

Board Editorials

Growing Up Is Hard to Do

The tragedy of the Sept. 11 attacks still presents a worthwhile opportunity for members of the University community to unite and help one another heal.

One of the fringe benefits of childhood is a belief in happy endings.

But there comes a time when an event such as the death of a loved one forces a person to confront the ugly truths caused by growing up – the shattering realization that sometimes the dragon eats the knight.

Ever since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, talking heads on television channels, politicians on the floors of both the U.S. Senate and House and newspaper columnists have proclaimed the end of America's childlike innocence.

They have spent countless hours reliving the tragedy that claimed 3,000 lives, intensely discussing what the United States represents and questioning what sort of personality, imagined grievance, or ideology could be responsible for such a calamity.

Everyone from politicians to the Pit Preacher has bemoaned the changes to American society caused by the nation's loss of innocence.

And they're all partly wrong.

It's not necessarily a bad thing for the nation, and particularly the University community, to face tragedy head on and to grow up together.

Reflecting on Last Year

Some philosophers hold that the only way individuals can develop a mature mind is by facing challenges and adversity in their lives.

The terrorist attacks presented a similar opportunity last year for the University community.

Coping with an all-but-unthinkable tragedy helped unite our University, which is often segmented along political lines, by religious beliefs or into hundreds of diverse student groups.

Members of the University community comforted others who had family in New York or Washington, D.C.

Students in residence halls flung open their doors for strangers to come in and watch the events unfold. Employees opened the Union Auditorium for prayer and meditation and turned on the jumbo screen in the Great Hall. Professors suspended classes, and some even threw out lesson plans to discuss students' reactions and the implications of the attacks for everyday life.

This feeling of unity campuswide is best reflected in the ceremony at Polk Place – the most widely attended campus event in nearly a decade that didn't involve athletics or graduation.

Roughly 10,000 students, faculty, staff and residents, brimming with anger over the attacks and fears about what tomorrow would bring, gathered in the quad Sept. 12 to listen as Chancellor James Moeser tried to instill a bit of hope and comfort in the wake of such a horrible event.

"Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted," Moeser said on the steps of South Building. "We are here this noon ... to offer our support and consolation for those in grief and distress and gather strength from one another."

In the days following the attack, that spirit of campus unity and that need to draw strength and solace from one another only increased.

Christian, Jewish and atheist UNC students made a special effort to reach out to their Muslim counterparts. Organizers of a blood drive held Sept. 12 at Berryhill Hall not only exceeded their goal of blood collections but actually had to turn away would-be donors.

Charity donations hit levels that the organizers of the Carolina First campaign can only dream about. Students who haven't completed a single hour of community service developed a newfound interest in working with young children or building a home for Habitat for Humanity.

Fleeting Changes

A large portion of the initial outburst of sympathy has died down as the memory of the attacks increasingly fades with the passage of time.

Lines to donate blood have dropped, charities are once again scrounging to raise money, and American flags, so bright and prominently displayed after the attacks, have become tattered and relegated to a closet shelf.

Old political battle lines on campus are redrawn with the coming of the November election.

But the events of Sept. 11 continue to haunt the University community – just look at the controversy surrounding the summer reading and the continued resentment of teach-ins held last school year.

Local governments continue reeling from the event's aftermaths in their own way.

The Chapel Hill Town Council recently decided to weaken restrictions on private signs partly because of controversy over a sign at Top of the Hill that stated, "God Bless America, Woe to Our Enemies." Scott Maitland, owner of Top of the Hill, was ordered to remove the sign last year following complaints that it violated the ordinance.

This summer the Carrboro Board of Aldermen decided that town employees should resist requests for investigative assistance made under the provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act, which they regard as unconstitutional.

More Lasting Imprint

Sept. 11, though, has left a deeper impression on the University community by forcing all of us – including freshman who just started class three weeks ago and professors on the verge of retirement – to grow up and face a new reality.

People have placed more interest in global and political issues – tracking the war on terrorism from the sands and caves of Afghanistan to the meetings of the U.N. Security Council.

No longer do students see a presidential address as a signal to change the channel.

UNC and the rest of the nation have become more conscious of how the world works – the positive aspects exemplified by the outpouring of support from other nations following the attacks and the negative illustrated by nations providing support for terrorists.

This increased knowledge lets the University community draw the line between knowing when to understand a people and when that group is an integral threat to the country's most fundamental liberty of all – the right to live as one chooses.

The greatest strength of UNC rests in the community's ability to work together.

Only by supporting one another throughout the anniversary of one of the worst single events in American history can we ever hope to find the sense of security that was lost one year ago today.

To rebuild the sense of unity that campus had last year and has since lost, The Daily Tar Heel urges members of the University community to attend today's memorial service at Polk Place, lasting from noon to 2 p.m.

The event will honor the six UNC alumni who died in the two World Trade Center towers.

Take some extra time today to visit other events on campus. Drop by the public service fair, being held in Polk Place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The UNC Campus Y is hosting an interfaith candlelight vigil at 8 p.m. in the Pit.

One of the speakers slated for today's candlelight vigil, Rev. Steve Stanley, campus minister at the Chapel of the Cross, commendably outlined the need for unity at one of the many forums held last fall after the attacks.

"All of us try in one way or another to make sense of experience," Stanley said last year. "We can draw some encouragement from knowing we are not alone wrestling with horror, and hope comes out of this."

Something else comes out as well – the knowledge that growing up is not always a bad thing provided that we channel our anger and our fears into positive pursuits and that we do it as a community.

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

UNC Students Invited to Participate With the Dance Marathon

TO THE EDITOR:

It is the time for you to get involved with the largest student fund-raiser on this campus!

The events of Sept. 11 forced all of us to think about what we can do for our school and community.

The UNC Dance Marathon has raised more than \$300,000 in the past four years for the children and families of the N.C. Children's Hospital.

This organization is a great way to continue the spirit of community service that last year's events imparted in so many UNC students.

The Dance Marathon is having committee recruitment all this week for the 11 committees – Campus Fundraising, Community Events, Corporate, Fundraising Projects, Hospital, Marketing, Morale, Operations, Outreach, Publicity and University Outreach.

The DM family needs students with all interests and skills to make a commitment to the children of the hospital.

As a committee member you will help plan, fund raise and publicize the marathon in February, as well as events all

year long.

We have both experienced participating on a Dance Marathon committee.

It is an inspirational, worthwhile and enjoyable way to give back to the UNC, Chapel Hill and North Carolina communities while meeting tons of fellow UNC students!

Committees meet once each week to brainstorm ways to make the marathon bigger and better.

Committee members will also interact with children and families of the N.C. Children's Hospital at socials organized for the kids by the Hospital Committee and through hospital tours and volunteer opportunities.

If you do not feel that you can give the time commitment of a committee member but still want to be involved all year with the marathon, then the DM Support Network is the place for you in the DM family.

The Support Network is a subcommittee that can be applied for that will only meet once a month and will be called on by all 12 committees to help execute tasks during the year.

Whether it's helping the Fundraising Committee collect money for the kids, assisting the Outreach Committee in a Mini-Marathon or playing with sick children at a social event planned by the

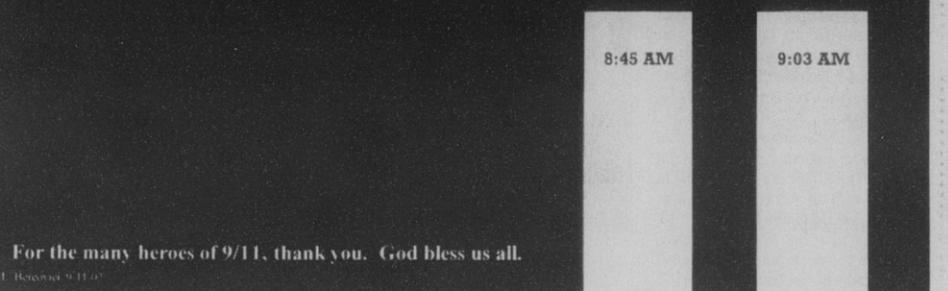
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If you have any concerns or comments about our coverage, please contact Ombudsman Michael Flynn at mflynn@email.unc.edu or by phone at 843-5794.

"They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old.
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun in the morning,
We will remember them."
- Laurence Binyon



For the many heroes of 9/11, thank you. God bless us all.

University Serves as Sanctuary In Middle of Terror, Violence

A little more than a month ago, during lunch hour, a bomb ripped through a crowded cafeteria at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. More than 80 were injured from the blast, nine of whom eventually died from their wounds.

The Washington Post reported that the explosion left pools of blood and debris around the cafeteria and charred some walls. Wires dangled from spots in the ceiling where tiles and insulation were blown to shreds. Shoes and blood-drenched clothing littered the area.

A year ago, on an otherwise beautiful Tuesday morning, our University awoke to one of the worst days in our nation's history. Immediately after the attacks, campus life took on a strange duality. There seemed to be two worlds: one inside on our television sets, where everything appeared to be falling apart, and another outside on the walkways of Polk and McCorkle places, where almost nothing seemed to have changed at all.

The bombing at Hebrew University violated that sanctuary of learning, destroying its ivory tower in the amount of time it took to detonate an explosive with a cell phone.

Meanwhile, over the past year in Chapel Hill, cell phones have continued going off in class, bars have kept on buzzing with activity, and life has churned on with beautiful regularity.

While a year ago we felt like students at Hebrew University, we'd really never been further from it. In last week's State of the University Address, Chancellor

James Moeser best described the attacks' impact on our campus when he said they altered the context of everything around us. Our sanctuary of learning has mercifully remained a sanctuary.

Despite being blessed by our disconnect from last year's horror, it creates a problem.

How can those of us who have no personal ties to the attacks successfully mourn from

this peaceful environment those who died? What can we possibly know of the pain of watching the towers collapse on television while knowing that a loved one was inside? Or of the heroism of the rescue workers who died a year ago? Every time I try to imagine, I fear that I'm drifting into sentimentality, experiencing the catharsis that comes with grief without the pain that should precede it.

Are we just phonies?

For me, the best way we can avoid turning genuine sympathy into self-serving sentimentality is to make our grieving a celebration of our sanctuary here in Chapel Hill.

First, as the travesty at Hebrew University demonstrated, academic institutions aren't always immune to our

world's endemic violence.

In the past, Chapel Hill has waded out chest-deep into the troubled waters in which our country has repeatedly found itself. Our University almost ceased to exist during Reconstruction, and its students repeatedly faced military drafts during the century that just ended. We were lucky this time; we barely got our feet wet. Just alone, that deserves celebration.

Second, to truly celebrate this place, we must make use of it. Today's volunteer fair starting at 11 a.m. on Polk Place provides a wonderful opportunity to recommit ourselves to the fervor for public service that overtook our campus a year ago.

As Columbia University writing Professor Mark Sloutka pointed out in a recent essay about the aftermath of the attacks, catastrophes like Sept. 11 occur every year, just more subtly.

While about 3,000 Americans died as a result of the attacks, more than 8,000 people die each day from AIDS – 6,400 of them in sub-Saharan Africa alone. No one will hold a vigil in their honor today, but we can still put our sanctuary to good use serving them and the billions of other humans silently living blighted lives around the world.

A year ago, roughly 3,000 Americans and six UNC alumni lost their lives. Today, let's avoid false sentimentality. They deserve better.

Jim Doggett can be reached at jdoggett@email.unc.edu.



JIM DOGGETT
REACH EXCEEDS GRASP

Hospital Committee, the 2003 DM Support Network will be an integral part of the success of the Marathon.

Visit the UNC Dance Marathon Web site at <http://www.uncmarathon.org> for information! Applications may be submitted online until Friday at 5 p.m.

Catalina Garretton
Junior
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
Neal Dejong
Senior
International Studies

The length rule was waived.

Muslim Reflects on Terrorist Attacks and Subsequent Events

TO THE EDITOR:

As Sept. 11 approaches, I look back at this tumultuous year.

Running through my mind over and over again what I was doing on the night of Monday, Sept. 10, 2001.

It was a relaxing night. Almost too relaxing, eerie in a way.

When I woke up Tuesday morning, I had no idea what I was about to see on

television – in just a short hour, my life, along with 280 million other Americans, would change forever.

Freak accident. Yes, that's what we first thought. Only to stand corrected minutes later.

How?

Why?

In the name of Allah?

I could not believe it. My religion had been hijacked. All my life, I interpreted Islam as a religion of peace, enjoin good and forbid evil.

In one morning, I saw evil enjoined in the minds of 10 hijackers. Everything clearly thought out in their minds, 10 individuals took the peaceful sacraments of Islam and sabotaged the Muslim identity. My identity.

Did you know, Osama bin Laden, that as a result of proving your quest, Afghanistan would be annihilated?

Did you know that the Taliban would not turn you over and fight until the very end? Did you know that millions of Afghans would be killed, displaced or stuck in refugee camps? Did you know that Hamid Karzai would be hand-picked by the U.S. government to fix this mess? Osama bin Laden, because of what you've done, my American flag is flying high in Kabul.

You must have had a grand plan, Uncle Osama – a five-finger special in the form of

instant gratification: Sink the stock market. Destroy the Taliban. Hamid Karzai and Cathy Beamer will be honorary guests at the 2002 State of the Union address. Pervez Musharraf will be Bush's new best friend. And how kind of you, a sixth bonus: the launching of Ashleigh Banfield's career.

It was a one in a million chance that such a sophisticated plan would work. Did these 10 individuals not realize that their acts would decimate the hard work of the American Muslim?

The American Jihad is going to be tougher for me and my Muslim peers. We've gone not one step forward, but 1,000 steps back. I now have to be suspicious of my Muslim brother sitting next to me on an airplane. If my plane crashes, I firmly believe that my name will not be listed as a passenger.

As I stood at Ground Zero on the night of Oct. 20, 2001, inhaling the fumes, listening to the bulldozers and stepping over mounds of dust, a chill ran up my spine. How will we ever explain to the families of the victims that Islam is a religion of peace, tranquility and morals? This question keeps my mind spinning.

Jamila Zafar
Chicago

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 forum to: editdesk@unc.edu.