

BOARD EDITORIALS

# TEAM UP TO CLEAN

Housekeepers should be open to a new cleaning system — provided it works as promised and supervisors don't make unrealistic demands.

A proposed change in the University's cleaning policy has housekeepers and union activists all fired up — and caution on the part of cleaning staff is understandable.

But they should also be open to change if it turns out to be for the better.

As it stands now, housekeepers and janitorial staff are assigned a specific territory to keep clean. But in light of complaints about campus cleanliness and a desire to make cleaning faster and easier for staff, the directors of housekeeping services and facility services have introduced a new idea for a trial run — team cleaning.

In a nutshell, team cleaning puts several housekeepers together to clean a much larger zone than a single person would. Each team member does one thing to every room — basically, the same specialization seen on an assembly line. One person might empty all the garbage, and another might clean all the sinks, as the team moves along.

In theory, everything should go faster, as staff members would not have to switch back and forth among the array of tasks they have to perform in order to keep our beloved institution from burying itself in its own filth.

Naturally, some workers and union officials have expressed a distrust of the new system. There has been an "us versus them" mentality among some workers and supervisors, especially in the past few years, and any possible change is rightly met with suspicion.

For example: David Brannigan, a familiar employee activist, has pointed out that supervisors could try to rush employees by trying to get a certain amount of work done in an unreasonable amount of time — which could make employees unhappy and lead to poorer cleaning.

But as long as administrators don't set those unrealistic goals for team cleaning, it could turn out to be a better system. The University of New Mexico had great success with the process, with teams being

able to accomplish in a four-hour shift what they had previously been doing in seven hours.

It's also hard to argue with team cleaning's economic benefits. In many places that use team cleaning, buildings are cleaner and require fewer people to do the job.

That being said, workers should have their concerns addressed. Administrators should make sure that rotations are commonplace — that way, no one gets stuck cleaning toilets for a month at a time. That would be a pretty hard change in janitorial duties for most people to take; no one enjoys cleaning toilets that have been defiled by undergraduates who don't have to deal with the messes they make.

Administrators should also work to communicate to cleaning staff that just because they are able to clean more does not necessarily mean housekeepers will have more work. The wonders of specialization simply cut down on inefficiency.

Not only that, but it also stands to reason that safety will improve. If — God forbid — a worker had a heart attack or were involved in a bad accident, there would at least be someone else around to help him. And assuming that co-workers aren't mute, cleaning together would also provide conversation, which one would think would be better than working completely alone throughout an entire shift.

At any rate, these are significant changes. And though administrators make the cleaning policy, it is clear that housekeepers and supervisors need to sit down and talk about these changes — especially given the prevailing climate in some work quarters.

Hopefully, any questions housekeepers have can be worked out in the trial run of the new system. The trial run will last 120 days, and supervisors will collect feedback on performance and the acceptability of working conditions.

We hope such a test can prove, one way or another, whether team cleaning is as efficient and desirable as administrators say it is.

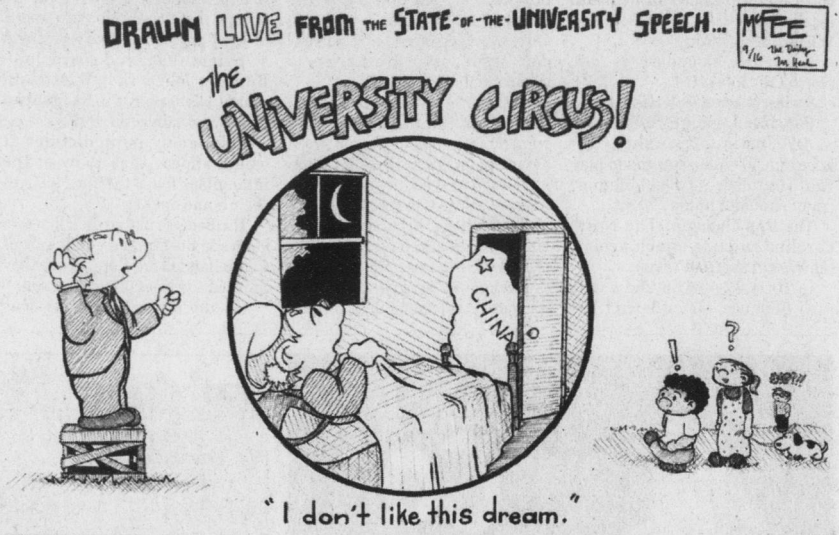
FROM THE DAY'S NEWS

"All the legislation in the world is not going to cause Katrina to do anything but what Katrina did."

ED ERICKSON, N.C. STATE ECONOMICS PROFESSOR, ON THE RECENT FLOOD OF LEGISLATION TO LIMIT FUEL SHORTAGES

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Philip McFee, pip@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

## From weekend wonders to Grandma's special sugar pie

I was raised in the North, in a small town about 40 minutes north of Boston. Grandma, who still lives in Charlotte with my granddaddy, used to send Mom cornmeal so she could make Southern dishes like corn bread.

Grandma made things like pinto beans and corn bread, yellow cake with caramel icing, and biscuits from scratch — using the floured bottom of a jelly jar to cut them from her rolled-out dough.

She also made Grandmother Burch's brown sugar pie.

I thought, up until Monday, that everyone in the South ate brown sugar pie, a recipe that came our way from Granddaddy's mother.

When the place where I work announced it was having a bake sale for hurricane relief, I thought slices of brown sugar pie would be the perfect addition to all the cookies and brownies. I called home to get the recipe, mentioning that I thought people would like it.

"Well, they've probably never had it," my mother said.

"Isn't it, like, traditional Southern food?" I replied.

"The recipe came from my father's mother. I don't know that anyone else made it."

That knowledge stayed with me as I beat the brown sugar, eggs, vanilla and milk. For at least 70 years, women in my family had been doing the same thing.

The smell coming from the oven reminded me of summers spent in the pool, burning my feet on the pavement as I walked to and from the house, and of the old wooden kitchen table we gathered around in Grandma's kitchen.

With two pie shells, a 1-pound box of brown sugar, five eggs, half a cup of condensed milk and a teaspoon of vanilla (10 minutes at 450 degrees, then 20 at 350), I brought my grandma to Chapel Hill.

It's not just cooking, you see. It's celebrating my grandparents and their parents and keeping



AMY ROSSI  
LIFE OF SPICE

tradition going. Oh, and I asked my mom what to do with the leftovers, if they should be refrigerated or not. Her answer? "Hmm, I don't know... It's never lasted that long."

Workin' for the weekend

And now, a horse of a different color. With the start of school comes the start of craziness. Before long, many of us will be lucky if we're eating dinner at all.

And most recipes aren't scaled for solo cooking, making things harder. So picking one night a week to make a substantial, one-dish meal can save you time and keep you eating well.

One of my favorites is an adaptation of a Rachael Ray recipe that can be tweaked to your tastes:

- 2 zucchini
- 2 summer squash
- 1 green bell pepper
- 1 can basil and garlic seasoned diced tomatoes
- Minced garlic
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tube of Italian seasoned polenta (found in the specialty produce section)
- Shredded cheese

1. Warm some olive oil in a large skillet or two. Slice the zucchini, squash and pepper.
2. Add at least three cloves of minced garlic to the oil, adjusting to your tastes. Sauté for a minute, then add the vegetables. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.

3. When the vegetables are tender, add the tomatoes and heat through.

4. Preheat oven to 500. Empty the skillet into a 13-by-9 pan. Slice up the polenta like you would cookie dough, arranging the circles on top of the vegetables. Top with shredded cheese.

5. Bake for 8-10 minutes, till the cheese is melted.

Not only is this a filling way to get your vegetables, but you can also use vegetables you like, switch to plain polenta or use a different combination of spices.

A lasagna is another dish that can be adapted to fit your tastes and that can spell dinner more than once. Barilla makes lasagna noodles that require no boiling, so all you need is a jar of your favorite sauce, 1 to 1.5 pounds of ricotta, garlic, herbs such as basil and whatever kind of filling you like.

I like this with one zucchini, one squash and one small head of broccoli, steamed for about 10 to 15 minutes, then added to the ricotta. You could do it with meat, too.

Cover the bottom of a 13-by-9 pan with sauce, then layer pasta sheets, ricotta filling and sauce till you run out. Top with mozzarella if you wish, then bake covered at 350 for 50 minutes and uncovered for a bit more to melt the cheese.

Three times an e-mail

If you have similar favorites, send them on. Also, I haven't forgotten the dorm people, and I would love any suggestions for a future column on dorm cooking.

Finally, sports fans, tell me what food makes your stadium experience complete. We'll run the best answers in a column.

Contact Amy Rossi, a senior majoring in communication studies, at amrossi@email.unc.edu.

# DOWN WITH BROWN

Michael Brown was a poor choice from the beginning, and it should be no surprise he provided slipshod leadership for FEMA in a crisis.

Michael Brown, director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, resigned Monday.

We know we're a little late here, but good riddance to bad rubbish.

Brown made the decision to step down following a barrage of well-deserved criticism from numerous media outlets, including this one, that accused him of supreme incompetence in his handling of Hurricane Katrina. We stand by that belief, and we applaud Brown's decision — likely encouraged by the Bush administration — to hand over the reins.

After all, North Carolina has its share of disasters — and when the next one hits, we can all take solace in the fact that Brown won't be arriving for our aid.

But the problems plaguing FEMA are a long way from being resolved, and replacing Brown is only the first step in what needs to be a dramatic overhaul of the way the federal government responds to disasters.

R. David Paulson, a career firefighter with more than 30 years of rescue experience, took the reins at FEMA this week — and that's a good start. He is an infinitely better choice for the job than Brown; for starters, he has experience in a field related to emergency management.

Brown, on the other hand, worked with horses before he took charge. (Sometimes, you just can't make this stuff up.)

But there's a greater tragedy here: The agency is still largely frozen at the ground level.

The state of Louisiana signed a corpse-removal contract with a private firm Tuesday, frustrated with FEMA's flagging efforts. Property owners in St. Bernard Parish were rounded up Tuesday night to meet with FEMA officials, but no one from the organization ever arrived. It is clear that FEMA's response to Sept. 11 was the personal success of Clinton-era holdover James Lee Witt — and that credit for the excellent response to Florida hurricanes in 2004 should go to Gov. Jeb Bush.

And, for that matter, the exemplary response displayed this week to Hurricane Ophelia rests largely with North Carolina officials. In a way, it's a good thing we're used to the storms; our response is almost always swift and appropriate, and we don't have to rely on FEMA as much as others might.

Still, though, the agency can provide a major boost. So we have a vested interest in its future.

Which begs the question: How do we fix it?

Some will blame the failure on President Bush's decision to move FEMA into the Department of Homeland Security — but this is misguided. The reorganization, suggested by the 9/11 Commission, makes sense, as there's no slam-dunk, compelling reason to separate natural disaster response from the response to terror attacks.

The blame for the relief-effort disaster that could possibly have led to more deaths than the storm itself lies with the elevation of Michael Brown to the director's chair — and the failure of the national media to question President Bush's appointment.

President Bush is not the first president to engage in cronyism, nor will he be the last. Indeed, some degree of it is necessary for a properly functioning government — the Carter administration taught us that a Cabinet full of insubordinate career civil servants doesn't serve anyone.

But there's a problem here: President Bush didn't just appoint friends and donors to unimportant posts, or even important posts for which they were qualified. He appointed Brown, the college roommate of the previous FEMA director, as the new agency head — even though, as the Boston Herald first reported, Brown was fired from his last job with the International Arabian Horse Association.

We hope the national media will do their job and be more critical of such appointees in the future. The nation — and North Carolina — can't afford to sit back and suffer the consequences if such bad choices go unchecked.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above editorials are the opinions solely of 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.

REPORT CARD

✓+ First home football game this Saturday  
CHECK PLUS

OK, so maybe the football team didn't really do anything to get this check plus. But darn it, they're going to be out there, and we've got a good shot at coming home with the victory. If you're not there, you'd better have a good excuse.

✓ An uneventful State of the University  
CHECK

A lot of the things Chancellor James Moeser said Friday were just about perfect.

But it's disappointing that he didn't touch on anything terribly new or exciting, as he has in the past few years with initiatives such as the Carolina Covenant.

✓- A task force sams many good ideas  
CHECK MINUS

Look — we know it's early in the Tuition Task Force's process. But as of yet, we haven't heard one good or interesting idea on the topic besides the inclusion of graduate students; and that's something that already should've happened.

READERS' FORUM

DTH not transparent about controversial termination

TO THE EDITOR:

I was fired because my editors said that I implied that the three sources I quoted had agreed to be characterized as agreeing with the statement, "Yes, we want to be stripped naked and sexed up in an airport."

When, in fact, they had not specifically condoned those exact actions.

Those were my words, not theirs. My interview quotes were deliberately juxtaposed against the comment, "Arabs don't seem to think being sexed up is such a bad idea" in order to get the desired humorous effect.

Was it taken humorously? No. Was it the best judgment call on my part? No.

I offended people I truly respect and who have taught me valuable lessons on the problems with sensational journalism.

But what I did was not journalistically out of bounds. My sources agreed with racial profiling, and I simply added my two cents.

I was also fired for apparently misleading my sources on what I was writing about. I thought I had made it clear that my article was about both 9/11 and racial profiling when I spoke to each individual. As I wrote, I focused more on

the latter topic. And I regret misleading them, even if I had no intentions of doing so.

But after asking each source several times what he thought of racial profiling, even if I did not explicitly tell them, I would've thought that they would understand what a large focus of my article would be about.

I'm deeply saddened that my sources have been harassed and have received death threats. I'm slightly put off by the profanity and hatred that has been thrown my way, and I'm extremely resentful for being called racist.

But this is the product of ignorant readers, not my writing.

It is downright insulting to hear my editor say I lied to my sources and to my readers. Through this and other comments, he has slandered my name on the front page of his newspaper simply to make the case for my firing.

If my editor felt as though the running of that column was as poor a choice as he has made it out to be, he shouldn't have fired me. He should have resigned himself.

A friend said it best: "The court of public opinion is vaster and stronger than the kangaroo courts of college Orwellianism. If you cannot be attacked on the grounds of truth — then all they have to attack you with are names and slanders and distractions from the truth."

That characterizes most of the negative feedback I've received thus far and wholly characterizes the manner in which I was released from my position with The Daily Tar Heel.

It's fairly obvious that strong opinions do not stand up to public outcry on the back page.

That makes me angry, but it also makes me resolved. I'm apologizing for offending people who didn't deserve to be disrespected, but I stand my ground in that there was a severe lack of judgment in my removal from the paper.

I'm going to fight against this for all I'm worth.

National news has picked up on the story of my dismissal. I'd encourage anyone interested to read Mary Katharine Ham's article on Townhall.com to read a very accurate depiction of the situation.

And Ann Coulter graced me with a comment on her Web site yesterday: "In what is always the first step to ending up on the bestsellers list, the writer, Jillian Bandes, has been fired from the Daily Tarheel."

We'll just see about that.

Jillian Bandes  
Junior  
International Studies

(Editor's note: The length rule was waived.)

Speak Out

We welcome letters to the editor and aim to publish as many as possible. In writing, please follow these simple guidelines: Keep letters under 300 words. Type them. Date them. Sign them; make sure they're signed by no more than two people. If you're a student, include your year, major and phone number. Faculty and staff: Give us your department and phone number. The DTH edits for space, clarity, accuracy and vulgarity. Bring letters to our office at Suite 2409 in the Student Union, e-mail them to editdesk@unc.edu, or send them to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, N.C., 27515. All letters also will appear in our blogs section.

The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893  
112 years of editorial freedom

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