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One in 20 is not a joking matter

A few weeks ago, some friends and I went out to dinner. Amid talk of basketball, sex and post-graduation plans, the following exchange occurred:

Random Guy at the table, to Skinny Girl sitting across from him: "You're not eating very much."

Skinny Girl's Friend: "Don't worry, Skinny Girl's not anorexic or anything. She eats plenty." Brief pause, for dramatic effect. "Now, whether she actually keeps any of it down or not..."

The table erupted into laughter, and I could feel my best friend's eyes boring into me, wondering if I — the girl who speaks openly about her past struggle with an eating disorder, who co-founded a student group promoting positive body image, who is writing her honors thesis on the stigmatization of anorexia nervosa — would say anything.

I could have blasted them with facts. I could have told them that eating disorders are serious illnesses with severe emotional and physical consequences — including death. At the very least, I could have said, "That's not funny."

But I didn't do any of that. Instead, I let out a nervous giggle and kept my mouth shut. "Don't ruin the mood," I thought. They're not malicious people, and I am certain that they didn't mean to offend. But comments like these are damaging nonetheless.

It's not hard to see how they might hurt someone in an immediate sense. What if Skinny Girl actually did have an eating disorder? Or what if someone else at the table did? One in 20 young females in the U.S. does, so it wouldn't have been unlikely.

Let's say that no one with a personal connection to the topic is within earshot. Throwing around labels like anorexia and bulimia in a joking manner still is detrimental because it trivializes eating disorders. It tacitly approves of discrimination against those who suffer from them.

Discrimination might seem like a strong word, but consider: In the past decade, research has found a significant biological and genetic component to eating disorders. Anorexia nervosa is 12 times more likely to occur in first-degree relatives of people with anorexia than those without the disorder.

Twin studies have shown that the heritability of eating disorders is more than 50 percent. Molecular geneticists have even identified regions on specific chromosomes that might be linked to an increased risk for eating disorders.

Yet insurance providers often refuse to reimburse treatment for eating disorders at the same level they do medical or surgical procedures, leaving families to pay out of pocket in an effort to keep loved ones alive. Those without enough financial resources are forced to forgo treatment, making full and lasting recovery a near impossibility. Federal laws to prevent such discrimination do not exist.

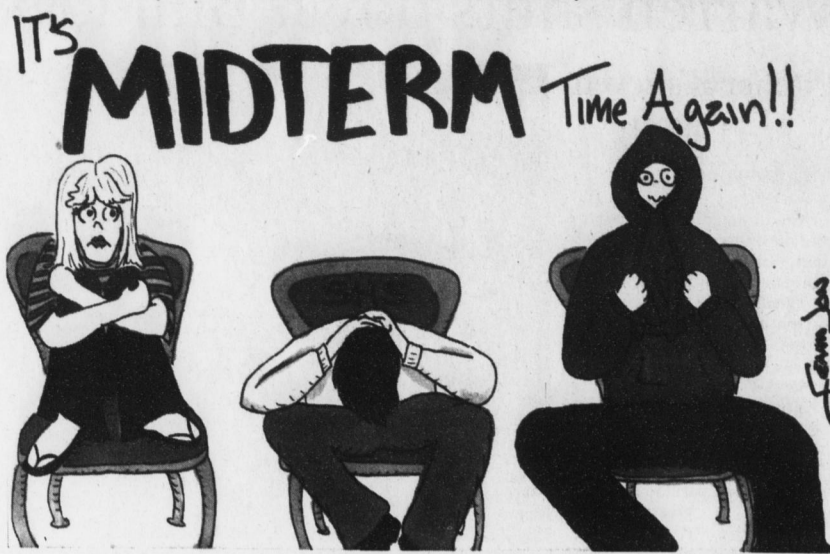
The dearth of federal funding for eating disorders research also represents discrimination. National Institutes of Health funds alcoholism research at a rate 18 times that of eating disorders. Schizophrenia and sleep disorders receive 13 and seven times more funding, respectively. Yet eating disorders are more prevalent and have a higher mortality rate than each of these conditions.

I can't help wondering if part of the problem lies in how we talk about eating disorders on a daily basis. If we as a society don't take them seriously, then how can we expect our policymakers to?

This week marks the 20th annual National Eating Disorders Awareness Week. A number of organizations and departments are sponsoring events on campus (you can get a schedule at studentorgs.unc.edu/shape). Take this opportunity to learn about a cause that needs and deserves your attention.

And if you hear people make a joke about eating disorders, let them know it's not funny. Next time, I promise I will too.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Jonathan Shrader and Seann Vicente, seannjon317@hotmail.com



Break out the guitars

Ticket campouts don't need administration oversight

The hundreds of students who crowded the grounds outside Memorial Hall last week for the upcoming Ben Folds concert have opened a can of worms for University administrators.

For yet another time this academic year, students camped out for concert tickets. But despite the temptation to supervise campouts more closely, administrators should refrain from trampling on students' fun.

At this time, UNC campouts for concert tickets typically are informal with little oversight or organization. Carolina Union Activities Board deserves praise for scheduling artists popular enough to warrant camping and for working with Memorial Hall staff to ensure the campouts run smoothly.

The campout for Ben Folds tickets was the first time that any security was present at all, and that was minimal.

Yet there still was some degree of frustration for students who felt slighted by the campout process, and particularly the manner in which tickets were distributed. We talked to several students who camped out, and the resounding consensus was that despite the lack of structure the campout was a hit.

Admittedly, there were a few suggestions for improvement. Several students were confused about when, exactly, they were allowed to start setting up tents and were denied access on their first try. A few others felt that the party lasted a little too long into the night and wished people would've quieted down earlier.

But even those with criticisms felt the event was a good time and went off without a hitch.

Because the Ben Folds campout, like those before it, worked so well without much University oversight, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Margaret

Jablonski's comments about possibly regulating future campouts are worrisome.

The term "manage," used by Jablonski, conjures images of her and Chancellor Moeser arriving at the next campout like mom and dad crashing a high-school sleepover.

And Moeser, like an out-of-touch parent, admitted last week he hadn't heard of Folds.

And so it goes with campouts. Students enjoy them because it's an opportunity to socialize in a relaxed and novel atmosphere with friends and strangers alike. Injecting unnecessary rules is sure to spoil the merriment.

Whenever students get to having a good time on campus, administrators will always be tempted to step in and regulate. But for campouts a better idea would be to follow two old axioms: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," and "Rock 'n' roll!"

The cost of an education

All state schools should see their share of increase

Gov. Mike Easley's office touts his new budget for its generosity in the education section, calling it the "nation's most ambitious education budget."

Unfortunately, some of these projects Easley hopes to fund with bonds rather than with tax revenue, meaning that the state would borrow money to finance this budget. By funding through bonds, our state will accumulate debt to serve its children and young people now, only to force them to pay the cost plus interest later.

The plan would add funding to help low-income students graduate from college debt free and to help universities with construction costs. It also builds education from the bottom up, providing more funds for preschool programs and increasing teacher salaries.

The total \$20.1 billion price tag represents an increase of \$1.2 billion compared with last year's budget. Our own Rep. Joe Hackney, the new speaker of the N.C. House, called the plan "fiscally conservative."

Though we don't think that's quite accurate, it's true that the state could use the extra funds for education. Years after Judge Manning of the N.C. Supreme Court mandated a basic level of education for all N.C. students, he noted that the state was doing a poor job of establishing that basic standard. Now, we hope the state is galvanized to help create equality of opportunity for public school students and will use any funding increases toward this aim.

The divvying of construction funds between UNC-system campuses has created some controversy. Under Easley's budget, only 12 of the 16 campuses will receive a portion of the funds he plans to borrow. UNC-Chapel Hill and N.C. State are among those, but UNC-Charlotte is not. This creates a perceived snub for it and the other campuses not included. But just because funding is not equally distributed doesn't necessarily mean that it is poorly allocated.

Granted, at UNC-CH we just want the construction to

finish and the mesh fences to migrate. But, N.C. State already has raised outside funds for a new animal hospital.

This year's construction funding would supplement that amount, rather than funding one project entirely. In UNC-C's case, it has no substantial base funds to work from, making it more difficult for the state to completely fund a particular venture.

While we expect the two larger universities to receive more funds, state officials shouldn't forget that 14 other universities also serve North Carolinians well; just because they aren't as high profile doesn't mean they should be ignored. With the right financial support, each university has its niche.

Now we look to the General Assembly to maintain education as a priority in its budget discussions. We hope that it will fund public schools to attain a basic standard of education for all students, and we hope that it will be generous to universities, despite recent tuition increases at all campuses.

Where money gets wasted

County should look to UNC for help with new slogan

In its search for a new slogan to represent the area, the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau is spending a pretty penny — \$200,000 to be exact.

The bureau hired Jennings, a Chapel Hill-based advertising firm, to formulate the phrase and develop a tourism Web site.

We can't wait to see what clever line the firm comes up with to describe our quaint little burg, but it is strange the bureau felt the need to pay a company when this area is home to one of the nation's best journalism schools.

There are a plethora of students and faculty with expertise in public relations and marketing here at UNC. A new slogan and ad campaign could have

been a homework assignment. Many students, being Chapel Hill tourists in some sense themselves, understand the unique experience that the county offers visitors.

They know what attracts visitors to Chapel Hill — part of that brought them to UNC in the first place — and so they are prime people to formulate a slogan. Students would be happy to help out — coming up with a town slogan would look great on a résumé.

Even turning the search into a contest open to both students and residents surely would provide the town with a slogan at least comparable to whatever Jennings decides upon.

Not to mention the contest would facilitate a joint venture

between the county and UNC, further improving town-gown relations.

If nothing else, using submissions instead of a private company would have saved Orange County taxpayers' money.

Here are a few suggestions of our own. Maybe we can see a slice of that \$200,000.

"The other OC," which would help to attract younger visitors. Or Chapel Hill also could utilize the unofficial town slogan: "The Southern Part of Heaven."

But we're sure that residents and students could have come up with some even better ideas and ask that you tell us yours. When trying to describe what makes this place so unique, who better to turn to than the people who love it.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"This is like coming home for us. ... Music is a glorious gift — it's a bridge builder in a land of walls."

GEORGE HAMILTON IV, COUNTRY MUSIC STAR, AT UNC VISIT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Due to space constraints, letters are sometimes cut. Read the full-length versions or post your own response to a letter, editorial or story online. VISIT www.dailytarheel.com/feedback

Protests are down because Iraq has fewer casualties

TO THE EDITOR: Tuesday's article about war protests missed a crucial difference between the Iraq and Vietnam conflict that likely contributes significantly to today's relatively muted protest efforts: casualties.

Any talk of numbers is going to unavoidably and regrettably dehumanize the precious and promising lives that we lose in war. But the numbers provide a sound explanation for less vociferous war opposition this time around.

The Vietnam conflict killed around 58,000 American soldiers. The Iraq war to date has killed 3,161 — just more than 5 percent of the Vietnam total. Further, the rate of casualty incursion in Vietnam was significantly higher, 350 soldiers a week at its height in 1968 versus less than half that in the worst month in Iraq so far.

Though polls show similar levels of opposition for both wars, the polls do not measure the intensity of this opposition. Right now, intensity is not high enough to make students skip class. But given an escalated or hopelessly open-ended conflict, I think we would see the same spirited protests of the Vietnam era.

Scott O'Brien
Graduate Student
Political Science

Columnist worsened divide between teacher and pupil

TO THE EDITOR: In response to the column, "Teaching from a student's perspective": Congratulations, you have successfully stretched the divide between teacher and pupil. Your suggestions mirror the fact that many students are selfish and lazy, and confirm the notion many young academics are apathetic, grade-grubbing, unintelligent blow-hards.

If you can't handle the reading, take an easier class, maybe it's just too demanding for you. I understand it's hard to balance school, extra-curriculars, and a social life, but it's a privilege to attend a University. And if you can't appreciate that, you should get out and take time to see what life is like for those who cannot afford the lifestyle you lead.

Furthermore, the grievance you lay out about teacher's complaining about their personal lives is embarrassing. Professors are real people. They have real problems, and their lives are shaped by as much emotional strife as yours. Perhaps if you took the time to look at them as similar individuals, you'd see they might have guidance to offer that extends far beyond the classroom.

I'd say the real problem among teachers and students is the lack of serious regard for student's capabilities. Many teachers see students as incapable of understanding some of the more "elevated concepts." People like you fuel their perception of the student body, and until students establish themselves as willing and able participants in the academic forum we will never be considered intellectually equal.

Leyla Ballantyne
Junior
English and Economics

SPEAK OUT

WRITING GUIDELINES:

- Please type: Handwritten letters will not be accepted.
- Sign and date: No more than two people should sign letters.
- Students: Include your year, major and phone number.
- Faculty/staff: Include your department and phone number.
- Edit: The DTH edits for space, clarity, accuracy and vulgarity. Limit letters to 250 words.

SUBMISSION:

- Drop-off: at our office at Suite 2409 in the Student Union.
- E-mail: to editdesk@unc.edu
- Send: to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, N.C., 27515.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Columns, cartoons and letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of The Daily Tar Heel or its staff. Editorials are the opinions solely of The Daily Tar Heel editorial board. The board consists of six board members, the associate opinion editor, the opinion editor and the editor. The 2006-07 editor decided not to vote on the board.

A capella group did not mean to offend anyone

TO THE EDITOR: When we agreed to sing a song as part of the "Pit breakup," we had no idea how that event would unfold. We would never want to publicly humiliate anyone or be a part of anything considered vulgar.

As many DTH readers know, we often perform in the Pit as a service to the University community. We were simply there to sing, not to demean, and we apologize to those who were offended by our participation.

Amanda Bolch
President
UNC Loreleis

Editorial wrong to support the Death with Dignity Act

TO THE EDITOR: I was disturbed by your 26 Feb. editorial, "Following the Oregon Trail," in which you advocate the Death with Dignity Act.

I understand that people with terminal illnesses face extreme pain and may feel themselves to be a burden on their loved ones. Still, I do not understand why the government should allow people facing such illnesses or serious disabilities to end their lives.

As I am intent on marrying someone with a disability, the idea that a loved one should decide that life is no longer worth living saddens me. The Death with Dignity Act promotes a negative stereotype of people living with disabilities and ignores the rights of the families who care for them.

As a Catholic, I believe in the sanctity of life from conception until a natural death and could not support the Death with Dignity Act. I hope that if such a measure should come up in the popular election, the citizens of this state would vote against it.

Dan Burke
Graduate Student
Physics and Astronomy

Bicycles for campus police put pedestrians in danger

TO THE EDITOR: The addition of bicycles to the UNC DPS arsenal of weapons is irresponsible and dangerous. Yes, weapons. Apparently, the officers received them last Thursday (or as far as I could tell, considering it looked like they had never used one before).

I watched three officers attempt to pop wheelies in front of Davis, then proceed to ride through the Pit at noon on the sunniest day of the week (which even the most inconsiderate University student would not attempt). Then one of them actually hit a girl on her way into the Union.

I thought the police were here to make us feel safer. How are we supposed to respect their authority when they can't even respect our personal space?

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The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893,
114 years
of editorial freedom

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