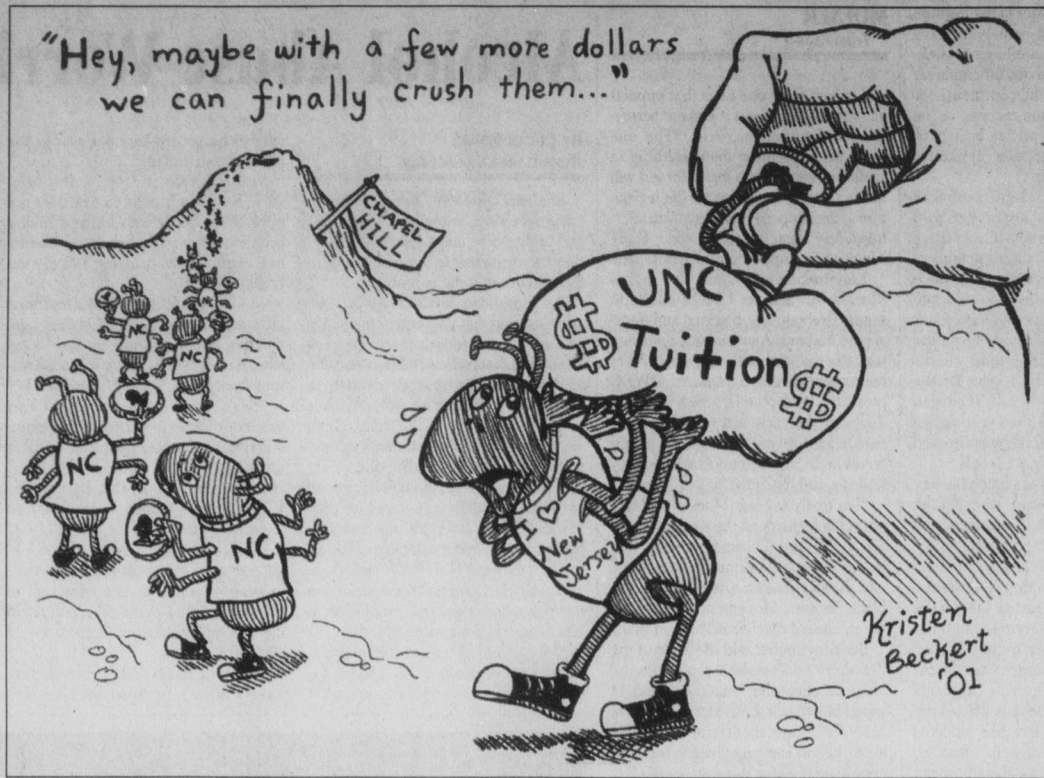


Opinion



No Need for The SRC; Life Offers Exercise

I'll admit it. I'm a bit of a geek. A nerd, if you will. All terms used to describe the bespectacled, flaccid-muscled young academics who meekly populated the halls of every elementary school perfectly described the early Erin Fornoff.

Growing up, I was always the kid who hid under the bleachers with a book in gym class. I would cry on volleyball days.

I am not ashamed; I've come a long way since then. Gone are the days of living in fear of physical activity or anything sports-related. These days I can drop ACC statistics, I play on a club team, I understand the tennis scoring system. I am a sports page-reading machine. I love running and pick-up games of all kinds. Hell, I am a sports bra's biggest fan!



ERIN FORNOFF SWEETNESS AND LIGHT

But I hate the Student Recreation Center.

And it's not because of my history as a nonathlete or that I don't feel that exercise is important.

It's incredible that we live in a society where we have to travel to a special building just to make ourselves tired. Just think what could be done if we applied all that energy to something productive — how many gardens planted, connections made, hours volunteered.

Now physical activity is fantastic, that is apparent. How many times have I heard one student remark to another, "Physical activity may provide the shortcut which we ... have been seeking for the control of chronic diseases, much like immunization has facilitated the progress against infectious diseases" (actually that was the U.S. Center for Disease Control, McGinnis, 1992.)

Right, sure. Like any student would say that, but you know what I mean.

Exercise is good for us, and I understand I could definitely use more myself.

But even so, I gave up the SRC.

I know what you're thinking, readers. "Sounds like somebody is itching' for some osteoporosis! Looks like this girl wants a slice of heart disease pie!" Hey, I'm certainly not doing with life-threatening illness, but if the SRC is the only thing that stands between me and an early demise, then I reckon it's time to write up a last will and testament.

I have some friends (they shall remain nameless, though one shall be referred to by the code word of "roommate") who have been known to take the elevator in the dorm and the bus to the SRC only to use the Stairmaster and the treadmill.

And therein lies the flaw of the whole thing.

The whole idea of a building full of nothing but stationary fitness apparatus smacks of wasted energy. So you've burned 500 calories, but you are still in the same exact place where you started.

Coming out of the SRC after circuit-training with the Cybex machines you can't help but wonder what has really been accomplished.

Sure, muscles are fatigued, but honestly, was it good for the soul or the world at large? Is there ever a genuine sense of satisfaction from picking up and setting down a random, useless piece of metal 50 times?

Doesn't it just seem a bit ... absurd?

I can't understand the willingness to uselessly exert energy solely in pursuit of toned pectorals, triceps, quads. Are we measuring worth by our squat max, our best bench press? We live on a beautiful campus chock full of jogging trails, and to pass up a gorgeous day to run inside a windowless room on a treadmill is a tad criminal. As it is, we spend enough time inside classrooms.

But it's not as though the sidewalks are empty. If this school has anything, it's certainly not a shortage of joggers.

I don't want to get self-righteous. This whole argument might just be a convenient excuse for my lack of motivation. Or maybe not. Perhaps this all harks back to my roots as the gym class pariah. Am I bitter? Do gyms in general bring back bad memories of early youth? Did I really change, or am I just fooling myself?

Am I unfairly condemning the innocent SRC, when all it's trying to do is improve the health and decrease the body fat of UNC students, effectively sending them on a path to long life and happiness?

I don't know. Just seems like there is a better way.

We shouldn't take substitutes for the real workout life has to offer.

At least that's how it looks from under these bleachers.

Erin Fornoff is a sophomore from Asheville. Find her at fornoff@email.unc.edu. She doesn't have to tell you where not to look.

Board Editorials

Polluting Policies

The state should enforce stronger air pollution regulations at its power plants to improve overall air quality

The battle for cleaner air in North Carolina has come down to two sets of regulations: a federal rewrite of the 1970 Clean Air Act and a "clean smokestacks bill" pending in the state House.

The state's proposal would be the more effective of the two in curbing the pollution problems from coal-fired plants across North Carolina.

Environmental Protection Agency administrator Christine Todd Whitman has said the federal proposal would impose strong limits on companies in order to reduce acid rain, ozone smog and soot.

These regulations, however, would allow a certain measure of flexibility for companies falling short of emissions standards.

Duke Power and Carolina Power & Light Co. are eluding compliance to current standards by making payments to companies that are in accordance with existing limits.

This system is based on the belief that companies will voluntarily fall into compli-

ance in order to avoid the pay-outs.

Duke Power, however, would seem impervious to such strategy, given its \$1.8 billion profits and the Fortune 500 ranking of 17th earned in 2000. The state's plan would be a more effective measure in terms of real results.

Although the clean smokestacks bill would raise electricity costs for customers of Duke Power and CP&L, without this upgrade, air pollution in North Carolina would continue virtually unabated.

Denver, Colorado is on the verge of resurrecting its air pollution situation by achieving full compliance with federal standards thus becoming the first major city with a poor air quality rating to successfully return to a clean-air classification.

Denver, much like North Carolina, has been plagued by outdated coal burning facilities. However, each has chosen to take initiative by phasing out one plant and converting others to natural gas, a cleaner-

burning fuel.

Denver's self-regulation has provisions to accommodate one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the country.

North Carolina would do well to follow this example and take strides toward rehabilitating the air quality. Especially in the Blue Ridge Mountains, where a visible haze emphasizes the need for environmental awareness, and in the Charlotte area, where daily monitoring often produces unhealthy readings.

The Triangle is also closely scrutinized for daily fluctuations that often show detrimental levels of some pollutants.

Federal standards are meant to be the bare minimum. It is up to state and local governments to decide whether they want to simply comply with these minimums or offer a higher level of safety and comfort.

The clean smokestack bill would give all North Carolinians a chance to breathe a healthy sigh of relief.

Lifelong Lessons

The last episode of "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" marks an era of lessons to be learned by children and adults

Today, there aren't many shows that have survived as long as "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" that address subject matters such as love, acceptance, tolerance, forgiveness and puppets.

However, though he enjoyed a home on public television for years, this past Friday, Public Broadcasting Service aired the last new episode of Mr. Rogers ever. I managed to catch the series finale, and as Fred Rogers changed out of his sweater and back into his suit jacket, I began to consider the effect Mr. Rogers has had on my life.

"Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" is a show devoted to the concept of human worth. It advocates the notion that every human being expects and deserves unconditional love.

In his innocent universe, Mr. Rogers presents the world as it should be. In his inter-

actions with the children, he addresses as his "television neighbors," the character of Mr. Rogers closely replicates the teachings of Jesus Christ (less the apocalyptic visions).

For six years, between the ages of 4 and 10, I watched Mr. Rogers religiously, and I dug everything he had to say about life.

But, there comes a time when all children rebel against their infancy — when they shout at the tops of their lungs, "I am not a baby!" and embark upon an odyssey of cruelty and yo' mama jokes that will last throughout junior high. That time occurs when all children lose their innocence and become the punks you went to middle school with.

I can pinpoint the exact moment when I wasted my last ounce of childlike innocence: One day in fourth grade, on the school bus, my friends and I decided that

ASHLEY HOLMES

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

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Concerns or comments about our coverage? Contact the ombudsman at jmyerov@email.unc.edu.

Ombudsman: DTH Should Review First Amendment

I think I heard a giant choking sound coming from the direction of Carroll Hall on Friday morning when the journalism school occupants read the editorial page of The Daily Tar Heel.

At least that's what I hope I heard. Everyone, not just journalists, should have been gagging, choking, and downright sick to their stomachs after reading that the DTH — the symbol of First Amendment freedom that it is — was strongly advocating on-campus censorship. After all, if the press doesn't defend the right to free speech, who will?

For those who missed it, the issue at hand was credit cards and the fact that college kids across the country can't seem to make a mental connection between plopping down a piece of plastic and actually having to pay back the money they owe.

The end result, presumably, is a generation of well-educated young adults with a mountain of debt that starts with college loans and continues with infinitely compounded credit card bills.



JOSH MYEROV
OMBUDSMAN

What's the solution? According to the DTH, a proposed amendment to the federal Consumer Protection Act would be a step in the right direction.

The amendment would impose a ceiling on the credit limits that credit card companies offer students, preventing students from owing exorbitant amounts of money.

Were the regulation to pass, it would do some good. Broke graduates might have to beg their parents for only \$10,000 to bail them out of debt rather than \$20,000.

But according to the DTH edit board, the federal regulation would not be enough — the University itself should get into the regulation game. "There are steps that UNC can take to protect its own full-time students," proposed Friday's editorial. "Banning all forms of credit card solicitation on campus" would be a "proactive step for the University. In particular, the administration should instruct Student Stores to stop placing advertisements in the bag of every shopper."

In effect, the DTH edit board is advocating that UNC eliminate all on-campus advertising of a legal product. Why? Because as the editorial says, "students are in danger of being taken advantage of," and because UNC should "do all in its power to protect the more vulnerable students here on campus."

These are troublingly paternalistic views (especially for a paper that seems sympathetic to the idea that the drinking age should be lowered or altogether abolished). But more than that, these views are curious for other reasons.

First of all, why is it that UNC students, undoubtedly some of the nation's brightest youth, need special protection from "predatory" advertisers? If UNC students are so "vulnerable," imagine how vulnerable the rest of the nation's 18-year-olds must be.

Secondly, since we're shielding impressionable UNC students from dangerous forms of speech, why stop with credit card ads. How about DTH columns? Sex education? E-mail solicitations? We wouldn't because college students have a right to have access to information about all the legal services that

exist in an open marketplace.

The U.S. Supreme Court supported this position for the first time in 1976. In *Virginia State Board of Pharmacy v. Virginia Citizens Consumer Council*, the court ruled that "purely commercial" advertising was protected under the First Amendment. In that case, prescription drug users fought for the right of pharmacists to advertise drug prices. Just like the credit cards, the prescription drugs were legal but federally regulated.

The Board of Pharmacy argued that advertising drug prices would compromise pharmacists' integrity and harm consumers. Pharmacists would spend too much time advertising and not enough time dispensing medication, the board said.

The Supreme Court didn't buy the argument that withholding information somehow benefits consumers.

"Advertising, however tasteless and excessive it sometimes may seem, is nonetheless dissemination of information as to who is producing and selling what product, for what reason, and at what price," the court said. "It is a matter of public interest that (consumer decisions)

be intelligent and well informed. To this end, the free flow of commercial information is indispensable."

And so the Supreme Court finally recognized the true value of advertising. Obviously, a seller doesn't have the right to advertise anything, anywhere, anytime. For the sake of a sane campus, certain advertising restrictions must exist.

However, for the DTH to promote the censorship of all credit card advertisements on campus is absurdly anti-free speech and anti-journalistic. As UNC's pillar of free speech, the DTH should encourage the University not to limit but to add to the information students have access to.

Perhaps the University could offer students seminars, classes or online resources about using credit cards wisely and paying down personal debt.

Of course, perhaps those resources already exist ... and all that's left to do is advertise.

DTH ombudsman Josh Myerov is a second year master's student in journalism. He can be reached at jmyerov@email.unc.edu or 918-1311.



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.