

BOARD EDITORIALS

IMPROPER BUSINESS

Republican gubernatorial candidate Patrick Ballantine's use of his N.C. Senate office to promote his business to lobbyists was inappropriate.

Patrick Ballantine, R-New Hanover, spent 10 years in the N.C. Senate, and for two of them, he was on the payroll of Image Products Inc. of Wilmington and charged with finding new customers. For that two years of work, he was paid about \$11,000.

During that time, Ballantine peddled his wares to a number of trade associations and lobby groups with business before the Senate. Representatives from these groups said that Ballantine was responsible for securing at least three contracts for his employer.

Ballantine admits to meeting with these groups while the legislature was in session but says that referrals he made for Image Products never influenced his vote.

Though Ballantine did not break the law, there are huge ethical problems with conducting such private business while working for the public.

Legislative guidelines say lawmakers are not supposed to use their offices for personal gain, and in this particular case, it is hard to tell where the lawmaker began and the salesman left off.

Mike Bender, the company's president and a close

friend of the Ballantine family, told The (Raleigh) News & Observer "Did someone shake my hand because of Patrick Ballantine? Sure they did," Bender said. "Did someone take a phone call? Absolutely."

In fact, involved parties agree that, at the very least, the prestige of Ballantine's office opened doors for Image Products that would otherwise have stayed shut, though lobbyists say they never felt pressured to buy from the former Senate Minority Leader and current gubernatorial candidate.

The public is left to wonder about the sincerity of these assurances. Can we be certain the lobbyists weren't hoping for a favor when they awarded business to the friend of a prominent legislator? What is the value of Ballantine's word when he says his business associations did not influence his vote?

The public deserves to know the answer to these questions, but the Senate Ethics Committee doesn't appear ready to answer them. The group of legislators hasn't met in five years, and it shows no indication of doing so now.

The silence is deafening.

PROTECTING PRIVACY

Athletes and Athletics staff face intense scrutiny — officials should take extra precautionary measures to protect them from embarrassing leaks.

The release of a UNC athlete's name in conjunction with information about his drug test results is an invasion of the student's privacy and should be an embarrassment to officials.

Athletics officials should work with the Office of University Counsel to devise a system to ensure that lapses of this sort do not happen again in the future.

In an article published Wednesday, The (Durham) Herald-Sun noted that an athlete recently suspended from the team for a drug citation might have failed a drug test before. The Herald-Sun cited a letter, obtained through a public-records request, in which the University forgot to black out the player's name.

The letter, obtained by the paper in July, was one of 12 sent to athletes and their parents to notify them of failed drug-test results, The Herald-Sun reported.

By requiring drug tests, officials assume responsibility for protecting the privacy of the students tested. Officials' inability to keep that information secure undermines the trust students should have in them.

Director of Athletics Dick Baddour wrote in an open letter to Tar Heel fans that the incident was a mistake and that "I have been told that the University has apolo-

gized to the student-athlete in question."

He also noted that University Counsel was responsible for redacting names and other sensitive information from the letters. University Counsel should have taken the utmost caution to ensure that confidentiality was maintained in the process of releasing records.

But the student in question had his tests required by Athletics, had his information held by Athletics and will continue to be under the supervision of Athletics — not that of University Counsel. Athletics should put pressure on other departments of the University to protect the privacy of student athletes to the highest degree.

Athletes and department staff have come under scrutiny in the past, and Athletics' efforts to shield them haven't always been stellar. But this release incident allows Athletics to take a stand and to push the University further than an apology — the department should pressure University Counsel to ensure that such a careless mistake not happen twice.

UNC owes a great deal to the staff and the athletes who contribute here. Athletics should lead the way in pushing officials to work to protect their privacy in the future.

EQUITABLE FUNDING

The NSF's governing body's recent decision to eliminate matching fund requirements from award proposals will help to level the playing field.

It's an unfortunate but widely known fact in the scientific community that researchers also have to be businessmen in order to secure funds. But getting a grant from the National Science Foundation became a little easier last week, allowing researchers to focus more of their efforts on science.

The foundation's governing board voted last Thursday to end the requirement for projects on which the NSF requests applications. Unsolicited proposals will still have to pay for 1 percent of the research-grant money that they are allotted.

The decision showed solidarity with several organizations, including the Association of American Universities, which have been urging changes for several years, The Chronicle of Higher Education reported.

The Chronicle reported that "cost sharing" measures had been implemented in the 1940s for several federal agencies to help them stretch their budgets, but universities began to volunteer money on their own to make their proposals more competitive.

The average cost for colleges has ranged from 10 percent to 30 percent of the total award.

Several attempts have been made by NSF officials

to alleviate pressure on colleges to pitch high matching funds, the Chronicle reported. Robert Killoran, former president of the National Council of University Research Administrators, told the Chronicle that some agency officials might have applied pressure to raise matching funds, but few university officials were willing to point out the offenders because they feared losing access to future funds. This new measure of complete separation works to prevent anything of that sort.

Thomas Cooley, director of the NSF's office of budget, finance and award management, told the Chronicle that the measure would allow smaller colleges to compete for awards more fairly with universities that might be able to foot more of the bill.

Research should be undertaken by the best people for the job. Science shouldn't be mired in petty business practices that give incentives for academics to focus on securing matching funds instead of their research.

The NSF's elimination of most of its matching fund requirements for proposals might force the foundation to make fewer grants available, but it should ensure that money goes to the researchers with the best ideas and not just the ones from the wealthiest institutions.

ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"In great matters men show themselves as they wish to be seen; in small matters, as they are."

GAMALIEL BRADFORD, BIOGRAPHER AND HISTORIAN

EDITORIAL CARTOON



COMMENTARY

Debates highlighted Bush's inability to admit mistakes

In fifth grade, I had my one and only formal debate. We were supposed to pretend we were on the brink of the Civil War, a choice that no doubt seemed safely distant to most of us where I grew up, in Colorado.

My parents' house lay about 2 miles south of what back this way was the Mason-Dixon line, so I chose to represent the South. It went pretty well through the opening statements and one round back and forth.

Then I got to my second major point, which was that northerners had no real moral claim against racism, since they had plenty of Ku Klux Klansmen up there, too.

My opponent, the dreaded Rhonda Blankenship, flashed a winning smirk and noted that I must be quite a fortune-teller — the Ku Klux Klan didn't exist until after the Civil War.

I still remember the shame of that defeat. Maybe that's what keeps bringing me back to watch the debates every election season.

I want someone to look worse than I felt back in fifth grade. After watching three rounds of John Kerry going head-to-head with George W. Bush, I'm starting to feel a bit better. Even for the pros, it's hard to keep everything on track.

Bush seemed out of his element. Presidents often get coddled into thinking they can do no wrong, and by carefully screening crowds and limiting his press events throughout his first term, Bush might have been softened up even more than some of his predecessors.

The easy floater questions suddenly came high and inside like a Roger Clemens fastball, and the soothing scroll of a teleprompter was nowhere in sight.

At times, he simply didn't seem to know what he was talking about. During the second debate,



DAVID HAVLICK
OVER THE HILL

responding to a question about tax cuts, Kerry pointed out that the Republicans include certain dividend payments as if they were small business earnings. Kerry noted that Bush had counted as a small business because of an \$84 check from a timber company investment.

Bush mocked Kerry in his response. "I own a timber company? That's news to me! Need some wood?"

As it turns out, Kerry had a better handle on the president's investments than the man himself did. The president's 2003 financial disclosure form showed he received \$84 for his partial ownership of "LSTF, LLC," a limited-liability company organized "for the purpose of the production of trees for commercial sales."

Kerry's source, www.factcheck.org, noted that their article omitted the fact that LSTF wasn't in the timber business when the president received his \$84 check and that it was designated on his 2001 tax return form as coming from "oil and gas production" business.

Speaking of timber, Kerry managed to appear confident and steady on most issues without falling into the woodenness that plagued Al Gore four years ago. And after the first debate, Republican tacticians largely abandoned the Kerry-as-flip-flopper taunt they'd used for months. Sixty million Americans had just seen the challenger sound so resolute that

the sandal slander no longer fit.

After three surprisingly substantive debates, what might be most shocking is not that we face yet another close election in just fifteen days, but that some voters still can't seem to make up their minds.

After all was said and done, if you still can't decide which of these two men would be the more thoughtful, competent, honest leader, or which represented your positions better issue by issue, then I would direct you to the straightforward question asked late in the second debate by Linda Grabel.

Asking Bush to think through the thousands of decisions he has made in the past four years, she requested simply, "Please give three instances in which you came to realize you had made a wrong decision, and what you did to correct it."

What came next was eerie. Bush seemed to be at a loss to think of any substantive mistakes from his first term. He acted as if Grabel sought to lure him into another question about Iraq. His response whittled down to this: "On the big questions, about whether or not we should have gone into Afghanistan, the big question about whether we should have removed somebody in Iraq, I'll stand by those decisions because I think they're right. It's really what you're — when they ask about the mistakes, that's what they're talking about."

No, Mr. Bush. It's not just about Iraq or the mistakes you've made there. It's about being human. It's about recognizing that even the president of the United States is fallible. It's about learning on the job. And if you can't manage to learn and be president at the same time, then I urge us all to help you concentrate exclusively on the former.

Contact David Havlick
at havlick@email.unc.edu

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 five 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

Abortion undermines rights of women and the unborn

TO THE EDITOR:

This is in response to Alyssa Levine's column stating how wrong it was for Carolina Women's Center to be linked to the Carolina Students For Life. ("Change needed for equality at the University," Oct. 12)

She feels this promotes greater gender inequality. As a member of CSFL, I am proud to stand up for the rights of the unborn and my rights as a woman.

No circumstance justifies abortion. Allowing women the choice of an abortion actually broadens gender inequality.

Recently, CSFL hosted a life chain near Franklin Street to silently protest abortion. Most of the opposition to our protest came from men. This was odd, since abortion for the most part is argued as the choice of a woman, since it is "her" body.

Some men see abortion as an "easy way out." One man commented, "Abortion makes up for my mistakes." This should outrage any woman trying to stand up for her rights — it demonstrates how some men disregard the woman and her health by considering the consequences they might have to face if she keeps the child.

Levine wants the University to stand up for the equality of all humans, but why not begin by standing up for the most innocent?

These children deserve the same rights we have. Having an abortion

says your life is more important than the life of your unborn child, which is equivalent to saying a man's life is better than a woman's.

The value of one person should never outweigh that of another.

Women should be given information on the other options available to them as well as the risks, and it is the job of organizations like the Carolina Women's Center to make sure women are informed.

I begin standing up for my rights as a woman by standing up for the equality of future women (and men) otherwise not given their chance at life.

Patricia Williams
Junior
Biology

Column portrays College Republicans inaccurately

TO THE EDITOR:

As a proud member of the UNC College Republicans, I am extremely offended by Matt Compton's Wednesday column ("College Republicans become bit players in their own farce," Oct. 13) — but I suppose the goal of it was to arouse such passionate disgust.

I'm appalled that you seem to side with the man who damaged our nation's flag. Thousands upon thousands of American lives have been lost in defense of that flag and, to me, burning it simply disregards the lives lost and the loved ones left behind with nothing but

a folded flag.

In regard to the fact that we seem to be the only ones "parading around campus" with it proudly displayed, that is simply a matter of the choices of others. We fully support anyone else who wants to display their American flag because it symbolizes the right of each person on campus to proclaim his or her views as loudly as he or she likes.

We may not agree with the Young Democrats, but I believe you'll be hard-pressed to find any College Republican on campus who would discourage them from setting up a flag on their table.

As to the rest of your column, you are simply an outsider looking in on an organization making great strides in the campus community.

I resent that you portray us as a group of whining, sniveling children who complain to anyone and everyone when things aren't going our way. We stand up for what we believe in, and I'm not really sorry if that offends you.

However, it is unfortunate that you haven't taken time to come to a meeting or an event to discuss with us what you think is wrong with our organization. I suggest you come to a College Republicans meeting and see exactly what our organization does before you sling around accusations.

Jenny Stevens
Sophomore
Political Science

Criticism of Bush's record on women on the mark

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to echo the sentiments of Emily Batchelder in her column last Friday ("President is chipping away at reproductive health care," Oct. 8) pointing out the inadequacies of the Bush administration's policies on women's health.

It seems hypocritical to denounce abortion and family planning without providing financial assistance to those families that would be drastically affected by bringing another child into the home.

Not only do President Bush and his right-wing Republican friends oppose equating men's and women's health care, but they also don't support the continuation of women's equality in the workplace.

During the past four years, the Equal Pay Initiative has halted. Women still earn only \$0.77 to every \$1.00 a man earns in the workplace. The Child Care Tax credit has not been expanded to meet the needs of working parents and their children under the Bush administration.

John Kerry and John Edwards will change all of this. Senator Kerry was the co-sponsor of the Women's Health Equity Act which provides the best health care to all women.

Senator Kerry and Senator Edwards support the women's right to choose and family planning ini-

tiatives. Both Senators Kerry and Edwards support balancing the pay gap so that men and women earn the same amount for the same work.

Kerry and Edwards support expanding the Child Care Tax credit to provide adequate child care to 3.5 million children in America.

Don't let the "W" is for "Women" fool you.

To find out more on this issue and many more, come out to the Festival for a Better Future from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 24 on McCorkle Place.

It is sure to be the biggest political event in recent UNC history. Gene Nichols, dean of the UNC School of Law, and Allan Gurganus, author of "Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All," will speak. I hope to see you there.

Blakely Whilden
District 6
Student Congress

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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