

Board Editorials

Drying Up

The recent rain will not solve all of the community's water problems, and the University needs to do its part by toughening its water conservation measures.

Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to spare. Despite the recent decision by the Orange Water and Sewer Authority to implement Stage 2 water use restrictions, there is still an alarming amount of waste throughout the University community.

The University is technically exempt from these regulations as a state body. But as OWASA's largest client, UNC administrators are exercising their community spirit wisely by choosing to voluntarily adhere to the restrictions. More, though, needs doing.

Most of the Piedmont region of North Carolina is currently in a period of "exceptional drought" – the highest possible drought classification.

A few days' worth of rain, no matter how needed, aren't going to solve a water shortage dating back for years. The last time OWASA's three reservoirs – Cane Creek, University Lake and Stone Quarry – were all full was June 2001.

While the El Niño weather conditions promise a higher-than-average rainfall this winter, UNC must take a more activist stance to ensure that the campus community knows about the importance of conserving water.

Carolina Dining Services has already started using styrofoam plates in both dining halls, thus eliminating the need for the spray dishwashers, which consume up to 100,000 gallons of water weekly in Chase and Lenoir combined.

Additionally, sprinkler usage has been curtailed. Grounds department officials were unable to provide an exact figure for the area of lawn irrigated each day but said Monday that more than 100 acres of lawn are watered with a combination of OWASA and well water. Irrigation occurs at night to ensure that the water seeps into the earth rather than evaporates.

No distinction is made, however, between the

irrigation of decorative greenery, such as that on Polk and McCorkle places, and the irrigation of essential lawns, such as recreational sports fields.

Even in these Saharan conditions, water is being wasted for ornamental purposes.

On the student level, there are notices in residence halls warning about the water shortage.

But these fliers are posted on hallway bulletin boards – vying for students' attention with local bands and refrigerators for sale.

The University must have a large publicity push that includes fliers on every residence hall bathroom door warning students about the restrictions and the need to take personal responsibility for their own water use.

The need for smart water use becomes even greater when one factors in economic costs. Drought and heat waves over the last four years are estimated to have accumulated an economic cost to the state equivalent to Hurricane Floyd – roughly \$6 billion to \$9 billion. Federal disaster drought relief is available to more than 70 counties through the Farm Service Agency, but it is only for farmers to apply for loans to cover actual agricultural losses.

This recurring pattern of drought begs the question of how to make the most of the expected elevation in rainfall this winter.

All water companies, including OWASA, need to apply for funding to focus on the long-term replenishment of the water supply and education of N.C. residents about water conservation.

As of Monday, the OWASA water supply is down to 113 days. If we continue with our current water consumption pattern, there won't be a single drop of OWASA water when we come back to school next semester.

Break the Silence

With more budget cuts on the horizon, leaders need to educate students about their voting options and push them to vote in the Sept. 10 primary.

Without fail, aspiring campus politicians awake from hibernation every January and start lecturing about the importance of voting in elections.

But these politically involved students must have settled down for an early winter nap because they are strangely silent even though the election primary is a mere two weeks away.

As students should be preparing to shape the state's future by voting, too many are ignoring the unique opportunity to have their voices heard.

Because of a Republican lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of a Democratic redistricting plan, legislative candidates are running in new districts on Sept. 10 rather than the normal date in early May.

The legislative redistricting plan drastically shakes up the entire N.C. General Assembly. Long-time incumbents, such as Sens. Ellie Kinnaird and Howard Lee, both D-Orange, are running against each other. The plan left other districts with no incumbent whatsoever bucking for re-election.

State Board of Elections officials, noting that far fewer voters usually show up for primaries than general elections, are making even more dire predictions for turnout this year because of the district shakeup and change in dates.

But the swirl of semi-chaos surrounding the election means the time is ripe for student interests.

For the past two years, the N.C. General Assembly has been dominated by efforts to cut state spending and raise taxes as a response to some of the worst budget shortfalls in recent history. And early revenue projections show the crunch is likely to continue for the next three years.

Legislators have slashed the budgets of numerous departments, especially Health and Human Services. While education largely was spared the

worst, it was not immune to the budget-cutting fever.

Current budget proposals cut UNC-Chapel Hill's budget by at least 3 percent outright. Other indirect measures, such as a proposal seizing \$7 million of the University's overhead receipts, only add to the pain.

And this comes after both the House and Senate increased tuition systemwide by 8 percent for in-state students and 12 percent for their out-of-state counterparts. Both bodies also signed off on a \$300 campus-specific tuition increase at UNC-CH.

Student leaders have preached about the importance of lobbying on countless occasions.

But no lobbying campaign – regardless of how skillfully handled – can substitute for the election of a candidate friendly and attentive to student interests.

UNC-CH Student Body President Jen Daum, who spent roughly five minutes at the Morehead site Monday morning casting her ballot, said student leaders plan to set up a table in the Pit and tell students about the location. Try again.

Daum's right about the need to begin publicizing the upcoming primary elections.

But she also needs to take a more activist role by discussing candidates' voting records and explaining how to obtain an absentee ballot from anywhere in North Carolina.

Responsibility, though, does not lie with Daum alone. Campus political groups, including the College Republicans and Young Democrats, should also popularize the vote. And Jonathan Ducote, UNC-system Association of Student Governments president, should put some of our student fee money to work by pushing students on other campuses to join the voting crusade.

Sleeping away this chance to support student-friendly legislators would be a horrific waste.

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Bowles' Campaign Misleading, Colors Past Clinton Connection

I've always been infatuated by listening to Democrats but have never been able to put my finger on exactly why. A psychologist might argue that deep down I am struggling with some sort of repressed socialistic tendencies; however, I think my fascination with listening to members of this party is largely due to the raw entertainment value they provide every time they open their mouths.



MICHAEL MCKNIGHT
RIGHT OF WAY

And this election year, Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Erskine Bowles has not disappointed. But with Bowles, the things he says are not nearly as amusing as the things he fails to mention.

The former White House chief of staff and UNC alumnus paid a visit to campus Monday evening and, as he has done throughout his campaign, made little mention of the fact that his White House service occurred during the administration of President Bill Clinton.

In fact, Bowles spent nearly four years working with Clinton not only serving as his chief of staff but also as deputy chief of staff and as an administrator with the Small Business Administration.

Now, being the astute political observer that I am, I realize that there is a simple explanation for Bowles' behavior: Clinton is highly unpopular among N.C. voters and never once carried the state in

either of his presidential bids.

Given that, it seems only politically savvy that Bowles might want to downplay his association with Clinton.

However, his efforts to erase "the Clinton years" from his past have gone far past simply ignoring them.

For example, in one of Bowles' initial campaign ads that aired earlier this summer, he not only omitted any video clips of himself and Clinton together but assembled an ad that included a scene with him and U.S. Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss.,

chatting. The campaign eventually pulled the ads after Lott publicly expressed chagrin for them.

But the Clinton bullet isn't the only one Bowles has been dodging lately. He has also made little mention of the fact that he did a complete 180 on whether to grant President Bush "fast-track" trade negotiating authority.

"Fast-track" authority, which passed Congress earlier this year, will expedite trade negotiations between the United States and foreign nations by forcing members of Congress to vote trade agreements either up or down instead of modifying them as they were formerly allowed to do.

While working in the White House, Bowles lobbied Congress to grant the very same privilege to Clinton. "Fast-

track is ... a prerequisite for seizing the trade opportunities before us around the world," Bowles said in 1997 when the issue first emerged.

Today, Bowles sings a different tune. "I'm not going to support any fast-track legislation, any slow track, no track," he told The (Raleigh) News & Observer last week.

Bowles has also shirked responsibility for his involvement in the corporate arena. In a July press release, Bowles' campaign blasted Republican frontrunner Elizabeth Dole for supporting a proposal that would allow individuals to invest a portion of their Social Security payrolls taxes in the stock market.

The Bowles' campaign dubbed any effort to privatize Social Security as "risky." And for once, he is right.

Social Security privatization is a risky proposition – at least if Erskine Bowles is the person managing your money.

The New York investment bank where he was a managing partner until he resigned to run for the U.S. Senate is now being sued for losing more than \$100 million for the Connecticut state employees' pension fund on two bad stock picks.

If he doesn't start being more honest with N.C. voters about the issues and his past, Bowles' campaign is headed for one place – the gutter.

Michael McKnight has never been more happy to be a registered Republican. E-mail him at mmcknight@email.unc.edu.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above editorials are the opinions of solely The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board, which were reached after open debate. The board consists of eight board members, the assistant editorial page editor, the editorial page editor and the DTH editor. The 2002-03 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

READERS' FORUM

Paying Reparations Not Best Solution for Fixing America's Past Errors

TO THE EDITOR:

This is in regard to the article by Tiffany Drayton titled, "Millions for Slave Reparations, Not a Cent for Media Support." Maybe the reason for the lack of media coverage on the Millions for Reparations rally is because the media, along with the majority of the public, realize slave reparations is a ludicrous idea.

The Japanese, Jews and American Indians have received reparations because they personally have lost their homes, money, etc. The idea behind reparations is compensation for being directly wronged.

The notion that reparations should be paid for slavery 137 years after the fact is ridiculous. Greeks, Romans, Russians and most Europeans have been enslaved at some point in history. Why not give reparations to their descendants as well?

Being able to trace an ancestor back to slavery is a ridiculous reason to demand reparations as well. The question being in what way have you suffered for your ancestors' being enslaved?

Much of my family either died in Nazi concentration camps or lost everything to them, and that was only 50 years ago. Just

because my grandmother was devastated by the Nazis does not mean I have the right to demand the German government pay me.

Yes, slavery was a horrible thing, but there is no way a government can repay everyone they have wronged in the past. Besides, money isn't the answer and will in no way help something that happened over 137 years ago.

The thing that should be done is to educate people so nothing like slavery can ever happen again.

Rebecca Hill
Junior
Biology

Summer Reading Meets Goal of Giving Students A New Perspective

TO THE EDITOR:

I am very disappointed with the way that groups have taken to Carolina's summer reading. I admit to being very surprised when I heard that the Quran was going to be the choice for this year's freshmen. At the same time, I felt that UNC was justified in choosing a topic that would otherwise go unheard of for many of the students.

Many people don't understand that the point of Carolina's summer reading is not

to impose religious or cultural beliefs. Regardless of what book is chosen, the idea is to introduce a new perspective to students coming in from all around the country and the world.

UNC has such a diverse population, and having this reading program is a way to help students understand what they will see when they arrive on campus.

In high school, we read selections from the Bible, and as a Buddhist, I was somewhat resistant to the reading because I felt that the text itself was out of place in the classroom.

But others argued that it was to be seen as a literary text and not meant as a religious text, and since I was the only non-Christian in the classroom, there were no uproars. I simply thought of it as an opportunity to learn something new.

To see the reaction that some Christians have taken against reading this really upsets me because if reading the Bible is OK, why shouldn't it be okay for students to read the Quran? Reading the Bible in no way made me question my own beliefs.

Reading a book does not change a person's beliefs. It simply opens the door to a different perspective. Perhaps what these people who are so adamantly opposed to reading it should consider is that they are simply afraid to learn about something new. Whatever the reason, it does not

change the fact that UNC is diverse and that they will have to face different kinds of people sooner or later, including those for whom the Quran is their life's meaning.

Kang-Shy Ku
Sophomore
Medicine

The length rule was waived.

Quran Controversy Promotes Stereotype of Ignorant, Bigoted South

TO THE EDITOR:

I am a fifth-year senior at the University of Maryland. I was just reading about the controversy involving the Quran being assigned to students by a University professor.

I just think the controversy speaks to the closed-mindedness that is characteristic of the South and that is also characteristic with those who don't understand anything about the cultures who are involved with this new war we are facing. I have close ties to Mississippi, so do not assume I'm some "Yankee" speaking about the South.

But I feel this gives people another reason to say the South is still backward. I urge all student leaders to help dispel stereotypes and get your student body to

be more sensitive and willing to learn about religions that may not be their own.

I think the controversy is absolutely juvenile and reminds me of the arguments that many high schools face with controversial books in their curriculum.

We are all adults and should be able to decipher between learning about others and blatant imposing of a religion on a group of people.

Are we not allowed to learn about each other's differences?

But people have singled out a certain religious group and for many decades they will be looked at as an "evil" religion as one top official in the Bush administration said. People who study Islam are not the enemy, a particular section of that community is our enemy, but not an entire religion.

Christians have been part of the KKK and church bombings and other religiously driven crimes, but no one has ever called Christianity an "evil" religion. Why? Because many of us understand the basics of Christianity even if we aren't Christian. I was crying right along with my fellow Muslim students on Sept. 11, and to blame a religion for what has happened is crazy.

Miesha Lowery
College Park, Md.

The length rule was waived.

The Daily Tar Heel welcomes reader comments. 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 form to: editdesk@unc.edu.