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MATT DEES
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BOARD EDITORIALS

Promises, Promises

The BOT wasn't out of line in voting to approve the Master Plan, but it needs to keep its promise to the town to be flexible.

Now that the UNC Board of Trustees has given the Master Plan unanimous approval, it cannot forget its promise to those who will be affected by it the most in the long run - Chapel Hill residents.

The Master Plan, a blueprint for campus development for the next 50 years, was passed last Thursday, despite widespread opposition from many local residents and town officials. These folks are especially angered by the BOT's refusal to postpone the vote until a collaborative research project studying transportation in the area, the Major Investment Study, is released in May.

BOT members responded to these qualms by saying waiting until May would hinder the progress of the Master Plan and that they needed this vote immediately to close the initial phases of development.

While Chapel Hill residents certainly have legitimate concerns on many of these matters, in this instance the BOT was right. There was no reason for the BOT to drag its feet in approving the Master Plan - provided that it stays true to its promise to adapt the plan according to the findings of the transportation study.

As Chapel Hill Mayor Rosemary Waldorf told The Daily Tar Heel on March 21, the Master Plan is conceptual, which means it will be subject to a lot of changes.

Though the Master Plan certainly calls for wide-ranging modifications, the fact that it isn't set in stone makes it flexible enough to change once the Major Investment Study, a collaborative effort by the N.C. Department of Transportation, Duke University, UNC, the Triangle Transit Authority and Durham and Orange counties, is released.

The BOT would be foolish not to fully consider this study, as its findings could prove to be invaluable in preventing the massive traffic problems some foresee as a result of the expansion in the Master Plan.

All in all, the Master Plan is essential to the University's growth. The BOT recognized this and wisely approved the plan, ensuring UNC will retain its national prominence. Let's hope it is just as wise in heeding the wisdom of the Major Investment Study and keeping its promise to the residents of Chapel Hill in the process.

Boss Hog

The General Assembly is using a hog farm moratorium to stall. It's time for members to make a real decision on the issue.

The Democrats in the N.C. General Assembly have given a new meaning to "pork barrel politics."

Last week, Gov. Mike Easley announced his two-year action plan for livestock operations. Unfortunately, there is little action in the area of cleaning up the more than 4,000 open-waste ponds used for the state's largest hog farms.

Instead of putting the issue on the back burner, Easley and other state lawmakers should begin working toward cleaning up these hog lagoons immediately.

Part of Easley's plan of action involves extending a three-year moratorium on new hog farms. Seems like a good environmental move, right?

Wrong. The state's hog industry does not protest the moratorium because it has no room for expansion. There's nowhere it can slaughter additional hogs. But environmental organizations groan at the thought of the extension. They see it as a delaying tactic by the General Assembly to avoid cleaning up the hog lagoons. And rightly so.

Lawmakers use the moratorium to stall - promising that they are waiting for the miracle cure to come out of N.C. State University research centers. In the meantime, the waste ponds sit in eastern North Carolina like a ticking time bomb.

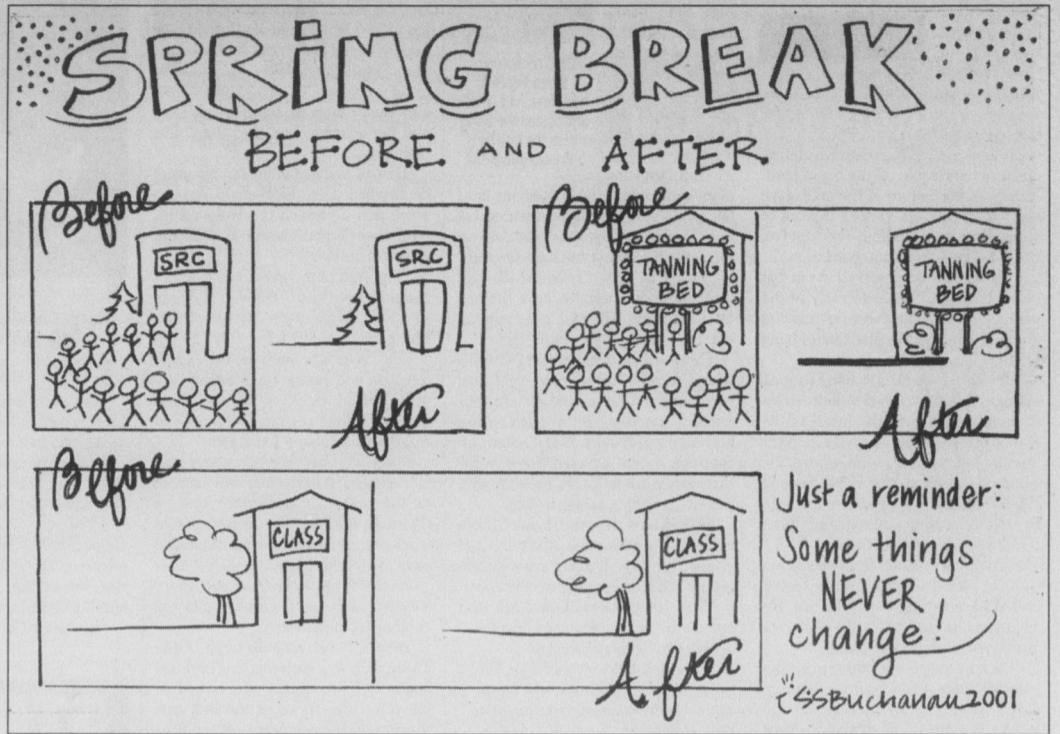
Easley shouldn't be so reliant on possible technologies coming out of N.C. State. To

pay for his \$3.1 trillion tax cut, President Bush has trimmed the budgets of several federal agencies - with the largest cut coming from the Department of Agriculture. It just so happens N.C. State was the beneficiary of a \$470,000 grant to look into alternatives to hog lagoons for disposing waste. That grant could suddenly end up on the bureaucratic chopping block.

But saying you are working toward solutions in the future is good lip service. Especially because the General Assembly has no will to clean up the waste. Republicans led the effort to control the growth of the hog industry in 1997, making them instant enemies of the N.C. Pork Council. Since 1998, the Pork Council has funneled \$84,950 to legislative campaigns and \$22,000 to the Democratic Party to knock the GOP out of power, according to N.C. Board of Elections records.

Maybe that has something to do with comments like "Nobody has said to us to date that there is a problem, other than (the waste ponds) smell bad," from Rep. Nurham Warwick, D-Sampson. Warwick happens to be the co-chairman of the House Environmental and Natural Resources Committee.

There might not be a crisis right now, but it would only take a leaking pond or hurricane to make the entire eastern part of the state a huge sewage dump. Clean it up now - before the state pays for it later.



A Friend You Can Never Forget

My safety net whenever I put finger to keyboard is one trite truism: "If in doubt, write what you know."

So what's been creeping its way into my cranium? Let's see - I can rattle off the 1985-86 Boston Celtics' championship roster, all 43 presidents in order and each NCAA Division I men's basketball champion since Sputnik hit space. (I had a lot of free time as a kid.)

I can explain the infield fly rule, why you should never turn your back to the basketball and how to determine if a secondary is playing zone or man coverage. (I'm also well aware that none of the above makes for a compelling column - but if you disagree, e-mail me. And get help. Quick.)

What else do I have upstairs, top shelf? Well, I just realized something. I know this guy named "Duff," and you probably don't. This week, I've decided you should. So here goes. Duff - that's his nickname, and we'll leave it at that - takes my cake as that person I've met in college, the one I'll never forget wherever I go or whatever I do.

Please tell me you know your own distinctively comical character who makes you scratch your head in wonder. Is he truly that way, or does he live each day according to a script? I'm always asking him, "What's going on in your life?" not to be polite but because amusing stories about life's daily trials and tribulations inevitably will follow, and they're never the same when heard secondhand.

How do I put such a person into words, much less just 900 of them? How do I relate to you who he is? Or how he differs from everyone else? Or how badly he smells?

What do you say about a guy who has lost his cordless phone twice? Who on six separate occasions - six! - absentmindedly left his ATM card in the machine and walked away? Who three years ago brought a life-sized cardboard cutout of Booker (of the bourbon company) to a basketball ticket camp-out so someone would be keeping him company?

Close your eyes and visualize Santa Claus



DAN SATTER
GROUCHO'S MANIFESTO

in slacks, sans beard. Add Fred Flintstone's body with Barney Rubble's persona. Include parts of Bluto from "Animal House," Chris Farley from "Tommy Boy," Barney from "The Simpsons" and Norm from "Cheers," and you're starting to recreate the Duff genome.

Congratulations, you just pictured the best argument against genetic replication. It'd be hardly fair to the world if another Duff doggie paddles his way into an upcoming gene pool. His unique mystique and distinct physique - a.k.a. "Duff in the Buff," unveiled all-too-often when he removes his shirt at the most inopportune of moments - have left me with more stories than the Sears Tower.

Duff's tales of woe-n-oh! will make you laugh so hard you'll cry, appropriate because that's how you'll react if you don't approach these tales with the right sense of humor.

Car accidents are no laughing matter - except Duff's because he proclaimed it to be. He crashed his 4-by-2 Chevrolet pickup - dubbed the "Duff truck" - while answering his cell phone. Initially stunned but unscratched, he laughed the incident off an hour later, explaining how such an event could happen only to a "cultured redneck" such as himself.

If that's me I'm still fuming. But that's the thing about Duff - he's more interested in what's for dinner tonight, not what life served him yesterday or will have in store for him tomorrow. He'll bite into a ham sandwich, fall asleep with it on his chest, wake up and finish it. Life, not surprisingly, goes on.

But sometimes you wonder how. One night last year, a Goodfellows bartender was cleaning up after a busy night by pouring "pingers" - the last sip of beers, often left undrunk - and cigarette butts into one pitcher. Duff, quite plastered yet still thirsty, saw the pitcher filled with Winstons and Marlboros floating amid the beer remains, asked the bartender if it was spoken for, and downed it without flinching. Then burped.

I sometimes wonder if I'll ever meet someone even somewhat similar. To answer that query, I revert to his humorously hungover response in a class to his professor's obviously rhetorical question: "Not ... very ... likely."

It's been a while since my buddy's been in The Daily Tar Heel, so I figured he was overdue for some ink. In February 1999, a reporter writing a story about our fraternity quoted him as saying, "The keg's supposed to be here at 11 (p.m.), the goat gets up at 12 (a.m.), and the stripper gets here at 1 (a.m.). ... Or we could invert that. Or we could do it all at once."

I couldn't let his legend rest with that. But I don't have to. Duff's still writing his own legacy, scripting new chapters each day. He's full to his pot-belly of an "Animal House" approach to life best summarized by Dean Wormer: "Fat, drunk and stupid is no way to go through life, son."

"Yeah, maybe" once retorted a belly-laughing Duff, never one to shy away from self-deprecating humor if it'll rouse a chuckle from his audience, "But it sure is fun."

You'll never meet a more genuinely warm-hearted dude, so stop looking. It's no surprise he used to sign e-mail with another line from that classic flick, "Damn glad to meet ya," which fits better than Goldilocks in Baby Bear's bed.

Couldn't of said it better myself, Duff. Damn glad to know you.

Dan Satter reminds you that cigarette butts, pingers and half-eaten ham sandwiches are hazardous to your health. Send responses - but only funny ones - to satter@email.unc.edu.

Anti-Sweatshop Activists Will Continue to Fight For Workers

In April 1998, UNC formally and publicly committed to implementing anti-sweatshop policy for all UNC-licensed apparel. This step forward in the fight against sweatshops came after months of student pressure, in particular a four-day sit-in at South Building. Three years later, this policy is being put to the test in a Nike production facility in Atlixco, Mexico. Advocates have charged that the Kukdong International clothing factory, which makes shirts and jackets for UNC, is in violation of the child labor, living wage and collective bargaining provisions of the UNC Code of Conduct.

United Students Against Sweatshops has had representatives present at Kukdong since the beginning of the struggle. Jeremy Blasi, a recent graduate of the University of California-Berkeley reports: "I came to Atlixco two weeks ago to see the situation with my own eyes and act as an observer for the United Students Against Sweatshops. So far I have met with about 30 workers and visited 10 of their home villages. What I have observed is a workplace that can only

MARY BRATSCH
POINT OF VIEW

be described as a sweatshop. Reflecting the general profile of the factory, the majority of the workers I've met are young women, between 16 and 20 years old, who live in poverty-ridden towns often far away from the factory.

"Today I met with workers in the rural town of Ahuatlan after a two-hour ride often interrupted by road-crossing cattle. The women in Ahuatlan wake up at 4:30 a.m. to work 10-hour shifts and return home at 8:30 p.m. For this they earn about \$5 a day, which even in Mexico's impoverished economy is well below what one needs to meet his or her basic needs, let alone those of their family.

"At the factory they have consistently endured verbal and physical assaults by their managers; in one incident a manager struck a worker with a screwdriver. Judith, an energetic 16-year-old, told me 'They treat us like dogs there.' The workers' main complaint is that they are represented by the FROC

CROC, a mafia-like organization that calls itself a union but profits from an inadequate and illegal contract it signed without workers' consent."

Blasi continues, "If the factory matches the popular image of sweatshops, the Kukdong workers could not resemble less the common stereotype of sweatshop workers as passive and docile. These are strong, soulful, witty people, and they are fighting every day against great odds to defend their rights. This January the Kukdong workforce decided it had had enough with the CROC pseudo-union and they organized a 'paro' (work stoppage). For three days it shut down the factory, camping in the Kukdong front patio. They faced nights of drizzling rain with shared or no blankets, sleeping curled under the entrance overhang or open to the sky. They fought the cold with card games and humor, naming sleeping areas after local hotels - the Grand, the Crystal, etc. - and joked about couples hanging out in the 'one-hour' hotels. In the mornings they serenaded the CROC office, located above the Hotel Crystal, with 'You're Gonna Miss Me' love songs.

"But on the third night things got ugly. The police, joined by CROC thugs, closed in the workers from all directions. Josefina Hernandez, a leader of the strike, grabbed a stick that the head of the CROC was holding. Several cops grabbed her, dragged her away and threatened that she would have 'to sleep in the officer's bed' if she did not shut up.

"Meanwhile, the cops attacked. Alberto Alarcon, was struck in the head repeatedly and fell unconscious. The police hit Catalina Torres so hard that, upon waking, she did not respond to stimuli. In the end, 17 workers were hospitalized."

Nike's initial response to the situation has been insulting. Nike representatives blamed the paro on a cultural misunderstanding over food - the Korean managers were providing "steak" while the workers wanted beans and rice - failing to mention that the food in question was in fact rancid.

What do the events in Mexico and Nike's slow and misguided responses to the situation mean for UNC anti-sweatshop policy? The events at Kukdong have suggested that if the

policy is going to be effective in protecting workers making UNC apparel, students need to continue protesting. It was after students held demonstrations at their universities and at Nike stores across the country that the company began to take responsibility for problems in the factory. As students, we wish that Nike would listen first to the workers. Yet we are thankful that our voices in the United States, raised in solidarity with the workers in Mexico, have helped improve the workers' situation at Kukdong.

Despite improvements, fabricated arrest warrants against seven individuals are still pending, and Kukdong's most violent managers are still on the job. Nike can and must resolve these issues immediately. The workers at Kukdong are not giving up - they are continuing their campaign to oust the CROC and to build their own democratic union. Student pressure on Nike will likewise continue until it fulfills the UNC Code of Conduct, ensuring workers in factories like Kukdong the ability to exercise their rights.

UNC has signed onto the Worker Rights Consortium, but students are

asking for stronger participation in this organization. The Kukdong case has demonstrated the importance of this membership, as it was WRC, as a factory-monitoring organization, that worked immediately and effectively to produce a report on Kukdong that was critical in bringing the abusive situation to light.

Despite such proactive measures by the WRC, Nike and conservative economists continue to attack both the anti-sweatshop movement and the WRC. They claim those of us who fight sweatshops do not "understand" business or economics. Yet we understand quite well that it is "bad" business for Nike to actually pay its workers a living wage, and we refuse to accept such Nike economics. We owe it to the workers at Kukdong - and the workers all over the world - to support their struggles. We refuse to let "good" business and profits supersede the voices of the workers.

Mary Bratsch is a junior English major and a member of Students for Economic Justice. Reach her at bratsch@email.unc.edu.