

Opinion

The Daily Tar Heel

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Board Editorials

Mailing Methods

The BOT should avoid voting by mail ballot; live discussion and long-term planning are needed

UNC Board of Trustees members have until Wednesday to vote on the Department of Public Safety's revised budget plan.

Let's hope they bought stamps. Last week, administrators and a small group of students devised a plan to alleviate DPS' \$2 million budget deficit.

And while the plan turned out to be a practical compromise, and it will pass the full board, as nine votes for it had been received by Monday, it is still important that the BOT make an effort to discuss and vote in person.

It's understandable that when a special meeting is called, some members will not be able to attend. But oftentimes, when a special meeting is called, it is to address the University's most pressing issues — and parking is no exception.

Parking has been, to say the least, a tense subject during much of this school year.

The idea of night parking permit proposals had the University community up in arms and pleading the BOT to strike it down. Fortunately, at its March meeting the BOT

did just that and forced administrators to draft a proposal without night parking permits.

Two weeks later, because of a stroke of good luck, DPS was saved when cost-cutting measures taken by Chapel Hill Transit saved the University \$520,000. DPS was now close to recovering the \$566,650 that would have been raised with night parking permits. The remaining will be made up internally by DPS.

The BOT's Audit, Business and Finance Committee voted unanimously last Thursday to approve the plan. But the plan has to be voted on by the entire board, and consequently, ballots were sent by mail for a vote.

While it's clear that students should be thankful that a plan was devised to keep night parking free and convenient, a discussion about the proposal couldn't have hurt.

As construction progresses on campus and parking becomes even more exclusive, discussions will be ongoing, and DPS' budget will be strained even more as more trans-

portation is needed to accommodate the influx of students and the expansion of campus.

The proposal is simply a Band-Aid for an issue that needs in-depth, long-term planning. The campus can't continue to function from one special meeting to another or from one mail ballot to the next. There must be constructive, cooperative, long-term planning by administrators and students to make sure that this year's parking debacle is not replicated over and over.

Fortunately, the transit authority recognized that eliminating the campus EU bus route was justified, which in turn saved DPS a nice piece of change. More cooperation between DPS and the transit authority is needed; there are probably ways to cut costs if the two worked more closely.

Mail-in votes can never replace the productivity of live discussion. And while there is no question that the proposed plan is indeed the best compromise for this campus, more long-term discussion needs to take place.

A Poor Solution

Instituting a lottery in North Carolina is not the right answer to fix state budget deficit problems

N.C. legislators might soon decide whether to join 37 other states and the District of Columbia by introducing a state-run lottery.

Gov. Mike Easley is urging the General Assembly to take up the lottery issue at the beginning of its session, which starts in late May. He also plans to include lottery revenues in his recommended budget.

The governor would prefer to see the legislature enact a lottery without a referendum so the state could start collecting revenues more quickly, but legislators dispute this view, and voter approval will likely be required for any lottery bill to pass.

Easley and other proponents claim a lottery is a necessary and relatively painless way to ease the state out of a projected \$1.2 billion budget shortfall next year.

Easley hopes that by instituting a state lottery, some of the budget woes will be alleviated. But even if the lottery is passed by the General Assembly, any revenue

wouldn't be made until the next fiscal year. Regardless, it would take even more time and money to get a lottery started.

The lottery is not North Carolina's answer right now — responsible spending and planning is.

North Carolinians must wonder if they are not looking at a classic bait-and-switch; the lottery is being sold as a means to benefit the budget shortfall and education, but at this point, the lottery could just turn into an outlet for wasteful spending.

Easley claimed in his State of the State address last year that a lottery would raise up to \$500 million dollars annually, but the numbers simply don't add up.

Based on sales and personal income data from eight Southern and border states with lotteries, the John Locke Foundation reported that a N.C. lottery would result in about \$285 million net revenue gain to the state, a far cry from the \$500 million Easley proposed.

North Carolina also should be forewarned that lottery revenue around the country is proving to be an unreliable source of funds. A recent report by the S.C. Policy Council Education Foundation reveals that eight states have recently experienced a decline in lottery revenue. In addition, the same report reveals that Florida and Georgia are experiencing problems meeting their commitments to education funding.

It is clear that a N.C. lottery might not be the cash cow for the state that it needs to be. Voters should be aware that, if passed, the lottery will not be a quick fix.

If the purpose of the lottery is simply to balance future budgets, then reducing the size of state government and cutting unnecessary spending could easily save North Carolina \$285 million. Policy-makers' reluctance to do so shows that, for them, supporting a lottery might be a wise political move but foolish economic policy.

The Last Word: Cue the Damn Show Choir!

Let's be honest — some things are never going to happen. Americans will never be known for being sensitive, Leonard Part 1 (or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5) will never come to fruition, and no matter how hard they try, the Generals are never going to beat the Globetrotters. Let's throw in the fact that graduation is looming large on the horizon, followed closely by an indefinitely lengthy period of unemployment, and all I have to say is, "I have seen the future, my friends, and it is bleak."

So, I say screw the future. Seize the day, today is the first day of the rest of your life, blah blah blah. We all have our favorite clichés that we bust out every so often because we lack the sophistication to express our thoughts and feelings without them. Strip a cliché of its banality and triteness, and you get the kind of nothing that makes you want to say, "Damn it, I should have stuck with the red snapper."

With an uneventful near future to anticipate, some seniors like myself are reflecting on the past nine months and wondering if they in fact got the most out of the final chapter of their college careers. Others are staring at their bank statements and wondering aloud what crazy drunk got a hold of their check card and spent so much money at bars. And still others are rhyming off stupid clichés, like the one about "living life without regrets."

The question is, then, do I have any regrets? Well, that's probably not the question that logically follows, but it seems to follow thematically at least, so, yeah, of course I have regrets. Everybody has them — anyone who says that he or she doesn't have any regrets is a liar, like that guy named Billiam in Tennessee claiming to be a ninja who in fact just dresses in black and runs around quoting lines from "The Karate Kid," like, "You possess great skills!" Oh, wait. That's from "American Ninja." Well, either way, Billiam is *definitely* a liar.

I regret not writing about a long list of things, including the thrashing that the overly-hyped U.S. olympic hockey team received, the tragic loss of four Canadian soldiers due to an American pilot's incompetence, the new software being developed that uses video footage to "predict" criminal behavior, the 72-mile stretch of California coast that is now under 24/7 surveillance, the scourge of single-occupancy vehicles, the recent boo-ing of the Canadian national anthem at a recent Pistons-Raptors game, the new bill of rights being introduced in the UK for dogs and cats or the various conspiracy theories floating around that suggest that W. Bush knew about the events of Sept. 11 before they happened.

I regret not having enough balls when it comes to women — my friends tell me that a woman wants a guy who "goes after what he wants." The conclusion is therefore that a woman is going to want me the same day that she'll want a pot of scalding hot water thrown in her face. I regret not having spent more time with my friends Sergio, Meredith, Emily, Alison, Chock, Keji, Megan, Emily, Mentos, Duane, Jools, Kevin, Sweetwater Jackson, Wang Chung, Rashonda, Skyy, Jet, Mordechai, Moon Unit and Little Dwayne. Incidentally, I regret not having friends named Sweetwater Jackson, Mordechai or Kevin — that would be cool.

I regret being born with nine toes and a third nipple. I regret attending nine high schools over a period of 18 months, including Chapel Hill, North Buncombe, East Chapel Hill, Northwest Guilford, Terry Sanford, Jordan, Western Guilford, East Burke, TC Roberson and Enloe. I regret being the illegitimately begotten child of Christopher Lambert and the French ambassador to Monaco, who mistakenly thought she was making whoopee with Christopher Walken. And sometimes, I regret being a compulsive liar.

But, I'm going to toss the regrets aside too — I say screw the future *and* the past. As the thread of my college life slowly approaches the point at which it is cut so unceremoniously by fate, the reality is all that matters is what we're doing in the "now," which is in fact all the time. *Sigh* — score another one for clichés.

Jeez, what in blue blazes am I trying to say? I don't know. Vote. Be a good citizen. Pay your taxes. Complain about paying them. Be informed. Question the media. Don't buy Christmas cards. Tell a loved one you care. Do something nice for someone. Question the government. Don't make a ninja angry. Carpool. Recycle. Eat kids' cereal and watch cartoons, if you want. And above all, worship Canadians.

Eugene regrets that this is his last column for The Daily Tar Heel but finds solace in Leonard Part 6! Help make Leonard Part 7 a reality: chinook@email.unc.edu



EUGENE KIM
OUTCLASSED AT
BAGGAGE CLAIM

READERS' FORUM

Co-coordinators Look For Input on Graduate Student Concerns, Ideas

TO THE EDITOR:

Graduate teaching assistants and research assistants are an essential, yet often overlooked, part of this University. Graduate TAs and RAs are neither faculty nor staff, yet we perform many of the same functions as individuals in both groups.

As students, we encounter situations/concerns that are distinctive from those of undergraduates. In short, we graduate TAs and RAs are a unique group and have a number of issues that are unique to us.

To address the particular issues faced by TAs and RAs, a new position was created for this year's Graduate and Professional Student Federation Cabinet: TA/RA issue coordinator.

We are serving as co-coordinators this year, and we are looking for a number of graduate TAs and RAs to serve on a committee to help us identify and address issues that concern TAs and RAs. Examples of such issues are TA and RA stipends and the five-year limit on tuition support for students pursuing a doctorate.

We are looking for people with ideas

and energy who want to see improvement in graduate TA and RA issues. We are already starting to organize and get to work on the coming year's agenda. We ask that any interested TAs and RAs to please contact either Tim Diette (tdiette@email.unc.edu) or George Harper (gharper@email.unc.edu) to join our effort as soon as possible.

Tim Diette
Graduate Student
Economics
George Harper
Graduate Student
Biology

Alumna: Ways to Give Back Are Varied; Support Student Scholarships

TO THE EDITOR:

Tuition increases — This year's main topic of conversation and frustration.

But instead of complaining, I plan to do something about it.

Next year, as an alumna, I intend to give back to support student scholarships and services so that some other student won't have to struggle as much as I am.

For example, if each of the students who

graduated last year contributed just \$25, we could fund 46 new undergraduate student scholarships. That's just one example of the impact of gifts to the University.

You see, alumni currently provide for most student scholarships, nearly all endowed professorships and even campus landmarks like the Bell Tower — but only 13 percent of young alumni are contributing. Just think how different the tuition conversation would be if all alumni gave back to the university each year. It's "Good To Know" how important alumni contributions are to our Carolina experience ... and how vital our contributions will be when we are alumni. There is more information on the importance of alumni contributions at www.unc.edu/goodtoknow.

Katie Loois
MPA Candidate
Good to Know Coordinator

Article Misrepresents Steroid Use on Campus And in Recreation Center

TO THE EDITOR:

It's tough being a big guy. You dedicate yourself to go to the gym six times a week to build muscle, spend hundreds of dollars

a year on supplements to speed your growth and eat like a horse to keep your body stocked with fuel to help your muscles grow, only to be ridiculed and grouped with all the steroid pumpers. It's nothing new to me though. I've always been asked if I'm on steroids. It's no big deal.

I'm mainly concerned with the way the writer bad-mouthed the Student Recreation Center in the story, "A Pumped-Up Problem" last week. One of the two cowards, who wanted to remain anonymous, who were interviewed said he estimated that 30 people who work out in the SRC use steroids.

The article then stated that steroid use is a huge problem on campus. Well, first of all, as an employee of the SRC, I don't think there are even that many steroid users who work out in the SRC. Secondly, even if those estimates are correct, it is not a huge problem. The official log book that records how many people come into the SRC daily, reported that an average of 1350 people came in to work out each day last week.

Therefore, the 30 people that the interviewee estimated to be on steroids represent only 2 percent of the people who come into the gym each day. Doesn't sound like a huge problem to me.

I also feel I need to address the state-

ment that people can get steroids at the SRC — of course you can! You can also buy guns and heroin in the Pit, if you know who to ask. However, the SRC does not condone or promote the usage of steroids in any way. This is just a problem that exists among a few patrons who are not dedicated enough to let nature and hard work take their course.

Chuck Bolbaugh
Junior
Exercise and Sport Science

Editor's Note

Just because this is the last day of the Reader's Forum for the 2001-02 school year doesn't mean you can't still write us!

The Daily Tar Heel will publish once a week in both sessions of summer school. Continue to read the summer paper and e-mail editdesk@unc.edu with letters to the editor, or submit your comments directly from the DTH's Web site at www.dailytarheel.com.

Thanks for all your submissions this year, both to the Reader's Forum and Viewpoints.

Congratulations to Lucas Fenske, the editorial page editor-select and Jon Harris, the editorial page assistant editor-select. Good luck to both.



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