections," Basnight spokesman Rob Lammie said.

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UNC's Teacher Training Program Ranked 10th

By MICHAEL MCKNIGHT
Staff Writer

RALEIGH - UNC-Chapel Hill was ranked 10th in the state in teacher training Thursday on yet another report card for N.C. education, behind nine other UNC-system schools.

The state Board of Education released a report Thursday morning on the ability of North Carolina's colleges and universities to train new teachers. The Institutions of Higher Education Performance Report graded public and private colleges and universities on the quality of their teacher education programs.

The report awarded exemplary ratings to teacher education programs at four North Carolina schools - Greensboro College, UNC-Asheville, UNC-Greensboro and UNC-Pembroke.

UNC-Chapel Hill's School of Education received a score of 125 and was tied for 10th place in the state with Lenoir-Rhyne and Chowan colleges.

The report rated and awarded points to each of the state's 47 teacher education

programs based on their compliance with state and national accreditation standards, the quality of graduates they produce, and their involvement with and service to the state's public schools.

Institutions receiving 135 points or more were awarded exemplary status and those receiving fewer than 105 were given a rating of "low-performing."

A significant portion of schools' ratings came from the results of surveys completed by graduates and employers of each institution but the return rate of the surveys was low.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Ward said the report was still valuable despite the low response. "We are of the opinion that this kind of performance report to the institution and the community will be a wake-up call," Ward said.

This report follows Wednesday's release of the "N.C. First in America 2010" report detailing the mixed progress of the state's public K-12 schools toward Gov. Jim Hunt's goal of making the

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Transplant Recipient Inspires, Gives Thanks

By RUSS LANE
Assistant Arts & Entertainment Editor

There is a sense of gratitude in Charlie Tolchin's voice.

It's a gratitude for the ability to breathe, a basic and often-taken-for-granted function UNC Hospitals doctors restored when Tolchin underwent a double lung transplant on April 13, 1997, after spending four years on the waiting list.

But there's also soft-spoken strength in his voice. A self-described fighter, Tolchin was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis at age 5. Doctors told the Tolchin family that Charlie should not expect to live past 8 years old - he is now 32.

In a gesture that demonstrates both his gratitude and strength, Tolchin related his experiences with the recent publication of "Blow the House Down"

(Writers Club Press, \$14.95). Plain-spoken, honest and direct, the autobiography documents Tolchin's illness and recovery and has touched its readers whether they are in need of a similar transplant or not.

The book, and Tolchin's life by extension, makes full use of the "Three Little Pigs" allusion in the title. A seventh-grade hit-and-run victim, to whom the book is dedicated, provided him with a new set of lungs.

Because his previous lung capacity was only 30 percent, the transplant gave him a new lease on life.

"(The transplant) has given me a lot of oxygen, a lot of energy and a totally normal life now," he said. "Four years ago, I was at home working on my health, and now I can give something back to society."

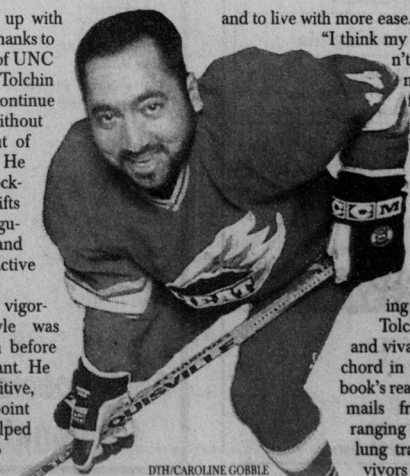
Given a clean bill of health, Tolchin

has caught up with lost time. Thanks to the efforts of UNC Hospitals, Tolchin can now continue his life without running out of breath. He plays ice hockey, lifts weights regularly and keeps an active social life.

But his vigorous lifestyle was intact even before his transplant. He said his positive, energetic point of view helped him to recover

and to live with more ease.

"I think my attitude hasn't changed much. I'm a fighter, and I believe in working very hard to stay healthy, and a positive attitude pays off in (helping that along)." Tolchin's story and vivacity struck a chord in many of the book's readership, as e-mails from readers ranging from fellow lung transplant survivors to those who



DTH/CAROLINE GOBBLE

are simply inspired find Tolchin's inbox. Tolchin's book reads as both a guide for people facing a double-lung transplant and a reminder that research monies and the organ donor box on your driver's license do matter.

"I'm here because people raised money for (medical) research and agreed to be a donor - I don't think people realize that a golf tournament for lupus means something, and it does," he said.

In late 1996, Tolchin moved to Chapel Hill to wait for a donor, go through surgery and begin physical therapy, a process that lasted eight months. Rather than sit and wait, he immersed himself in Chapel Hill culture in the interim - seeing shows at Cat's Cradle, haunting Caribou Coffee, dating often and falling in love with Chapel Hill's

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