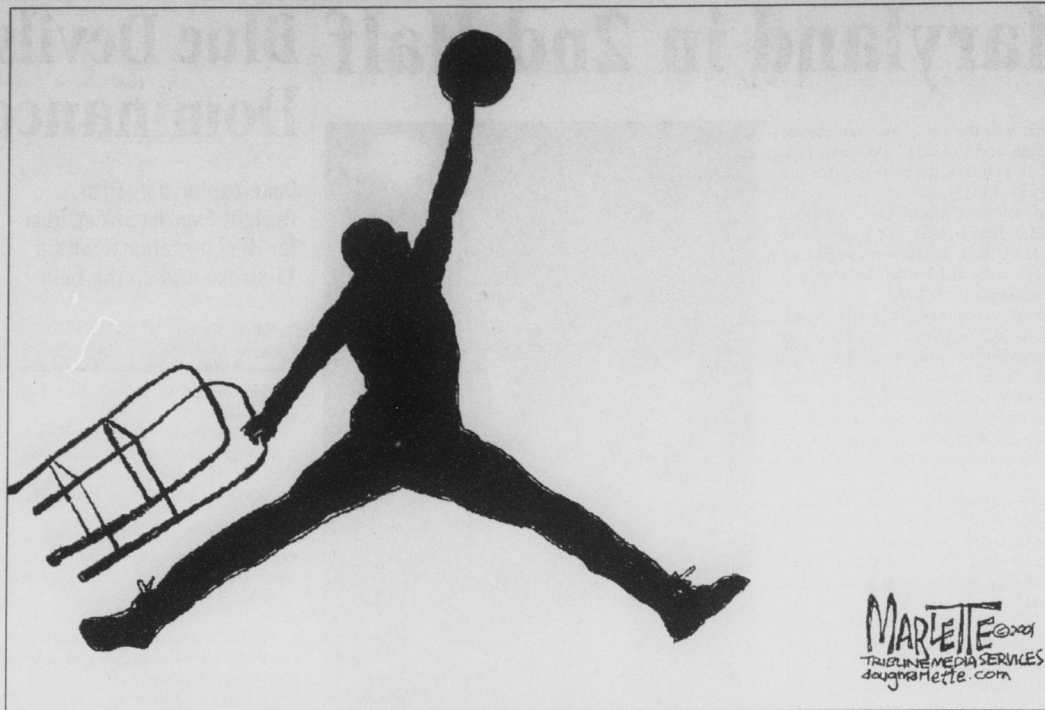


# Opinion



## Columbus Put The 'Seas' in Deadly Disease

How does that rhyming mnemonic phrase go? "Back in 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue. ... In the New World he did sneeze, bringing natives to their knees. ... And if by genetic resistance some were saved, these healthy natives were soon enslaved."

I'm not sure if that's how it went exactly. Despite my deficient memory, the fact remains that Christopher Columbus not only sparked Europe's westward expansion across the seas, he also inadvertently introduced the world to germ warfare. True, he might not have consciously introduced this agent of genocide, but the "discoverer of America" also thought he was in Asia.



MICHAEL CARLTON

MOJOVIAN V.D.

Deriding Columbus from a modern standpoint is easy, but I do not plan on criticizing imperialism or bashing the misguided spirit of early missionaries. Actually, I was hoping to link today's observances and holiday blowout furniture sales to the growing fear of biological terrorism. The same day we honor the start of several civilizations' downfalls, we fear the very slate-clearing plague that ensured European society's American conquest.

So how might our nation avoid a widespread epidemic today? There are two solutions, neither of which is bargain hunting for gas masks at Sergeant Sam's Army Surplus Store. The only way to avoid losing millions of lives is by either containing the disease and treating its victims or preemptively thwarting such an attack.

Currently there are 29 National Guard response teams across the U.S. trained to handle the events following suspected biological attacks. One such team was deployed to ensure the safety of Manhattan's inhabitants following the World Trade Center assault.

But what if the terrorists don't wave a big flag and say "Hey! We just attacked you!" Any effective biological attack will show no clear signs that it has occurred until many are already dead. If a virus is released clandestinely into an urban environment, National Guard teams could fail to quarantine the infected and be forced to rely on hospitals to treat most victims.

Unfortunately America's public health system is unprepared to handle the aftermath of bio-terrorism. However, if funds are diverted to better equip and educate hospital staff, the problem can be identified sooner, rather than later. When only subtle differences separate anthrax and flu symptoms, knowledgeable doctors are essential to our nation's health. Fortunately, the United States' first line of defense against bio-terrorism was bolstered last week when Congress approved \$60 million of spending to accelerate the development of an improved smallpox vaccine and boost vaccine stockpiles.

Pursuing the second option, the U.S. is also looking to root out bio-terrorists before they can strike. Using a loose interpretation of language in a 1972 biological weapons treaty, the Clinton administration launched a germ warfare research project that included the production of a more potent form of anthrax. The Bush administration continues this research as a defense against biological threats.

By building weapons and weapon factories, U.S. intelligence can deduce how much funding and materials are needed to produce these lethal tools. Telltale signs, such as emissions unique to germ warfare factories, can also be deciphered and sought out. (The U.S. used harmless biopesticides when building these bombs and factories. As for developing the new strain of anthrax, the U.S. knew it existed elsewhere and only produced it in limited amounts to test its vaccines.)

I trust America, but why should any other country? Invoking American logic, Saddam Hussein could claim that all germ-incubating devices in Iraq exist to defend against its neighbors. To make this matter of trust more complicated, we cannot subject our nation's military facilities to the scrutiny of United Nations inspectors. This would open up our blueprints to more terrorism from all other nations.

Only by redefining the term "defensive" that is used in the 1972 treaty can Americans and all other nations opposed to germ warfare vanquish this unconventional form of terrorism. We know the capabilities of our terrorist enemies, a luxury the sixteenth century natives did not enjoy. By effectively allocating resources between hospital training and military intelligence, any biological terrorist attack can be mitigated before another civilization on our continent is wiped out.

Michael Carlton also would like to wish you a Happy Canadian Thanksgiving! Come help him carve the traditional moose at [carlton@email.unc.edu](mailto:carlton@email.unc.edu).

### Board Editorials

## Giving Something Back

This year's senior class officers need to recognize the importance of the class gift

On Tuesday and Wednesday of this week, seniors are urged to log on and vote for the senior class gift.

They are also urged to e-mail senior class officers with suggestions for a graduation speaker. Just recently, senior class officers have been very vocal through e-mail and in person to get both of these items squared away.

However, attaining a graduation speaker and organizing the senior class gift are probably the most important responsibilities of the senior class officers.

Senior class officers have been working hard on both of these items, but the falling out of Bill Cosby as a graduation speaker — because of a prior commitment to another school — only showed that senior class officers may be a little behind.

Oftentimes, the senior class gift is highly criticized by seniors, and this year has proved to be no different — there are always those who take an active role and those who really don't care.

Three ideas have been posed to seniors — one, an Unsung Founders memorial that would symbolize those people of color who built the University; two, a marquee at Memorial Hall to publicize events; and lastly a need-based scholarship for a fellow student preparing for senior year at Carolina.

There wasn't as much discussion about the senior class gift as some would have liked — and for officers who ran on a platform emphasizing student input, it seems strange that there wasn't a place on the Class of 2002 Web site to make suggestions.

This could've been a technical problem, but it still doesn't change the fact that options might have gone unheard.

There are clear merits to the gift options — a memorial to those forgotten people who built our University is unprecedented, and the marquee would be dedicated in memory to late Chancellor Michael Hooker, as is appropriate for the last class to have him as chancellor.

Senior year only happens one time, and

it makes it even more important to make a mark, as well as embrace and remember Carolina.

However, for seniors, this year is no ordinary year for many reasons.

Seniors also will remember their last year in college as the time when the greatest act of terrorism in American history occurred.

Giving back has a whole different meaning for people, including seniors. Senior class officers need to be mindful of that fact. There has been a real change in the way students feel about things they might have felt strongly about before. In one way or another, each senior has been affected by this tragedy, some more seriously than others, financially and emotionally.

The senior class gift is meant to give something back to the University. It also is meant to represent its class of students. Seniors and senior officers, let's not do this hastily, and recognize the importance of the times.

## Cruel, but All Too Usual

Georgia outlawed the electric chair — when will it outlaw the death penalty itself?

It seems Georgia is moving up on the evolutionary scale, if slowly. On Friday, the Peach State's Supreme Court eliminated the use of the electric chair as Georgia's sole instrument of execution. The state will now turn to lethal injection to rid its prisons of death row inmates.

Georgia's dissension means only Alabama and Nebraska now equate electrocution with justice. The 38 other states that practice execution — including North Carolina — use lethal injection, as Georgia now intends to do, or they allow the inmate to choose his method of death.

In the majority opinion written by Justice Carol W. Hunstein, the court held that "death by electrocution, with its specter of excruciating pain and its certainty of cooked brains and blistered bodies," exceeded modern-day standards of moral decency. The court even cited a U.S. Supreme Court precedent that prohibits

"the infliction of unnecessary pain in the execution of the death sentence."

I wonder if Georgia's 129 death row inmates, watching their clocks while waiting for the warden to flip the switch, now feel any better about their fates. I would bet not. While it does recognize that even convicted murderers have some civil rights, the court's 4-3 ruling is only a step toward bringing the state's justice system into the 21st century.

The court did not overturn Georgia's use of the death penalty, which some death penalty advocates, including the state's attorney general, had feared. It simply struck down an exceedingly archaic, barbaric way to carry out what the state has determined is justice.

It took 77 years and 441 electrocutions for the state to re-examine its method of execution. In 1924 Georgia switched from hanging to electrocution, and last year the

state's legislature created a new law making lethal injection the method of execution for anyone sentenced to death for murders committed after May 1, 2000.

So while Georgia is taking steps to make its execution system more humane, it has neglected to examine what is most central to the death penalty debate. A prisoner's right to life — even that of someone who has admittedly taken the life of someone else — hasn't entered the picture so far.

Georgia's attorney general, Thurmont Baker, said Friday that "the effect of the majority's decision is to substitute their personal opinions for the will of the people of Georgia." Let's hope that the court's opinions do reflect those of the people of Georgia and not those held by the switch-happy Mr. Baker. And let's hope that it doesn't take another three quarters of a century for Georgia — and its fellow 38 states — to eradicate the practice of legalized murder. Enough is enough.

### CATE DOTY

#### EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

### The Daily Tar Heel

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## Halloween For Dummies (and Pirates)

It has recently come to my attention that people are actually reading my column. Before, I was almost positive that my only readers were my suitemates (I force them) and my parents (they have to). So, it was a delightful surprise to discover that people were actually reading voluntarily. In light of this fact, I'm going to attempt to improve the quality of the column so my readers have something a little more serious and educational to adorn the bottom of their Editorial Pages. On that note:

*It is already October and I don't know what I should be for Halloween! I want something really good for this year, because last year was a flop. Do you have any ideas? H.G.*

I know midterms have been foremost on everyone's mind lately, but as soon as they finish up, the next big thing on the agenda is Chapel Hill's favorite holiday.

For those of you who don't know (or don't remember), Halloween is a hallowed tradition (read: Bacchanalian festival) here at Blue Heaven. So, of course, everyone is wondering what they should wear to the year's biggest party. Here are some sugges-



ADAM SHUPE  
F1

tions:

**The Pirate:** All you really need for this costume is an eye patch, a scowl and a terrible brigand accent. It's cheap and easy (much like the Pirates who were here this weekend). And to complete the outfit, stash a flask of rum, a pirate's favorite drink.

**The Devil:** It's funny how a set of red horns turns a girl into an instant sex symbol. You don't even need the rest of the getup

(though you can throw in the tail if you want to be kinky). Just don't do it in blue. You ought to know better.

**The Oompa-Loompa:** Ok, so this one takes a little bit of work. But dammit, some guys pulled it off perfectly last year, and so can you. All you really need is some green hair dye, some orange costume makeup, white overalls and white gloves. You could do more, but everyone will get the point. By the way, it helps if you are a midget.

**The Hooker/Pimp Combo:** For some reason, this duo gets the most play out of every other costume (no pun intended). I mean, a short skirt, tube top and fishnet hose is enough for a cheap hooker. It's the pimp getup that takes a lot of work. But it's

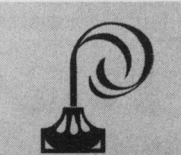
not like you can't just use the one you normally wear. Buy a new hat and a couple more chains and you will be good as new.

**The UNC Mascot:** Now I know what you are saying: We see the mascot all the time. Well, I'm suggesting a more anatomically correct mascot. If anyone has ever seen the real UNC ram, you know exactly what I'm talking about. I think there is a disease associated with that kind of thing. Testicular elephantitis, maybe?

**The Curry/Durant Doppelganger:** This one is a Halloween 2001 original. All you have to do is get a Ronald Curry jersey with his number one on the front. Then, depending on how many ones the Halloween revelers are seeing on your shirt, that's who you are. It's just like a real football game!

These are all pretty quick and easy to put together (and cheap!). But just remember the most important thing: Don't stress about your costume too much, because no one is going to remember what you wore in the morning anyway.

Adam Shupe believes he failed his reform attempt with flying colors. Send your questions, comments or costume ideas to him at [shupe@email.unc.edu](mailto:shupe@email.unc.edu).



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](mailto:editdesk@unc.edu).

### READERS' FORUM

#### Letter Writer Berates Fans for Booing Curry, Sends Best Wishes

TO THE EDITOR:

I was very disappointed by the booing that some of our fans did when Ronald Curry entered in the second half of the ECU game. No fans should ever boo one of their own players, especially a player who has given so much to his football team and school like Curry has done the previous three years. I understand people will argue that Darian Durant has added a much-needed spark to our offense this season. However, I also realize that Curry has done the same thing throughout his career and will continue to do so if given the chance. Curry can lead our team to victory, as evident by his gutsy performance in the fourth quarter of the ECU game when he led our team to crucial first down conversions that helped seal the game. Now that our team is winning once again, I believe that Curry along with Durant deserve our full support and not even one boo from fans. Especially since many of those same booing fans started cheering less than a minute later when Curry was scram-

bling for first downs. My best wishes are with the Tar Heels, and especially Curry, for the rest of the season.

James Colombo

Senior  
Communications Studies and  
Management and Society

#### Campus Protesters Are Asking for More Than Just Simple 'Respect'

TO THE EDITOR:

There has been a lot of talk recently on this campus about respecting differing points of view, particularly in regard to those who have protested for a non-violent U.S. response to the terrorist attacks. I am afraid, however, that those who call for this "respect" are actually asking for something different. They are asking for acceptance. They should remember that just as it is their right to speak freely, so too do we have the right to consider them fools for what they say, and, of course, to speak freely about that.

Matthijs Schoots  
Clinical Research Coordinator