

## BOARD EDITORIALS

## ON EQUAL FOOTING

Public financing for local election campaigns would make it so that the less wealthy candidates wouldn't be at as much of a disadvantage.

Arguably, the most daunting obstacle in running for public office involves money. It usually takes a substantial number of resources to mount a successful bid.

But a bill in the N.C. House soon could level the playing field for people seeking public office in Chapel Hill.

The bill would provide candidates here with the option of receiving public financing; if it is passed, it undeniably would open municipal elections to a larger group of people.

Lawmakers would be wise to pass the bill. By allowing for greater political participation, they would be doing a great service to Chapel Hill residents.

The current system puts too much of an emphasis on fund-raising capabilities. There's an obvious problem when, in many instances, a candidate's platform can be overshadowed by the amount of money he or she has raised.

Too often, the hopefuls with the most cash on hand and the largest donor networks are the ones who seriously contend for public posts, while good

candidates with strong ideas are left in the lurch because they can't keep up financially.

Some critics' contentions that public financing could violate candidates' right of free speech are unwarranted, because the bill provides candidates with the right to turn down public financing and to raise their own money.

In a sense, the heavy financial burden that campaigns put on candidates' shoulders already treads on free speech, as the people who can't afford to run for office are deprived of an avenue for political expression. The bill would rectify that situation by creating more opportunities for these people.

And the legislation wouldn't let government officials throw away taxpayers' dollars on insincere or frivolous campaigns. According to state law, candidates already must be able to prove their political viability by paying a filing fee or garnering a certain number of signatures.

By giving less wealthy candidates a boost, the House bill would give Chapel Hill residents a wider range of choice in terms of their public officials.

## REASONABLE SPLITS

It's not perfect, but a proposal altering representation on the county's Board of Commissioners would give rural residents a stronger voice.

Districting is a sensitive political issue, especially in North Carolina. But a bill introduced by state Rep. Bill Faison, D-Orange, makes a good-faith effort to represent the interests of Orange County voters without bias, and it's worth serious consideration.

State legislators should take county commissioners' objections with a grain of salt and proceed to pass the legislation.

The current setup of the county's board of commissioners, in which five commissioners are elected at-large, has allowed Chapel Hill and Carrboro to be hugely influential in the board's makeup and rendered the rest of the county somewhat insignificant.

Rural areas should get more political pull. Faison's bill would counteract the imbalance in representation effectively by dividing Orange County into three districts: one including the Chapel Hill township, one containing the greater Hillsborough area and one that stretches to cover the remaining parts of the county.

The plan would increase the board's size. The district including Chapel Hill would be tied to four seats on the board, while the other two districts would get

one each, better reflecting the population distribution in the county. One seat would be elected at-large.

Although it's not a perfect setup by any means, it would help to ensure that those outside of Chapel Hill and Carrboro get a louder voice in county politics.

Commissioners Steve Halkiotis and Barry Jacobs both oppose the push for rural representation because, they say, they've been working on their own solution to the disparity for some time. But it's hard to ignore the commissioners' personal stakes in the issue.

Halkiotis and Jacobs both live in the Hillsborough area, but they draw support from Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Instituting a district system would shake up future elections and potentially could put them at risk of losing their seats.

Waiting for commissioners to come up with a proposal would take too long. Though it's not the ideal solution, the district plan outlined in Faison's bill doesn't appear to give an unfair advantage to any political party or individual.

Such a system would enfranchise more Orange County voters: It would increase their effectiveness in terms of picking who governs them.

## NEEDED DEFINITION

Higher education groups are right to suggest guidelines that should clarify the ties between public universities and certain private donors.

In light of the controversy that surrounded a possible John William Pope Foundation donation to UNC, a recently released set of guidelines on working relations between public universities and donor foundations might prove a useful tool.

The guidelines, created by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education and the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, would offer a good model for universities and donors to develop a "Memorandum of Understanding." But these agreements should not restrict public access to donor records.

The relationship between public universities and their donors created a stir in Kentucky after a lawsuit by a local newspaper forced the University of Louisville to release the names of corporations and foundations that donated money.

The AGB and CASE hope that the new guidelines will be used to help universities and donors develop working rules in case a similar legal situation arises.

The document would provide universities with advice on fund raising, finance and records management and ending relations with private organization

donors. Such guidelines would be a boon to universities and colleges that might be inexperienced in relations with corporate or foundation donors.

An increasing dependence on private dollars in the academic world should be accompanied by standards regarding limits of control on education.

Still, these guidelines shouldn't be used as a legal means to conceal the identity of those donating to public universities.

Transparency is vital, and it should be protected from efforts to please donors. Legislation being debated in Georgia that would enforce the anonymity of private organizations that make contributions should be shot down. Public universities are extensions of the states, and their records should be made available to the public to protect against undue leverage.

Fortunately, the potential Pope Foundation donation has been widely publicized and debated.

Information to spark that sort of debate should always be made available.

A set of guidelines is a good idea, but they should discourage universities from hiding their donors.

## ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"A person's treatment of money is the most decisive test of his character, how they make it and how they spend it."

JAMES MOFFATT, SCOTTISH ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORIAN

## EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Philip McFee, pip@email.unc.edu



## COMMENTARY

## Putting our trash in private hands would be too costly

They say one man's trash is another man's treasure.

When you consider the more than 57,000 tons of municipal solid waste dumped into the Orange County Landfill last year, we might as well be talking about pirate's gold.

The Chapel Hill Town Council is considering a recommendation by consultant Maximus Inc. to privatize the town's commercial garbage collection.

According to The Chapel Hill News, the decision would end the city's responsibility for solid waste collection from about 450 customers — including businesses, schools, restaurants and apartment complexes — and require them to hire a private company to empty their trash bins.

Maximus claims that the privatization of waste collection would save the town more than \$600,000 a year.

But it seems as though the outsourcing of commercial waste management would result not only in a heavier burden on local business but also in an eventual decline in services and loss of valuable resources in the town as a whole.

Chapel Hill businesses pay a fee of \$801 per year per trash bin to have their trash collected once a week. The town provides this service free of charge to churches and nonprofits.

If and when the town ceases to provide waste collection services, it would have to pay more than \$20,000 per year for its own waste to be collected.

Though that amount is much lower than what it costs the town to provide businesses with collection services, there are hidden costs.

In fact, what we throw away might actually be worth keeping around. There are no private waste collection companies in



LAUREN CRAIG  
LIVE FROM THE BOONDOCKS

Chapel Hill, which means that the town and local businesses would be forced to hire an outside company to collect trash.

Also, the town couldn't require a private company to dispose of trash at the municipal landfill. If a company didn't choose that option, it would result in hundreds of thousands of dollars of lost profits for the county — not to mention the breach of a 1999 legal contract requiring the town "to agree to deliver, or cause to be delivered" all solid waste to the county landfill.

Essentially, Chapel Hill would be funneling its money out of the area along with its trash.

Most of our local businesses already rely on outside sources for supplies — if outgoing trash ceases to be handled locally, we will be living in an even less self-sufficient community.

It seems that the quality of waste collection and disposal would suffer if they are turned over to a company that has no stake in our particular community.

Also, it's unclear at this point what the options for local businesses would be.

Would they all be required to use the same waste collection company, or would we see 10 different garbage trucks crowding downtown streets every day of the week? Where would the trash go?

Would this decision end up costing local businesses more or less than they already pay for

trash collection in the form of taxes?

These are all questions that the Town Council needs to address, or at least to assist local businesses in answering, before it makes a decision.

Just because Maximus insists that privatizing trash collection in Chapel Hill would benefit the town financially doesn't mean that there's not a bigger picture to consider.

Shouldn't a town be responsible for its own waste? When Chapel Hill as a whole benefits from the commerce of local businesses, should it not also bear the burden of the waste produced by that commerce?

I mean, when my dog takes a dump, I, as her owner and caretaker, am responsible for cleaning it up. I guess I could pay someone else to do it, but that just seems elitist.

Have we become too good to clean up our own trash?

One lesson we all can glean from this is that the saying, "One man's trash is another man's treasure," doesn't just apply to that unopened bag of Cheetos in the trash can.

So the next time you can't finish your dinner at a restaurant, don't think, despite what your mother may have told you, of the thousands of starving children in China.

Don't think of the poor busboy who is going to have to clean up after you. Don't think about how you should have ordered something else.

Instead, think about how your trash is actually a commodity. People are fighting over what you are throwing away.

Contact Lauren Craig  
at lauraig@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 seven 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 should respect people and property this weekend

TO THE EDITOR:

As the Tar Heels prepare for the Final Four, Chapel Hill is preparing for victory celebrations on Franklin Street. We look forward to two nights of celebrating as Carolina brings home the NCAA championship.

The town handles several major Franklin Street events annually. We have always appreciated the manner in which UNC students act while participating in these events. Though you celebrate and enjoy yourselves fervently, you have always done so in a way that does not infringe upon the ability of others to do likewise.

After the Carolina victories this weekend, we will close two blocks of Franklin Street to provide a safe place to celebrate. Our goals are to ensure that you can celebrate safely and that property is protected. I hope that you will help us achieve those goals by following these few basic rules:

■ Please, no bonfires. Several students have suffered serious burns during previous celebrations, and should a fire spread to an adjacent structure, firefighters would have difficulty getting to the scene.

■ Help us protect property. Celebrate away from building fronts and plate glass windows, and do not climb on structures, trees and light poles.

■ Do not bring alcohol, flammables, weapons, animals or paint

into the closed area. Backpacks, packages and containers in the closed area will be searched.

We want you to have a great time celebrating UNC victories, and therefore, arrests are a last resort. However, individuals will be arrested if they are observed damaging property or infringing on the rights of others to have a safe time on Franklin Street.

Thanks for your help. Go Heels!

Gregg Jarvis  
Chief

Chapel Hill Police Department

## Bumps would boost safety of South Road pedestrians

TO THE EDITOR:

While I commend UNC's Department of Public Safety and the Highway Safety Research Center's Yield To Heels initiative, I wonder if the money would be better spent installing speed bumps on South Road between Coker Hall and Woollen Gym.

This stretch of road is heavily trafficked by pedestrians, and speed bumps would clearly assist in enforcing a reasonable speed limit. The administration should explain why it has not afforded pedestrians the protection of speed bumps where there is very clearly a crucial need.

Fred Stutzman  
Employee

Office of the Vice Chancellor for  
Information Technology

## Firing Dowdy would create a huge void for UNC diners

TO THE EDITOR:

Vel Dowdy is the shining star in my bleak and horrible existence. Her cheerful disposition and bright smile warm me up and energize me in a way coffee can't.

There is no day bad enough that it can't be brightened by a trip to Lenoir. Sometimes I go just so she can swipe my card. I leave immediately and go through the line again because she's just that wonderful.

"How you doing, baby?" Not good, Vel, not good. Who can console me now that you're gone? After reading the horrible news, I stumbled around campus in a daze with my ONE Card in hand, looking for something to fill that aching gap, someone to piece back together my broken heart.

I was alone, an island unto myself. No one else seemed to share my loss. Someone instructed me as to where I could swipe my card. Inappropriate. The language barrier and what I can only assume to be homophobia prevented me from reaching out to certain Lenoir employees who I could tell needed a hug the most. Apparently, they aren't as friendly as their smiling faces would have us believe.

Vel, what you're charged with is wrong, but I don't believe you would have done something like that out of malice. Your giving nature would have got the best of you. I forgive you, if you did this.

To the rest of the student body

and faculty, I say this: Do not focus on the negative. Think instead of the opportunity to learn from this and to set an example of kindness, understanding and forgiveness.

Think what we lose if Vel is permanently let go. She's not just a person but an institution who embodies what's good and great in the world.

Brandon Curry  
Junior  
Journalism

## Considering real problems, Dowdy's arrest is ridiculous

TO THE EDITOR:

All citizens must be on constant guard to protect what they know and love. With terrorists, energy crises, weapons of mass destruction and Sodomites proving themselves to be ever-present and altogether substantiated dangers, I find it thoroughly comforting to know that a hardened, hostile and wholly deserving criminal threat has been arrested.

The hard-knock streets of Chapel Hill reeked of safety following the arrest of lunch lady Vel Dowdy. According to the University's newspaper, Vel was charged with felony embezzlement of food at the local dining hall. A police investigation charges that Dowdy arrogantly flaunted both law and order on four separate occasions by granting access to the dining services of the eatery to wretched students who were otherwise unable to pay. Law enforcement officials should

be commended for appropriately allotting so much of their time and resources in bringing down the baleful malefactor that is Vel Dowdy. This high-profile arrest will serve as an example for future cafeteria employees to be weary of the swift and severe punishment eagerly doled out to those who villainously waive the established system of payment for students unable to afford the high price of luxurious cuisine.

No longer will Vel's bone-chilling wails of "Good morning, baby!" or "How ya doin,' my precious?" rattle the brick-lined walkways of this learning institution. Now the students may have their meal cards swiped with total peace of mind, taking comfort in knowing that justice has been served and that a once-malicious threat has been rightly neutralized.

Timothy Lee  
Freshman  
Undecided

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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