

Comments or
concerns about
our coverage?
Contact the
readers' advocate at
ombudsmen@unc.edu
or call 933-4611.

MATT DEES
EDITOR
Office Hours Friday 2 p.m. - 3 p.m.

The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893 • 108 Years of Editorial Freedom
www.dailytarheel.com

LAUREN BEAL & KATHLEEN HUNTER
MANAGING EDITORS

Jonathan Chaney
EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR
Kim Minugh
UNIVERSITY EDITOR
Ginny Sciabarrasi
CITY EDITOR

Alex Kaplan
STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR
Rachel Carter
SPORTS EDITOR
Jermaine Caldwell
FEATURES EDITOR

Ashley Atkinson
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR
Carolyn Haynes
COPY DESK EDITOR
Sefton Ippock
PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Beth Buchholz
DESIGN EDITOR
Jason Cooper
GRAPHICS EDITOR
Josh Williams
ONLINE EDITOR

Brian Frederick
READERS' ADVOCATE
Laura Stoehr
SPECIAL ASSIGNMENTS EDITOR

BOARD EDITORIALS

Corporate Perks

The commission Easley appointed to close tax loopholes is full of people who benefit from them, making real reform difficult.

Promises, promises. During his State of the State address in February, Gov. Mike Easley confidently said he would save the state \$150 million each year by closing tax loopholes only the elite are able to slip through. And now his Efficiency and Loophole Closing Commission is preparing to deliver its recommendations to do just that. But it looks as though some of the elite few will be able to slip through unscathed while the average consumer could actually be forced to pay more. The commission has dropped the notion of closing loopholes such as the \$1,500 cap on the sales tax on boats, the deduction for corporate subsidiary dividends and tax credits on industries such as ethanol manufacturers, textile producers and airlines. Instead, the commission is looking at measures that are nothing more than tax increases on consumers. It has considered imposing a 6 percent sales tax on the repair of "tangible property" such as automobiles. In addition, it is considering raising the sales tax on movies from 1 percent to 6 percent, live entertainment (such as concerts) from 3 percent to 6 percent and on Direct TV from nothing to 5 percent. So why have some businesses been able to get off the hook? Look at the commission itself.

Many of the members are from private industry - the same sector many of these loopholes benefit, so they have little incentive to get rid of the loopholes that save them money when Uncle Sam comes along to collect his dues. Take Chuck Hayes for instance. Hayes is the CEO of Guilford Mills and has benefited from an \$80 sales-tax limit on mill machinery purchases. He went before the commission and argued against closing this particular loophole, and it magically disappeared from the list of targeted loopholes. The commission members defend some of the exemptions by saying they must remain competitive with other states, and they have to keep the tax breaks to stay that way. So the consumer has to shoulder the burden in the interest of business. But the commission has made some headway in other areas. Easley had asked the panel to find ways to improve government efficiency and save \$25 million. And the commission has come up with some innovative measures to improve efficiency and save the state \$142 million instead. But everyone has to tighten his belt during this budget crunch. And businesses should be no different. These loopholes should be closed if they do not serve a strong public interest. Scale back the corporate welfare.

Standardized Dropouts

Rigorous testing programs are putting new pressure on students. Schools need to focus on just getting some students to graduate.

If North Carolina does not relax its emphasis on rigorous standardized tests in high school, it will continue to bear the burden of fewer students donning a cap and gown. Since 1990, the state's four-year graduation rate has fallen from 66.2 percent to 55.8 percent. Even though these numbers reflect a similar nationwide trend, North Carolina's graduation rate is still among the five lowest in the country. With more and more students dropping out each year, some state educators have pointed their fingers at tougher promotion requirements added in the past few years as reasons for the increase in dropouts. Starting in 1996, high school students were required to pass Algebra I to be eligible for graduation. While measures such as this have been applauded for holding schools more accountable for progress, many feel they are leaving struggling students out in the cold. This situation is unlikely to improve in the next few years as educators are preparing to administer a high school exit exam starting with the class of 2005. If even more students are unable to finish high school because of failure of the exit exam, the state could be in a perilous situation economically as well as educationally. North Carolina's economy is rapidly shift-

ing from one of agriculture and manufacturing to one of science and technology. Without a high school diploma, a person's chance of securing a job in the new technological economy is greatly diminished. When industries consider relocating to a new area they look at how skilled the area's work force is. One of the major statistics many industries take into consideration is the graduation rate. If they do not feel the work force is skilled enough to do what they would require the workers to do, they will simply take their businesses and their tax dollars to another state. This is the situation North Carolina could very well find itself in if something is not done to get more students to graduate. Instead of pushing students to take more difficult classes and get higher standardized test scores, school officials should realize that for some students just graduating is a goal some students should have. North Carolina's education officials need to realize that students don't need more testing, they need more quality education. This could start with efforts to reduce class size. If class sizes were reduced, more students would be able to get the one-on-one attention they need. Then these students wouldn't feel so alienated by the education system and would be less likely to drop out and more likely to contribute to the state in the future.



Potluck Roommates: College 101

"What's your astrological sign?" What an odd question, I remember thinking. Why would he ask that? "My fiancée wants to know." Oh. Right. That's why. After my jaw bruised my chest, I covered the phone and asked no one in particular, "Do I have to go to college?" Somebody upstairs must've cracked a rib scheming up this one. I was hand-picked to live with this guy? Carolina has, what, 15,000 undergraduate students, and I'm paired with the one reading palms and dealing tarot cards? Don't get me wrong. I thought - and still think - nothing bad about hippies. But living with one? "C'mon, tell me," he said, suppressing a sly grin I felt subtly mocking me from 1,000 miles away. "She's been reading about horoscopes. She'll know right away if we'll get along good." We talked for a few more minutes. I think I can't remember, I was so shell-shocked. I still am, despite having lived with him for a semester. An old adage states, "You can choose your friends, but you're stuck with your family." Well, that saying forgot someone else you're randomly paired with: your freshman-year college roommate. Now's the time to make decisions about housing contracts and future roommates, and some students haven't yet considered it. If that's you, consider this column a friendly kick in the rear. Start thinking. Don't bypass your opportunity to control fate. Claw-grip your winning lottery ticket until you're ready to cash in. Don't casually toss it aside and hope you'll find it later. You won't. It'll be buried somewhere beneath your new roommate's laundry. Or your new roommate's boyfriend's or girlfriend's laundry. Then again, things might work out. But expect it to take a while. Adjusting to a new roommate is like learning to ride a bicycle. Off to a fast start, you think you've figured it out. You fall off, try to



DAN SATTER
GROUCHO'S MANIFESTO

regroup, stumble before regaining any momentum and fall again before finding a smooth ride. When it's done you've got plenty of stories to tell and scars to show. After braving that initial conversation, I lived with Will in 821 Hinton James. Somehow. When comparing the two of us, you couldn't even resort to the famous "apples and oranges" analogy, we were that different. We wouldn't be found in the same store, much less in the same aisle. Will believed in astrology, alternative medicine and, on occasion, illegal narcotics. To me, stars are freckles - fun to look at, but serving no purpose beside providing an endless game of connect-the-dots. I think herbal medications and mind-altering drugs are less appealing than B.O. or bad breath, so I wasn't exactly ecstatic that going potluck for a roommate had brought me a self-professed former poethead. Will believed in true love when he was 18. So did I. Difference was, he thought he'd found it in a four-month relationship with a masseuse-in-training named Angie. Will asked Angie to marry him. I once asked a girl out on a date. Will was sure Angie was the one for him. I didn't know what I wanted for dinner, much less with whom I wanted to spend the rest of my life. Will's habits differed from mine, but we both adjusted. Will enjoyed the smell of burning incense, the taste of tofu and the sounds of Pink Floyd and the Moody Blues, all of which I reluctantly accepted. That's who he was, after all. Who was I to ask him to change? Will didn't like sports, so he couldn't have been thrilled with me watching so many foot-

ball and basketball games. I'd also bet he didn't appreciate my habit of procrastinating, which caused me to keep a light on late. Still, he never complained; instead, he'd politely tell me if something I did bothered him. I tried my best to do the same. I learned to pick my spots. So did he. Despite being so different, we never argued. We went about our lives like office acquaintances who nod heads at the water cooler. Our relationship thrived on the week-ends, during which we got along fantastically. Most times I had the room to myself because Will often returned to Arden, N.C., to see Angie. Will and I slept in the same room for four months two years ago, an experience I neither regret nor forget. Isn't going away to school supposed to teach you how to accept people different from you? If so, Carolina owes me three class credits. I survived a crash course of College 101. Truth is, living with Will was like drinking orange juice immediately after brushing your teeth. A somewhat unpleasant taste remains, but it's bearable - and certainly not nearly as bad as it initially seemed. Will decided to take the next semester off. He said UNC wasn't for him, and he was too far from Angie - and reality, I think. He enrolled in massage-therapy school, the same one she attended. Will did what was right for him. I wished him only the best and still do. Granted, I didn't miss him. We weren't friends. We were roommates. I had a single for the rest of the year. Every day of spring semester felt like the weekend. The room no longer smelled of incense. There wasn't any tofu in the fridge. But I'll still listen to the Moody Blues and Pink Floyd. I've found if you give them a chance, they grow on you. You might even learn to like them. By the way, Will's a Taurus. I'm a Capricorn. Angie claimed from the start we were astrologically compatible. Go figure. Dan Satter admits to being the Felix of this Odd Couple. E-mail thoughts and comments to satter@email.unc.edu.

READERS' FORUM

Readers React to First Amendment Issues on Campus; GAP, Horowitz Controversies Bring Differing Views to Public Discourse at UNC

TO THE EDITOR:
Like many African-Americans, I have had the displeasure of hearing David Horowitz defend his views on Black Entertainment Television last week. After hearing him state that Africans realize the horrors of slavery because of movies like "Roots" and "Beloved," I immediately dismissed him as a total idiot with a lot of money and time on his hands. After conversing with some friends about this very controversial topic, I've come to a conclusion. The reason why I feel so many black students are upset (and I do not speak for the entire black community) is because Horowitz's arguments are alarming. What scares me the most is that this man's opinion is being fostered as factual information. Newspapers use discretionary measures all of the time, why run his ads? Anyone who has taken an AFAM 40 class can dispute any one of his claims, but what about those who haven't? Of course, I'm not a survivor of a slave, however, slavery has beget many children, one being segregation and Jim Crow. My parents and grandparents are sur-

vivors of that period in our glorious American history, and so am I. As we live in a period of racial profiling (another child of slavery), we as African-Americans are affected daily by this crime against humanity, a crime that has killed more blacks than the Holocaust. Horowitz's comments are alarming in the fact that many Americans (white and black) feel the way he does, and these people are heads of corporations, managers and police officers. In response to Matt Dees's column, I have only one question. If welfare and affirmative action were initiated to level the playing field for blacks in this country due to slavery, what about the millions of whites, Hispanics, Asians and women who have benefited from these same programs? Veronica Peagler Senior Dramatic Arts

(April 2), we can see a certain editor could benefit from a class in African-American history. If Matt Dees resents anyone who would call him a racist for seeing David Horowitz's side of things, what would his feeling be to those who call him ignorant? Dees thinks Horowitz "makes some pretty good points" in his editorial. What would those be? The point that descendants of Africans earn more here than they do in Africa? Comparing black Americans to black Africans is pointless. European Americans earn more than Europeans. This is America; we do OK here. The figures Horowitz should have quoted are the ones that compare how well African-Americans fare economically against white Americans. Quoting Matt Dees, "There are still injustices that face black Americans, but reparations are not the answer." Well, what is the answer? Dees agrees that these injustices, the "aftershocks of slavery," need to be fixed.

His suggested list of repairs include: working to end racial profiling, reforming our justice system and raising the quality of public education. Guess what, those are all reparations. Reparations do not necessarily have to be monetary, though it would be difficult to achieve them with only smiles and good faith. Matt Dees, the fact that you champion Horowitz's right to voice his opinion does not make you racist, but the fact that you find his argument "cogent" (which means compelling and convincing) makes you shamefully ignorant. Someone needs to sign up for an AFAM 40 class. Leah Irvin Junior Economics Carmen Scott Junior Journalism and Mass Communication

TO THE EDITOR:
I am writing in praise of the University for allowing the Genocide Awareness Project to put up its display on the quad Monday and Tuesday. Whether or not you agreed with the information presented, it is refreshing to know that we live in a country where anyone can present his or her case and not be persecuted for it. At the same time yesterday, there was a presentation in the pit of people who could not even peacefully practice Falun Gong meditation in China without being beaten and tortured. Don't ever say that we should disallow people who are not like us to practice what they please (within lawful bounds) in public. I'm not homosexual, nor do I support it, but I love the fact that others are allowed to, if they want. That's what freedom is. If you don't want to look, don't look. But don't try to kick them out. That's what oppression is. Ben Meredith Junior Religious studies

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.