

BOARD EDITORIALS

5 FOR CHAPEL HILL

The editorial board endorses Laurin Easthom, Mark Kleinschmidt, Will Raymond and Bill Thorpe for Town Council and Kevin Foy for mayor.

When, starting today, Chapel Hill residents cast their ballots in the 2005 race for Town Council, they'll be voting in a race that looks suspiciously like 2003's.

Sure, there are fewer candidates and the student running is legitimate. But the elephant in the room is still University development — specifically Carolina North, a satellite campus down Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard that promises to recalibrate life in Chapel Hill through the effects it will have on neighborhoods, transportation, the local economy and campus life.

Thing is, though, the past two years have seen a shift in the way UNC deals with the council; the groups' working relationship has improved. And the candidates who should serve on the next council are the ones who will continue that trend while keeping enough distance to stomp for the rest of Chapel Hill when South Building comes up with a bad idea.

That's why Chapel Hill should send Laurin Easthom, Mark Kleinschmidt, Will Raymond and Bill Thorpe to Town Hall as council members — and re-elect Mayor Kevin Foy.

For mayor: Kevin Foy

It's essentially a foregone conclusion that Foy will win a third term as mayor; his opponent, Kevin Wolff, is a local newcomer who has done precious little campaigning and who admits that he knows little about the issues.

Thankfully, though, Foy has the experience, the leadership and the ideas to make him worthy of being re-elected to serve another term.

Foy has nearly a decade of governing experience in Chapel Hill. He was elected to the Chapel Hill Town Council in 1997 and was elected mayor in 2001 and 2003. During his time in local government, he has sought to encourage commercial growth, fought for eco-friendly policies and has been dedicated to public art. He knows these issues well and has a proven record of addressing them.

Foy also has proven to be a fine leader of not just Chapel Hill but of the Town Council as well. He helped the council push its way through rancorous battles with the University concerning a chiller plant and parking deck on the main campus in 2003, for example, and he also was a voice of reason during the debate on the renaming of Airport Road. Foy has been the calm voice in the storm — a true sign of leadership.

He also has shown foresight and leadership on one of the most pressing issues in Chapel Hill: downtown development. Foy's appointment to the Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership, then known as the Downtown Economic Development Corporation, was criticized in some quarters; but his work on the CHDP has provided a steady force and helped build a link between it and the Town Council.

To his credit, Wolff has run a token campaign so Foy would not run unopposed. That certainly is a laudable challenge to take on.

But Foy is obviously the right man for the job.

For council: Laurin Easthom ...

As a member of the Horace Williams Citizens Advisory Committee and the town transportation board, Easthom boasts a fundamental understanding of Carolina North and the problems it will bring if not built correctly. And Easthom's call for UNC to incorporate its future Arts Common into downtown shows that she knows how inextricably the University's destiny is linked with the rest of the town's.

She also is a strong candidate on other fronts. Her idea to measure bus ridership by stop, if it comes to fruition, will help officials make the best possible decisions about how to expand Chapel Hill Transit's services; it would particularly benefit students who often face full buses during their morning commutes. And her favor for shared parking arrangements and additional police presence downtown, while not novel, would provide a good start toward improving Franklin and Rosemary streets.

Mark Kleinschmidt ...

More than any other candidate in the race, Kleinschmidt — a one-term incumbent — has put his money where his mouth is on the importance of

students. While a law student and speaker of Student Congress, for example, Kleinschmidt worked to make fare-free busing a reality. And he has helped the town and UNC go through what he appropriately calls "couples therapy."

He also showed strong leadership in opposing the town's (thankfully) short-lived red-light cameras program. He favors smart, novel ways to encourage developers to build affordable housing, as he's willing to consider tax credits in addition to inclusionary zoning. In fact, perhaps Kleinschmidt's biggest strength is his openness to all viewpoints; he has refused to engage in the demagoguery and groupthink that sometimes plague Chapel Hill politics, and he is a better candidate for having done so.

Will Raymond ...

A member of the town's technology committee, Raymond has made his mark as someone unafraid to question anything and anybody — a trait that enabled him to successfully challenge the council's decision to adopt a red-light camera program.

He's also willing to go to bat for all residents. He wants any wireless Internet program expanded into low-income areas surrounding downtown; he's been on campus campaigning more than any candidate except undergraduate student Jason Baker; and his involvement with the council will help turn Carolina North into a world-class project that benefits all residents.

And Bill Thorpe

A former council member who is returning to politics after his retirement, Thorpe can lay claim to more experience — and, likely, more connections — than anyone else in the race. His prior dealings with UNC's growth, including a key role in the improvement of initial plans for the Smith Center, will bring perspective to current town-gown affairs; his tireless advocacy for minority affairs, including a role in the renaming of Airport Road to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, only will be amplified if he again takes office.

Thorpe also has done much on behalf of students, and his plans to expand student influence in Town Hall — including an internship program — will help incorporate campus residents into the town's affairs.

The rest of the pack

It has been assumed in some quarters since the race's start that The Daily Tar Heel would endorse any serious student candidate. And indeed, having a student presence on the council would do much to connect the student body with town officials.

But despite political science major Jason Baker's hustle and deep understanding of University affairs, it's obvious in talking to him that he still has much to learn about the town. And his public statements that a growing business climate isn't as important as the environment, while noble, will do nothing to improve the town's unacceptably low commercial tax base.

Incumbent Ed Harrison has provided the council with strong expertise on transportation. Unfortunately, that's essentially the beginning and the end of his ideas and accomplishments. The issue of transportation is certainly vital to the future of the entire Triangle region, but someone who has been in office four years ought to have more to show for it.

Candidate Robin Cutson brought a fresh voice to the race, forcing other hopefuls to take up the issues of infrastructure and a bloated town budget. But she's too gruff — and too much of a one-trick pony — to have any serious impact as a council member.

Get out and vote

Election Day isn't until Nov. 8. But those who are registered to vote in Orange County — thousands of students, according to the Board of Elections — can cast ballots starting today at Morehead Planetarium.

It's easy. It'll take only a few minutes. And we've even told you who to vote for.

Please get out and make your voice heard.

Check back tomorrow for endorsements for both Carrboro Board of Aldermen and Carrboro mayor.

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. Address concerns to Public Editor Elliott Dube at dubee@email.unc.edu.

READERS' FORUM

Student Congress members need to reassess priorities

TO THE EDITOR:

It was with a mixed sense of amusement and disappointment that I happened upon a copy of the Oct. 20 Daily Tar Heel and the story titled "Board Examines Claims of Fraud."

It seems that, once again, Student Congress members and other campus politicians are engaging in the perennial battle of liberal vs. conservative and Democrat vs. Republican. As a former four-term member of Student Congress during the 1990s, I remember well the passion both sides put into many contentious issues.

I also remember that in many cases, those same passions blinded all involved and became detrimental to serving the student body. From investigating the student body president to censuring the speaker and engaging in back-room deals over funding for minority recruitment programs, we did it all, many times in a grossly partisan fashion. I wish now that we had done better by the electorate.

In regards to the current controversy, I can only surmise that the balance of power on the Congress must be very close indeed if direct attacks upon the speaker by the Young Democrats and Black Student Movement are being car-

ried out. With the involvement of the executive branch, the Board of Elections and special interest groups, we now have the perfect recipe for student government paralysis. After five years away from Chapel Hill and UNC, I can see that little, unfortunately, has changed.

In closing, allow this veteran of the Congress to offer some advice to all the parties involved. Ask yourself before every vote, before every political maneuver, if what you are doing will serve the interests of your constituents. Only then will you be doing your job and upholding the oath of office. In the meantime I'll be watching with a wistful smile on my face, remembering those Wednesday night meetings and the post-meeting "debriefings" at Linda's.

Steve Oljeski
Neuroradiology Fellow
Department of Radiology

Columnist is right to draw attention to AIDS epidemic

TO THE EDITOR:

I'd like to thank Sara Boatright for her column on Tuesday, "AIDS needs more attention, fewer barriers to U.S. help." She correctly focuses on the key problem in combating this public health crisis policy. As young people we need to

recognize that short-sighted and ideologically driven policies are the primary obstacle to halting the most devastating health crisis that will effect our generation.

Is the student body aware that North Carolina virtually eliminates talk about condoms in high school classrooms and makes it impossible to buy a clean needle? We must demand of our state and our nation comprehensive sex education in public schools, endorsement of harm reduction measures and full funding of science-based prevention and treatment programs. Now we need a strategy to get from identifying the problem to seeing results.

Come out Nov. 2 to arm yourself with the knowledge and skills to affect policy. The Student Global AIDS Campaign is hosting an advocacy training lead by community organizers from Washington, D.C., and Greensboro. Sessions are at 2 p.m. in 104 Saunders Hall and 6 p.m. in Saunders 220. Not every lesson you learn on campus is applicable to the real world — don't miss this one.

Elizabeth Raki
Senior
Philosophy

Marce Abare
Senior
Biology/African Studies

West House adds value to the UNC campus community

TO THE EDITOR:

Thank you for your commentary on West House, Mr. Kim. I am grateful you didn't just come out and say tear West House down, but still, the undercurrent of your commentary was that West House supporters are against change. We have expressed our support of the Arts Common and of progress on UNC's campus.

As a 30-year employee, as a forward-thinking artist, as a long-time resident of Chapel Hill and the Triangle, and a native North Carolinian, I know firsthand the value of progress.

Our argument still stands that West House is not just a nostalgic emblem but rather is of historical as well as aesthetic importance to our campus. I do agree that each of us who live at Carolina come away with something of deep value regardless of change.

We also are aware that West House has only received a reprieve and that much work still needs to be done to find an appropriate purpose and perhaps even a new location for the House. Our descendants will approve of our success.

Jeffrey Beam
Founder
West House Coalition

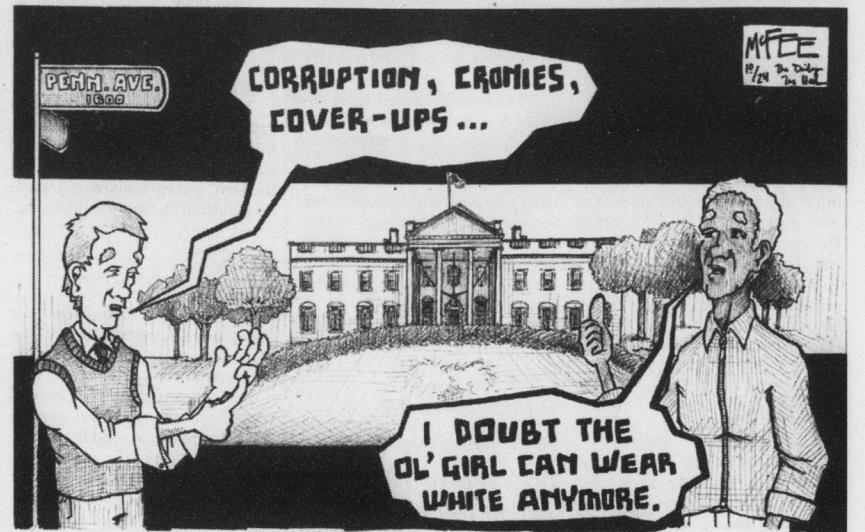
FROM THE DAY'S NEWS

"The reason we should be addressing this issue is if there's student outcry. But students haven't had an outcry thus far."

KRIS GOULD, STUDENT CONGRESS REPRESENTATIVE AND YOUNG DEMOCRATS CO-PRESIDENT, ON STUDENT GOVERNMENT STIPENDS

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Philip McFee, pip@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

Election board's behavior should serve to end apathy

Last week, I commented on a pressing attack on stipends for student government leaders. I know at least five or six people read it, because they either sent me their comments or told me in passing.

However, I might have put the cart before the horse in assuming that a majority of readers cared at all about student government happenings — and I would contend that last week's manufactured predicament did not help.

My roommate spent the better part of 30 minutes this week lambasting the motives, methods and necessity of student government. He espoused a commonly held perception that student government is a bunch of megalomaniacs squabbling back and forth over useless issues.

As a student government alum, I did my duty defending the niche of student self-governance.

But a multitude of bickering and the continuing student election debacle, I found myself more and more in agreement with my roommate.

As has been reported, last night The Daily Tar Heel resolved a formal grievance procedure against the Board of Elections before the Student Supreme Court for alleged violations of the Student Code during the administration of the last week's special election. I know that to most students this is not even close to relevant to their daily lives, but I would like to argue that this is one of the cases when it should be — if for no other reason than it involves the people who deal with the details so you do not have to.

The marrow of the controversy boils down to the Board of Elections stepping out of the bounds of its power in administering and deciding last week's special election. The Student Code allows for special elections to be called — by the student body



MATT LILES
HERE'S TO DOWN HOME

president — in order to fill vacant elected positions, such as Student Congress seats.

When done correctly, special elections have been integral in keeping the student body properly represented in Student Congress on decisions about funding for student organizations. In valid elections, the speaker of Congress tells the student body president there are seats open; the SBP then calls for elections. By the Code, the Board of Elections then holds a mandatory candidates meeting to inform all interested about the rules and procedures. Finally, the elections are held on Student Central and the results are certified by the Board of Elections.

There are still many questions about what went on in this past week's elections. It is well known that there were several problems with the voting software that kept some students from voting. Also, it is also commonly known that writing the same person in each write-in space, when two seats in the same district are open, can allow for the equivalent of a double vote.

More questions arose about who was allowed to vote for what seats. For a South Campus district there was one seat open when the mandatory candidates meeting was held, but the Board of Elections opened up two seats for the election after another became vacant in the days before last week. This misstep matters for those people who decided not to jump in the race for the single seat but who would have

ran if two seats were available. This violates the Student Code because the Board of Elections held an election for the additional seat surreptitiously without being asked to do so by the student body president.

For most people, this is the part of the argument where you tune out, turn the page or just stop caring, and I certainly do not blame you. But the Cliff's Notes version of my argument is that this grievance in particular was about process and an administrative body overstepping its bounds in the realm of legislating and adjudicating.

Simply put, the conduct of the Board of Elections has caused the process to be compromised. Students who couldn't care less about the details of student government as long as it is done right should therefore be even more incensed about the issues settled by the Student Supreme Court yesterday.

Not to delve back too far into an analysis of the nature of democracies, but to me, at least, discussion is the very essence of a good democracy. Student government at UNC is no exception; it thrives to the extent that it involves and enriches the lives of the 27,000 students it serves. Student government does a million things behind the scenes that matter little to the majority of the electorate, but fouling of elections is an exception.

Electing representatives and ensuring the integrity of the way we do it is the most basic exercise that even the most apathetic among us should fervently demand.

Columnist Matt Liles served as solicitor general for the 2004-05 school year; his job was to interpret the Student Code. Contact Liles at limat@email.unc.edu.

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.

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