



JEFF SOPLOP
IF THE WATER'S ITCHY, GET OUT
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You don't know what you got 'til it's gone

I love experiencing nature firsthand, so I was stoked this summer to visit the famous Garden of the Gods Park while traveling across Colorado.

In my head, I imagined a beautiful hike for several hours punctuated by breathtaking views of the gigantic red-sandstone spires the park is renowned for. What I actually found was a park so heavily developed with roads and information signs that the rock formations looked like a museum exhibit rather than a wonder of nature.

For visitors who didn't want to bother walking or driving to see the geological formations up close, the multimillion-dollar tourist center offered a bookstore, a multimedia presentation about the rocks and great views of the park in a comfy, air-conditioned environment.

I was dumbfounded. How could anyone take a place with such stunning natural beauty and develop it into a tourist trap that caters to the lazy and obese? As Joni Mitchell's often-covered song, "Big Yellow Taxi," observes, "they paved paradise and put up a parking lot." But why would anyone do that?

Although lots of reasons come to mind, the central issue is control. As mankind has "evolved," we've gotten better at making bigger and more powerful stuff. We used to fight with rocks, then swords, then guns, then nuclear weapons. We used to walk, then we rode horses, then drove, then flew in jumbo jets. You get the idea.

Each advance is accompanied by a shift in how we view the planet. Once upon a time, man needed nature for shelter and food. Now man subjugates nature. We exploit and domesticate the parts we need and ignore the ones we don't. That ignorance has a price. Mankind's progress has resulted in the severe marring of our land, water and air. Many of the tools we incorporate into our daily lives are convenient for us, yet harmful to the environmental conditions we live in.

The consequences of our actions are everywhere, and some big ones are visible right here in North Carolina. In one recent study by geologists from East Carolina University, they found that "large segments of the Outer Banks are already collapsing" due to rising sea levels and fiercer storms caused by global warming — a phenomena that only two-thirds of our country even believes is real. Not that their disbelief will help the residents of the Outer Banks.

Some of the costs we pay for our conveniences aren't obvious — do you know which carcinogens are in the air you're breathing right now? Probably not, but your lungs do.

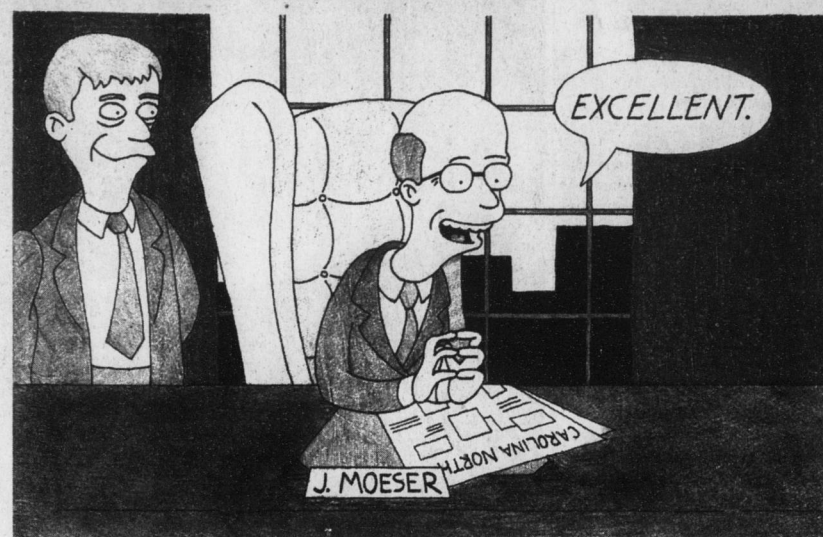
Solving environmental problems isn't about opposing development or turning back the clock. Technology has had benefits such as increased lifespan and a decline in the number of hours worked in developed nations. While that provides for more leisure time outdoors, it's tough to enjoy a planet when the best parts are trashed and the resources spent. The only thing to do would be watch Discovery Channel reruns and wait for the polar ice caps to melt.

Practical steps to avoid that outcome are great — it's in everyone's interest to bike to school rather than drive or use compact fluorescent light bulbs rather than conventional ones — but addressing the real issue requires a fundamental shift in our worldview.

Continuing to talk about silly notions like "saving the environment" won't do much. The planet carried on just fine before humans ever existed and can do so again.

But we can talk about how to minimize our impact on the environment. We can observe how beautiful nature is when left untouched by man. And most importantly, we can consider how the decisions we make today will affect the world inhabited by our children and grandchildren. That might not be as comfortable as an air-conditioned tourist trap, but it's far more rewarding.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Mason Phillips, mphil@email.unc.edu



Here we go again?

Intra-governmental tensions underlie Congress bill

Trouble is a-brewing in the Union, and it isn't because Alpine ran out of sweet tea ... again.

Student Congress and the executive branch of student government are in the midst of their first disagreement since Speaker Tyler Younts and Student Body President Eve Carson were selected to lead their respective organizations.

The problems arose out of a bill that was approved by Congress last week that would require any student fee increases that go through the body to be approved by a two-thirds majority before being sent to a student referendum.

The bill is now on Carson's desk awaiting her signature.

We urge Carson to sign it. It is hard to deny that Congress has ideological divisions that are better suited for national politics than student government. These could affect

how many fee-increase proposals go to a full student vote.

But if a fee is proven to be truly worthwhile by the group bringing it before Congress — which, incidentally, many times is the executive branch — it should have no trouble passing. This also requires groups seeking fee increases to provide a compelling reason for the increase.

In addition, members of Congress have the responsibility and the resources to fully research fee increases and decide if it is something that will benefit the student body. After all, that is what we elect them to do.

There is also something to be said about the effect a veto would have on Congress-executive relations.

Doing her best impression of former Sen. John Kerry, Carson initially indicated that she had no problems with the bill, then rescinded her support after gathering information on the

legislation. Immediately prior to the vote, however, Carson told Congress she would not be angry if they passed the measure.

This flip-flopping has led Younts to wonder if he can trust Carson when she says she will not veto a bill.

We understand that gathering more information will sometimes change minds, but Carson really shouldn't have indicated her amiability to the bill prior to fully understanding the issue at hand.

Both branches are committed to avoiding the kind of animosity that characterized the relationship between former Student Body President James Allred and former Congress Speaker Luke Farley last year. A veto might put this year's leaders on a fast track to repeat that mess.

Both for the good of the students and for student government relations, Carson should give the bill her John Hancock.

It's just good business

Easley right to keep performance-based incentives

People respond to incentives. That's basic economics.

For instance, people actually drive less safely with extra safety features in cars. If you stuck a giant spear through the steering wheel aimed at the driver's heart instead of that airbag, people would think a lot longer before they went 35 mph over the speed limit on a state highway.

That's why Gov. Mike Easley's Aug. 30 decision to veto a bill that would have changed the way North Carolina offers economic incentives to businesses was a good move.

The bill would have provided \$40 million to Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. in Cumberland County to help keep it in the state.

There is an inherent danger in singling out an individual company with legislation, particularly when there are no strings attached to that money.

The bill would have run contrary to the existing program, One North Carolina Fund, which takes into account multiple factors, including economic

and environmental impact and the quality of jobs before awarding money to the company.

The performance-based system is superior to simply providing money upfront, as some states such as Virginia do. If companies receive an initial flat sum, they have no further attachment to the state.

On the other hand, withholding the money as an incentive until the business follows through on certain promises to help the state ensures that the money is justifiably well spent.

Basically, if businesses haven't received their money yet, they're going to do whatever the state wants them to do in order to get it.

Easley's proposal in place of the bill he vetoed would stick with the performance-based system, thus ensuring that the end benefit to the state justifies the means.

It also would address a complaint of the current system by spreading the economic incentives around to poorer counties in addition to more-developed areas such as the Triangle.

Opponents of the performance-based system argue that it makes it harder for North Carolina to attract businesses next to states such as Virginia.

Luckily, the Tar Heel state doesn't have much to worry about in that category. In June, Forbes named North Carolina the third-best state in the country for business.

We've got a lot of other things going for us other than economic incentives from the state, things that make businesses want to come here regardless.

Our state has the second-lowest labor costs in the country and the second-fastest projected income growth rate. Businesses can have lower costs and N.C. citizens will buy more.

And just because Virginia does it doesn't mean we should stoop to the same low levels.

Businesses get a good return on the money they invest here, and since the state holds those businesses to higher standards, we get a good return on the money we offer them to come here.

It's just good business.

UNC is falling down

University should look into its construction contractors

First there were the broken elevators in Morrison. Then came round two of contaminated water in Caudill Labs and Chapman Hall. Now Hooker Field is sinking and the School of Law has collapsed ... Why is UNC falling apart?

This plethora of problems might be entirely unrelated. But under the circumstances, it wouldn't hurt UNC to conduct a comprehensive review of the construction companies it uses.

The School of Law building was completed in 1968. In terms of construction, 40 years is practically nothing — certainly not enough time to justify a building's collapse.

Even if it's just the brick facade that was affected, as engineers maintained, the

damage to the building has part of the School of Law closed for a month. Not only did this put students at risk, but now the classes in an already overcrowded building must find another place to meet on an already overcrowded campus.

The sports teams that practiced on Hooker Field 3 also are searching for a new place to reside. After depressions were first noticed on the field this spring, gravel was added underneath the turf to reinforce the sinking area. These efforts were to no avail, and now Hooker Field 3 is closed at least until the end of the semester.

Officials are justifying the recent closings with talk of abnormal natural circumstances, saying that UNC isn't to blame.

Apparently the building codes under which the School of Law was constructed didn't account for the high temperatures we've recently encountered, and the depressions in Hooker Field are the result of bad soil or the natural settling of the land.

Yet none of the other buildings constructed around the time period of the School of Law have had any similar problems. Nor have problems been found on any other fields on campus.

Maybe global warming is to blame for this problem. Maybe it's a failure of the land on which the nation's oldest public university was constructed. Or maybe, in light of the crumbling campus, UNC just needs to take a serious look at the companies it contracts for construction.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"Every person in this state has an interesting story if you'll just listen."

BILL FRIDAY, FORMER UNC-SYSTEM PRESIDENT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To read the full-length versions
VISIT <http://dailytarheelpublic.wordpress.com>
Post your own response to a letter, editorial or story online.
VISIT www.dailytarheel.com/feedback

An alternative perspective on campus construction

TO THE EDITOR:

I remember not too long ago, as a freshman, I thought, "This campus is going to be really nice after all this construction."

How silly and naive. There's no doubt colleges are engaged in an "arms race" to attract more students. But you can't blame Carolina for adding amenities to get more business.

They've added new dorms, upgraded old dorms and built fantastic new buildings in the hopes of bringing in more money.

They'll tell you that it's all part of "the plan" or "the changes had to be made."

Maybe. It could have been done better. When I was a freshman, one could walk from the sidewalk by the SRC straight across the street to the stairs by the Union.

Not anymore, you have to go out of your way and cross up the road. Then, you have some choices. You can go through the Student Stores and hopefully spend some money, or you can stay outside and walk over to the steps.

The floor plan (at the Rams Head Dining Hall) could have only been designed by an accomplished power walker.

If you want to grab some pasta after getting a burger, you have to walk two miles over to the Italian area.

That new advising area on South Campus is nice, with all the bricks replacing what was grass.

I think I'll call it N.C. State Jr.

Casey Sturgill
Senior
Journalism

Playboy Magazine causes thoughtful introspection

TO THE EDITOR:

As my girlfriend and I waded through Bull's Head Bookshop before the football game last Saturday, we thought it would be fun to find Playboy — the Devil's magazine — at the newsstand.

We searched for about 20 seconds before finding the magazine enclosed in plastic, hiding on the top shelf.

Before placing my hands on this Pandora's box, my lover quickly reminded me of the danger involved.

Clearly, I could have been stabbed, shot or trampled.

So, I went outside, smoked a cigarette as thoughts of existence and morality raced through my mind, and concluded: Breasts are far more entertaining.

Matthew Eller
Senior
English

Women don't know what porn does to and for men

TO THE EDITOR:

Why do I keep reading all of these (letters), written by women, that explain to people how porn affects the male gender?

Have any of you ever had a Y chromosome or been a man? Please stop thinking you know what it's like to be a guy and read porn.

You don't. Case closed.

Jordan Rogers
Junior
Political Science

Sale of Playboy actually contributes to mission

TO THE EDITOR:

I agree that the purpose of everything on campus is and rightly should be to educate and enrich the lives of students.

However, I would argue that the case of pornographic media is different than alcohol and tobacco.

Is upholding a commitment to freedom of speech on campus not a part of the University's educational mission?

Should the University really give the message that, if one disagrees with the morals and/or psychological effects of a publication, one should censor it away?

Would removing Playboy from the shelves be a precedent for removing from campus some student publication with a different purpose, but which contains the same sort of images?

If there were enough demand on campus for white-supremacist magazines, and if the Bull's Head chose to sell such literature, I would defend them on the basis that exposure to this material might be harmful, but in the long run, this University cannot survive without free speech.

Max Ballenger
Junior
Physics

Student fees are for all groups and publications

TO THE EDITOR:

I write in response to Donnie Hill, who griped that he didn't want student fees going to pay for "biased" publications ("Student fees should not fund biased publications" Sept. 5).

As a rookie Student Congressman almost three years ago, I had a similar view as Mr. Hill but from the left.

I wrote in to the DTH pledging to block an allocation for Alan Keyes' honorarium to the law school's chapter of the Federalist Society.

But I soon learned two things. One, it is not the place of Student Congress, which allocates the student activity fee to student organizations such as Mezcla, to have its own biased debates over which organizations are most deserving of students' money based on the content of their publications or meetings.

Two, Congress is not just ethically but also legally obligated, under U.S. Supreme Court precedent, state law and the Student Code, to be content-neutral when allocating funds.

Congress simply cannot say to Mezcla or, for that matter, the conservative Carolina Review, "We do not agree with your views; you don't get our money anymore."

If an organization gets official recognition, produces material or organizes an event and comes to Congress with a watertight request for money, it will more than likely get that money, even if a lot of students disagree with what they want money for.

Dustin Ingalls
Former Speaker Pro Tem
Student Congress

The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893,
114 years
of editorial freedom

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.

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