

Opinion



Leading Into Phase 2, No Progress Seen

Seven months ago today, the World Trade Center and the Pentagon were attacked. We don't really know by whom, and we certainly don't know why, though we try to act like we have definitive answers to both of these questions. What we do know is that America is not the safe haven we always thought it was.

And that's OK with me. It is simply naive for us to think that our country is indestructible or infallible. Our acceptance of our mortality and vulnerability as a nation can be a positive thing, despite such a horrible means to this end.

Perhaps Sept. 11 can lead us to a realization that we should stop our imperialistic, blind attitude to the rest of the world. We can use our resources and power to make some necessary changes in the world.

Maybe this horrific attack can shake our values so strongly to force us to re-examine the way we live our lives as Americans.



JOHANNA COSTA FLANK VIEW

And this indeed did happen. Seven months ago today, our core values of safety, security and freedom toppled with the fall of two massive buildings and a strike on our nation's capital. Our stability and mortality were shaken at their very roots.

Before Sept. 11, Americans were like comets flying quickly through life.

But in the hours and days following Sept. 11, most everyone stopped for a moment to assess their own personal values. Some people made major changes in the way they prioritized, and the issues of family, community and safety became more important.

The thing is, we didn't really change permanently. Even some people who re-examined themselves are already back to normal today.

Living in the United States is a blessing. But it is far from the reality the rest of the world faces.

I studied abroad in West Africa this past summer and finally saw another perspective. For the first time, being white was a burden. People harassed me and called me names because I was different. I was seen as another white person and not as an individual.

I realized that this attitude was how this entire nation viewed the Western world. They saw whites and Americans as sources of money, referred to the United States as "the powerful U.S.A." and had such a reverence for our way of life — a way of life they didn't even know.

People would call all the white females "Akosua," which means Sunday. In other words, they only understood white people as being Christian missionaries there to "help" change their society.

In reality, the Ghanaians couldn't have been anything other than bitter. How could they respect a group of people swooping in with their money and their intractable ideology and merely interfering with their lives?

With this in mind, it saddens me more to reflect upon what our nation has come to since September. We had a perfect opportunity to change our "powerful U.S.A." from the world's wealthy bully into the world's enabler. But maybe it's not about what we give to them but how we are perceived by them.

I keep thinking of the statistic that if all the world's people lived in the same standard of living as the United States, it would take six planet Earths to accommodate these needs. That's why the world hates us. We consume and take whatever we want without a second thought.

It is easy for others to blame the United States because, looking at the way we live — the way we so blithely go on with our lives and take for granted even the core values that we only recently re-examined — we are callous to everyone else in the world.

The bottom line is people still need help. We justify with "American ethics" the continuation of our capitalism — being competitive and ignoring the pleas of people who need our help.

The attacks of Sept. 11 didn't change America the way it should have. We don't need to increase airport security, we need to make a permanent adjustment in American values. Seven months have passed, and we have entered "Phase 2" of our war on terrorism, but we are not attacking the root of the problem that the U.S. faces — understanding different perspectives and our place in the world community.

There is a Ghanaian proverb that translates to "with patience one can successfully dissect an ant." In other words, with patience and understanding, America can undertake a new role of promoting a world of co-habitation, respect and potentially peace.

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Board Editorials

Renting Rules

The passage of rental licensing is key for student renters, but students still need to understand terms of leases

Like a bunch of small-town vintners, the Chapel Hill Town Council carries a philosophy that seems inherent to the way it conducts business — all good things come with time.

But instead of yielding a product that time makes more enjoyable, the Town Council's delays usually produce something that is simply late.

In typical fashion, the Town Council finally passed a rental licensing ordinance Monday night.

But the ordinance, which is preceded by more than two years of work, will be a good step to ensure landlord accountability.

Under the specifics of the ordinance, landlords will be required by the town to possess a rental license. At the small cost of \$10 per year, purchasing the license should not represent any problem or threat to local landlords, nor should the cost be passed on to renters.

The ordinance will go into effect this year and will be evaluated after two years

of practice.

When experiencing problems with off-campus housing, many students find that it is nearly impossible to get in touch with their landlord to voice a complaint. And to make matters worse, oftentimes problems go unaddressed.

The ordinance will help to make situations of absentee landlords less common because it holds landlords more accountable. It also includes access to an online database containing all landlords in violation of town housing codes — an invaluable resource for those looking for a place to rent.

Contact information and complaint records also will soon become available to the public through the database, which will be maintained by the town.

Still, students should not be fully assured by the passage of this ordinance. Although it will give students the means to research on their landlords, students will still need to take certain responsibilities that the ordinance will not provide.

Students need to take the time to understand the details of their lease agreements and utilize sources on campus like Student Legal Services to be familiar with the obligations and liabilities of living off campus.

The Town Council passed the ordinance with one amendment aimed at protecting those responsible landlords in Chapel Hill who have not received complaints.

The amendment will make it so that only landlords with violations will be on the database.

The ordinance will force landlords who have been negligent toward the needs of their renters to become more accountable for their property.

Basic problems that inevitably occur with housing will be addressed more easily with access to landlords' contact information and history.

For a university like UNC where close to 70 percent of students live in off-campus housing, such an ordinance is long overdue.

Unlikely Solutions

Drilling in the Arctic is not going to help the nation's dependency on foreign oil

A single drop can produce great ripples, especially when that drop is in the Middle East.

As the Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to spiral downward, Iraq's Saddam Hussein has temporarily halted oil imports to America to punish Washington for its support of Israel.

Although it probably won't lead to a change in foreign policy, Hussein's decision to turn off the spigot has already affected the lives of many Americans. Gas prices began to rise precipitously after the announcement, causing Americans to once again reflect upon their reliance on foreign oil.

After Sept. 11, Americans began to seriously consider the ramifications of obtaining most of their oil from a region that is often mired in conflict and many of whose leaders and citizens don't like them much.

President Bush and congressional leaders rightly have identified the nation's failure to

reduce this dependency as a serious problem and have vowed to rectify it. But their cure, unfortunately, might be worse than the disease.

MARK SLAGLE

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

As the Senate hashes out a new energy bill meant to reduce America's dependency on foreign oil, the Bush administration and its allies in the Congress are pushing a shortsighted agenda that rewards the oil industry without in any way improving the long-term energy situation.

Bush's forces already scored a victory in the House, which passed an energy bill larded with incentives for the oil, gas and coal industries while paying little attention to conservation and fuel efficiency. The House also has resurrected an idea that Bush has been pushing since before the election — opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to exploratory oil drilling.

Letting oil companies sink their rigs into ANWR is a bad idea, for several reasons.

First, most experts believe that there is only a modest amount of oil beneath the refuge. Second, it could take years for that oil to reach the market. Tapping ANWR to address a short-term energy shortage would ultimately be futile. The bottom line is that drilling in ANWR won't end America's reliance on foreign oil.

Rather than viewing the energy problem as a question of supply, politicians and policy-makers should instead consider ways to decrease demand. The Senate bill is an excellent opportunity to do that.

Senators need to take the long view and consider how they can encourage improved fuel efficiency and research into different forms of energy. Scientists have already made great strides in fuel technology in past few years; imagine what could be accomplished with government support.

America's policy-makers have reached a crossroads; they can continue to perpetuate harmful trends or embark on a new future.

The Daily Tar Heel

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READERS' FORUM

Night of the Divas Planned for Great Hall; Five Acts to Perform

TO THE EDITOR:

Loreleis. Opeyo. Carolina Style. Kamikazi. Mezmerhythm.

Tonight at 7 pm in the Great Hall, each of these groups, together with other talented Carolina women, will perform on one stage for one cause — the prevention of sexual assault.

(And tickets are only \$4!)

Clearly, the lineup is amazing. But the Night of the Divas has more to offer than simple entertainment value. It also has heart. Every dollar raised will go directly to the Orange County Rape Crisis Center, an organization that provides everything from counseling to elementary school education programs, all free of charge. In order to continue this work, the center needs your help — and your money.

Recent events on this campus have highlighted the prevalence of sexual assault, and facing this reality can be frightening. But we aren't trying to frighten you; we want to tell you that you can help. You can come to the Night of the Divas, bring a friend, enjoy the show and know that you are doing your part to help end sexual

assault.

Imagine enjoying some of Carolina's finest entertainment and working to end sexual assault — all for only \$4?

Shaina Vatz Junior Peace, War and Defense Theresa Chen Senior Journalism and Mass Communication

Tickets Can Be Bought Online, at Alumni Center For Senior Ball Event

TO THE EDITOR:

We would like to invite each and every senior to the Senior Ball, to be held on Saturday, April 20 from 9:30 p.m. to 2 a.m.

The ball will be held at Michael Jordan's 23 so we can celebrate the last month of our senior year!

Tickets are \$10 each and can be purchased in a variety of ways. First, you can buy them at the front desk from noon to 4 p.m. at the Alumni Center from April 8-19. You may also purchase them online at seniors.unc.edu.

Lastly, if you know a marshal, you may get tickets from them as well.

The ball will be semi-formal attire, and a date is not required. They will be checking IDs at the door (you can be marked under), and any non-senior may attend with a senior.

If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail Brooke Roper, the coordinator, at broper@email.unc.edu. Thanks, and please come out to enjoy an evening to remember!

Ben Singer Senior Class President Brooke Roper Senior Ball Coordinator

Graduate, Professional Students Speak Out About Commencement

TO THE EDITOR:

Attention graduate and professional students — it is already time to begin thinking about next year's Commencement speakers!

This includes graduation ceremonies in December 2002 and May 2003. This is your opportunity to request individuals whom you would like to hear at your Commencement.

Nomination forms can be found on the

GPSP home page (<http://www.unc.edu/student/orgs/gpsf/>) or by e-mailing me.

We are asking that all submissions be in prior to Friday, April 19.

Please e-mail completed nomination forms to sschmitt@email.unc.edu. You can also find blank copies and a drop-off spot in my box in the GPSP office in Suite C of the Student Union.

Stephanie Schmitt GPSP External Vice President

Article on Williamson Gives Him Legend Status, Deaths are Footnotes

TO THE EDITOR:

The Daily Tar Heel, as the campus newspaper, undoubtedly plays an important role in shaping how the "history" of UNC is chronicled.

While it is certainly a good thing that Wendell Williamson is getting the treatment he needs to fight his internal battles, there is no reason for the DTH to elevate him to a higher place in history than he should be entitled to.

More than seven years after Williamson's long-planned deadly rampage on Franklin Street, I was disappointed to

read Kellie Dixon's article that, while news-worthy, appears to portray Williamson as merely a former UNC law student who should be afforded legendary status by virtue of his battle with paranoid schizophrenia.

Williamson is not a legend by any means.

Despite the fact that Williamson's story is arguably as tragic as the chaos he perpetrated on Jan. 26, 1995, the UNC community should never forget that two individuals — Kevin Reichardt and Ralph Walker — suffered horrific deaths on that day.

Reichardt and Walker, like everyone else who walked on the downtown Chapel Hill streets that day, never imagined that such a horrible event could occur. Countless individuals who were students at the time will always remember where they were and what they were doing when the events of Jan. 26, 1995 transpired.

It was a dark day in the history of this University.

The DTH should not be giving Williamson more notoriety than he is due and, by the same token, should not be referring to Reichardt and Walker as mere footnotes.

Lonn Weissblum Class of 1998



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.