

# Board Editorials

## Scott for RHA President

Colin Scott's experience, knowledge of campus concerns and thought-out plans set him apart in the race for Residence Hall Association president.

The position of president of the Residence Hall Association is far from the most glamorous leadership position on campus.

Other student offices have better perks, carry more status and present a greater opportunity to shape the University's future.

But the two candidates running for RHA president hope to change that by building ties with other campus groups and giving the organization a more active role in students' lives.

One of the candidates, however, stands out by having the leadership background, the relationship with campus administrators and the innovative plans required to achieve those goals.

The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board endorses Colin Scott for RHA president.

Scott, who has served as an award-winning co-governor of Hinton James Residence Hall, has experience planning activities for large, diverse groups. Additionally, his willingness to reach out and offer support – in the form of experience and money – to other campus groups would enable Scott to raise the prominence of RHA and make it a force on campus. This effort would be reinforced by his proposal to put a RHA representative on the Student Advisory Committee to the Chancellor.

Scott shows a clear understanding of the ongoing needs on campus with his plans to keep students updated about the ongoing construction around campus and to form a construction committee to make the construction process as easy as possible for campus residents.

At the same time, however, Scott realizes the

limited voice students have over construction and does not make any infeasible promises about reopening sidewalks and stopping noise completely.

Scott also demonstrated an impressive amount of knowledge about safety concerns on campus.

He emphasized the importance of prevention over reaction by continuing and expanding the anti-tailgating campaign that started last semester following an armed robbery in Avery Residence Hall.

Both Scott and his opponent, however, too readily dismissed the idea of placing security cameras outside entrances as being overly reactionary – pointing out that cameras in Granville Towers failed to prevent a similar crime. But the cameras did provide police and the campus community with the faces of two suspects in the robbery – giving police something concrete to aid in their investigation.

Scott also should reinvestigate his proposal to place more call boxes at residence hall entrances. The procedure likely will provide only a limited safety benefit and probably not enough to justify the cost.

Scott's plans to continue and to expand conservation projects in residence halls also are laudable given the concerns during last semester's drought. Continued and long-term planning will allow the University to better respond to a similar problem in the future.

Next Tuesday, cast your vote for Scott.

Editor's Note: Editorial board member Rachel Boren did not take part in the debate or vote because of a conflict of interest.



Colin Scott

# The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893 • 109 Years of Editorial Freedom  
www.dailytarheel.com

<p><b>KIM MINUGH</b> EDITOR Office Hours Noon-2 Friday</p> <p><b>Lucas Fenske</b> EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR</p> <p><b>Aaron Fitt</b> SPORTS EDITOR</p> <p><b>Terri Ruper</b> COPY EDITOR</p> <p><b>Brian Millikin</b> WRITING COACH</p>	<p><b>ALEX KAPLUN</b> MANAGING EDITOR</p> <p><b>Daniel Thigpen</b> UNIVERSITY EDITOR</p> <p><b>Brian Cassella</b> PHOTO EDITOR</p> <p><b>Beth Buchholz &amp; Tiffany Pease</b> DESIGN EDITORS</p> <p><b>Eric Gautschi</b> OMBUDSMAN</p>	<p><b>LIZZIE BREYER</b> PROJECTS EDITOR</p> <p><b>Elyse Ashburn</b> STATE &amp; NATIONAL EDITOR</p> <p><b>Nick Parker</b> ARTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR</p> <p><b>Adam Shupe</b> ONLINE EDITOR</p>
---	---	--

If you have any concerns or comments about our coverage, please contact Ombudsman Eric Gautschi at [gautschi@email.unc.edu](mailto:gautschi@email.unc.edu) or by phone at 918-1311.

## Troubled Times

Tragedies such as the Kinston explosion and the space shuttle Columbia show how much can be accomplished when people unite as a community to deal with the pain.

The past week has not been an easy one. A chain of tragedy started with the worst industrial disaster in the state in more than a decade.

The West Pharmaceutical Services plant exploded the afternoon of Jan. 29 with such fury that residents heard the blast from miles away and the plant still was burning fiercely more than seven hours later.

Panicked family members flocked to the scene, desperately hunting for any word of loved ones, while the media estimated the number of dead at several dozen. The injured were rushed to area hospitals – with 10 of the worst burn victims heading to UNC Hospitals' N.C. Jaycee Burn Center.

But by the end of the day, the Kinston community had much to be thankful for.

Stories of plant workers helping injured friends to safety instead of saving themselves flooded the airwaves. Partly because of that heroic spirit, the initial death estimates proved grossly inflated. The blast claimed three lives rather than several dozen and injured 35 people rather than an estimated 60. One of the injured, who was being treated at UNC Hospitals, died Friday.

Although the casualty list is all-too-grim, as Kinston Mayor Johnnie Mosley told The (Raleigh) News & Observer, "We are very fortunate and blessed that we didn't have any more injuries or deaths than we have."

The people in Kinston also should be thankful for the way neighboring communities and others statewide rallied to their cause by donating food, clothing and money.

And the dedicated doctors and nurses at the N.C. Jaycee Burn Center are working around the clock to treat nine heavily injured victims. Their

devotion, which goes overlooked until a crisis, sets a high standard of care that everyone in the field of medicine should strive to reach.

Even as investigators were still trying to find a solid answer for the Kinston tragedy, the space shuttle Columbia broke apart Saturday morning on re-entry – killing the seven crew members.

Families nationwide huddled around televisions while parents tried to explain what happened to their children in hushed, reverent voices.

Within hours, countless thousands of people in several states gathered to search for fragments of the shuttle to help piece together what happened – a grim, hopeless search made all the more painful with the discovery of a charred shuttle patch lying on the grass.

President Bush offered condolences at the Tuesday memorial service and described the astronauts as heroes taking risks for the good of all.

"Each of them knew great endeavors are inseparable with great risk, and each of them accepted those risks willingly, even joyfully, in the cause of discovery," Bush said during the televised service.

Despite the Kinston and Columbia tragedies, it's still possible to find some good from such sadness.

Rather than do nothing, people volunteered their time and savings to help ease the suffering of complete strangers – showing how important it is for people to shed tears together as a community.

But that concern is typically all-too-fleeting.

In the weeks ahead, the nation's attention will turn to other matters even as families of the Kinston victims wait in agony at the burn center, not knowing if their loved ones will recover, and as families of the astronauts stare at empty chairs.

Keep their lingering sorrows in mind the next time you look up at the star-filled sky.

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.

## Hard-to-See Line Splits News, Editorial Missions at DTH

I'm going to begin my first column as The Daily Tar Heel's new ombudsman by stating the obvious. From there, I'll attempt to work in some more subtle observations, and before I'm done the nuances may be so slight, you might blink and miss them altogether.

First, the easy stuff – a lot of people flat-out don't like the news media. Despite the fact that you are now reading this here newspaper, you might very well be one of those people. Sure, you might rely on the media to get your news, but what choice do you have? Is the media infallible? All right, nobody thinks that. Do they bungle the occasional story? Well, yes, "they" certainly do. Do individual reporters sometimes allow their own personal biases to creep into their writing and compromise their objectivity? Perhaps.

The news media makes for a convenient punching bag. It's a big target, and you won't encounter much resistance when you take your swings. No matter what your politics are, no matter what your beef is. From the much-hyped charges of liberal bias from those on the

right. To the paranoid cries of vast right-wing conspiracies from those on the left. To charges of all-around incompetence, unfairness and general tomfoolery from countless individuals in between. From sea to shining sea. From the dawn of the first reporter to future generations of laborers of the Fourth Estate. It's always been this way and probably always will be.

So, what's my point? With student elections fast approaching and DTH endorsements rolling in, now would seem an opportune moment to state the case for the journalism principles of fairness, accuracy and objectivity – specifically in the context of editorial versus news content.

While this separation might seem painfully obvious to those in the media, the distinction nonetheless is often quite hazy to all kinds of rational, intelligent readers. Why is that? We'll get to that in a moment.

The DTH, like most newspapers, divides its content into different categories. Everything in the paper falls under the broad category of "news" unless it is clearly designated as opinion. While all reporters (at least as of this

writing) are human and thus bound to the human condition, which includes holding scores of personal preferences and biases, any reporter worth his or her salt will strive to achieve fairness, accuracy and balance at all times.

In other words, you can never be free from biases, but you can check your sources, present all sides and remove any language that would hint at opinion.

In the editorial world, content is not only biased, it is intentionally so. That's really its whole purpose – to state opinions. There are opinion columnists, with their names and often mugshots alongside their bylines.

And then there are editorials, which are the stated positions of the newspaper itself. This is where it often gets confusing. It is traditional for an editorial, such as an endorsement for a political candidate, to be the voice of the newspaper rather than just an individual writer.

However, this does not mean that the opinions stated in an editorial are the opinions of everyone who works at the paper. Quite the contrary, most of the people who work at the DTH don't ever get a say in the paper's editorials. The editorials are solely the work of the editorial board.

Why is this important? So what and

who cares? It matters because the reporters who cover the news, such as reporters on the University beat covering student elections, don't get involved in their own stories. And the editorial board, which does engage in the political process by interviewing candidates and determining the paper's endorsements, does not have to go cover those same campaigns as objective reporters.

There is a clear separation, and it makes sense intuitively. It is worth noting that at the DTH, the code of ethics involving student elections extends beyond merely the traditional separation of editorial and news. No one on the DTH staff is permitted to get involved in student campaigns in any fashion.

That means everything from not being able to sign a petition to get a candidate on a ballot to not having a campaign sign up in your room.

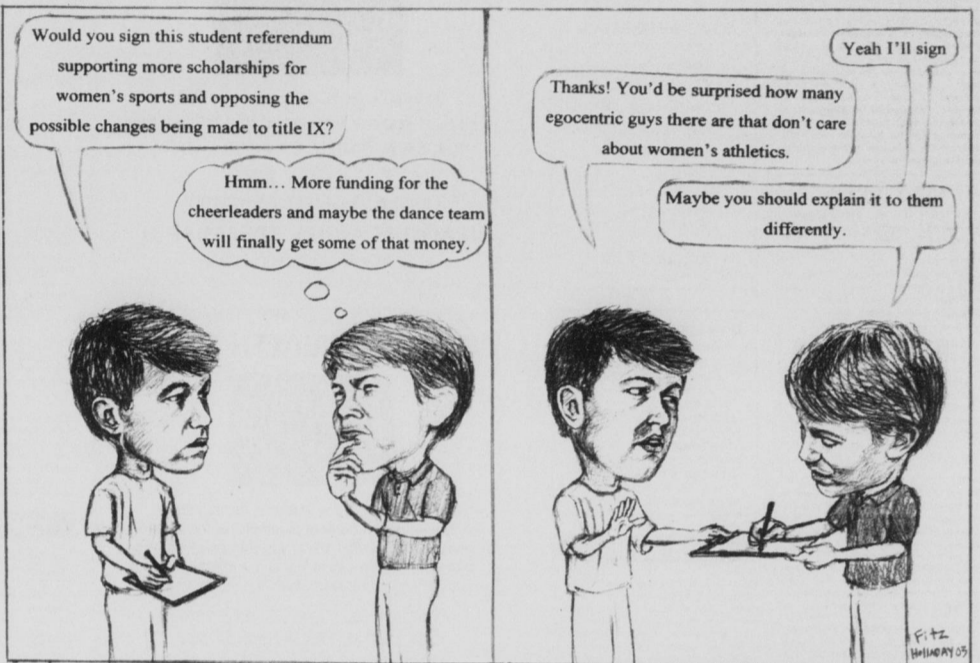
These ethics guidelines are not unique to the DTH. The majority of mainstream newspapers follow this standard. The standard-bearer news organizations like The New York Times and The Associated Press make their ethics codes publicly available online. You can go check them out – they're quite similar to the code of conduct at the DTH.

Another question readers often have: Why do endorsements at all? If newspapers simply reported the news and removed all opinion pieces, there would be less fuzziness surrounding the whole bias issue. Maybe. Sounds like somebody's dissertation topic and certainly not something we can get to the bottom of here.

One age-old theory has the press existing primarily to inform the voting public so that democracy can work like the well-oiled machine we'd all like it to be. Sounds a bit grandiose for student elections, but the principle is essentially the same. Endorsing candidates is one way a paper can engage in the democratic process.

Chances are, when the dust settles after the student elections, there will be those among you who will voice concerns that the DTH showed bias. Some of you will question the coverage and the editorial choices of the paper. This is good. It's part of a healthy discourse in any democratic society. In the media, it should never be an "us versus them" mentality. A word to the wise, however – your opinions will go farther if they are better informed. The same goes for ours.

Reach Ombudsman Eric Gautschi at [gautschi@email.unc.edu](mailto:gautschi@email.unc.edu).



## Americans Push Self-Reliance To Side in Favor of Handouts

America needs to return to the ideals that made it great, and one of those is self-reliance. The liberal establishment has done a fantastic job of convincing us that our ability to succeed depends on something or someone other than ourselves. Too often these days, people are not encouraged to build the best hand with the cards that life deals – instead, they're conditioned to expect some sort of handout.



FELIX LURYE  
LET FREEDOM RING

Of course, the reality in America is that people's stations in life are in large part due to what *those people* do with what they've got. Americans can form their own identities. If that weren't true, then millions of immigrants from Third World countries wouldn't be risking their lives coming here and enjoying spectacular success, albeit after years of hard work.

Why are immigrants successful? I'm the son of political refugees from the former Soviet Union who came to America with \$446 and four suitcases but now live quite well, so I think I've got a good grasp on why the "immigrant mentality" works so well.

First of all, many immigrants come from places where they have no expectations that anything will be done for them by someone else. So if they want to accomplish something, they'd better go out and do it themselves. And it's just too bad if the

odds are stacked against them – they work as hard as they need to in order to succeed.

Basically, immigrants compare America to their home countries and realize how much better it is here. Then they take advantage of their newfound freedom to build a better life for their families. Their outlook is the main reason why immigrants are able to achieve more than others who aren't willing to work as hard.

Indeed, the tremendous effort put forth by immigrants is amazing to see. It happens in America every day, as when poor Chinese or boat people from Vietnam slave away in California to send their kids to better schools or when Mexican immigrants here toil away at the jobs the rest of us don't want so they can send money back to their families.

And it's no different than what has always been happening in this country, such as with Irish, Polish, Italian and Jewish immigrants at the turn of the 20th century. One of my favorite examples of the immigrant mentality at work is that of America's West Indian community (people from the West Indies), who have achieved near income parity with whites.

Because West Indians are black, their success tends to contradict the left's claim that racism is the main reason for economic disparities between black and white Americans.

We cannot expect the immigrant mentality to lead to success in all cases all the time. Obviously, society has a responsibility to help those who aren't able to help themselves, such as the sick, the elderly and the mentally handicapped. And charitable giving is certainly both a worthy and necessary pursuit for everyone.

But as far as most of us are concerned, we just need to accept that life isn't fair sometimes. Yet instead of engaging in self-pity or looking to society for help, we need to foster an environment where people feel more empowered to improve their stations in life the way immigrants have been doing for more than 200 years.

Conservatives believe that people are smart enough to take responsibility for who they are and what they do. Since we all want credit when we succeed, we should also accept responsibility when we don't. Life can be unfair, and some people have better luck than others. However, playing the blame game and wallowing in self-pity accomplishes nothing. Instead, we just need to do our best and live with that.

One of the greatest things about America is that each one of us has the power to shape our own destiny. And so the ability to succeed lies first and foremost in each of us as individuals.

Reach Felix Lurye at [flurye@email.unc.edu](mailto:flurye@email.unc.edu).

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 [editdesk@unc.edu](mailto:editdesk@unc.edu).