

BOARD EDITORIALS

TOO MUCH LEEWAY

Student Congress should think twice about its decision to allow the student body president's appointees to take office on a provisional basis.

Last week, to little fanfare and a one-sentence mention in The Daily Tar Heel, Student Congress passed a bill that flat out gives the student body president too much power.

And it ought to reconsider. The bill in question allows the SBP's appointees to begin work immediately — before they get the congressional approval that's been required in the past. It's still up to Congress to approve the appointment before it becomes permanent, but for all intents and purposes, appointees will be able to start work the minute the SBP wants them to.

Proponents say the short school year requires that the student body president be able to hit the ground running, and — as anybody who has read this page's editorials on current SBP Seth Dearmin can tell you — we fully agree.

But a quick start shouldn't come at the expense of a full vetting of any appointees. In particular, the student body vice president — who historically has a big hand in any major policy decisions — needs to face some sort of scrutiny before starting the job.

Some would say that because Congress historically

is friendly to an SBP's appointments, this change is merely superficial — and that any opposition is much ado about nothing.

But student leaders deal every day with important issues. Their constituents deserve to know that the top officials in the executive branch will be able to go to bat for them. And under this change, that won't happen.

Some in Congress dispute that. After all, they say, representatives haven't given up their power to reject or approve any presidential appointees.

But that attitude strikes us as disingenuous. Are we to believe that Congress will vote a bad appointee out of office after that person already has served — risking the collapse of its relationship with the executive branch? Even if that does happen, is it really best for the student body to switch its leaders in midflight — after a provisional leader already has begun to meet with campus leaders, local politicians and UNC administrators?

Some representatives recognized these concerns, and they should be applauded. The others mean well, but they should rethink their choice — and reclaim some of their power.

DROP IN AND SAY HI

After you finish your dinner Wednesday, stop by an informal forum in Greenlaw and chat up the candidates in this fall's municipal elections.

Every student on campus should drop by 101 Greenlaw Hall on Wednesday between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m.

No, it's not another job fair; no, it's not exclusively a free-food festival. But by attending the event, you'll be setting in motion a series of events that could end in major change in Chapel Hill and Carrboro.

The Daily Tar Heel's elections forum — co-sponsored by the Graduate and Professional Student Federation, the Interfraternity Council, College Republicans, Young Democrats, student government, VoteCarolina and the Black Student Movement — will feature all but one candidate for the town offices that are up for grabs this November.

The politicians won't be grandstanding or giving boring speeches. They won't be paying lip service to things they don't particularly care about.

They are coming to listen — to you, the students. They are coming to hear your questions in a casual setting; each will, in essence, have a booth like the ones people set up at the State Fair. They are coming, in short, because they want your vote.

And you should listen to them. As a student, are you tired of high rents — espe-

cially in neighborhood conservation districts? Would you like to see a bus route extended to somewhere you live or need to go? Do you care about the environment? Do you want to be proud to return to the University as an alumnus?

Then come to the forum, which provides a great opportunity to voice concerns and to learn more about individual candidates — including Jason Baker, a UNC undergraduate, and Walker Rutherford, a recent alumnus. Make sure those present earn your vote.

(If you live in Carrboro, no worries — everybody except alderman candidate Jacquelyn Gist will be on campus Wednesday night.)

If you're not registered to vote in Orange County or if you need to update your registration, the sponsors will have forms aplenty. Wherever there are College Republicans or Young Democrats, there are people who want you to go to the polls — and who will make sure you know how to get there.

Whether it is to job at a candidate for an ill-placed remark or to express support for and get involved in a local campaign, hop on by after dinner tomorrow. We made it easy — the forum is next to Lenoir Dining Hall.

ELECTRONIC PLAGUE

Students need to show some computer smarts these days — especially since a UNC e-mail address was used to help spread a virus last week.

It's a tale as old as e-mail: Student opens inbox, student clicks on a suspicious link in a random message, student gets a virus that could infect the entire campus server.

That was the story again last week, when between 25 and 30 people with University e-mail addresses fell prey to the latest infection.

To be sure, that's not a lot of people on a campus with more than 25,000 students. But it's still enough to cause headaches for Information Technology Services, which had to block access to the virus and repeatedly update the central server.

It also illustrates a larger point: Even computer-savvy students do things that can put computers at risk, whether they realize it or not. And people at ITS have better things to do than to fix the campus server, let alone the PC of someone who just really needed a porn fix — and instead got spyware.

The bottom line is that it's not just a matter of protecting your own computer, though that ought to be enough to convince most people to act cautiously. It's also a matter of making things easier for the ITS people who'll otherwise make fun of you behind your back.

Clicking on suspicious links is one thing; every-

body (except 25 to 30 of us, apparently) knows not to do that. There are other solutions to the problem:

■ **Monitor your downloads.** Everyone likes free music. And there's little doubt that students continue to trade the latest Young Jeezy joint on LimeWire. That's OK, as long as you realize that "andthenwhat.mp3" might well be a crippling virus masquerading as your Friday night entertainment.

■ **Turn off pop-ups.** It's amazing how many students still have Internet Explorer on their computers when they could just as easily snag a browser — such as Firefox — that allows them to turn off pop-up windows as they surf the Web. Pop-up windows are like cold weather: They tend to make viruses spread.

■ **Above all, use common sense.** Cruising the Internet looking for music or an illegal version of Photoshop might be common — but often, the people doing it lack common sense.

If you're going to surf on a regular basis, make sure you're taking steps to keep things clean — or as clean as they can be while you perform illegal activities.

It's not fair that someone else out there might have to suffer for your sins.

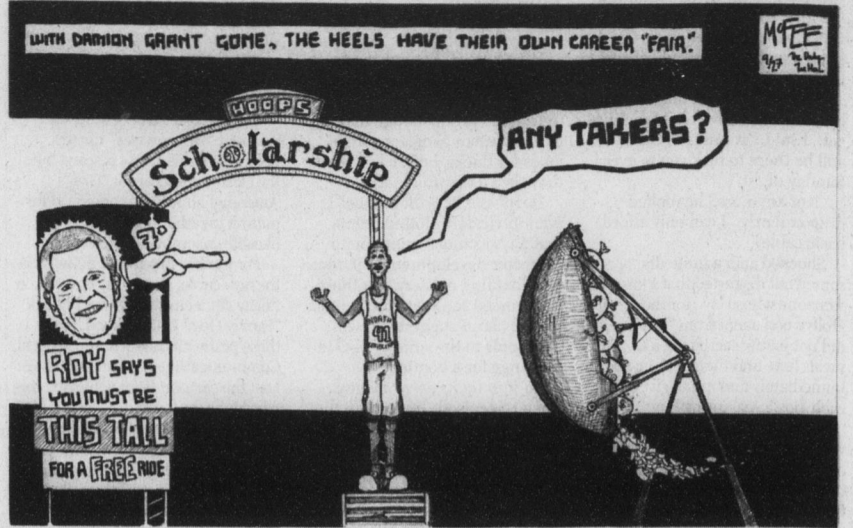
FROM THE DAY'S NEWS

"You can't buy a pizza for this."

JAMES MOESER, CHANCELLOR, ON \$10 STUDENT TICKETS AT MEMORIAL HALL

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Philip McFee, pip@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

Our response to tragedies can't stop at the Big Easy

I miss sidestepping vomit on Orleans Avenue at 2 a.m.

I miss the homeless woman in Jackson Square, her face riddled with the mud cracks of Louisiana summers. I miss the drunken shouts echoing off St. Louis Cathedral as partygoers toe the line between midnight and morning. I miss the rhythmic ghosts of Congo Square, the tangled gris-gris in Rob Zombie's Voodoo Shop and the beautiful stench of New Orleans in the morning.

Politicians will mourn the loss of "one of America's greatest cities," waiting for the swamp water to settle before hailing the opportunity to clean up the Big Easy's act. But I will miss what cannot be rebuilt: the grit and grime of a town that wasn't afraid to bare its scars to the sun.

When I first visited New Orleans on my 16th birthday, my mother hid me in the darkest corner of Lafitte's Blacksmith Bar so the light wouldn't glint off my braces and give my age away. While the piano man pounded out "Bourbon Street Parade," she leaned in close to tell me the stories of the city: how it had burned down twice, how it sat in a bowl, waiting to be swallowed back into Lake Pontchartrain.

Lost in the invincibility of adolescence, I brushed it off, painting the crumbling city with my own illusions of immortality.

Five years later, the braces are off and the city was swallowed. I know that eventually the streets will light back up, the slow, sweaty saxophone notes will cautiously creep back in, and before too long another teenager will offer the suspicious bartenders a closed-lip smile.

Whether or not the city will regenerate does not bother me; I know it will. The lingering tragedy is that worrying about the plight of New Orleans is no longer



SARA BOATRIGHT
KEEP 'EM ON THEIR TOES

in vogue. In the week following the flood, there wasn't a starlet in sight who didn't gaze into a network camera, pleading for donations with a desperation normally reserved for carbs and stilettos. For five minutes, supermarket tabloids featured Katrina victims instead of Britney's baby.

But this week's People magazine cover? Kirstie Alley's dramatic weight loss.

That would not be so disturbing if the damage were indeed done. But the worst of Katrina can no longer be seen in New Orleans.

The hurricane is still raging in Raleigh and Charlotte, where displaced victims struggle to pin themselves into the community's fabric. And the flood waters haven't receded in Sugarland, Texas, where the man who saved my parents is having trouble feeding his children.

Tyrone Jennings was a retired cop with a cab business who drove my parents, who had just begun their annual visit to the French Quarter, to the airport Aug. 28. Hours after their flight took off, Katrina hit, the levees broke, and Mr. Jennings got his wife, daughter, autistic son, disabled brother, and six nephews and nieces out before they could see their lives dissolve into the Gulf.

Now crowded into a Texas hotel room, the Jennings family is scraping by on donations, with its homes, businesses and even its bank lost to the flood.

These are circumstances in

which hopelessness would seem acceptable, even expected. Still, the last time my mother talked to Jennings, there was more jazz than blues in his voice: "Don't worry 'bout me, dahlin. We're doin' just fine."

The floodwater and the sludge will be gone soon enough, but this is the grit that New Orleans is made of.

The city is naked now, ripped and slashed and laid bare to the world. The tall oaks have fallen outside St. Louis Cathedral, taking the index finger of a granite Jesus with them. The infamous Bourbon Street sign dangles from its post, rakish and ravaged all at once. The sidewalks of Rampart Street, once host to New Orleans' only ordained voodoo priestess, are scattered with bodies swaddled in brightly colored fabric.

And still, the best we can do is toss our spare change into a Red Cross jar while flipping through Alley's diet tips in the supermarket line.

Tragedy is not trendy, and relief is more than a VH1 telethon. There are families 30 minutes down Interstate 40 who still don't have toothbrushes to call their own. There is a man in Texas with 10 hungry mouths and two empty hands.

Through it all, there is a rhythm and there is a pugnance, the infallible fragrance of resiliency.

In New Orleans there might be grime, but there are no grudges, and when the five-minute activists venture down for Mardi Gras, there will be room at Lafitte's. Just don't expect a free round of hurricanes.

Sara Boatright, a junior public relations major, will write the Tuesday column for the rest of the semester. Contact her at scb419@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

Housing's steps to protect students are over the top, silly, unnecessary

TO THE EDITOR:

As a resident of Spencer Residence Hall, I was befuddled to learn that my hallmates and I were being required to ante up some of our hard-earned money because of bathroom doors that were being propped open.

Since we moved in, the bathrooms on our floor have been locked and now require a room key to be opened. My peers and I see this not only as a huge inconvenience but also as a potential safety hazard, so every attempt to keep these doors unlocked has been made.

In one instance, we were holding a door open with paper towels; but according to our community director, this shortened the lock's lifespan. Unfortunately, the "repair" cost had to be handed down to us.

If someone could show me a type of paper that severely damages steel, I would be a very rich man. The community director's claim is that the doors' being locked is a matter of safety, but we residents could not be more opposed to this view.

The Housing Department is clearly unaware of the security provided for residents by the exterior doors to our dormitory and as a result thinks locking interior bathroom doors is a necessity.

But if housing staff cannot ensure residents' safety from the moment they step inside the housing facility, I strongly urge all students to think twice about living on campus.

Nicholas Lopezzo
Junior
Exercise and Sport Science

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

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The Daily Tar Heel

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