

BOARD EDITORIALS

THE FARMER'S FATE

U.S. lawmakers should institute a tobacco buyout as soon as possible, and they should allow for federal regulation of the tobacco industry.

Members of the U.S. Congress are planning to go into recess at the end of the week — meaning that they are running out of time to institute a tobacco quota buyout.

Tobacco can only go further downhill as a part of North Carolina's economic future. Growing public health concerns about smoking and increased regulation of the tobacco industry have decreased the power of big tobacco in the United States, and foreign competition has created additional pressure for the state's tobacco farmers.

Quota levels — the use of which dates back to the Great Depression — have fallen recently with alarming consistency, and experts predict that they will continue to drop. In short, time is of the essence for farmers who are seeing their livelihoods diminish before their very eyes.

As things stand, farmers would be hard-pressed to reduce their level of tobacco production or to leave the leaf behind entirely. Despite the obvious decline of the viability of tobacco as a cash crop, there is little incentive for the state's farmers to switch to alternative crops, and many farmers are facing a shaky retirement.

A buyout would change that — and it's the responsibility of a House-Senate conference committee, working to reconcile two vastly different versions of a bill including a buyout, to give farmers the money they need to adapt to the times.

Buyout language is part of a larger corporate tax bill in both congressional chambers. The omnibus measure is needed to end increasing penalty tariffs on U.S. exports to Europe.

The Senate version of the bill is better than the House edition in practically every respect. In addition to including a provision for federal oversight of tobacco, the Senate's plan would pay farmers more money. It would use \$13 billion taken from tobacco companies to pay \$8 per pound for quota holders and \$4 per pound for growers based on 2002 quota levels. Senators on both sides of the aisle supported their chamber's legislation in a favorable 78-15 vote.

The House proposal, on the other hand, would use \$9.6 billion in tobacco excise tax money to pay \$7 per pound for holders and \$3 per pound for growers. This version would give participating farmers less money, it would come at taxpayers' expense and it would exclude a call for the Food and Drug Administration to regulate tobacco.

House leaders in charge of moving the legislation need to do a lot better.

Federal oversight of the tobacco industry must take place. The practices of cigarette-makers have been suspect for years, and the federal government needs to have greater monitoring power over the

quality of companies' products. Neglecting to authorize FDA regulation at such an opportune time would be a massive failure on Congress' part.

Proponents of FDA tobacco regulation rightly see its inclusion in the corporate tax bill as a necessity. Passing a buyout without including a provision for federal oversight would be a major defeat, not only for supporters of regulation but also for the public at large.

Thankfully, senators supporting regulation have threatened to filibuster any legislation that comes out of the conference committee without the FDA language. "A de-linking of (the buyout and FDA regulation) is simply intolerable and will occur over my dead body," Sen. Mike DeWine, R-Ohio, told The Washington Post.

Elected representatives shouldn't be protecting companies that have made their fortune by selling their harmful products and targeting young people with their advertising. Instead, they should be working to protect consumers. Members of Congress would be adding insult to injury by both allowing a buyout to fall by the wayside and neglecting to address a major public health issue in the appropriate manner.

House leaders and the majority of the Senate might disagree when it comes to FDA regulation. But the core issue — the proposed buyout — isn't a partisan one. North Carolina's congressional delegation and the state's two major Senate candidates, Erskine Bowles and Richard Burr, support a quota buyout.

If legislators make the right choice, tobacco farmers could get the resources they might need to leave a failing livelihood behind and to start anew.

But as is too often the case, a political game has supplanted an honest drive to help a large number of constituents. For farmers, a buyout would represent a bridge to the future. Lawmakers unnecessarily are keeping the path to prosperity unclear.

Tobacco's dominance as a cash crop in North Carolina is seeing its last days. The quota system's death sentence has been prescribed for a while. It's time for members of Congress to realize that. It's time for them to give tobacco farmers a chance to take on new ventures with as much stability as possible.

Quite frankly, it's time for them to forget about their political maneuvering and to make a commitment to men and women who have been supporting the state and national economies for decades.

It's up to U.S. lawmakers to get their act together and to push a reasonable buyout plan through — and it's up to voters to keep track of who's responsible if Congress doesn't take advantage of this golden opportunity.

ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"The future belongs to those who prepare for it today."

MALCOLM X, CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Steven Oklesh, elven@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

When 500 words about Yeats must face a jury of your peers

Let's say you've just finished writing a personal narrative about the time you treacherously beat a thousand dollars on the wrong side of a Carolina-Duke game in the Dean Dome. Would you want the story read by a professor or by a whole class of your fellow students?

Most creative writing classes and some journalism courses at UNC would use the latter "workshop" approach.

Typically, you complete a writing assignment, and instead of just turning it in to the instructor, you make copies for each classmate, pass them out and listen as the whole class critiques your work.

Chris Roush, a journalism professor, usually eschews these peer critiques even though his classes often involve short writing assignments.

"My concern," he said, "is students hearing feedback from other students ... that may not be the correct feedback."

Daniel Wallace, who wrote the novel "Big Fish" and teaches creative writing at the University, agrees that this is reason enough to limit the time spent on peer review. "I feel like I know more than (students) do, and that's why I'm the teacher," he said. "I like to do most of the talking."

"If you let the students lead the workshop, it's like the blind leading the blind."

But the knowledge of instructors is not necessarily without limits.

Angie Luvira, a senior studio art major, found this out the hard way after turning in a photography assignment.

"I did photos of skateboarders, and my teacher was anti-skateboarder, I think," she said. "And he just said, 'These look like photos



ROBIN SINHABABU
MAYBE PARTYING WILL HELP
FROM A MAGAZINE."

Her classmates were quick to counter the derision. "Everyone in the class told him, 'No, you've never seen a skateboard magazine — these don't look anything like that,'" she said.

It's true that what you get out of a class is proportional to what you put into it.

But with workshop classes, your educational rewards are a more complex function of what 15 other students invest. Only the most earnest effort attracts the most useful criticism.

The trouble is, these classes don't always bring out the most earnest efforts. I know I have occasionally turned in assignments of which I was not particularly proud.

This was not to my advantage, as I sat silently while my classmates pointed out the deficiencies in my work of which I was already aware. Furthermore, they felt obligated to suggest ways to fix the piece or build upon it, though I had no intention of looking at it again.

Wallace, whose class I have taken, rightly frowns upon such delinquency. "If (students) don't bring their A game, it's their fault, and there's nothing I can do about it."

On the other hand, knowing that others will analyze your work can be an incentive to produce something of quality. Faced with the task of producing something for a whole class to read, one

wouldn't want to be thought of as a dull writer — or worse, a poor speller.

Perhaps the great cosmic challenge every workshop instructor faces is to turn the seemingly individual nitpicking directed at one student's paper into lessons useful to all the students.

I'm taking a journalism seminar in which the instructor, a veteran newsman, constantly broadens the discussion of one paper by framing it with an anecdote or generality about writing.

Not only does this increase the utility of the workshop, but it also maintains students' attention and interest — essential for keeping the fire of comments and criticism alive.

Wallace follows this technique. "If you run a workshop really well, it's possible to use sort of a universal criticism of stories where you're not just talking about one story, but you're talking about all stories," he said.

This technique seems most useful in classes in which students are making aesthetic judgments, such as those dealing with art or creative writing. The less of an objective sense of merit that exists, the more useful a workshop likely is going to be.

Creative writing, art and journalism classes are, in a sense, trial runs for work that's intended for a public audience. It's definitely useful for students to have that audience recreated for them in a classroom.

"Writers don't always know where their mistakes are," Wallace said. "When someone else points them out to you, it becomes clear. The final destination for your work is another reader."

Contact Robin Sinhababu
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HAVE A CLEAN FIGHT

Though this year's election is proving to be a most divisive contest, people shouldn't let ideological anger lead to verbal or physical abuse.

National politics certainly should provoke debate at UNC, but members of the University community should work to ensure that they do not cross the line in expressing their views.

The (Durham) Herald Sun reported Friday that a post-debate argument between two UNC students over whom Jesus would vote for in the election escalated into a physical confrontation that led to one student being taken to UNC Hospitals.

We live in a nation that allows public debate, yet there are certain parameters that citizens must keep in mind when expressing their beliefs. Your rights end where another individual's rights begin.

Respect is key. It must exist in order to maintain a viable and informative public discourse.

Respect demands tolerance. This doesn't mean we have to agree with the other's beliefs — it just means that we must tolerate their right to believe it.

Tolerance and respect for each other's rights means that we must not get into physical confrontations over the things we believe.

Having a friendly or even a heated debate amongst people with different ideologies is one thing, but act-

ing in a brutish manner is another.

We went wrong when we assumed that, in order to get our message out to people, we had to beat our beliefs into them.

We need to respect each other's opinions — Republican, Democrat and independent alike, we are all human beings with the natural right to believe in whatever we wish to believe in.

If students aim to educate their peers about who they believe would serve the nation most effectively, they should do so in a manner that goes hand in hand with a civil democracy.

We partake in a marketplace of ideas — not in a market where one ideology is more correct than another.

Emotions are high in this election and we are a nation divided. But we live and participate in an educational environment. There is no room in our academic climate for childish activities such as petty fights over our preferred candidate.

Let's keep the political debates out of the boxing ring and make sure that the only punches we are throwing are merely verbal — not made out of hatred and anger.

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 six board members, the editorial page associate editor, the editorial page editor and the DTH editor. The 2004-05 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

READERS' FORUM

Fans proved to be a factor in epic field hockey contest

TO THE EDITOR:

Henry Stadium housed what our Coach Karen Shelton deemed "one of her sweetest victories" in all her 23 years of coaching this past Saturday afternoon. In an epic battle between longtime rivals, UNC and Wake Forest — the No. 1 and No. 2 field hockey teams in the country — competed for more than 100 minutes to determine the final victor: the Tar Heels. Through two periods of overtime, penalty strokes and a torrential downpour, the teams played on.

After the game, as is traditional in Carolina field hockey, the women on the team were endlessly congratulated by parents and friends at the habitual "tailgate." While everyone at the tailgate had something to say about the heart, determination and perseverance exuded by the players, they could not stop praising those same qualities in the crowd.

And we could not agree more. The crowd was spectacular and deserves great credit for our victory Saturday.

So, to all of those who gutted it out, who never gave up on us, who withstood the rain and humidity this past Saturday afternoon at Henry Stadium, thank you. Go Heels!

Carey Fetting-Smith
Co-captain
UNC field hockey team

Carolina Women's Center will take on relevant issues

TO THE EDITOR:

During a time when the University is working diligently to recruit and retain female faculty, students and staff, I am concerned that the incident involving a faculty member's association with Playboy may chill the climate for women at Carolina.

Chilly climate refers to women feeling like "other" in relation to their male colleagues — that their viewpoints are somehow less important, that they must push harder for benefits that men obtain automatically and that they are left out when important decisions are made.

Relationships between faculty members and students are a critical component of the learning environment, and students look to faculty members as role models of ideal conduct within their disciplines.

The Carolina Women's Center serves the campus by providing programs that promote positive relationships between men and women, help women to feel safe and encourage understanding of critical issues of importance to women.

While Professor Malcolm Forbes has apologized for the "mess" his conduct has generated, I would like to offer the services of the Carolina Women's Center for discussions of the concerns about sexism in society that this matter has raised.

What are pornography's effects on men, women and society at

large? How are appropriate boundaries drawn between men and women in an educational setting? When students feel insulted by a faculty member's conduct, how can they deal with this internally and safely with the faculty member or others?

To this end, the Carolina Women's Center will offer several brown-bag sessions during October and November to discuss these matters. Facilitators who understand these topics will lead the discussions and generate ideas that will help students, faculty, staff and administration explore these issues both in a broad context and in relationship to their own lives.

I invite you to visit our Web site, <http://www.unc.edu/womenscenter>, for dates and locations.

Diane Kjerovik
Director
Carolina Women's Center

Voting is just one of many ways to make a difference

TO THE EDITOR:

I disagree with Michelle Jarboe's column on why it is important to vote. I don't disagree that voting is important. However, I do disagree when she says that "Election Day is the one day you and I will be able to influence history" and that "only once every four years will you affect the nation by making a statement" by voting.

She says excuses for not voting

are "poor masks for thinly veiled apathy or laziness." Statistically speaking, your vote really doesn't matter all that much.

I'm not suggesting that people don't vote. What I am suggesting is that if every four years the only thing you do to "influence history" and "make a statement" is voting, then you are the lazy one.

There are much more effective things that you can do every single day of the year to change the way government is run. Engaging others in debate or writing letters to editors of newspapers and magazines are just a couple of examples. So vote Nov. 2, but then go out and do something that will really produce change.

Philip Hensley, Jr.
Senior
History

Viewers should distinguish between style, substance

TO THE EDITOR:

While trying to decipher a bipartisan consensus as to the "winner" of Thursday's presidential debate, friends and acquaintances from both sides of the aisle informed me that Kerry was the victor.

For some time now I have had a budding suspicion that today's politics touts style over substance. I would agree that, in style, Kerry was a clear winner: He was tall, his oration was precise and his words were underscored with panache. If

we were to judge the debate and the debater on such characteristics, Kerry would get my vote.

Yet, as I know them, debates serve to inform the public about the candidates' substantive and ideological policies. When I probed a little deeper as to why people thought Kerry had won, their answers uniformly cited a presidential presence or his way with words.

I am dismayed. Candidates should be evaluated by what they say, not how they say it. With two debates remaining, I urge every American to listen to what the candidates are saying, rather than how they say it. Style might trump substance in Hollywood, but not the White House. Watch, listen and choose wisely, my fellow Americans.

Joshua Diver
Professional
School of Law

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 2409, Carolina Union, mail them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515 or e-mail them to editdesk@unc.edu.

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