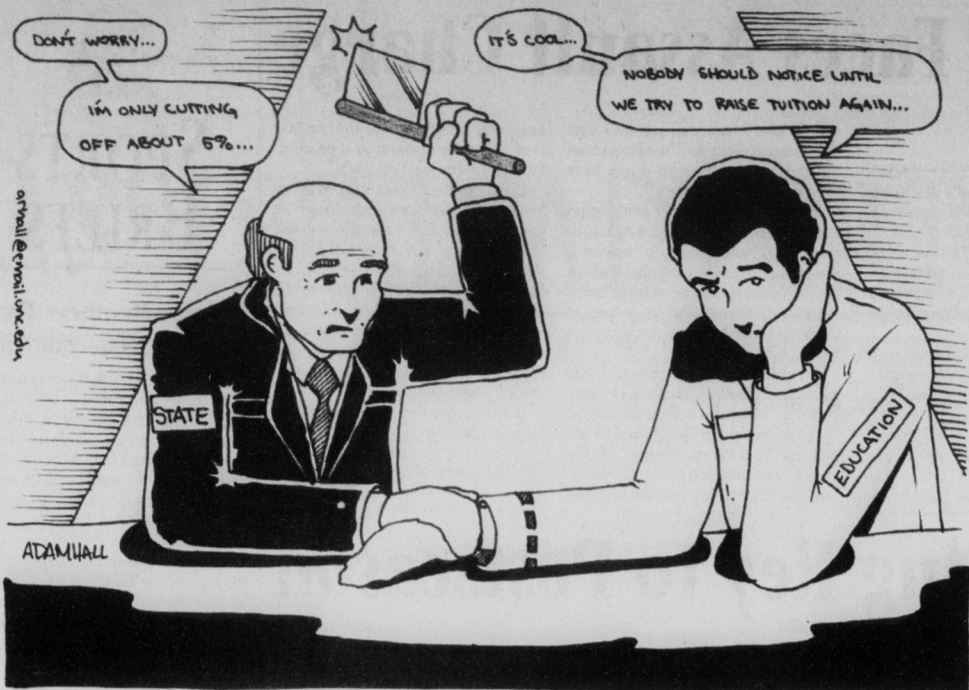


Opinion



Editorials

Setting Priorities

Gov. Mike Easley's plan for funding enrollment growth with a nonexistent lottery doesn't add up

With N.C. officials predicting a budget shortfall of \$2 billion for the upcoming fiscal year, financial prudence has become a guideline.

UNC-Chapel Hill Chancellor James Moeser recently nixed a new video board for the University that would be funded entirely with private money. Moeser rightfully decided that the board, priced at \$2 million, would make state leaders question the University's spending priorities.

Moeser should pass some advice to Gov. Mike Easley. Last week, Easley proposed a state budget that uses revenue from a nonexistent lottery to fund enrollment growth across the UNC system.

Easley also would use lottery revenue, which his staffers estimate at \$250 million, to fund his pet initiative More at Four, a pre-K program designed to help at-risk children.

Easley made some smart budget deci-

sions, such as allotting \$13 million for need-based financial aid, but linking lottery revenue and enrollment growth threatens the future of college education.

LUCAS FENSKÉ

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

Campus administrators need funding for additional classes and professors to manage enrollment growth. Without extra revenue, students will have a harder time taking required courses and graduating on time.

The state has to address the problem, but Easley's solution is the wrong approach. Enrollment growth is a recurring expense and requires a reliable source of revenue.

But Easley cannot reasonably predict lottery revenue for the first year because he doesn't know when a lottery will start, assuming it passes.

The N.C. General Assembly, based on past lottery debates, is more likely to approve a referendum than a lottery.

If voters approve a lottery in November,

state officials still need time to implement it. And every day that goes by will result in lower first-year sales.

Worse yet, lottery sales typically decline after the first year.

Faced with lower revenue, Easley likely would protect his pet programs and pass the brunt of costs to the UNC system.

Easley has tried to ease concerns by saying enrollment funding would be provided even if the lottery proposal is shot down. But the governor has broken promises before.

State legislators should not use lottery revenue to fund enrollment growth. Rather, they should follow an earlier proposal to make system enrollment growth an automatic yearly increase, paid for out of the state's general fund.

To get the \$66 million needed to fund UNC-system enrollment growth, legislators should increase the sales tax by another half cent.

It's more prudent than Easley's plan.

Making Headlines

With world conflicts dominating the news, many people are finding it difficult to ignore a sense of escalation

While reading The Washington Post the other day, I noticed that pages two through five were devoted to articles covering conflicts in all parts of the world.

There were pieces on the escalation of paramilitary actions in Kashmir, the disputed region on the border between India and Pakistan. There were a couple of articles covering daily homicide bombings and troop intrusions in the West Bank and Gaza, which left many dead and more wounded. Another item reporting on Bush's trip to Russia commented on the tension between the two governments due to Russia's sale of nuclear technology to fundamentalist Iran.

Flipping the page, an article covered the tension-filled Colombian elections. In the piece, President-elect Alvaro Uribe called on the United States to give more aid to help combat leftist guerrillas in a national struggle that has claimed thousands.

I found this most interesting because it was the first time since I had started reading the newspaper (beginning in seventh grade) that I've noticed the Colombian conflict mentioned so prominently. Yet in a matter of days, it had become national news.

COLIN SUTKER

EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

Reading the Post left me with a feeling that our world was coming apart at the seams; conflict after conflict was popping up like wildfires in the West, unable to be contained.

Then after picking up a News & Observer, I noticed an article on a car bomb that had injured two in Spain. The bomb was planted by the Basque separatist group ETA, using this terrorist exploit to advance its independence movement. According to the article, this incident was one of many since the beginnings of the movement in the 1960s.

When I went to the Spanish newspaper

ABC and searched for articles covering Basque separatist activity, a string of articles appeared dating back as far as the paper had cared to archive their articles.

If you were to go to the Jerusalem Post's Web page and search for the phrase "terrorist activity," you would find articles every day reaching back for years archiving the conflict in that region, with many of the recent events not even covered by U.S. newspapers.

Recently, a feeling of escalation has settled in among hopes for world peace, disrupting security and instilling despair that quarrels are never to end.

But what cases like those in Spain and Colombia show is that just because papers such as the Post are only recently covering them doesn't mean that suddenly crap is hitting the proverbial fan.

Conflict has been a mainstay of world affairs; it's not going away any time soon. As individuals, we can only hope for the best and keep an open mind.

Dog Days of Summer in Full Swing at Last

Most of us have been waiting on summer's delights since Spring Break came to a screeching halt at the mere mention of exams. Not even two weeks into post-finals summer, I've fully realized the greatness of summer.

This is not just the "summer-is-wonderful" column; it's the "summer-in-Chapel-Hill-is-better" one.

Part of the annual changing of the guard occurs here as Chapel Hill goes from a busy town of 25,000 students to a quaint small town waiting to be refilled in the fall by ex-C-TOPSers.

For now, we can ignore those C-TOPSers because they are in and out before they can even be noticed ... and rightfully so.

Chapel Hill is now left to the glory days of the summer. To quote my roommate and social philosopher, Jason Keever, "Good times!" (Don't confuse this with my last column, in which that would have been a Jimmie J.J. Walker allusion.)

Uptown on any evening in the summer is like a small gathering rather than a debacle of more people than you can imagine on a Thursday evening during school.

Sure, the overhyped ratio decreases, but the girls are more friendly and, therefore, more attractive. That counts for everything, but perhaps I have touched on a column for another day.

It's not just the cute girls in summer dresses who are more friendly. The dynamics of chilling in the summer make everyone more enjoyable.

Without as many activities on campus, summer gives us the time to relax. I'm finding that stressed-out people are the ones causing all the tension in the world. Maybe they go into hiding for the summer.

I've narrowed it down to say that there are only a few types of people who remain here throughout the summer. There are the slackers - the laid-back, fun people - who didn't work as hard during the regular school year as their folks would have liked.

There are the studious ones who are trying to get ahead in their course requirements by taking summer school. Athletes also fall into this category because they have two full-time jobs.

Finally, there are people from small towns who enjoy the sprawling metropolis of Chapel Hill. This is just the place to be.

Regardless of why a person is in Chapel Hill for the summer, is there ever a reason to go to sleep before 3 a.m.?

During the school year there are all those pesky early morning classes when the work starts to pile up. Going out when the unread chapters and book work mount up like dirty laundry is a daunting task.

I'm not the most studious person, but nothing compares to three papers and an exam in one week of classes.

No, this is not a challenge to my media law professor, but it does happen to everyone two or three times during the fall or spring semesters.

This is my second summer in Chapel Hill, and I realize just how much fun and how laid back it can be to be here. It is even worth working 40-plus hours per week at the Yogurt Pump in order to afford it.

It's worth being around Chapel Hill just to bargain down some poor smuck who will inevitably pay you to sublease an apartment. And I'll note that rent is the only thing that comes remotely cheap around here.

Am I the only one that thinks Mama Dip's should have \$5, all-you-can-eat night once a week for starving young adults? Still, Wendy's late night window will work just fine.

For me, summer is a chance to be studious, to be a slacker and to extend my junior year just a little bit longer. Sure, I have the credits, but being a senior is a frame of mind that I'm not ready for.

It is simply frightening to realize that I am a senior. Therefore, I refuse to admit my last year here has come.

At my graduation next year, people will be telling me I can't hang out in Chapel Hill anymore. Real world, what?

In the meantime, I'll be enjoying my time as an extended junior through this summer. I advise you to do the same.

Calvin, the great comic character and pal of Hobbes, once wisely stated, "Summer days are supposed to be longer, but they sure seem short to me."

If you don't want to admit that you are technically classified as a senior or if you want to tell me about something fun going on, e-mail me at tompkins@email.unc.edu.



MICHAEL TOMPKINS
THIS SIDE OF PARADISE

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READERS' FORUM

Humane Society Questions UNC Reports Of Lab Animal Treatment

TO THE EDITOR:

The Humane Society of the United States has examined UNC's legally mandated reports to the U.S. Department of Agriculture; in our view these documents indicate that the University has improperly reported pain and distress in research animals. UNC reported that 9,079 regulated animals were used for research from 1996-98 (the most recent years for which data are available) and that not a single animal experienced unrelieved pain and distress. We find this difficult to believe, as should everyone.

Statistics reported by other countries, such as Canada, indicate that up to 38 percent of research animals experience pain and distress. By comparison, the United States reports only 9 percent; however, this is still significantly higher than 0 percent reported by UNC.

How is it possible that a leading U.S. research institution conducting research on cancer, cystic fibrosis and neurological diseases does not have regulated animals that suffer from unrelieved pain and distress?

This not only represents questionable reporting but also suggests that pain and dis-

tress are not being properly recognized and/or minimized at UNC as required by the federal Animal Welfare Act

Andrew Rowan
Senior Vice President of Research, Education and International Affairs
The Humane Society of the United States

UNC Parking Plan to Increase Revenue Abuses Off-Campus Employees

TO THE EDITOR:

When the issue of the parking system budget deficit came up recently, various proposals were discussed, at times heatedly, to solve the problem. Night parking fees, student fees, increases in revenues and so forth were all debated.

In the end, the parking system administrators were charged with reducing costs to make up most of the deficit. Apparently these same parking system administrators have found another way to raise revenues, which is under the radar screen of public scrutiny - charging exorbitant increases in parking fees for trivial or nonexistent increases in the "quality" of parking spaces.

I speak of the plan to gate the 440 W. Franklin St. parking lots. True, this plan may

prevent a few, say 10 or less, people from using this area to park when they go to a restaurant. But in return, employees will now have the traffic hassles of entering gated lots from a busy street and the pleasure of paying a 58 percent increase in parking fees.

Increased revenue from the lot as a result of the fee increase will raise an additional \$34,000 in monies to help the parking system overcome its budget deficit.

In truth, people who work off campus are penalized in our parking fees and are forced to subsidize people who park on campus and who share in campus benefits.

Where is the outcry? Just because state employees who work off campus are in the minority and are neither faculty nor students, does this give the administration the ability to force unreasonable and unasked-for fee increases and campus subsidies down our throats with impunity?

Where is the outcry from the students on this obvious injustice? Where is the outcry from our faculty on this abuse of authority? I suspect the real reason that there is no outcry is that it would affect their pocketbooks.

I am not part of the campus-parking problem, but my wallet obviously is part of the solution.

Robert Vickery
University Accountant



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