

Opinion

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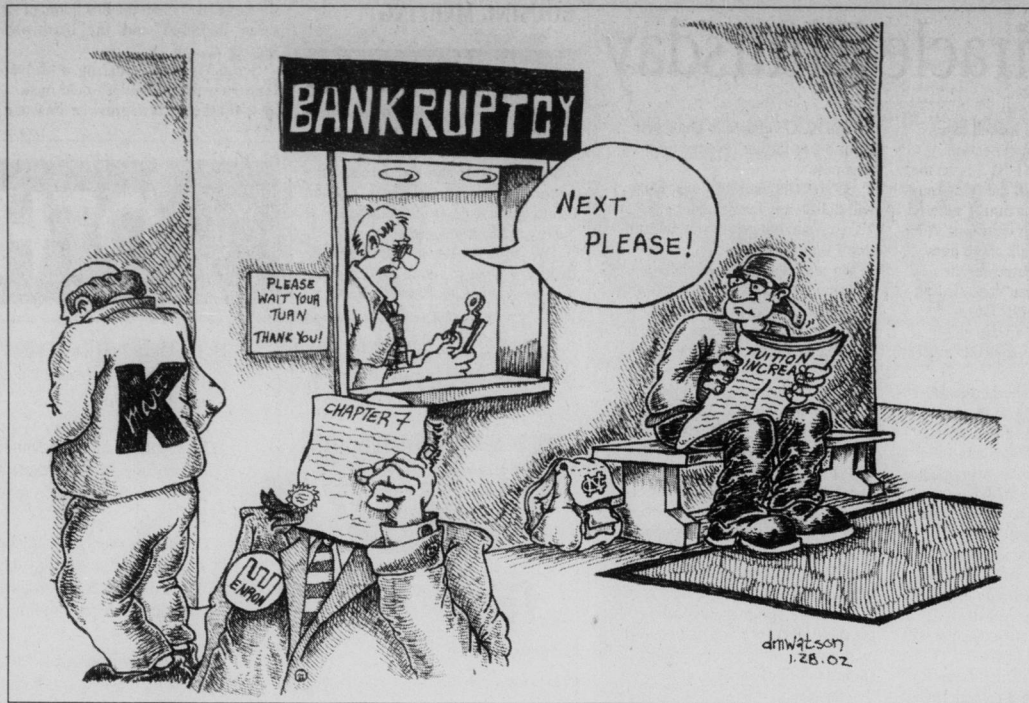
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Board Editorials

The Prospects Are Good

The University should take a look at using an available land tract for affordable faculty and staff housing

With living costs in Chapel Hill constantly rising, many University staff members and faculty have decided to accept an extended daily commute by settling in more affordable developments in Carrboro and Durham.

A recent proposal to sell a 62-acre Horace Williams satellite tract to developers Phil Szostak and Bob Chapman could result in the creation of more reasonably priced housing arrangements for UNC employees as part of the Winmore mixed-use development off Homestead Road.

By accepting the proposal, UNC officials would be looking out for the best interests of its faculty and staff and would set a precedent for further housing development in the Chapel Hill area.

Recent discussions of the proposal have revealed that homes within the satellite tract would sell for less than the median price in Carrboro, according to Nancy Sutenfield, vice chancellor for finance and administration at UNC.

Housing prices in Chapel Hill are already too exorbitant for many UNC staff and faculty members.

Development of the satellite tract would provide the opportunity for faculty and staff to stay closer to the University campus and increase the appeal of UNC to prospective faculty.

"(Housing) is a very important part of the total recruitment and retention package that would help boost us up to where we want to be," said Faculty Council Chairwoman Sue Estroff.

Affordable housing close to campus, coupled with an proposed increase in faculty salaries as a result of the recent tuition increase, could only attract new faculty to the University.

But before the UNC Board of Trustees can accept the proposal, it must first decide if the tract is best suited for affordable housing and if it will receive an acceptable price from developers.

Appraised at just under \$1 million last

year, the value of the tract will probably rise with the development of Winmore, but further development of the Winmore area could also drive up the price of homes built on the tract.

Proceeds from the sale of the property will be allocated for the University's Department of Philosophy, a condition set when the land was donated.

The issue of affordable housing in Chapel Hill has raised concerns within the community for several years.

Designation of the satellite tract for the purpose of creating reasonably priced homes will not only keep UNC faculty and staff closer to home, but it will also show a vested interest on the part of the University in ensuring smart growth in Chapel Hill.

The tract's location in Carrboro limits its potential for student use.

But it can still be an asset for faculty and staff who wish to settle close to the University.

Drop the Proposal

Rather than proposing to raise the dropout age, the school system should develop more alternative programs

N.C. Public Schools Superintendent Mike Ward wants to reduce the state's dropout rate by raising the minimum dropout age from 16 to 18.

While this idea appears good in theory, in practice it does nothing more than beat a dead horse.

In a perfect world, all children would go to school until they graduated from high school. After that, they would go to college and, upon completion of a degree, enter the workforce with the skills needed to be successful in life.

Sadly, it is not a perfect world, and many children, for a variety of reasons, won't make it to college or even to the end of high school.

Some teenagers have pressing family situations or financial burdens that leave them no other choice but to drop out.

For example, imagine you are a 17-year-old high school student. Your mother has raised you and your three younger brothers

and sisters by herself since you were born.

You find out your mother has a deadly form of cancer and needs constant care and will not be able to care for your brothers and sisters anymore. Now where are your priorities? Who's to tell you should be sitting in a classroom when you could be at home caring for your family?

While that situation might seem extreme, it could happen every day in this state.

Some students are so hell-bent on dropping out that once they reach adulthood, there is no way to keep them in school. Even if there was a way to physically bring them to school, they would leave as soon as they got there or be so disruptive that learning would be impossible for other students.

Instead of spending exorbitant amounts of time and money to keep 16- and 17-year-olds in school, the public schools should use their resources to provide alternative

programs and vocational training. A number of state school systems have had success with vocational training and even have programs for children as young as those in sixth grade.

These programs, including apprenticeship programs and partnerships with local community colleges, allow students to do something they are interested in and prepare them to enter into productive careers that do not necessarily require a high school diploma.

All students are unique individuals with different wants, needs and dreams. Some students have to get an early start on the real world by dropping out at 16 while others graduate and go on to college. It is the school system's job to make sure both of these groups get the training they need and deserve.

If the school system was smart, it would drop the whip and show the horse the pasture.

Groundhogs — Our Next Big Terrorist Threat

Ha ha! Your weekend plans have been foiled again! I know exactly what you were up to, and thankfully some important (or highly delusional) people figured it out, too. It looks like you will need to find a new activity, since you're not going to be able to make a road trip to Pennsylvania to assassinate a groundhog.

What? You weren't planning on that? Oh my. ... This sounds like a problem.

Punxsutawney Phil (please don't make me spell that again), America's favorite February rodent, is the latest in a long line of mammals covering to the terrorist threat. For the past two weeks, Phil (as he's known to his friends) has received around-the-clock protection from some very lucky Pennsylvania state troopers. As the big day approaches, (Feb. 2 for those of you who are too lazy to look at the calendar) snipers will be on hand, as well as the National Guard. That's right — uniformed and armed National Guard troops!

I swear I'm only making part of this up! I can't remember when something with the word hog in its name captivated the attention of America since Sega introduced us to Sonic the Hedgehog. (Side note: That game really sucked.)

There is so much that disturbs me about this that I don't even know where to begin ... namely the fact that IT'S A GROUNDHOG! Not only is Phil a groundhog, but there have been (insert number) Phils over the course of time. ... So he's not even the only candidate. I'm pretty sure that any groundhog that's not blind is capable of doing the job.

This does raise some interesting questions, however. The first one that comes to mind is that if Phil sees his shadow as the result of an incendiary blast, does that count for something? What if someone gets a shot off and Phil is incapacitated? Is there a 25th Amendment procedure for groundhogs? I hope so. ... I'd hate to see controversy creep into this year's insanity.

But this also raises questions about fairness to other animals. Shouldn't other high-profile animals also receive some sort of protection? What about Shamu, Flipper, Scooby Doo and Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen? Certainly if Phil's a target then these other celebrities are in some sort of jeopardy. And let's not forget about El Macho Baracco, the self-proclaimed winningest cock-fighter in all of Mexico — I'm certain there's a lofty bounty on that rooster's head. Where's his security detail? (Answer: Eating brunch.)

This also makes me wonder about future holidays. Will we see FBI agents tailing Saint Patrick? How soon until we see Santa Claus with his own Secret Service protective detail? I'm not sure that anyone knows the answer to these questions, but I would love to hear suggestions.

Speaking of the Secret Service ... It's not uncommon for Secret Service radio traffic to include code names so that not everyone (defined as anyone) will know exactly what they're talking about. For example, lines such as, "The president's going for a run around Dupont Circle," aren't among the most popular, since it would give radio geeks critical advanced knowledge of the President's location.

To combat this, they use code names. I would give you some examples, but I don't know any. ... So use your imagination. However, I did think of a great one for President Bush. It would be superbly fitting if they called him "The Boob." From this point, it doesn't take a creative genius (nor a pregnant porpoise) to see classic humor coming from a mile away. My feeble mind came up with naming the presidential limo, "the bra."

You'd now have radio geeks pleasing themselves while listening to the presidential radio frequency every time an agent says, "The Boob is leaving the bra." I really think this would cut down on the threat of an attack against the president. After all, Internet porn is big these days. ... I'm sure radio porn could use a revival.

Sorry for that aside — it was more obnoxious than usual. But I digress. The point that I'm trying to make is that Pennsylvania has suffered some immeasurable disappointments lately (namely the Steelers and Eagles), and I hate to think what they're bringing on themselves.

Do you seriously think there's someone wacky enough out there that they've contemplated offing Phil? Seriously? Think about how utterly and completely silly this looks to anyone with an IQ.

Regardless of what happens, I promise I will not be in the line of fire. I don't think I have it in me to take a bullet for a groundhog. Sorry Phil.

Travis Raines will spend the weekend as far away from Phil as possible. He can be reached at traines@unc.edu.



TRAVIS RAINES
UTTERLY
RANDOM
QUIPPING

READERS' FORUM

Join Other Students for Pit Sleep-In or Attend Hunger Banquet

TO THE EDITOR:

I want to lay out some statistics for you. Within the United States, 25 percent to 40 percent of homeless people work, 37 percent are families with children, 25 percent are children, 25 percent to 30 percent are mentally disabled, 30 percent are veterans, and 40 percent are drug or alcohol dependent. Most of the time a missed paycheck, health crises or an unpaid bill is the final straw toward a family becoming homeless.

These are statistics found on the back of the Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week brochure, and the Campus Y HOPE committee, the sponsor of the week, got the statistics from the Web site <http://www.worldhungeryear.org>.

Another unsettling statistic is that one out of 12 people worldwide is malnourished, including 160 million children under the age of 5 — these are from United Nations Food and Agriculture.

Now I know that statistics can be warped and suited to mean just about anything.

But I also know that anyone who keeps up with current events and watches the

news is aware that these statistics are close enough to count.

It's a serious problem, one we've got plenty of in this land of plenty — the United States of America.

How aware are any of us? How much do we allow ourselves to leave our comfort zones and ponder the amount of suffering some people go through on a daily basis?

I don't leave my comfort zone nearly often enough, so I'll be going to spend the night at the Pit Sleep-In on this Sunday from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m.

And the next morning, I think I'll go to the Hunger Banquet at 6 p.m. Feb. 6 and "eat as the world eats."

These are little things; they're meant to make us aware, and if we are aware we just might care enough to try doing something to help.

I just want to encourage everyone who reads this to try some of these things too. Come by the Campus Y, pick up a brochure.

You've got a whole week to share in it with other students — Feb. 3 through Feb. 7.

Andy Weeks
Junior
English

Student Disagrees With The Way That Student Fees Are Used, Spent

TO THE EDITOR:

Today in the Union, I walked past a flier tacked on the bulletin board. The said flier caught my attention because of the scantily clad, seductively posed models contained therein. OK, so maybe it's not exactly a wholesome reason for looking at a flier, but, hey, it's a lot more interesting than just text.

Some of you may have seen this poster — it is a man and a woman, both half naked, with headlines in 32-point text: "Are you Bi? Curious? Are you Bi-curious?" It proceeds to advertise for a meeting to explore and promote bisexuality. "Different strokes?" I thought, being neither "bi" nor "curious," yet not opposed to those who are.

I was about to continue on to my scheduled meeting when I noticed a small, handwritten sentence at the bottom of the page — this sentence was pleasant in nature but the content was almost gloating.

"Paid for in part by student fees. Thanks!"

As I stated before, I am neither bisexual nor curious about being such.

I see no problem with a group that helps students question their sexuality; neither do I have a problem with its existence on campus.

However, I also see absolutely no need for my student fees to pay for this group's existence, especially without my knowledge or consent.

If I had not seen the flier in the Union today, I would not have known that my money is supporting groups such as these. I can only wonder what other programs I am paying for — programs that clash with my personal ideologies and beliefs.

While other students protest that the administration is not informing them where their money goes, I take issue with my fellow students who are not informing me what my money is being used for.

How can activist groups accuse the administration of not disclosing the destination of extra funds from a tuition increase — even though the administration made it clear that the added tuition would go to much-needed faculty salary increases — when groups on campus are using student fees without letting the students know particulars?

Even if it is unrealistic for me to expect to be able to control the destination of my student fees — which it should not be — I don't think that an annual public disclosure

detailing the use of student fees is too much for students to expect from the Carolina Union Activities Board or from groups themselves. I certainly would like to know what my money is supporting.

Joseph John Ahearn
Freshman
Political Science and Business

The Way Money is Spent Doesn't Match Priorities Or University Needs

TO THE EDITOR:

Let me get this straight: Next year students will be expected to pay an extra \$400 in tuition plus (possibly) \$389 to be able to park on campus at night. We are given a list of reasons we "need" these increases, including higher faculty salaries and budget shortfalls. Yet, amongst this money crunch, the University found \$100,000 to give our football coach a salary increase. I appreciate our sports wins as much as any Tar Heel, but something is wrong with this picture.

Jacqueline Legere
Graduate Student
Pharmacy



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