

EDITORIALS

GIVE THEM A BREAK

Orange County residents should not be upset with members of the Board of Commissioners' decisions to attend a conference in Hawaii.

As if they needed another, the Orange County Board of Commissioners has found a new way to enrage some taxpayers.

Did they reach a controversial decision without voter input? Did they break N.C. Sunshine laws? Did they use nepotism to fill county jobs? Did one of them plagiarize a graduation speech again? No, they have done nothing of the sort. All they have done is register for an annual conference.

At least four members of the board have decided to attend the National Association of Counties' annual conference, which is scheduled for July 15-19 in Honolulu. This has angered a few residents, who have called county officials in Hillsborough to share their complaints that the commissioners should not be vacationing in paradise on the public dime. However, these residents need to take a breath and calm down.

The commissioners aren't going to the conference to play. It is an educational program for county government officials across the nation to learn skills to improve their communities. Over 40 hours of constructive programming will be offered, including workshops on energy efficiency, rural transportation and budgeting. Plus, our leaders will have the chance to interact with others from across the nation.

This provides the opportunity for our commissioners to find new and creative ways to fix problems in Orange County, especially the festering issue of whether we should end at-large elections to the board in favor of geographic districts.

We should also not scrutinize the commissioners' attendance based on where the conference is. As Chair Moses Carey has said, Hawaii is another state in the USA, and the fact that it is seen as a vacation spot should not negate any professional activity that goes on there. Also, the conference is held each year, and its location changes. No one thought the commissioners would spend all of their time looking at national monuments in Washington D.C. or the World of Coke in Atlanta when those cities hosted the event.

If all of those professional reasons weren't enough, the commissioners deserve a break. Commissioner Carey and his colleagues should soak in all of the information they can during those five days, but they should also take time to put on some Bermuda shorts, cool down in the waters of the Pacific and bask in the balmy island weather.

Although they're not perfect, the lives of public officials are hard, and they aren't paid enough at all for what they do.

PROFESSIONAL HEELS

Last week's NBA Draft signaled a new era in the history of Carolina athletics and is the harbinger of good news for professional basketball.

Professional basketball's Charlotte Bobcats likely made thousands of new fans in last week's NBA Draft by taking former UNC hoops standouts Raymond Felton and Sean May with the evening's fifth and 13th picks, respectively.

Plus, it's likely that folks in Chapel Hill will pay close attention next season to the Atlanta Hawks, who picked up freshman sensation Marvin Williams with the No. 2 pick, and the Minnesota Timberwolves, who grabbed Rashad McCants at No. 14.

That's the way it ought to be. Williams, Felton, May and McCants all played splendidly for Coach Roy Williams en route to winning a national championship. The draft officially closed a chapter in Carolina basketball history.

But it will be fun to watch Marvin try to resurrect one of the NBA's worst teams, or to keep up with Rashad as he seeks to silence his numerous detractors. Road trips to Charlotte are now viable options for students who will want to see Felton and May together again on the same court.

Yes, the 2004-05 season for Carolina basketball is sure to be a much-discussed part of Carolina lore for decades.

But let's not forget Jawad Williams, who was expected to get drafted but didn't, or Jackie Manuel, who broke his foot before the draft and never got a chance to show off his superior defense, or Melvin Scott, who came through in the clutch with turnover-free play against Villanova and Illinois in the NCAA Tournament — even though his minutes had been significantly cut.

Let's be grateful that when our players left school early, they did it the smart way, with the blessing of their coach and the promise of the guaranteed contract that comes with being a first-round pick. How painful it must be to be a fan of Kentucky, poised to be top-five team next year until two of its best players — Randolph Morris and Keleenna Azubuike — declared their NBA eligibility and then went undrafted.

It won't be easy going next year for the Tar Heels, and most people are praying that 8-20 doesn't return, but we've still got one of the best coaches in the country, a great freshman class and a group of players who were here last year and know what it takes to win it all.

For that, and for the way this year's draftees and graduates helped bring Carolina basketball back to where it ought to be, we should all be thankful.

DISCOURSE NEEDED

Guest columnist feels modern political dialogue in America lacks the exchange of ideas that would foster a better situation for all citizens.

To me, the most notable advancement in the nation's political sphere since the 2004 election was made not by an elder statesman, but by Jon Stewart of "The Daily Show" when he appeared on CNN's "Crossfire" last year.

Stewart infamously critiqued the show's hosts and the nature of political dialogue, prompting me to ask an important question: Why is it that cable news shows seem like screaming matches to many Americans, particularly this newest generation of voters?

The politicians and civil servants featured in these shows go on stage holding on to an immovable opinion about a certain issue, only to leave with the same opinion that is now hand-in-hand with newfound ire and frustration with those who disagree. It's as if the entire purpose of such shows is to allow politicians yet another chance to scream their opinions without any expectation of analytical discourse. This is a problem, and if we liken it to a disease, we are facing an epidemic.

Let's start at the beginning. Our opinions are formed on the facts we accumulate on an issue, and it's probably best to speak of opinions as interpretations. Thus, if one's basis of fact changes, such as when one's opponents lay out their arguments, then our opinions must — not "can" or "ought to" — alter in response to those

DOUG ORNOFF
GUEST COLUMNIST

arguments. If they don't, then we aren't genuinely listening, and we'd be better served by not wasting our time.

We must ask ourselves if we have become blind to reason and truth simply because we happen to disagree, at least initially, with the person sitting across from us. If discourse of any kind is to be productive at all, both parties must come to the table as willing to listen and to be transformed as they are to convince and to advocate.

That's where modern politics fails. Both politicians and citizens are too defensive and stone-set about their opinions and are too afraid to allow themselves to either change their own opinions or to deviate from those of their party.

It's as if there is an unspoken rule in Washington: Never appear to be wrong, even if you know that you are.

We need to be animate in fighting this attitude, and it will take effort on the part of us all if it is to be defeated. We are beings with finite knowledge, and it's time that we all realized this and started finding value in the wisdom of our opponents.

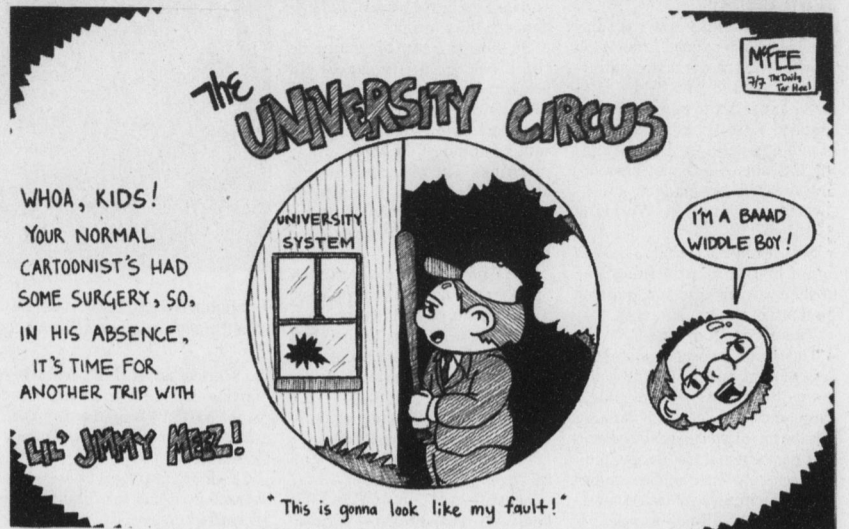
ON THE DAY'S NEWS

"Justice is like a train that's nearly always late."

YEVGENY YEVTUSHENKO, RUSSIAN POET

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Philip McFee, pip@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

Mr. Dearmin, where have you been in the past five months?

When I asked a member of the Chapel Hill Town Council whether Student Body President Seth Dearmin was doing a good job advocating for students with the Chapel Hill Town Council, I was met with a puzzled look and the question, "Seth who?"



TOM JENSEN
ANGERED PEOPLE ... ONE WORD AT A TIME

Sadly, the other council members I spoke with hadn't had a second of contact with him either.

Dearmin told The Daily Tar Heel on February 22 of this year that he planned to encourage dialogue between Town Council members and students and work with them to make students more aware of what's going on in the Chapel Hill.

These are perfectly reasonable goals, but Seth, if you want to work with them you have to establish contact with them first.

Of course the Dearmin Administration is not the first to do a bad job of interacting with Chapel Hill leaders. When it comes to town-gown relations, student government needs to get a clue. Year after year, SBP candidates talk about everything that they wish to do in order to increase student influence in Chapel Hill decision making, and year after year little to nothing happens.

It's not that the ideas student leaders put forth are necessarily bad ones. Shorter student terms for boards and commissions would probably allow more students to have a stake, and other initiatives suggested by the Dearmin and Calabria Administrations have been well-thought out too.

But in order to see any of these things to fruition, student government has to establish a higher level of credibility with our town's elected leaders — and it's just not happening.

Seth Dearmin was elected Student Body President almost five months ago, but he still has not seen it fit to attend a Town Council meeting. I know it's not because he's too busy — he's been spotted at bars and parties around Franklin Street many nights this summer. Seth, Town Hall is just about

a five-minute walk north of He's Not Here, and most council meetings end by 10 p.m., more than enough time for you to get a shower and head to the bars. They don't close until 2 a.m., Seth.

You can do your job as SBP and still not have your night ruined.

Of course when it comes to building up credibility with Town Council, not showing up at all might be better than showing up and sending a completely wrong message.

Matt Calabria and some of his officers showed up at their first council meeting last summer with a high-ranking University administrator who is known to have hostile feelings toward several council members. This sent a symbolic message that student government was just another pawn in the University administration's well established pattern of hostility toward the town.

The Calabria administration confirmed that perception when it released its list of "student priorities" for the Town Council. High up on that list was asking the town to approve University construction projects more quickly. I may be wrong, but I don't think there are many students who sit around thinking, "that stupid Town Council, they need to approve our construction projects more quickly."

This was just another step toward making student government look like a "mouthpiece for the University's construction office," as council member Mark Kleinschmidt aptly put it.

My first piece of advice to student government in improving its relations with the town is to think for itself. Don't just approach the Council and ask them to do whatever the admin-

istration wants them to do. Instead, actually talk to students about what issues they care about; then think about them and make your own conclusions.

There's no point in even having a student government if its agenda marches lock and step with that of Moeser & Co.

For instance, the most well-thought out student-driven project having to do with town-gown relations in recent years was the Carolina Environmental Program's Carbon Reduction Project, which would drastically reduce carbon dioxide emissions in Chapel Hill in the coming decades.

Why hasn't student government jumped forward to help push this, something that an intelligent and hard working group of students has shown it wants?

Why spend time pushing the administration's agenda when there is a real student agenda to work on implementing?

After student government has better established itself as a body working for student interests independent of the administration, it needs to greatly increase its visibility. Somebody from the Executive Branch should be at every meeting, and Dearmin himself should be establishing regular contact with all the members of Town Council.

If these steps are taken, Student Government will have much more credibility in advocating for student interests with the town than it does now.

The Dearmin administration is off to a bad start with town-gown relations, but there's plenty of time to fix it. There's no doubt that Seth has the personality to work constructively with just about anybody, but in this realm as well as others, his work ethic hasn't quite caught up with his charm.

It's time for "Seth Who?" to establish himself as Seth Dearmin, effective advocate for students in the chambers of Town Council.

Contact Tom Jensen at tjensen@email.unc.edu.

READERS' FORUM

DTH editorialists misunderstood Student Congress' last meeting

TO THE EDITOR:

I was quite shocked to see an editorial by The Daily Tar Heel stating that Student Congress is taking a "break from accountability." I write today to clarify a few points about our meeting on June 24.

In addition to the resolution we passed opposing the special provision in the state budget allowing UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. State University to raise tuition without the approval of the UNC-system Board of Governors, summer Student Congress was charged with considering two finance requests.

While I advocated against funding Carolina Week's travel as it went against my personal philosophy of funding and against my interpretation of the Student Code's Title V, I also made the decision to abstain from voting on finance bills except to break ties when I ran for finance chair in April.

As such, the decisions to fund both organizations were majority voice vote decisions of the remaining eight present members.

As for the formal minutes from the June 3 and June 24 meetings, which were indeed taken, I am certain that Speaker Luke Farley and Speaker Pro Tem Kris

Gould will be more than happy to pass those along to our Web master shortly for posting.

Anisa Mohanty
Finance Committee Chairwoman
87th Student Congress

Readers' comments about the Confederacy were misguided

TO THE EDITOR:

I couldn't believe my eyes when I read David Robinette's and Terry Crayton's comments about the Confederacy. Writing like this makes me think Southerners are still in denial about the cause of the Civil War.

The war had deep seeds that all stemmed from the South's wishes to expand slavery — the worst institution in U.S. history — and the Confederacy fought to preserve it by gaining their independence.

In response to these watered-down accusations that the Confederacy was fighting for freedom, what about the thousands of slaves located in the South who were flogged and beaten for talking of freedom?

I'm not saying that Southerners shouldn't be proud of their ancestors, but living in the 21st century, Americans should recognize the true abominable issues of the war and accept them.

I only ask that people know the facts before they discuss such a sensitive issue in which their ideas could deeply offend others.

Jon Albrecht
Senior
Business Administration

CORRECTION

Last week's editorial "Asleep at the Helm" misidentified Student Congress Representative Anisa Mohanty as summer Speaker of Student Congress. Mohanty is Congress' Finance Committee Chairwoman, and, as dictated by the order of succession, she presided over the June 25 Congress meeting in the absence of Speaker Luke Farley and Speaker Pro tem Kris Gould.

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 forum to: editdesk@unc.edu.

The Daily Tar Heel

PROFESSIONAL AND BUSINESS STAFF

Business and Advertising: Megan Gilchrist, advertising director; Lisa Reichle, business manager.
Customer Service: Ashley Mullins, Kate Polichowski, and Megan Povse, representatives.
Display Advertising: Emily McKnight and Joyce Tan, account executives.
Advertising Production: Penny Persons, manager.
Classified Production: Cindy Huntley.

EDITORIAL STAFF

Arts & Entertainment: Alan Hayes, Whitney Isenhower and Danielle Latman.
City: Kathy Cho, Ginny Hoyle and Nicki Jhabvala.
Design: Daniel BeDen, Rachel Ferguson and Fred Lameck.
Editorial: Chris Cameron and Phillip Hensley, edit board members; Tom Jensen, columnist; Phillip McFee, cartoonist.
Photography: Natalie Ross, Raj Saha, Brandon Smith and Val Tenyotkin.
State & National: Whitney Isenhower and Stephen Moore.
University: Stacy Carless, Katherine Hollander.
Editorial Production: Stacy Wynn, manager.
Printing: Triangle Web.
Distribution: Triangle Circulation Services.

The Daily Tar Heel is published by the DTH Publishing Corp., a non-profit North Carolina corporation, Thursdays while classes are in session over the summer. Callers with questions about billing or display advertising should call 962-1163 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Classified ads can be reached at 962-0252. Editorial questions should be directed to 962-0245.

OFFICE: Suite 2409 Carolina Union
CAMPUS MAIL ADDRESS: CB# 5210, Carolina Union
U.S. MAIL ADDRESS: P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3257

Established 1893
112 years of editorial freedom

The Daily Tar Heel
www.dailytarheel.com

- BECCA MOORE**
SUMMER EDITOR
- BRIAN HUDSON**
MANAGING EDITOR
- DERWIN DUBOSE**
EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR
- JOSEPH R. SCHWARTZ**
UNIVERSITY / STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR
- BRIANNA BISHOP**
CITY EDITOR
- ISAAC SANDLIN**
PHOTO EDITOR
- ROCKY RIVERO**
SPORTS EDITOR
- JOHN COGGIN**
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT / FEATURES EDITOR
- DANIEL AARHUS**
COPY EDITOR
- JEN ALLIET**
DESIGN / GRAPHICS EDITOR
- CHRIS JOHNSON**
ONLINE EDITOR

If you have any concerns or comments about our coverage, please contact our management staff at beccam@email.unc.edu or call at 962-0245.