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2008 is the year of the camel

As 2007 drew to a close, I was watching the time go by on a Camel cigarette-branded clock in Chapel Hill and thinking that perhaps I really should be that iconoclastic public health student: the one who dared to be cool enough, real enough to actually smoke.

The glass in my hand was also etched with a camel, and I wondered if it would be easier to strike up a conversation if I could ask for a light. The ensuing reverie ended after an internal debate about what type of research method would be best to find out if "striking up" a conversation was really easier with a cigarette.

All I really wanted to know was what time it was. Instead there I was, a public health graduate student, thinking about how I am drawn to smoking. If you mapped out these moments when tobacco marketing draws your attention, I think you'd get a map that looked like the famous map of a cholera outbreak in London, sickness and death mapped out as black lines in houses surrounding a central point. Except, instead of a water pump at the center, you would find the University of North Carolina.

All around you find camels. Herds of them — on napkins at the West End Wine Bar, on shot glasses at Blend, lit up on the wall at East End Martini Bar, behind the counter at Hell, hanging around the necks of beautiful women dressed in "Playboy Bunny" suits handing out free packs at He's Not Here (you can even take a Polaroid with them) and on glasses at the Dead Mule. You will find them lighting your bill when you sign for it and on faux-vintage signs.

At one or two bars, it might seem that Camel paraphernalia was part of the decor. But if you go out in Chapel Hill, count them for yourself. When almost every bar that allows smoking has a glowing three-dimensional camel etched in glass somewhere, Camel napkins, Camel ashtrays and (surprise) Camel cigarettes for sale, you do have to wonder ... might the tobacco companies be targeting us students as a lucrative market?

I don't know how the tobacco industry refers to college students, but the past hints at something less than flattering. Seum is one way RJ Reynolds's (maker of Camel cigarettes) referred to customers. They even put it in their PowerPoint: Project Sub-Culture Urban Market. Project SCUM took methods that had been tested first on black neighborhoods and honed them on neighborhoods with homeless or gay people. Project SCUM's plan was the ubiquitous availability of tobacco products and advertising. Now it appears college students are the targets.

If RJ Reynolds has any connection to that Duke tobacco money, imagine what they must call UNC students.

I've heard far too many times in my life, "Love the sinner, hate the sin." Tobacco control has too often been about hating the sinner and the sin. We should be thinking more along the lines of: "Love the smoker, hate the tobacco companies." And, here in Chapel Hill with its herd of Camel advertisements clouding the air and slowly destroying lungs around a newly smoke-free campus, it's worth thinking about the local business community. Going smoke-free improves profit and protects the health of employees and patrons.

We have the option of calling on Chapel Hill's business community to stop serving up emphysema and impotence (yes, cigarettes do more than "just" cause cancer) with each drink. For those of us who smoke there's also the free N.C. QuitLine at 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669). As the UNC campus goes smoke-free, I hope 2008 will not be another year of the Camel.

Editor's Note: Guest columns run every Monday. If you would like to submit a guest column, contact the Opinion Editor Adam Storck at apstorck@unc.edu.

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

CAMPAIGN BUMPER STICKERS

MITT ROMNEY '08
The candidate with moMittum!

VOTE RUDY
OR THE TERRORISTS WIN

McCain
You kids stay off my lawn!

Huckabee
Christ 08

Fred08
Meh.

Ron Paul 2008
SCREW ALL YOU GUYS.

Blue about blue books

Student Stores' policy is an unnecessary inconvenience

Just when we thought test taking at UNC couldn't get any more formidable, UNC Student Stores decided to start charging students for scantrons and blue books.

With blue books costing 15 cents each and scantrons 8 cents apiece, rushing to class for a test now requires a pit stop to wait in line and fish around for pocket change. On top of being an unnecessary charge, the long lines of people buying blue books on test days is sure to be inconvenient and inefficient.

Of course, you could buy your test materials in advance and catch great savings — get seven blue books for \$1 and save 5 cents, or save a whopping 6 cents with the seven-scantrons-for-50-cents deal.

But it's not really about the extra few dollars that students will shell out for test materials during their time at UNC — it's the principle of the matter.

Surely there is 15 cents somewhere in our skyrocketing tuition and fees for the occasional blue book and scantron. If nothing else, UNC could take a few pages out of each student's allotted ITS printing, which leaves many students with enough paper to print a small novel at the end of each semester.

We understand that it costs money to supply test materials for an entire university, but there are better ways to recoup the cost than charging for single blue books. Academic departments pay to order test materials in bulk, a much more logical

process than having students pay individually.

Who knows where this new cost could lead — perhaps a secret black market for blue books will appear on campus or a nighttime burning of scantrons will take place in the Pit.

Students aren't actually required to use blue books for tests; maybe there will be a campuswide revolution to write on notebook paper instead.

More likely, students will bow down and quietly pay their pocket change. But we hope that when midterms roll around this semester and the campus experiences unprecedented levels of stress and agitation, Student Stores will realize just how inconvenient and problematic its new policy really is.

All or nothing

ASG lacks purpose; targeting funds won't help

The UNC-system General Administration, in conjunction with the Association of Student Governments, has embarked on yet another adventure in missing the point.

Because of its inability to spend its money appropriately — or, often more accurately, to spend it at all — ASG expenses will now be screened by an official from the UNC-system academic affairs office before the money is allocated for use.

Unfortunately, administrators have yet to define exactly what kind of role they plan to play in the ASG's spending habits.

Regardless, the ASG's use of its money is only a corollary of a much larger problem and one that spending oversight alone will fail to solve — the group's existential lack of purpose.

System officials have said they would like to see the ASG's funds spent so as to be consistent with the group's mission. That's a hard standard to hold when nobody seems to know what exactly that mission is.

The ASG has collected \$1

from each student in the UNC system each year since 2002, amounting to about \$190,000 in fee money for this year.

More than \$86,000 of that is discretionary income, with some of that going to officer salaries and monthly meetings.

During the past several years, the ASG has allowed a huge surplus of money to accumulate because it has been unable to find anything even remotely productive on which to spend it.

Part of the surplus is caused by unnecessarily stringent spending regulations imposed by the UNC system, which also prevent the group from investing its reserves or returning them to students.

But when the ASG does spend money, the results usually aren't pretty — back in December 2006, for instance, the group traveled to Washington, D.C., to protest the politically immune Supreme Court.

And when they're not pursuing futile causes, officers enjoy giving themselves raises and increasing their travel budgets.

To find something to spend money on, we propose the ASG

form a committee to appoint a task force to hire a consultant — whom it can pay with the ASG's excess funds — in order to then disregard his suggestions and enforce a moratorium on all spending indefinitely.

If confused, ask the Chapel Hill Town Council for help.

While the ASG hasn't had a problem with overspending, it's very clear that often it is spending simply for the sake of it, with no focus whatsoever — a dilemma indicative of the group's overarching identity crisis.

If the UNC system hopes to help the ASG, it needs to look at more than its finances; it must help the ASG define its role as a systemwide representative of the students.

If it chooses not to do so, and simply wants oversight of funds, then the system is effectively giving up on the ASG.

The ASG's leaders have thus far proved to be utterly inept at establishing any sense of purpose. If system officials aren't willing to help them do that, they should just dissolve the group altogether.

Wright is wrong

Should be expelled from GA for ethics violations

After five and a half years of suspect campaign finance paperwork filings, Rep. Thomas Wright, D-New Hanover, finally is being put under the microscope.

On Jan. 4, Wright, the former right-hand man of disgraced ex-Speaker Jim Black, D-Mecklenburg, pleaded not guilty to six felony charges — five counts of obtaining property by false pretense and one count of obstruction of justice. His peers in the assembly also took aim at him and filed eight counts of ethical misconduct.

While it's nice to see the General Assembly taking corruption within its ranks seriously this time around, it still has some room for improvement.

For his part, Wright needs to man up and resign. And if he won't, our legislators need to kick him out.

The criminal charges against Wright say his creative bank-

rolling consisted of everything from using fraudulent grant papers to secure a credit line to using his campaign coffers as a personal slush fund. He is facing up to 11 years in prison if convicted.

In addition to the criminal charges, Wright faces the wrath of a special House ethics committee. That committee filed all eight charges in a unanimous vote. Committee Chairman Rep. Rick Glazier, D-Cumberland, also commented that Wright has shown a pattern of "purposeful, deliberate misconduct."

Pattern, you say? Glazier just might be referring to the fact Wright has either failed to file or incompletely filed his campaign finance disclosure forms for the last 22 consecutive quarters. We can only imagine how late this guy is on his cable bill.

In response, Wright has refused to resign and is planning to contest the committee's

charges.

If found guilty of the ethics violations, the committee has the choice to either censure him or expel him from the House. If expelled, he would be first representative given the axe since Josiah Turner 128 years ago.

Of course, unless he's actually found guilty of the charges, he can just run again next election because there is no legal standing that allows the GA to bar anyone access to political office.

Wright is taking another page from his role model Black's playbook and running for re-election despite the charges.

So while we're glad the legislature is trying to take the hard line now, waiting five and half years before asking any questions is utterly pathetic.

The House passed all those nice ethics reforms last year for a reason. It's about time our legislators dust them off and give enforcing them a try.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"When we play our style of defense ... there's not that many teams that can hang with us."

WAYNE ELLINGTON, UNC GUARD, ON N.C. STATE VICTORY

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

Institute for Sustainable Development offers events

TO THE EDITOR:
As the director of the Institute for Sustainable Development, a new membership organization in the Triangle, I would like to invite all UNC students and faculty who are interested in sustainability and sustainable development to two events we are hosting this month. The first event is an informal informational lunch Tuesday from noon to 1 p.m. in room 4003 at the FedEx Global Education Center. Pizza and drinks will be provided.

The second is a networking event on Jan. 31, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Counter Culture Coffee (4911 S. Alston Ave., Durham). RSVPs are required for the event at Counter Culture.

Through networking events, seminars, workshops and the development of a sustainability metric, the institute will connect students to local community development organizations, international development organizations and businesses in the Triangle community that are engaged in sustainable development work both locally and globally.

For more information about becoming a member of the Institute or to RSVP to the Jan. 31 event, e-mail amckune@sustainablefoundation.org.

Anne McKune
Director
Institute for Sustainable Development

Maybe Student Stores is not bad for health after all

TO THE EDITOR:
In "Student Stores shouldn't be selling harmful plastics," (Jan. 10), the writer misrepresents the harm that may be done by the polycarbonate bottles sold in Student Stores (Nalgene's).

No. 7 plastic is a general label used for recycling that designates all "other" plastics and has not been "scientifically proven to cause fertility problems."

Although Bisphenol A, or BPA, is used to make polycarbonate, it is not present at the surface of the product, meaning that it cannot leach out into one's water or food.

After testing, the Society of the Plastics Industry could find no detectable BPA, down to the parts per billion, in water stored in polycarbonate bottles.

The EPA and the Scientific Committee on Food of the E.U. agree that, even when exposed to more than 50 milligrams per day, there is no adverse effect.

A polycarbonate bottle is safe when kept out of the dishwasher and without interior scratches for at least three years. While it is important to be aware of what we are putting in our bodies, it is equally important to check out the science before crying wolf.

While endocrine disruptors are becoming more of a concern in our environment, they are not coming from your Nalgene.

Meanwhile, do find a reusable water bottle, UNC logo or not, instead of buying bottled water.

Kristen Jarman
Sophomore
Environmental Science

Laura Stephenson
Sophomore
Environmental Science

Paying for testing supplies isn't a big deal; it's 15 cents

TO THE EDITOR:
With respect to the decision to charge students for testing materials ("Students now must pay up to take tests," Jan. 9), I am not sympathetic to students who would complain. I attended a school for two years that charged 25 cents per blue book, and I still managed to scrape together a few pennies for clothing and shelter.

I understand that tuition is not easy to pay and that out-of-state tuition is increasing at concerning levels, but covering the cost of testing materials at a whopping 15 cents per blue book and 8 cents per scantron is something I'm willing to do.

If people can justify spending \$70 on a pair of "trendy" jeans, surely they are willing to pop for the paper. If we can pay the beer bill, we can pay the exam bill. All that is required is foresight.

Tim Wander
Senior
History

UNC students foot the bill for modern conveniences

TO THE EDITOR:
In a letter to the editor on Friday ("Quit your whining about the cost of blue books," Jan. 11), (Kathy) Morgan argued that students should stop complaining about having to pay for bluebooks because we get free bus rides and have better technology than when she was a student. However, her assertions are inaccurate.

This past semester, I was charged \$44.75 for a Transit Fee and \$1.38 for a Transit-Safe Ride Fee as part of my student fees. At 75 cents per ride, I could ride the bus almost 62 times for the amount of student fees I pay toward public transportation.

I would be happy to pay 75 cents per ride instead of paying \$46.13 each semester because I only use public transportation a few times each semester. Perhaps students should be given a choice between paying per ride and paying a transit fee each semester.

On top of that, students pay \$193.94 each semester on Education & Technology Fees and a \$6.50 Registration Fee.

So while we are afforded greater "tech luxuries" than Ms. Morgan was when she attended UNC, these luxuries come at a price for all students. Perhaps many students would elect to wait in a long line instead of paying \$6.50 each semester for registration fees.

In my opinion, the issue is not that students now have to pay 15 cents for a bluebook. The issue is that the University seems to always be looking for ways to increase student fees.

Maybe next year students will have a new "Bluebook and Scantron Fee" of \$5 per semester. Would that solve the problem?

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The Daily Tar Heel

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114 years
of editorial freedom

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SPEAK OUT

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- 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.

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