

BOARD EDITORIALS

COMING TOGETHER

UNC workers have done well to organize 2 teach-ins dealing with worker issues, but the University is wrong not to make an appearance.

It is a shame that many UNC workers will find it difficult to participate in a program that has much to do with their experiences on campus. Members of UE Local 150, the N.C. Public Service Workers Union, and other nonunion workers have worked to bring attention to labor issues on campus. Part of that hard work will come to light today when Barbara Ehrenreich, author of this year's summer reading assignment, "Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America," and outside experts speak at two teach-ins. The teach-ins, from noon to 2 p.m. and 6 to 9 p.m., will be held on the steps of South Building and the Rosenau Auditorium at the School of Public Health, respectively. Workers should be commended for their efforts to make the programs a reality. However, the teach-ins haven't come without some controversy. Because the South Building teach-in occurs during the day, some workers were concerned that they couldn't attend. So they requested time off from Chancellor James Moeser. Moeser refused their request because the teach-in wasn't University-sponsored. Workers also were denied community service leave because the event didn't comply with Office of State Personnel policy. Although Moeser defended his actions, something more should have been done to allow workers to attend the event. Officials' suggestions that workers attend the teach-in during lunch breaks or ask managers for time off do not go far enough. Some workers have expressed frustration at the University for its actions concerning labor issues.

Not enabling workers to attend the forum only adds to this frustration. Kudos to organizations — including the student brigade of UE Local 150 — that, by creating carpools, are helping to make it easier for workers to attend. Workers' frustration has been compounded by the fact that Moeser turned down an invitation to participate in the event. In an Aug. 1 letter, members of UE Local 150 requested Moeser's presence at the teach-ins, "as the leader of UNC-Chapel Hill." But in an Aug. 14 letter to UNC workers Barbara Prear and David Brannigan, Moeser wrote "It is not appropriate for me, as a University administrator, to participate in a union-sponsored event." He went on to state that the Chancellor's Task Force for a Better Workplace was created to deal with worker issues. Although the University has made efforts to gather workers' opinion through the task force, not attending the teach-in could make it appear as if the administration is not tagging workers' issues as a high priority. Workers play a big part on this campus and working with them to create a friendly atmosphere is in the interest of the University. Attending the teach-ins would help reassure workers that administrators are concerned about their status and benefits. People respect individuals who are open to opinions, even if their positions prevent them from publically agreeing. University officials should remember that they are judged the same way.

MAKING THE EFFORT

The Association of Student Governments needs to define better its purpose and organization to become a more effective lobbying force.

The idea behind the UNC Association of Student Governments is a good one. The governing bodies in place at the 16 campuses in the UNC system have significant power. But decisions that have perhaps the greatest impact on students are in the hands of the UNC-system Board of Governors and the N.C. General Assembly — both bodies without any student contingent of their own. Thus it makes sense to have an office in place to represent the interests of all students in UNC-system schools. Enter the ASG, an organization supposedly devoted to representing student issues to higher governing bodies. Yet the reality of the ASG is far from what it is supposed to represent. In its current form, the ASG is a painfully ineffective organization badly in need of overhaul. It will take strong leadership and hard work to move the association in the right direction. While daunting, this is by no means an impossible task. The ASG, which includes student representatives from all UNC-system schools, received a noteworthy boost last year after the BOG approved a system-wide student fee increase of \$1 to provide the association with \$165,000 annually in operating costs. This new stipend has permitted the ASG to hire a full-time office manager to coordinate the organization's activities and has allowed ASG to rent a Raleigh office. But expecting the new hire to take the workload off the shoulders of the student representatives would be a big mistake. The ASG is a student organization, paid for by students. So it is the job of ASG President Jonathan Ducote and others to make the body an effective outlet for student concerns across the state. What he and others must do is lay out concrete goals for the organization's future. The ASG has been plagued by a lack of focus from the representatives who are always changing. In recent years, the group has selected the issues it champions in a flavor-of-the-month style. Some of the issues include fighting tuition

increases, pushing for student voting rights on the BOG and improving student services on campuses. While the issues facing students change frequently, the organization would benefit from selecting two to three core issues that it sticks to for years to come. Having a defined mission will lend the ASG some badly needed credibility among students, campus officials and members of the state legislature, many of whom have expressed concerns that the organization has gone awry in recent years. And if people began to respect the association, perhaps leaders then would be able to accomplish all of their goals. N.C. Sen. Tony Rand, D-Cumberland, has often cited ASG's lack of expertise as a reason for refusing to support bills granting a student vote on the BOG. In addition, the organization's lobbying efforts — which have suffered from halfhearted effort in the past — perhaps would be taken more seriously in the future. But the ASG meeting this weekend demonstrates that the organization has a long way to go. Instead of focusing on key issues facing North Carolina students, the body approved the cockamamie idea of rotating the location of the office depending on who holds the presidency. Adding to the woes of the meeting is that no UNC-Chapel Hill representatives made it to Cullowhee. It is true that this year's UNC-CH representatives have not yet been approved in Student Congress. But Student Body President Matt Tepper is, according to his duties, a member of the ASG and should have found a way to get a Chapel Hill delegate to the meeting. Tepper was attending a leadership-building conference the same weekend. While Tepper's administration erred in not sending a UNC-CH representative, it's not hard to see why the University's student government has not made ASG a priority. The organization is not doing what it was established to do. And although students only pay \$1 for the group to operate, the actual costs of an ineffective ASG are much higher. There is no question that it is time for a change. The only question is when someone will take the first step.

EDITORS' NOTE: The above editorials are the opinions of solely The Daily Tar Heel Editorial Board and 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 2003-04 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

COMMENTARY

Editorial page tackles accountability daily

For the next several days, members of the University community will be commemorating the second annual Honor and Integrity Week. This week is part of a yearlong effort to reinvigorate a culture of honor on campus. One prevailing theme for the week will surround the need to hold individuals accountable for their actions, whether in the classroom, the business world or the realm of athletics. The field of journalism has experienced its own series of discussions on honor and integrity — most recently during this summer's infamous sagas concerning former New York Times reporters Jayson Blair and Rick Bragg. Those discussions even found their way to The Daily Tar Heel and other campus newspapers across the country. The scrutiny surrounding Blair and Bragg led the DTH editorial page to place a greater emphasis on the need to hold members of the page's staff more accountable for the material that is printed every day. On the opinion page, however, accountability takes on a different meaning. There is no right or



APRIL BETHEA
EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR

wrong belief about a particular issue, but opinion writers must be willing to defend their point of view. After all, how an opinion is expressed can raise eyebrows. This semester, as in the past, some readers have weighed in with their views on things appearing on the editorial page. Two cartoons in particular have prompted concerns from readers about their taste or appropriateness for inclusion in the paper. The first involved a cartoon that ran Sept. 11 and featured President George W. Bush asking the U.S. public to contribute money to efforts to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan during a ceremony commemorating the two-year anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. A couple of readers felt it was inappropriate to run a cartoon

critical of Bush on a day during which the nation was remembering the tragedies that occurred in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania. The cartoon appearing in the next day's paper also raised the ire of at least one reader. This one presented an image of Jay Anhorn, director of Greek affairs, dreaming of the "perfect" fraternity. Although some readers felt the cartoon was poking fun at the new rush rules placed on the Interfraternity Council this year, at least one person felt it was taking a cheap shot at a particular group on campus. Both of these cartoons and the responses by readers highlight a debate that occurs on a daily basis: how to strike a balance between protecting the right of members of the editorial page staff to express their opinions and the possible repercussions among readers. Finding a happy medium between these two often competing issues can be difficult at times. However, as a general rule of thumb, I believe it is important to protect opinion holder's rights. I do not believe it is appropri-

ate to prevent staff members from expressing their opinions just because others might view them as controversial. Voltaire once said, "I may disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it." In a way, this quote has become the mantra of the editorial page editors in recent years. It's even posted above the editorial desk's computer in our newsroom. And this is a belief I hold strongly as well. But having a forum for expression does not mean giving people free reign to voice just any opinion without any insight into possible repercussions. All members of the editorial page staff must bear responsibility and ownership for what goes into print. One of the most effective mechanisms for doing this is to identify whose opinion is being expressed, whether it's the editorial board or an individual. Columns and board editorials always have included disclaimers indicating they were the opinions of those particular writers or of a group of editorial board members, and not of the entire page's staff. Likewise, we make clear efforts to identify readers who submit let-

ters to the editor. Cartoons now bear a header identifying the artist's name and e-mail address. The drawings also now appear under the heading, "Editorial Cartoon." This new addition to the page helps to ensure that it is clear that the drawings are reflective of the artists' personal opinions. Identifying the source of all materials that appear on this page is not an attempt to deflect any suspicion away from the editors about the appropriateness of a particular viewpoint. Rather it is a means of ensuring that, at the end of the day, the editorial staff members are held accountable for their views as well. Contact April Bethea at adbethea@email.unc.edu. **TO SUBMIT A LETTER:** 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 them to editdesk@unc.edu.

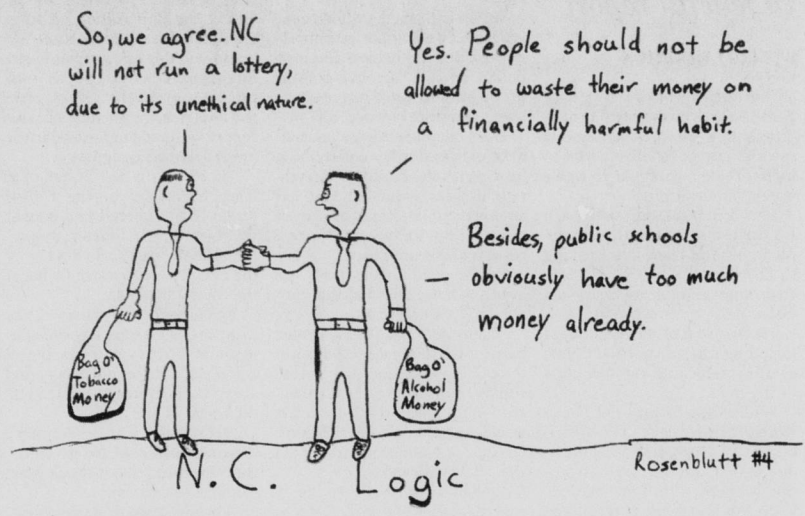
ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"Making noise is an effective means of opposition."

JOSEPH GOEBBELS, NAZI PROPAGANDIST

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Danny Rosenblutt, rosenblu@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

Isabel provides break from everyday monotony of life

There was a tree down directly beside Silent Sam. Its roots were exposed for the first time in probably a couple of centuries. In its passing, the tree had left a marshy hole in place of the roots.



BILLY BALL
FOR KIDS WHO CAN'T READ GOOD

Hurricane Isabel was slowly leaving the area. A group of squatters stood with us in reverence for the fallen giant. We all crouched and stared at the gasping roots like they were the end of the rainbow. I was almost certain that I was sad about it. "We need to get drunk in this hole," one of the squatters said to the other. The other chuckled, and I was certain that I was mad about this — even though I chuckled too. My fellow squatters wanted to celebrate the passing of this tree with some good beer and laughs. It struck me as kind of funny, and it reminded me of a few things. It reminded me of a moment from "Zoolander," one of my favorite films of all time. Derek Zoolander, the dimwitted male model, casually remarks that he has an "after-funeral party" to attend. True, Derek, true. I remember a funeral that I attended when I was younger and bumper and less assured. Generally, it was a sad affair, as funerals often are. People crying. Some of them sobbing. One woman crouched with her head on the coffin, her body racked by sadness. In a fit of melodrama, she was pounding her fist on the lid of the coffin. Within an hour, though, that same woman was laughing and eating little sausages with some friends. She cackled mightily at

someone's joke. I am interminably confused about whether I was supposed to be happy or sad right then. For all that I knew, this was a backyard Fourth of July barbecue or a Super Bowl bash. It didn't feel like someone had just died. I also remember another storm named Bonnie. Bonnie was a hurricane that dropped to tropical storm status by the time it reached my northeastern corner of the state. The funny thing is that it rebuilt itself on top of me. I sat on the porch and watched eagerly as the wind threatened to tear everything down around my house. The trees in front of the house bent to their breaking point. The rain filled the ditches and, eventually, entire lawns, washing away a few ugly lawn ornaments. It was wonderfully exciting to see everything threatened. I would never want to lose my home or my belongings, but it's hard to deny that it was fun to watch those stupid, fake puppy dog ornaments wash down the street. I'm convinced that people don't want destruction, but they do prefer a little shake-up every now and then. They like it when something big comes along and rustles a few branches. Things get boring when we see them every day, and we don't want them to leave — but it

"People don't want destruction, but they do prefer a little shake-up every now and then."

would be great to see them stirred. Some people are more conservative than others, enough to keep a desk drawer filled with Easter candy and a wallet packed with bank receipts from a year ago. Some are more flighty, enough to give away books they've already read and give their old khaki pants to the Salvation Army. But some things bridge that gap, and a good threat might be just that bridge. It was fun to explore the campus after the worst of the storm had passed. People love to go out and explore. They love to go out and flaunt that they're still there, even after a centuries-old oak tree has fallen. It's why people climb on fallen trees. It's why amusement parks sell T-shirts proclaiming that someone has survived some kind of roller coaster. It's why people want to eat El Gigante at Bandido's. I'm certain that in its time, someone had a special meaning for that tree. I'm certain that some sappy people somewhere remember that tree as "their" tree. It's really sad that this tree had to fall in this storm. But it's comforting to know that it wasn't my tree and that I outlasted that tree. Contact Billy Ball at wkbball@email.unc.edu.

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