

BOARD EDITORIALS

PICK A LOCAL HERO

If officials rename a street to acknowledge civil rights, they should consider locally relevant options before automatically choosing MLK.

By no means has society accomplished the goals of the civil rights movement, but even in the small context of Chapel Hill, simply renaming a street is not the next great step.

Former Chapel Hill Town Council member Bill Thorpe submitted a proposal last week to rename Airport Road in honor of Martin Luther King Jr.

Thorpe — a member of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People — said that although there is already a road in the area named after King, it is too small and out of the way to honor his memory effectively.

Thorpe said he suggested Airport Road for a name change because many people use it and because Horace Williams Airport, for which the road was named, could be closed in the near future.

Certainly, the achievements of civil rights leaders like King deserve plenty of respect. However, a large number of roads, boulevards and avenues bearing King's name exist in cities and towns across the country.

The action of renaming a roadway after him might have had greater symbolic meaning in the past. Recently, however, it has become a clichéd substitute for real social progress.

Renaming Airport Road will create several different problems to be resolved since town rules do not permit two roads to have the same name. Furthermore, the idea could prove expensive for residents and businesses on Airport Road that would have to change letterheads, signs and other means of indicating their location.

Still, honoring the tradition of civil rights leaders is an admirable goal. Since many places already have roads named after King, it might be more useful to look for new ways to sustain his legacy. There will be plenty of opportunities to do so here with the re-

alization of the town taking place. For example, council member Mark Kleinschmidt has suggested naming a new community park in King's honor.

The town also could elect to be more inclusive in honoring civil rights progress. King was arguably our nation's greatest civil rights leader, but Chapel Hill also should consider people who have made a significant local impact.

One such person is Howard Lee. He became the first black mayor of a predominantly white southern town when he became Chapel Hill's chief executive.

He continued his work in public service as secretary of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources and as a state senator, and he is currently chairman of the N.C. Board of Education.

Lee, who received his master's degree in social work at UNC in 1966, has served as a role model for everyone in the surrounding community and deserves to be recognized as a local leader and a champion of education.

Renaming a road in honor of Lee would have a significantly greater impact in terms of local awareness than a road that follows other towns in memorializing King. Most citizens know who King is, but many would be hard-pressed to name local luminaries such as Lee.

Thorpe's intentions are noble, and Chapel Hill should make a better effort to acknowledge King's good work. But there are other black leaders who have continued to work in his footsteps and who deserve recognition as well.

Town Council members would do well to memorialize King, but they should not have to follow the lead of many of the nation's other towns and cities.

They should use the opportunity to recognize continued progress, not just what has been accomplished in the past.

INELIGIBLE PLAYER

A home-schooler isn't hurting anyone by wanting to play baseball for McDougale Middle School, but it would go against the rules.

It's hard to say no to a kid who just wants to play baseball. But Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools administrators shouldn't bend the rules for Karsten Rabe, a home-schooled 13-year-old Chapel Hill boy who wants to join the baseball team at McDougale Middle School.

Honestly, it won't hurt anyone if Rabe is allowed to join public school kids on the field. He is not, however, enrolled at the middle school, and that's a basic requirement for joining the team, according to state law.

Rabe's parents do pay taxes in the school district, but ultimately they chose to educate their child independently of the public school system.

In addition, the area has many opportunities, in

the form of recreational leagues, for children who do not play sports in their public schools.

School administrators should keep in mind that opening the doors to a home-schooler means that kids from private schools might be allowed to play on teams at public schools as well. In an age in which youth athletics already are taken far too seriously, allowing privately educated kids to play at public schools could create a dangerous scenario in which school coaches recruit talent regardless of eligibility.

It seems unfair to disallow Rabe, or any other homeschooled child, the opportunity to play sports in a school setting. But his parents chose to take him out of the public school setting, and that choice means Rabe might miss out on some opportunities.

DRAWING THE LINE

Students in athletic or extracurricular pursuits should be tested for illegal drugs, but the average student's rights demand protection.

Alongside his State of the Union remarks about terrorism, health care and the economy, President Bush also noted Tuesday a decline in illegal drug use among schoolchildren.

"Drug testing in our schools has proven to be an effective part of this effort," he said. "So tonight I proposed an additional \$23 million for schools that want to use drug testing as a tool to save children's lives. The aim here is not to punish children, but to send them this message: We love you, and we don't want to lose you."

Drug testing is acceptable with regard to student athletes and students participating in extracurricular activities, such as school bands, ensembles, aca-

ademic teams and so forth. These types of students have volunteered to represent their respective schools both on and off school property and should be held accountable for their actions. Also, school and law enforcement officials should continue to conduct drug searches, because illegal drugs have no place on school property.

However, subjecting entire student bodies to drug tests would be overreaching. Many students are obligated to attend school and should not have to be subjected to legal dragnets.

Bush is right to say the nation doesn't want to lose its children to drugs but shouldn't lose sight of the average student's basic rights in the process.

EDITOR'S 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 seven board members, the editorial page associate 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.

QUOTABLES

"I don't think he did that. He ran the play I told him to run, he made the shot I told him to make — I think I took over."

ROY WILLIAMS,
UNC MEN'S BASKETBALL COACH, ON BEING ASKED IF GUARD RASHAD MCCANTS TOOK OVER THE GAME BY HITTING A GAME-WINNING SHOT AGAINST UCONN.

"Keep your eyes on the ends and not just the means."

JAMES MOESER,
UNC CHANCELLOR, MAKING THE CASE FOR A HEFTY TUITION INCREASE BEFORE THE UNC FACULTY COUNCIL BY EMPHASIZING THAT TUITION REVENUE WOULD LARGELY GO TO BOOSTING FACULTY SALARIES.

"We need medicine, but first do no harm."

JUDITH WEGNER,
FACULTY COUNCIL CHAIRWOMAN, ASKING THE UNC BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO THINK ABOUT THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF A TUITION INCREASE.

READERS' FORUM

Students must understand rising cost of college

TO THE EDITOR:

I am disappointed at the editorial staff for publishing the tuition petition and then claiming it was unbiased with liberal circular talk.

The University is in a crisis, and the days are over when this place is a "blue light special" of education. In the Department of Germanic Languages, funding is so tight that they could not even print a syllabus or worksheets for students, and cutting class sections and increasing class size has become prevalent.

Let's remember the faculty are not here merely to read essays and grade tests either.

It is time for the student body to realize that college is expensive and probably not accessible to everyone. Maybe with more funding, we can all learn some common sense.

Joshua S. Davis
Sophomore
Chemistry

Listening more productive than condemning women

TO THE EDITOR:

Brentley Tanner forgot to check the meaning of the word "choice" when he wrote his commentary on the anniversary of Roe v. Wade. Being "pro-choice" affords the women of the United States the right to make informed decisions.

As a Christian and an informed woman, I "choose" not to have an abortion. However, I firmly believe in the constitutional rights set forth by our government.

I resent that society has forced us to be categorized under the titles, pro-choice or pro-life.

Mr. Tanner I hope you plan on only adopting children when you decide to have a family. Because, if you don't, then I get to judge you and your "selfish act" of contributing to the "overbreeding of the working class."

Please remember to show some personal responsibility with your sperm. I would hate for the government to intervene and regulate what you do or don't do with it.

Cara Barton
UNC Hospitals

TO THE EDITOR:

One must wonder why Mr. Tanner wrote his commentary ("Plenty of alternatives exist when considering abortion"). Was he trying to inform pregnant women of their options as the title implied? Or was he attempting to persuade pro-choice individuals (pro-death individuals as he insinuates) to change their stance? In either case, he failed abysmally.

If Mr. Tanner truly wishes to create a discourse about abortion alternatives (and methods of pregnancy prevention), it would be better to refrain from insulting

women in such a predicament and their supporters.

He manages in the course of one article to call these individuals cruel, selfish, irresponsible, reckless, immoral, criminal, hypocritical, pro-death, murderers and even likens them to Nazis.

Obviously such statements only serve to alienate people and discourage them from hearing the heart of his message, which was, I hope, to inform them of alternatives instead of attacking them.

Regardless of one's side of the debate, a better way to receive a woman's attention is by offering her a nonjudgmental ear, listening to her concerns and compassionately explaining available options.

It is possible to provide education and generate debate without resorting to insults and shame tactics.

Rachele Peterson
Senior
Public Policy

Abortion allows women to shirk personal responsibility

TO THE EDITOR:

There are a plethora of reasons why I disagree wholeheartedly with the decision set down by the Supreme Court 31 years ago in Roe v. Wade.

One of them is that by allowing the termination of pregnancies, such a law negates the importance of personal responsibility.

ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"Without heroes, we're all plain people and don't know how far we can go."

BERNARD MALAMUD, WRITER

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Chris Mattsson, mattsson@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

Red light cameras do town little favor as policing tools

I'm a huge fan of '80s pop culture; I just can't get enough of aerobics instructors in unitards and neon leg warmers, Euro-trash synthesizer riffs, New Coke and, of course, Data, Chunk, Sloth and the Fratellis.

I ain't scared to admit that I used to get down with the ugliest version of white-boy poppin' and lockin' the globe's ever witnessed while *Thriller* and *Off the Wall* continuously spun on the LP player in the background.

Hell, Wacko Jacko could do no wrong back then, except for his unfortunate 1984 decision to lend backing vocals to one-hit wonder soloist Rockwell.

And I'll be durned if I can't get that horrendous song out of my head each time I drive near the intersections of Airport Road and Estes Drive or Sage Road and U.S. 15-501 — you know it, "I always feel like, somebody's watching me."

Unfortunately, I'm experiencing not quite a feeling, but an actual camera-induced reality. A reality that I pray ends when the Chapel Hill Town Council decides Monday whether to retain or remove these edifices of Ashcroft-era fear-mongering.

The voyeursections now in place along two of the town's major traffic arteries have been established, ostensibly, for the safety of all us dear commuters. Since a cop is no longer necessary to nab a red light runner, proponents say, fewer drivers will try to squeeze a lemon and potentially plow head-on into the side of another vehicle.

As if these occurrences have ever been so epidemic that the town has no other recourse than to take law enforcement out of the hands of our beat-walking sisters and brothers and transfer it



NICK EBERLEIN
THE VILLAGE MEGALOMANIAC

to some corporation in Texas. The fine folks that serve in the town's 5-0 headquarters are municipal employees held accountable by our local government — they are the manifestation of this community policing itself.

By bestowing civic power to Affiliated Computer Services, the proprietor of the camera, we have let our roads become a fiefdom to be exploited by our Lone Star State lords of the snapshot.

And we don't even share in the money. The town gets a puny \$2 share of every \$50 citation coughed up by each driver popped by the cameras. The cut improves to a little more than \$20 for each citation issued above 1,750 per month, but that won't happen.

Only about one-third of the photos taken have had sufficient clarity to warrant issuance of a fine; this is hardly a deterrent. Lucky me, I drive a pick-up truck. All I need to do is drop the tailgate to distort the camera's focus on my plate, and — poof! — I can transform into the most spiteful, untouchable, light-running hooligan behind a wheel.

Now believe me, I'm not about to go run red lights as a form of civil disobedience, but the fact that the human and procedural tenets of law enforcement are stolen from us leaves me nothing but angry at the utter demolition of local values and character wrought by these spycams.

I've read lots of letters written by lots of folks asking the question: "How is providing for the safety of local residents an affront to the town's values?" Well, first of all, the claim that the traffic cameras are making us safer is dubious.

Studies done in other cities show that simple engineering procedures, such as enlarging traffic lights, lengthening the time a light is yellow and increasing the lag time for light-controlled intersections to transfer right-of-way have cut down on accidents drastically.

And it was done without forcing drivers to FEAR these electronic monstrosities on the side of the roads. Washington, D.C., the most stridently pro-camera city in the nation, has seen an alarming increase in the number of rear-end crashes at intersections rigged with these mechanisms.

It is doubtless that these occurred because people are breaking too violently at yellow lights in fear of being the next contestant on candid camera. Having vehicle operators constantly looking over their shoulders for cameras and becoming wary about approaching intersections is exceedingly harmful.

I don't know about you folks, but I trust a congested roadway full of irrational, scared-poopless drivers about as much as I trust Ray Charles to navigate a Suburban around a cul-de-sac.

Responsible policing and a responsible community create safe roads, not a public covering in fear from an omnipresent lens. Every time I think about this my mind reverts back to 1984, but it's not Rockwell I'm reminiscing about: It's Orwell.

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