

BOARD EDITORIALS

GET IN OUR BELLIES

Campus officials should open Lenoir Dining Hall for Sunday brunch. Keeping it closed is unfair to North Campus students with meal plans.

After studying to the sounds of bulldozers, saws and hammers, residents of South Campus last year were greeted by a multistory complex years in the making: the Ramshead Center.

But with such sprawling grounds came a pitfall for the rest of campus: Lenoir Dining Hall cut back on its hours — big time. As this board wrote at the time, the move was a major inconvenience for students who live or work on North Campus.

So the news that dining officials have decided to reopen UNC's central dining hall for Sunday evening meals is a welcome one. Students ought to be served with more options when they're in search of food on the weekends. But one Sunday meal does not satisfy students.

Ira Simon, director of food services at UNC, said officials decided to reopen Lenoir on Sunday nights when they realized what students found out a long time ago: Handling the night's large crowds is too much work for just one location.

That's good. But the issue isn't just crowded hallways. It's convenience.

Dining officials say Ramshead is open instead of

Lenoir because it's bigger and because UNC's leaders want to emphasize the campus' southern shift.

But that neglects the good number of students who live north of South Road — and the fact that Ramshead, for everything campus leaders say, is not yet the center of campus.

Right now, that center is situated near Student Stores — and many upperclassmen live even further north, about a 15- to 20-minute walk to Ramshead. Why force students who have paid for a meal plan to make a decision between a long walk or takeout, especially if the weather's bad?

Not all students want to eat on Franklin Street when they've forked over the cash for a meal plan. And a hearty meal at Alpine Bagel Cafe is just as expensive.

For years, students living on South Campus had to trek up to Lenoir for certain meals on the weekends, but at least Chase Hall and Subway were open most of the time for residents.

Officials were short-sighted in limiting most weekend meals to South Campus. They should take steps to remedy the problem.

Give us Sunday brunch at Lenoir.

FROM THE DAY'S NEWS

"Right now, it seems that there's a disconnect with the constituents and the representatives."

LUKE FARLEY, SPEAKER, STUDENT CONGRESS

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Doug Marlette, Tribune Media Services



"BOOKS?...NO, IT'S MY WET BAR!"

A THEATRICAL FLOP

The town isn't to blame for the failure of a movie theater in Village Plaza, but it should work with those involved to find an acceptable alternative.

It's no secret that our area is blessed with good movie theaters. The closing of the Carolina was a sad hit to the scene, but between the Chelsea, the Varsity, the Lumina and Timberlyne, Chapel Hill gets a good taste of both mainstream flicks and more arty fare.

But the town and the county are still losing business to Durham's Streets at Southpoint mall, whose theater is just a short jaunt away on Interstate 40.

That's why it's so disappointing that infighting between business owners and a developer led to the sad end of a years-long attempt to bring a new movie theater to the Village Plaza.

And now, everyone involved should work to bring a different business to the area — one that will fill the same sort of gap a theater would have.

Here's the back story: Village Plaza, located down Franklin Street near U.S. 15-501, housed a small theater for many years before developer Eastern Federal decided to build a bigger, better facility at its site.

That decision drew complaints from nearby business owners, who said a new 10-screen facility would snarl traffic and hog the shopping center's parking spots.

The Town Council approved the theater in January

2003 on the condition that Eastern Federal widen a driveway into the site. But it was later discovered that the developer didn't own that driveway — and Ginn & Co., which does, refused to allow the work to be done.

If that story sounds ridiculous, well, it is. The shame is that the townsfolk who could've had a theater in their back yard now won't. (And let's not even mention all the business that could have come down that stretch of road.)

To be fair, it isn't Eastern Federal that no longer wants to build a multiplex in Chapel Hill. It's Regal Entertainment Group, which recently bought Eastern's theater division.

And make no mistake about it: The blame here does not lie with the town, which eventually removed the driveway provision from Eastern's special-use permit, or with Regal. It's with the business owners who couldn't play nice.

Let's hope Regal, which has final say in any new development, works with the Town Council and community members to find a unique, progressive solution to the problem.

Not that it would be hard. They can't really mess things up any more.

IT'S YOUR CONGRESS

The petty squabbling and irrelevance that marred Student Congress last year must change. Students can hold their representatives accountable.

Tuesday marked the first meeting of the 87th Student Congress this fall. This Congress would be well served to avoid the many vices of the previous Congress — and to focus on its job of serving students.

Last year's Congress was plagued by incivility, weak leadership, partisanship, trivial resolutions, disconnect and meetings that went far longer than was necessary. Its one, and only, shining moment was when former Speaker Charlie Anderson was able to swiftly pass a resolution condemning tuition and fee increases.

But a new year brings a new Student Congress. Thankfully, Speaker Luke Farley has proposed some measures that promise to improve this year's group and enable it to be a better voice for students.

It's not yet clear whether these measures will work. But they're a step in the right direction.

Last week, Congress held a retreat that was supposed to build better relations between members and, ideally, improve decorum. Hopefully, a social setting will remind representatives that they're all on the same side: the students'.

Farley also saw to the creation of a Calendar Committee that will set time limits on debate so as

to keep meetings focused and efficient. He also is encouraging informal caucuses and other measures that encourage members of Student Congress to read and discuss bills before formal meetings.

That's good. When Congress runs past a certain time, even The Daily Tar Heel's reporters have to leave to make their deadlines. Sometimes, enough is enough.

There also are plans to have more "meet your representative" days in the Pit and to produce brochures for students so they know who their representatives are and what they do.

All of this sounds promising, and Farley does have enthusiasm for the job.

But representatives should keep in mind that it is in no one's interest to see a Congress that is caught up in frivolous legislation, acting like a political club gone awry; students deserve better representation.

Students should do their part to keep Congress in line. Contact Farley, Speaker Pro Tem Kris Gould, or your district representatives if you have a question or comment. The Congress Web site, <http://congress.unc.edu/>, has the contact information you need.

Remember that representatives work for you. They are your Student Congress.

COMMENTARY

There are creative solutions to the county's election crisis

When it comes to electing county commissioners in an at-large system, rural voters in Orange County get screwed. It's a rarely disputed fact.

The county should deal with its representation problem quickly. But commissioners: Please don't take creative solutions off of the table for the sake of expedience.

The debate presents a unique opportunity for democratic experimentation — the kind that would make amateur political scientists salivate, if only we hadn't wasted our glands on that rocket launcher in "Halo."

An innovative solution like proportional or cumulative voting could put to rest fears about gerrymandering and racial underrepresentation. It could serve as a model for democratic reform in the U. S. and in the South. And it would be the first of its kind in North Carolina.

Such a solution would be well worth a fight in the state legislature.



JEFF KIM
NO LONGER A VILLAGE

County, put it well when he told The Daily Tar Heel that rural residents disagree with many of the county's land-use regulations. They're popular with Chapel Hill residents, who like their land beautiful, but they lock up rural residents' decision-making ability.

"A lot of them (invest in) farms, as distinct from the stock market," Faison said in March. "They don't see themselves as a bike path."

Proportionate response

Whether the system is broke ain't the question no more. About 1,200 county residents got together last year and signed a petition asking the commissioners to take up the issues, and the county has held two hearings in the last two weeks to address the situation.

Implementing a preference or cumulative voting system — as has been suggested by bloggers on OrangePolitics.org, a local political site — would strengthen the rural voice while avoiding the inevitable problems with district mapping.

In a cumulative system, voters are given "points" (or some other weight) to give to one or many candidates. If you were given three votes, you could vote for one candidate three times or for three separate candidates.

In preference voting, voters rank their choices. If no candidate has a majority, the last-place finisher is eliminated, and the votes that went to that person go instead to the voters' second-ranked candidate. And so on until there is a winner.

Either of these systems would

be a good alternative to a district-based scheme. Maps in a district system would have to be redrawn regularly to meet legitimate goals, such as ensuring that each district has about the same number of people. They are subject to political manipulation.

Furthermore, a preference or cumulative system would help give rural voters a voice without stifling the voice of the black community, since no one would be stuck in a district where their voice is "drowned out." Commissioners Chairman Moses Carey raised that point recently, and he's right on.

Such a system would have to be approved by the state legislature — a task that could prove difficult. Faison even told The Herald-Sun that such a plan is not viable.

But the same thing has been said about efforts to consolidate a campus voting precinct. And although the "superprecinct" bill that passed in General Assembly this summer was a long time in coming, it showed that innovation can be achieved — if you fight for it.

The race card?

Finally, I'm tired of hearing white people lob accusations at Carey and other black politicians for working on behalf of their communities.

The debate about representation came up because rural residents thought they're "drowned out." Haven't racial minorities — blacks in particular — also had to deal with things that might make them worried about losing their voice?

Carey should step out of his protective shell, I agree. But his concerns are nonetheless valid.

I wish local residents would play the "race card" more sparingly, because it's not a bluff.

Contact Jeff Kim,
a senior economics major,
at jongdae@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 four board members, the associate opinion editor, the opinion editor and the DTH editor. The 2005-06 DTH editor decided not to vote on the board and not to write board editorials.

READERS' FORUM

DTH overlooked seniors in some of its recent coverage

TO THE EDITOR:

With the ringing in of the new school year, innumerable clubs and organizations are incessantly hosting a myriad of programs catering to both new and old students alike. From Week of Welcome to Fall Fest, there is far from a shortage of events for The Daily Tar Heel to cover. That said, the DTH has, in my opinion, simply dropped the ball.

Throughout the duration of the last week, the class of 2006 has been part of an undertaking never before attempted by any of the previous 213 senior classes to graduate from Chapel Hill. Welcome Seniors, a weeklong series of events hosted by the class to welcome back its members, was an undeniable success and an incredible catalyst for bonding at the debut of our last year at UNC.

Why, then, despite turnouts of hundreds at several of our six events, was there not so much as a mention of this ambitious program in the DTH? The class of '06 has already proven that we are unquestionably capable — just let us know what it's gonna take to make it into your newspaper.

Jason Warner
Chief Senior Marshal

Group will lend a helping hand to Katrina victims

TO THE EDITOR:

For those interested in helping those who have been affected by Hurricane Katrina:

Yes You Can is a new student group that will be sending down much-needed supplies to Biloxi, Miss., this coming weekend. We have come across several 18-wheelers that will be used to transport goods to an area where the survivors have nothing.

What we need are the thousands of items the hurricane victims will be lacking until someone from outside can bring them in. Several students from UNC, including me, will be accompanying the goods down to the Mississippi Gulf Shores this weekend — where we will be handing them out at a community building.

We will be collecting items this week in the quad on Wednesday and Thursday between 12 noon and 5 p.m. Please bring bottled water, PowerBars, soap, canned food with pop tops, shampoo, razors or other nonperishable foods and toiletries to the quad Wednesday and Thursday.

This is a great opportunity to directly help the people we have seen on TV and hurt for. The essentials you give will reach needy

hands this weekend. Please help us bring hope to the hopeless.

Madison Perry
Senior
Political Science/Spanish

DTH cartoons should be considerate of others' losses

TO THE EDITOR:

I was under the impression that editorial cartoons were set aside for students to create, but it seems that Doug Marlette is a common person to go to when there maybe isn't one available or ready. Fair enough.

Sure, he's well known, and sure, he's successful, but the problem with his "combative, thought-provoking" cartoons is, well, they're not funny.

I'm usually not one to complain about black humor, but the Aug. 31 cartoon was completely in bad taste. I get it, I understand his point, haha, but it definitely wasn't an "oh, look at how clever and strong-willed said cartoonist is in the face of tragedy" moment: In fact, it made me pretty much sick to read it when I was in the process of trying to find out if my uncle and his family in Hattiesburg, Miss., were still alive or not.

I found it really odd that you would rally the troops around the cause and then stick that little barb

in there. For what? To show that sentimentality doesn't run rampant at the Daily Tar Heel? Stick to student cartoons, no matter how unrefined they are.

I assume theirs might at least be in the wide, wide boundaries of what I find good taste, or even funny.

Wil Donegan
Sophomore
English

Creative ways to save fuel needed in gas consumption

TO THE EDITOR:

To really make a difference saving gas, we need to change how we live and plan better. Don't drive to the store just to get milk; maybe take the bus to University Mall or Franklin Street to shop.

If the towns, business community and the University want to really make a difference, consider other options, such as increased use of four-day work weeks, telecommuting, carpooling, alternate fuels, adding bike/walking paths to South Columbia Street and Greensboro Street, and so forth.

Just my opinion.

Dale Poole
Employee
Purchasing Services

The Daily Tar Heel

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112 years of editorial freedom

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