

BOARD EDITORIALS

PLEASE, VOTE SMART

If voters are educated, then maybe competent student officers will be elected next year — something vital to serving students' interests.

It's that time again. No, not the inevitable over-hyping of the Superbowl, but student elections.

And like with any election, a precursor is campaigning — a time of posters, clever slogans and candidates and associates trying to brainwash you into voting for them while you walk through the Pit. After all, one of those candidates will be the best — or least worst — next student body president or president of the Graduate and Professional Student Federation.

Yet, while we all want to see the candidates out there working hard to earn the vote, their self-marketing techniques should, for you the voter, only serve as a personal introduction.

You wouldn't date someone for a year based on a single glimpse.

We all like the pretty colors and the gimmicks, but please base your voting decision on something more in-depth than that one candidate talks like he's from the cast of "West Wing."

Be proactive and research the candidates. Bernard Holloway and James Allred are running to be Student Body President — see what they are all about. They have platforms, so read them and decide for yourself

if their respective ideas are good, bad, plausible or untenable. Allred's is at www.unc.edu/allred/platform.html. Holloway's isn't up yet.

You don't have to be an undergraduate student to get in on the action, Lauren Anderson and P.J. Lusk are running to lead the GPSF next year. Read their platforms and judge their worth.

Also, feel free to attend the bevy of forums and see how well candidates articulate their respective ideas, field questions and interact with other human beings.

You can do it tonight — Di-Phi is holding one such event at 7:30 p.m. in New East. Next week the Young Democrats and College Republicans will be hosting forums to determine their endorsements — be there, and be partisan if you want to be.

Don't simply vote straight friend-ticket. As a voter, you need to be educated on the candidates' plans for you — issues affecting everything from your wallet (tuition) to your belly (possibly replacing Lenoir's Burger King).

These are your issues, not just topics of debate for a student government club. Don't be afraid, get involved and get educated.

VIRTUAL EDUCATION

Online courses are a wonderful way to help educate North Carolinians as part of the push to make our state more economically competitive.

In today's high-speed society, online courses are comparable to Super Wal-Mart. Both offer low-priced goods and both are convenient for people from all walks of life.

And just like with Wal-Marts, we would like to see more and more of this service popping up.

With the help of that technology, people across the state — not just college students on campuses — can receive a high-quality education from distinguished universities without having to leave the comfort of their own homes.

Grab a comfy desk chair and a computer, and you're all set.

North Carolina offers a variety of courses over the Internet, from communications to the sciences.

In fact, there are 234 distance learning programs and 89 online degrees offered across the state. The distance-learning program is ready and available for undergraduates and for professional adults alike without the bother of having to be on campus for that dreaded 8 a.m. class.

Distance learning through online courses is a vital part of the education process today with people living at a faster pace and having limited free time to

go back to school.

Not only does this delicious new flavor of higher education allow us to connect with people from the mountains to the coast, but it also helps to enhance the overall economy.

Let's face it: The more people North Carolina has with college degrees, the better off our economy will be. Education means a higher standard of living and a better employee pool companies pondering a move to the Old North State can choose from.

With the old North Carolina economy — based extensively on tobacco and textiles — fading into the past, education will become all the more important as we move into the new frontier.

North Carolina and the University should make an effort to increase further available distance education programs to offer even more courses and degrees.

For those interested in perusing the possibilities here at UNC, the University's courses can be found at www.fridaycenter.unc.edu/cp/cco.

The North Carolina economy of tomorrow isn't yet here, but by investing in education — on and off campuses — we can ensure that the one that finally arrives is a bright one.

THRIFTY'S THE WORD

Lottery money should only go to public schools — charter schools will just have to miss out in exchange for their unusual autonomy.

This spring, North Carolinians will be able to buy lottery tickets without having to drive to South Carolina, Virginia or Tennessee.

The revenue from the lottery — minus payouts and administrative costs — will go exclusively into funding public education.

That's how it should be. While some might take issue with the morality of a state-sponsored lottery, few will argue that public schools don't need the money.

But a debate about whether public schools have the sole right to lottery money — centering on the right of public charter schools to receive a fair share of the lottery profits — should go no further.

Due to the unique nature of the charters in question, we believe that the lottery formula should not be rewritten to give them a share of lottery funds.

In a sense, charter schools blur the line between public and private schools. They receive their day-to-day funding from taxpayers, but they must pay for their own building costs through tuition and private donations.

They are governed by boards of directors, not local school boards, and while they can set their own poli-

cies in most areas — such as school uniforms — they still are subject to state standardized testing.

We believe charter schools should receive the same per-pupil funding as any other public school, minus that earmarked for new construction.

And we understand why charter school administrators are pushing for construction funding from the lottery; they're just trying to do what's best for their students — that's their job.

However, we believe legislators should accept that, while we appreciate their efforts and service, a lack of access to public construction funding is the trade-off for the schools' autonomy and self-determination.

It is only natural for groups to try to gain access to new sources of revenue. But the \$350 million projected to come in from the lottery is a finite resource, and charter schools should abide by the deal they made with the people of North Carolina: They traded funding for freedom.

In the lottery, you have to play to win. When it comes to getting money from the lottery, you have to be public to really cash in — we wouldn't have it any other way.

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 six 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 Elizabeth Gregory at elizagre@email.unc.edu.

READERS' FORUM

Campus Y endorses planks from candidates' platforms

TO THE EDITOR:

On Tuesday night, the Campus Y hosted this year's first election forum.

Instead of endorsing individual candidates, our officers and co-chairs decided to endorse an idea from each candidate's platform that relates directly to our mission: "the pursuit of social justice through the cultivation of pluralism."

We endorse these platform planks:

William Thompson, Residence Hall Association president candidate, would help with the Big Four ACC Canned Food Drive by encouraging residence halls to take an active role.

Rachel High, Carolina Athletic Association president candidate, would bridge the gap between athletes and the Campus Y by having committees, mainly those with one-on-one relationships, such as Big Buddy and Best Buddies, come to sporting events.

Doug Weiss and Juelle McDonald, senior class officer candidates, would organize a laptop drive so children in developing countries can learn computer skills.

Meg Peterson and Eric Schmidt, senior class officer candidates, would pair the senior class with one service organization all year to

foster a stronger relationship and to capitalize on seniors' manpower.

Jonathan Friedman and Barry Turner, senior class officer candidates, would work with Heifer International, an organization that provides sustainable sources of food and income to people in developing countries.

James Allred, student body president candidate, would foster a closer relationship between the Campus Y and student government's public service advocacy committee.

Bernard Holloway, student body president candidate, would create a North Carolina Service Corps.

No matter what happens Feb. 14, we look forward to working with student leaders and all students in the coming year to bring those ideas to fruition.

Kamal Menghrajani
Co-president
Campus Y

Stephen Lassiter
Co-president
Campus Y

Front page picture featured some rather effective 'D'

TO THE EDITOR:

I regret to inform you that your hopes of keeping anonymous the individual, who was "Taken to School" on Tuesday's front page,

are hereby spoiled.

It was I, Amon Anderson, employee-athlete.

First off, I'd like to point out my quality "D" in the photo.

As I pointed out to my roommates, my knees were bent, my center of gravity was low, my arms were extended and, most importantly, I positioned myself between my opponent and the basket.

I request a correction. Rather than "Taken to School," how about the headline, "Employee-Athlete Skillfully Maneuvers Mismatch Down-Low and Proves Good Things Come in Small Sizes."

A little long, I know, but if there's anything that we need in this world, it's accurate journalism free of sensationalism and headline mongering.

Kamal Menghrajani
Co-president
Campus Y

Stephen Lassiter
Co-president
Campus Y

Students come out and help local pets, local music

TO THE EDITOR:

Like Sumner Phillips, I was disappointed with the Diversions section's "Top Ten of 2005."

The list's similarity to those in national publications only highlights The Daily Tar Heel's thin coverage of Chapel Hill's thriving local talent.

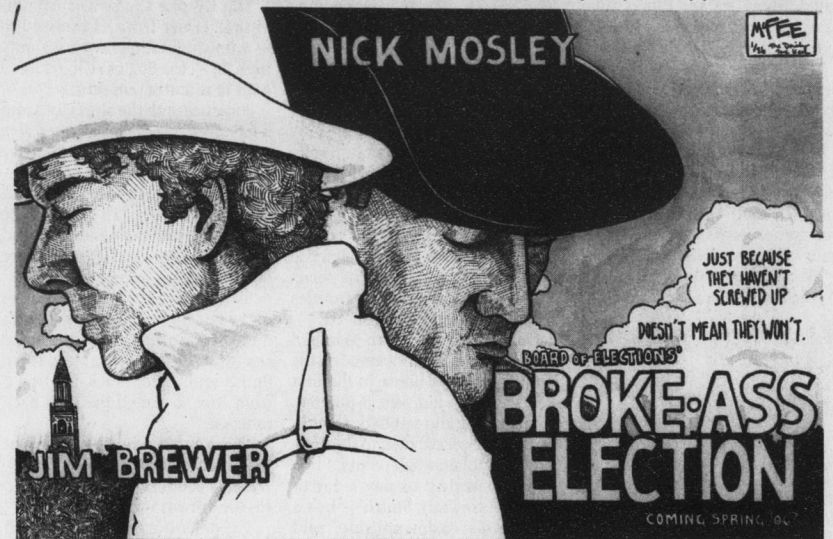
FROM THE DAY'S NEWS

"The necessity of (a tuition) increase is undeniable."

SETH DEARMIN, STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT, IN A COLUMN, ON HIS SUPPORT FOR RAISING TUITION

EDITORIAL CARTOON

By Philip McFee, pip@email.unc.edu



COMMENTARY

Vote with your dollars when examining labor practices

You there. Pick that dirty pair of jeans up off your bed. Do you know where they were made?

I'll bet you can remember buying them. Maybe you finally found a pair of jeans for 40 bucks that didn't look horrible, or somehow found a pair of designer jeans on sale. Or maybe you got dragged along to the mall and didn't feel like wasting an afternoon window-shopping without actually accomplishing anything.

Whatever the reason, they're sitting there on your bed right now, worn one time too many without seeing the inside of a washing machine.

Not only do your clothes tell everyone just a little bit about you, they also tell us a great deal about what people and corporations value — what they avoid and what they ignore.

Every piece of clothing you own has helped write U.S. trade history. Clothing from Taiwan in the 1950s helped transform the country into a global powerhouse.

Today, clothing purchased from China expands an already burgeoning trade deficit, weakening U.S. currency and transferring vast wealth to a country that is beginning to train its own fighter pilots and is exhibiting increasing hostility toward both Taiwan and the United States.

The damage caused by river pollution was in the billions of dollars last year, and two instances of serious river pollution next to major Chinese cities in the last six months have brought extra attention to what some say is an environmentally unsustainable industrial expansion.

Yet, according to the Chinese government, the standard of living has been skyrocketing, bringing impoverished citizens a quality of living that was unimaginable under the isolationist Mao not 40 years ago.



JEREMY SPIVEY
ALL OVER THE MAP

In Vietnam, where \$1.8 billion of U.S. clothes are put together, the minimum wage is just more than a dollar a day in most places. At those exceptionally low labor charges, everyone from Dockers to Nike receives clothing from Vietnamese factories.

Depending on your perspective, that either mercilessly exploits Vietnamese citizens oppressed under Communist rule or provides them an opportunity to get off the seven-day workweek farm and into a six-day, eight-hour-per-day factory job, which is both less strenuous and pays slightly more.

Regardless of your position on free trade — which varies both within and across political parties — nobody can deny that U.S. textile factories are going overseas, destroying rural communities whose identities were once crafted around town mills.

Unless those jeans are made by Seven, Citizens, Lucky, Paper or a few other choice brands retailing from \$80 to \$300 per pair, they probably aren't supporting your local mill town.

Maybe you think textile manufacturing belongs in countries without the resources the United States has to train and educate employees in high-tech fields. Maybe you want to help Third World countries with reasonable wages provide work for their impoverished citizens.

Maybe China's owning enough U.S. securities to fund the entire Iraq war through November 2005 scares the crap out of you.

If you care at all about any of those scenarios, then you should care as much about the tag inside of your jeans as much as you care about the tag on the outside.

Many people are quick to blame the U.S. free-market system for exploiting foreign workers. Some feel that by not protecting our own jobs in the United States where we can verify that people are making acceptable wages, our government is contributing to a system of want and poverty. By not demanding a living wage in exchange for trading rights, we encourage countries to race to the bottom.

However, World Trade Organization rules have demanded that all quotas be eliminated among member countries. That means we're internationally obligated to provide China with unfettered access to U.S. markets.

And the WTO estimates that half of all U.S. textile imports will be Chinese by next year, making it our responsibility to support good companies and shun bad ones.

Will you buy clothes made in a country with decent labor protections, such as Cambodia?

Or, will you buy the best quality clothes at the cheapest price, often from Vietnam or China?

Maybe you want to support companies whose clothes are often made in the United States, such as New Balance, Lucky Brand or Charlotte Russe.

If you have a few dollars to donate to a good cause, consider using it to tell corporations that you care about where their clothes are made. Buy from responsible companies that buy from responsible countries.

Those dirty jeans might not have a clean history, but that doesn't mean your next pair can't.

Contact Jeremy Spivey, a senior political science major, at jkspivey@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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