

Opinion

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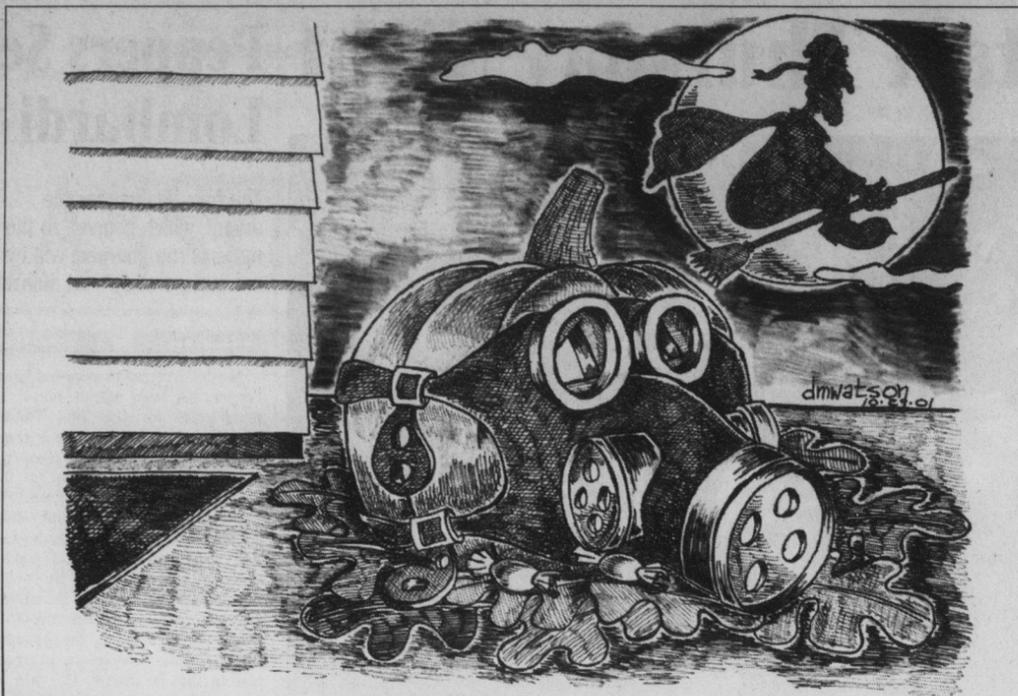
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Board Editorials

Uniting Through Speech

The events of a local rally prove the importance of maintaining respect for others' freedom to speak

This weekend, Taliban soldiers and U.S. forces were not the only ones involved in a heated confrontation.

On the streets of Chapel Hill two opposing groups, one pro-war and one anti-war, came face to face and exercised a right those in Afghanistan could only dream about - freedom of speech.

But unfortunately, some of those protesters crossed the line of respect and decency. Several protesters and bystanders made obscene gestures while others shouted obscenities at members of the other group.

The debate grew so heated that police had to ask the two groups to separate from each other.

While one could argue that the protesters' actions exemplified exactly what free speech is all about, in the broader scope, their hostile actions were totally uncalled for.

The nation now faces an uncertainty

unlike any it has ever faced before. Before Sept. 11, terrorism was an outside prospect in America. People used to believe terrorism was only committed by faceless menaces in far-off lands.

Today it is right outside our back door, in our mail and in our places of business. War is now a realization, not just a prospect.

We have troops on the ground in hostile territories and armed guards in our nation's airports.

Now, more than ever, the people of this nation should stand together and be united as brothers and sisters.

But just like in any sibling relationship, we must realize that there will be disagreements. These disagreements are a natural part of human nature.

While our first instinct might be to scoff at the other side in our disagreements, we must remember that the only way to find a solution is through civil, open discussion.

Any action made with the purpose of intimidating or silencing someone with opposing views is not a democratic action, no matter how democratic the cause may seem. It does no one any good to resort to name-calling in a time like this. Just because someone supports military action in Afghanistan, that does not make him or her a war monger.

Nor does a person who supports peace through nonviolent means constitute a person with "un-American" views.

It is the diversity of this nation that makes it great.

We all do not look the same, act the same or think the same.

As Americans, we must bask in this diversity and give each other's views the respect they deserve.

If we don't, our country would look a lot less like the land of the free and the home of the brave and a lot more like Afghanistan.

Seniors With No Class

Student elected leaders need to remember who they represent and act with their constituency in mind

Graduation ceremonies are an annual reinforcement of the hard work and dedication of a college career. For students, it is a beginning and an end, complete with beach balls, folded program-fans and a keynote address that should entertain, inspire and impart wisdom.

The selection process for the Commencement speaker is largely a behind-the-scenes operation. Students are usually unaware of the committee meetings, telephone calls and deal-making negotiations that take place around the time they are registering for that final class load.

As is the case for most University business, there are committees and representatives in place to handle the business to which the student body at large cannot attend.

A few weeks ago, this year's Commencement seemed set. Bill Cosby had verbally accepted an offer to speak at the graduation of the class of 2002. The people charged with securing a graduation speaker

appeared to have finished their job with a simple conversation and a handshake.

But the Cos backed out because of a prior commitment, so the real work had to begin.

JOSEPH FORMISANO

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

We all know the tune - one side pushes for an academic type or a bureaucrat with a seven-word title, the other side wants Brad Pitt or Carrot Top. I think we're on the same page here.

These are normal bumps in the road, and they are usually resolved with minimal bruising. Unfortunately, to this point, it has been handled without the professionalism and maturity that the student body demands from its elected officials.

Students don't require much from the offices of senior class president, vice president and student marshals. A quality senior gift, a few parties at select locations and a memorable Commencement ceremony are enough

to make their terms in office a success.

Lately, however, senior class officers have been resigning faster than they have been accomplishing the tasks of their office. Chief Marshal Annie Peirce and Vice President Ursula Dimmeling have stepped down from their posts before the speaker selection process could be completed.

Seniors submitted more than 300 suggestions for Commencement speaker. They were tabulated and ranked, with the top 20 presented to the administration, who would, in turn, offer other possibilities.

The candidates are discussed, ranked and reranked. The two sides are supposed to try to produce a consensus list.

But the system has broken down somewhere along the line. None of the students' top choices are in contention, and class of 2002 has lost its vice president and its chief marshal.

Some senior class leaders have failed to represent their constituents and have chosen to walk away without finishing the job.

READERS' FORUM

Harrison, Kleinschmidt, Verkerk Best Candidates For Town Council Seats

TO THE EDITOR:

America's dependence on oil is one of the many costs of our dependence on the automobile as the primary form of urban transportation, but we are well familiar in the Triangle with more immediate problems associated with it.

Sprawl, traffic and parking congestion, unsafe conditions and the degradation of the air we breathe are among these. It is well known that we can not solve these problems by building more roads, highways and parking lots. Instead, we must shift in the next few years to increased availability and convenience in alternative transportation services, including transit. Now we have in Chapel Hill a golden opportunity to do something about these problems.

In the coming Town Council election, there are three outstanding candidates who understand the urgent need for new transit infrastructure and services: Ed Harrison, Mark Kleinschmidt and Dorothy Verkerk. Votes for these candidates will make a real difference. They are not paying lip service to transportation reform; they believe in it.

In the next five to 10 years we will see great changes in Chapel Hill as a result of the University's Master Plan and its designs on the Horace Williams grounds. Unfortunately, these plans lack the vision we will need to achieve genuine transportation reform.

As currently conceived, they will increase traffic congestion enormously. In the case of the Horace Williams grounds, for example, the plans call for building first next to Airport Road, rather than on the existing transit corridor that runs right through the grounds! We must have people like Harrison, Kleinschmidt and Verkerk on the Town Council to protect the community from this recklessness.

James Coley
Chapel Hill

Student Offers Counter Opinion to Columnist's Advice to Girlfriend

TO THE EDITOR:

I am writing in response to the relationship advice by Adam Shupe to 36B and her boyfriend.

The male claim that blatant breast goggling is "a product of typical, raging hor-

mones" is not only a really lame excuse, it's also pure crap. Trust me, women eye bulging biceps just as much, but we're taught not to rock the boat.

Bottom line: Girl, next time your man trips on his tongue over some cleavage, undress the next football player you see with your eyes, and make a few comments about how nicely his pants fit around the crotch. Either that or tell him the grass is always greener and kick him to the curb until he learns a little more respect and tact.

Katy Clark
Graduate Student

Candidate for Chapel Hill Mayor Lee Pavao Offers Best Assets for Seat

TO THE EDITOR:

I support Lee Pavao to be our next mayor of Chapel Hill.

I think Pavao will do the best job of leading the Town Council during what will certainly be interesting and challenging times. One thing for sure, Pavao will not have to spend a lot of his time writing letters to the editor to clarify his positions or correct "misperceptions."

Kevin Foy has written letters to clarify

his involvement in the great "Top of the Hill sign flap," and he told us that his remarks were taken out of context.

He has now written a letter to clarify his role in injecting race in an appointment to a town board a couple of years ago. Regretting it now is fine, but isn't Foy asking us to judge candidates on their records?

He also noted that lingering divisions are "a luxury we cannot afford," yet he would not clearly answer the question when asked about Pavao's place of residence. Instead, he let it linger, and he answered by saying that it was up to voter interpretation instead of telling us what he thought.

Cam Hill had the courage to answer the question, and he clearly stated that he felt that it was a false issue. Why won't Foy just tell us his answer and at the same time tell his supporters to knock it off? There are enough important real issues without creating false ones.

Through out this entire campaign, Pavao has acted as the gentleman that he is.

He is the right candidate to be our next mayor.

Vote for Pavao for mayor of Chapel Hill on Nov. 6.

Anne Tyson
Chapel Hill

Pedestrian Asks Drivers For More Patience When Others Use Crosswalk

TO THE EDITOR:

Every day I wonder. I wonder why I have to risk my life just to walking up South Columbia Street across Mason Farm Road. I wonder if it ever occurs to drivers who turn onto Mason Farm Road going 30 mph that it actually is a crosswalk. I wonder if there is some unwritten "one-life-one-crosswalk" rule that I don't know about; maybe that's what got invoked on Manning Street. I wonder why the Public Safety officer who sits there in the morning never gives anyone a ticket for almost running me over even though the reason he is there is because someone has been run over already. I wonder if the driver who scowls at me through the windshield because I made him wait 20 seconds while I crossed the street rushes to work so he can drink coffee and check his e-mail for 10 minutes. Lately I see flags in some of the windows of these cars.

As I finish my daily walk to school I wonder if there is any irony in that.

Michael Howell
Curriculum in Neurobiology

Limiting Fun, Frolicking On Franklin Street

Now is the time of year to sit back and reflect, to give thanks for the cornucopia of blessings, time to sit around the table and think of Squanto and the Pilgrims as they ate their first feast.

Oh, wait.
As carols echo through halls decked in yuletide splendor with warm hearts and hearths, we snuggle in our beds, ready to celebrate the birthday of the once-begotten son.

Oops. Wrong again.
With souls swelling with pride and gratitude, we come together and show appreciation for our hard-working secretaries; let's all thank them for the kitten posters, the Family Circus cartoons, and all those "Good mornings."

Oh, wait, that's not it either.
Which reminds me - I've heard a bit an inking, a smattering, a barely discernable whisper, if you will, about a holiday today? No? You either? Hmmm.

I've heard it boasts a proud stamp of approval from the Prince of Darkness himself, or at least that's the word on the street from the Baptists.

No, I'm not talking about Coach Krzyzewski or that guy in your Lit class who reads Dostoyevsky to cheer himself up - I'm thinking more along the lines of a Lucifer, a brimstone type of figure. (I was going to make some mention here about what having a team called the Blue Devils must symbolize, but I'm not going to because I am a better person than that.)

Halloween always has been a holiday with edge. Halloween, or "Hallowe'en" as they refer to it in the academic journals (apparently the apostrophe makes it more distinguished or at least that's how it seems to me) is a fairly random holiday on which to throw the biggest street party of the year.

Then again, I doubt there would be a turnout of 50,000 folks to a May Day celebration. I can just see it: "Come on and raise up! Time for the May pole dance, guys! Grab your ribbons and weave!" And when was the last time we had a University-wide throwdown for Arbor Day?

The Chapel Hill Police Department would probably love an Arbor Day bash.

Seems to me this year it has blown the Halloween gathering a little out of proportion. Sure, it is a school night, and while I genuinely appreciate their concern for my grade point average (which, right now, is probably scarier than any costume), a little mid-week debauching never hurt anybody. Well, not too much anyway. The crackdowns of good-intentioned Chapel Hill festivities are what mini raisin boxes are to Halloween candy stashes. In other words, they're a bit of a bummer.

Now I can understand the desire to keep Franklin Street from turning into a den of iniquity, and I think that all those guys who walk around with giant foam genitalia forfeit all rights to civil liberties. But there is no need to lay a Brent Road-style smackdown and positively suspend the writ of habeas corpus.

We're civilized members of the University community! Give us some credit. True, a huge number of people show up for Halloween in Chapel Hill every year. But to enlist the help of over 300 police officers and 100 plus firefighters?

Couldn't that manpower be better spent fighting injustice? For example, you know those stores that sell Christmas stuff all year round? How could they be anything else but fronts for some sort of money laundering operation? We all know they can't make any money legitimately! I say it's time we take a stand! Policemen, you are our foot soldiers of justice.

Protect me from the Stadium Drive mugger or the lewd guy in Davis. Protect me from the embittered employees at Kinko's (job interview question: "So, you think everything sucks too? You do? You're hired!") or the treacherous falling acorns on the quad.

But the frolicking, costumed masses? Don't get me wrong - I do appreciate it. Just seems a bit much. We might have a tad excess of the party spirit, but we're not out to hurt anyone. Can you really punish people just for having too much mirth? That could cause folks to develop unhealthy mentalities. And we all know it's not good to have a poor sense of self-mirth! (Rimshot. Ladies and gentlemen, she's here all week!) Oh, yeah - Happy Halloween.

Erin Fornoff will be dressed as the Scary Sleepless Monster. Contact her at fornoff@email.unc.edu or just follow the cries of "My God! Look at those eye bags!"



ERIN FORNOFF
SWEETNESS AND LIGHT



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.