

BOARD EDITORIALS

HERE AND LICENSED

The General Assembly should reject a bill that would prevent illegal immigrants from getting driver's licenses — it is foolish and impractical.

Lying in wait for the N.C. General Assembly to take up in May is a bill that would make it more difficult for illegal immigrants to obtain driver's licenses. The Comité de Asuntos Latinos de Orange will take up the issue at its meeting today. The bill is nothing more than mean-spirited discrimination and a waste of state resources that will not improve security but only make N.C. roads less safe. Introduced by Sen. Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, the bill would require proof that applicants are inhabiting the country legally. It also would require the governor to report to the assembly on which kind and how many licenses are denied, as well as any new security features. This is a foolish bid to bring the state into compliance with a stupid federal law, the Real ID Act. Illegal immigration certainly is a problem, but the fact remains that we have illegal people in our country who are a part of communities and economies. They work, they pay sales taxes, and they drive. Making it harder for them to get driver's licenses will not change that reality one bit. It will, however,

give illegal immigrants no motivation to learn N.C. driving customs and regulations. The vast majority of illegal immigrants are neither terrorists nor a threat to the United States, but they will be a danger on the roads if they are not compelled to learn how to drive. Furthermore, there is the question of what are the rights of residents — illegally present or not. Immigrants pay local and some state taxes. They help support our road systems and should have a right to use them regardless of residency status. This bill is just one of many that are emerging as part of a trend of modernized xenophobia. We do not deny that there is a problem, but this is not a problem to be hammered down with draconian tactics. Surely there is a way of addressing illegal immigration in a way that these people are legally integrated into the communities of which they already are a significant part. Denying these people driver's licenses is simply short-sighted; it will hinder safety and will not help security — and it's just un-American.

OUR LANDS ABROAD

UNC purchased land in London for study abroad programs — it's a smart investment as students spread their horizons beyond our campus.

UNC is expanding its horizons with a \$5 million purchase of land in the London area for study abroad programs. The land will provide more students with the opportunity to study in the city and is a progressive step that promises a strong future for UNC's already strong study abroad office. According to the 2005 Open Doors report, 1,657 Carolina students traveled abroad during the 2003-04 school year. That number only will continue to grow, as more and more students seek to diversify their education opportunities and immerse themselves in a new culture. The purchase of the London land is evidence of UNC's forward thinking and vision for the future of the program. More students will continue to seek study abroad opportunities, and the land in London will no doubt provide such for students. The purchase of the land also shows UNC's commitment that all students wishing to go abroad will have the chance. No matter what administrators or advisors might say during orientation, the cost to go abroad is significant.

For many students, this cost might thwart participation in programs, most of which are more expensive than a semester or even a year at school. The London purchase reaffirms UNC's declared commitment of sending students abroad. The new property will allow for an area to hold lectures free of rent, hopefully cutting down on study abroad costs. UNC officials also deserve commendation not only for purchasing the land, but for doing so with private funds and not taxpayer dollars. The purchase will benefit students, without taking more from their wallets. Should plans for the newly purchased land work out, UNC officials should consider buying property in other frequently visited cities. The popular programs in Spain, Italy and other countries would benefit from a similar endeavor. UNC will continue to grow in the future. The next few decades will mark a period of intense expansion of the core campus, and the study abroad programs shouldn't be left out of the mix. It's great to see the administration taking steps to encourage more students to travel and study beyond this campus.

MORE REFORM NOW

The N.C. House Speaker has appointed an ethics committee — a group that needs to accelerate reforms and develop even more accountability.

Since the gods of irony would not have it any other way, N.C. House Speaker Jim Black, D-Mecklenburg, has formed a new legislative panel on ethics reform. The panel will explore whether a new lobbying law needs to be implemented sooner and if additional restrictions need to be implemented. The answer to those questions is a big "duh." Of course the House needs ethics reforms. Look no further than the man who has called for the panel. Black already has had a paid adviser who helped write the lottery bill resign because of her side work with a lottery company. The N.C. lottery commission — which Black partially helped appoint — also had a resignation for similar reasons. With all its potential, the nascent phases of the N.C. lottery have been tainted by corruption — a disturbing number of which traces back to the House Speaker. And if the committee is going to succeed in reform, the first step is making it bipartisan. Twelve Democrats and 10 Republicans is not a bipartisan group — it's a committee that Democrats easily can dominate. This should not be about politics. It needs to be

about creating honest government. The best way to do this is by making it evenly divided with 11 Democrats and 11 Republicans — that way the recommendations will not favor just one party but all state residents. The panel as it will be led by Reps. Joe Hackney, D-Orange, and Julia Howard, R-Davie; they need to focus on closing up holes in the system so that the people — not lobbyists — hold the reins of power in Raleigh. That means more reporting of gifts, regardless of size, and more accountability. Part of the privilege of serving the people of North Carolina should mean reporting on who buys you anything — whether it be a martini or a Maserati. The very first recommendation that the panel should make is to call for accelerating when the new lobbying law takes effect. Jan. 1, 2007 is too far away — Jan. 2006 would be a lot better. If this is a good law a year from now, then enacting it early shouldn't be a problem. Cleaning up N.C. politics is no small task, but this panel can go a long way toward taking out the trash and bringing back the people.

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 three 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

UNC treats test animals in a legal and ethical manner

TO THE EDITOR: Regarding the Dec. 6 editorial "Carin for Critters," it's important for the University community to know that our animal research care program is in full compliance with federal rules. We have a rigorous system in place to ensure the humane care and treatment of the laboratory animals used in research conducted by our scientists to improve human health. Our campus adheres to the policies and guidelines of the National Institutes of Health Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare and has worked diligently to resolve any known deficiencies as quickly as possible — a practice that we pledge to continue. NIH's last report said that our corrective actions were "appropriate and responsive." UNC has been rigorously inspected and accredited by the Association for Assessment and Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care. Last month, AAALAC commended UNC for "providing and maintaining a quality program of laboratory animal care and use." AAALAC went on to praise UNC for factors including a committed staff, an effective veterinary care

program and a well-maintained physical plant. AAALAC's conclusions were drawn from a process that included an on-site visit to our campus last summer — one year after OLAW had done the same. Every proposed use of animals in research at UNC is carefully reviewed by a team of scientists and community members. No project is approved unless the reviewers are satisfied that the use of animals is justified in conjunction with the proposed research. Many life-saving medical treatments for human beings are based on research with animals. Humane treatment of animal subjects is not just good policy; it is also necessary for good science. UNC remains committed to maintaining an outstanding program for ensuring high-quality care for all of our animal subjects. *Tony Waldrop*
Vice Chancellor of Research & Economic Development
University already has ways of caring for test animals
TO THE EDITOR: What the editorial "Carin' for critters" and, from what I've seen, most of the articles on animal treatment in research labs in UNC

is missing is information about the institutional animal care and use committee. They're an office of the National Institutes of Health present in all research institutions to monitor the training of personnel, approval of protocols and inspection of animal health, well-being, and their housing. So someone at the University is trying to work on the situation. *Michael Rowland*
Senior Biology
Langdon not responsible for listserv shenanigans
TO THE EDITOR: On Tuesday, a large number of e-mails were sent to what is apparently a large percentage of the UNC student body under the listserv "Rob Langdon for Student Congress." After this initial bombardment of e-mails, there were multiple replies from immature individuals who felt that they needed either to try to share their attempt at comedy with the entire listserv or to ask people to stop replying to the entire listserv. Many of the latter were rude, filled with profanity and stereotypes and attacked Rob personally.

Rob is not to blame for this mess — the immature individuals who replied are. Direct your anger at them if you lack the maturity to get over it. *Zach McKay*
Freshman Biology
At least the ATN gives the option of not getting spam
TO THE EDITOR: Subscribing to obnoxious listservs is something freshmen do to themselves at Fall Fest — not something I wanted someone else to do to me right before Student Congress elections. Adam Farag and Robert Langdon's blatant attempts to circumvent rules limiting schoolwide (or at least South Campuswide) mass e-mail were even more ridiculous than the continuous stream of e-mails I used to receive asking whether I suffered from breast pain. At least with legitimate school sponsored e-mails like those I could exercise the option ATN intended for me to have and select "do not receive mass e-mails" in my directory settings. *Erik Schuchard*
Junior Business Administration

FROM THE DAY'S NEWS

"There's nothing that parts of downtown need so much as a fire in which no people are hurt."

ROGER PERRY, CHAPEL HILL DOWNTOWN PARTNERSHIP BOARD MEMBER

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Evann Strathern, evann@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

Student leaders should clash with locals about UNC issues

I've argued in several columns now that student interests are at odds with the town's present goals. And like many staffers at The Daily Tar Heel, student leaders and other observers, I'm disappointed to see that only 440 student-aged voters participated in last month's municipal elections. But although municipal elections are over, they are not the only way for students to voice their opinions on town issues. They certainly are not the only opportunity for students to show leadership.



JEFF KIM
NO LONGER A VILLAGE

The race for student body president will begin soon next semester, and I for one would like to see candidates who are willing to confront the town on issues in which student interests diverge from those of permanent residents. Don't get me wrong, most of the issues that the town deals with are of common interest. Keeping the bus system running, providing police and fire protection and taking care of all of the minutiae of town life is certainly an undertaking that everyone should appreciate. But it's political difference that makes politics worthwhile. I've harped on the queue of neighborhoods that want to become conservation districts many times throughout the semester, and I'd like to come back to it again because it is an initiative that will hurt students — yet there's still no detectable confrontation. There have been student leaders in the past who have tried to get students involved in town affairs, but I believe that the main problem with past approaches has been an excessive willingness to concede. Former Student Body President Jen Daum, for instance, spearheaded a "Good Neighbor Initiative" to improve relationships between town students and

town residents. Student behavior might be at fault for local residents' negative view of student housing, but has this approach helped? No. Since Daum's initiative, local residents steadily have increased their efforts to fence students out of their spaces. Yet students are lulled to sleep by local officials who are adept at avoiding any negative buzz words. I feel compelled to say it again: Neighborhood conservation districts and a duplex ban are two different means to the same end. In order for student leaders to get their fellows interested in local politics, they will have to demonstrate what's in it for students. There is a natural incentive for students not to care after all. Most of us only stay here for four years and leave. We aren't interested in many of the issues that the town addresses. Students look in the DTH and see controversies that don't concern them. They see the funding discrepancy between Orange County and Chapel Hill schools as a recurring news issue. They might have a passing interest in the topic for reasons of social justice, but very few of them will get up and do anything about it. And they certainly won't care about what the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools decide to name its newly constructed high school. Student leaders should change the focus of the DTH's local cover-

age by confronting the town on issues that are important to students — and making news of it. They should ensure that the high school naming story runs deep within the pages of the DTH, if at all. Former Student Body presidents Matt Tepper and Nic Heinke were able to bring out large crowds to protest tuition increases for the Board of Trustees. Future presidents might do the same for Town Hall if they're effective. Students are just as affected by issues of housing, busing and access to cheap goods as they are by a few hundred dollar hikes in fees. They are losing just as much money, but the concepts are more abstract. Student leaders should be vocal in town affairs and point out the murky language when they see it. They should cry foul when town officials screw students to appease active voters. They should take the confrontational approach that they often take with UNC's BOT. They should remain critical about the town's actions — even if town leaders have good intentions at heart. And they should remain vocal about it. I would like to see a student body president who is able to engage the town and has a strategy for confronting it. Candidates should be diplomatic, and they should retain the ability to work with council members on issues of mutual interest. But a good student body president is one that keeps the interest of his or her constituents in mind. And that interest inevitably will collide with those of town residents. *Contact Jeff Kim, a senior economics major, at jongdae@email.unc.edu.*

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RYAN C. TUCK
EDITOR, 962-4086
RCTUCK@EMAIL.UNC.EDU
OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAY, THURSDAY 1-2 P.M.
FIT SITE: FRIDAY, 12-1 P.M.

JOSEPH R. SCHWARTZ
MANAGING EDITOR, 962-0750
JOSEPH_SCHWARTZ@UNC.EDU

REBECCA WILHELM
DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR, 962-0750
BECCA07@EMAIL.UNC.EDU

CHRIS CAMERON
OPINION EDITOR, 962-0750
EDITDESK@UNC.EDU

BRIAN HUDSON
UNIVERSITY EDITOR, 962-0372
UDES@UNC.EDU

BRIANNA BISHOP
TED STRONG
CITY CO-EDITORS, 962-4209
CITYDESK@UNC.EDU

KAVITA PILLAI
STATE & NATIONAL EDITOR, 962-4103
STNTDESK@UNC.EDU

DANIEL MALLOY
SPORTS EDITOR, 962-4710
SPORTS@UNC.EDU

TORRYE JONES
FEATURES EDITOR, 962-4214
FEATURES@UNC.EDU

JIM WALSH
ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR, 843-4529
ARTSDESK@UNC.EDU

SCOTT SPILLMAN
CATHERINE WILLIAMS
COPY CO-EDITORS, 962-4103

WHITNEY SHEFTE
PHOTO EDITOR, 962-0750

JEN ALLIET
DANIEL BEDEN
DESIGN CO-EDITORS, 962-0750

FEILDING CAGE
GRAPHICS AND MULTIMEDIA EDITOR, 962-0246

CHRIS JOHNSON
ONLINE EDITOR, 962-0750
ONLINE@UNC.EDU

KELLY OCHS
EMILY STEEL
WRITERS' COACHES, 962-0372

ELLIOTT DUBE
PUBLIC EDITOR, 260-9084
DUBEE@EMAIL.UNC.EDU