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## A blind eye to glaring service projects

I moved to this fine state two years ago from California, and I must say, I like what you've done with the place.

In fact, setting aside the lack of a decent place to surf and the absence of successful football at any level, I feel almost at home between the traffic jams, multiplying crops of McMansions and delicious \$4 coffee. If not for the occasional Confederate flag and waking up after a night out smelling like an ash tray, the area is similar to my home, across from Stanford University in northern California.

Yet the Triangle also reminds me of the town which lies a half mile east of Stanford — East Palo Alto — which through neglect, isolation and intrusive governmental policies earned the FBI's distinction of the United States' per capita murder capital in 1992. Ironically, a school district within one mile of arguably the nation's top university — with no lack of pedagogical expertise — needs a Teach For America site.

Literally walled off from the rest of the region, all concerns of poverty, crime and blight are segregated to East Palo Alto and forgotten — at least until property values become so exorbitant and crowded even the most blighted areas are ripe for gentrification. While my friends at Stanford and other great private universities generously offered their services to the downtrodden of Africa and Southeast Asia as undergraduates, while problems within earshot further festered.

The only geographical ties students of most private schools possess are to the campus itself, and relationships beyond the walls of campus are unlikely. Chapel Hill, however, seems different from stereotypical university towns.

Writing about aloof college students and strained town-gown relations is easy and overplayed. Normally such laments ring hollow not only because they are holier-than-though polemics but because the connection between students and the surrounding town is artificial. Yet North Carolina isn't a four-year layover for Carolina students, the stop between New Jersey and Manhattan.

Contributions made directly influence the community in which most UNC graduates will reside for the rest of their lives. This unique fact allows students to develop relationships and projects at UNC which might be continued and grown throughout their lives. The desire of students to contribute can't be questioned; the overwhelming number of applications to semester abroad programs demonstrate both interest and initiative. While local causes certainly aren't as sexy as traveling the world, the latter is more about an individual interest than about selfless contribution.

Instead of making an empty call for increased participation within the community, UNC students can ensure the problems of the region are not isolated and tucked away into a neglected corner of the community by creating an atmosphere that rewards service and integrates individual efforts as an expected and lauded portion of everyday life.

Specifically, a UNC education offers students the tools to not only volunteer but to lead others — to create entrepreneurial institutions that provide opportunities for lifelong support and development.

Whether cultivating after-school programs, such as the Write On! workshops in Durham, or physical centers which provide safe havens for students, such as the 826 Valencia writing center in San Francisco and Bull City Headquarters in Durham, UNC offers a unique opportunity to develop lasting institutions, as engagement with the community is likely after graduation.

While flying across the world to hammer nails might produce a great story, it is far less effective than directing the same resources to concerns only a few blocks away.

### EDITORIAL CARTOON By Wayne Stayskal, Tampa Tribune



## Tell us about it

### DOT needed to better publicize new traffic pattern

**K**udos to the town of Chapel Hill in unveiling what could be the most complicated traffic system since the inception of the four-way stop ... and not telling anybody.

The monstrosity of a project that has been cluttering up U.S. 15-501 at Europa Drive and Erwin Road since July 2006 was finally opened Jan. 8.

While we're glad to see any improvement to the convoluted intersection, the next time the Department of Transportation decides to alter a major interchange, they should make the effort to better inform the public about how to use it.

The superstreet is designed to minimize congestion at the intersection. It relies on U-turns to control the flow of traffic and is supposed to improve the safety of the intersection.

Unfortunately, when the new traffic pattern went into effect, most drivers were left confused as to what had been sprung on them. Near accidents and pure confusion marked the unveiling of the new road.

Part of the cause of the confusion is that the DOT made a sad showing in keeping the public informed. The Web site for the project still states that alternate plans for the project are under consideration and states that a public meeting has yet to be scheduled but will occur in late September 2003.

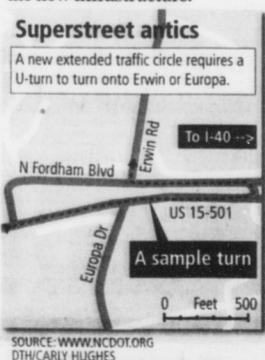
Common sense should have suggested that people must know about the new traffic pattern for it actually to work. At the very least, the DOT could have mailed letters to residents living near the area. After paying close to \$3 million for the project itself, an additional allowance for letters would look paltry — and to make sure the intersection is effective, that's not too much to ask.

The new superstreet's severe lack of informational signage doesn't help the situation. Two U-turn signs aren't quite enough to get the public over the learning curve of an entirely foreign traffic pattern. It doesn't help anything that there is still construction equipment in the median, making it seem as though the new U-turns are not fully operational.

It's not that the superstreet is a bad system. In fact, it is pretty intuitive and should help improve safety in the long run at the dangerous intersection. The problem is that there is a learning curve, particularly when it comes to completely new ideas for traffic management.

So the next time the DOT decides to spring a major traffic reconstruction on the town, it should do a better job of providing easily available information on the proper way to approach the new infrastructure.

**Superstreet antics**  
A new extended traffic circle requires a U-turn to turn onto Erwin or Europa.



SOURCE: WWW.NCDDOT.ORG  
DTH/CARLY HUGHES

## Better safe than sorry

### Involuntary commitment should be added to gun checks

**E**very once in a while, one of those rare initiatives comes along that seems so germane to common sense that it defies party lines and ideologies and is adopted before the ink on the proposal dries.

We saw one of those instances Thursday, and it couldn't have come sooner. The N.C. task force on public safety recommended that the state legislature require involuntary commitment orders be added to national background check data.

The recommendation comes as part of a broader examination of how to improve campus safety in light of the Virginia Tech shooting.

It follows federal gun control legislation signed by President Bush on Jan. 8 that authorizes

financial incentives for states that better their ability to catch individuals not qualified to purchase a gun legally, including those involuntarily committed to mental institutions.

The bill is limited to seeking prevention of individuals with extreme forms of mental illnesses buying guns and thus would do nothing to erode the right of a non-threatening individual to possess a firearm.

The horror of last April's Va. Tech shooting, still fresh in N.C. residents' minds, has given a blood-red underline to the importance of background checks on people buying guns.

The gunman, Seung-Hui Cho, was able to pass a background check and buy two guns despite being labeled a "mental

defective" by a Virginia court.

While Cho still could have posed a threat to students without access to firearms, the devastation he wrought on campus demonstrated the destructive power of guns in the hands of a mentally troubled individual.

And if common sense isn't reason enough, the proposal is made even more appealing by the financial incentives for states. Thus, the N.C. General Assembly has the chance to make the public safer with minimum cost to the state.

Taking preventative measures can't ensure that disastrous events won't occur, but if the state can drastically reduce the chances of a major gun-related tragedy occurring, it should do everything in its power to do so.

## What to do about the Bush

### Mock debate should educate public on impeachment

**F**ormer President Bill Clinton assured us all that he "did not have sexual relations with that woman."

The infamous phrase led to Clinton's impeachment by the House. Now there is a push to impeach President George W. Bush, but the grounds for doing so are up for debate.

The impeachment process is confusing and often misunderstood, which is why we are excited to see Carrboro stepping in to make sure everyone who has one of those "Impeach Bush" bumper stickers actually knows what it means.

To help shed some light on how Bush should be dealt with, instead of their usual debate on the health benefits of flaxseed oil versus cod liver oil, Carrboro will hold a mock debate tonight over whether the calls to impeach are legitimate.

What constitutes a valid rea-

son for impeachment is confusing even to political professionals. Former President Gerald Ford once said, "An impeachable offense is whatever a majority of the House of Representatives considers it to be at a given moment in history."

The Constitution itself allows for impeachment on the grounds of "treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanors," charges that are not at all clear.

The debate will take place at 7 p.m. in the Carrboro Century Center. Hodding Carter III, the assistant secretary of state under President Jimmy Carter, will moderate.

The organizers of the event have arranged for two eminent political experts to actually debate and, with any luck, they will clear up some of the confusion about how impeachment works. Republican Bruce Fein will take up the pro-impeachment angle, while Democrat

Michael Tomasky will argue against it.

The event surely will be beneficial for all parties and should be worthwhile for people who don't understand what impeachment is and what actions will land executive branch members an inquiry by Congress.

In essence, the debate will help the public better understand the pros and cons of impeachment. And learning how the process works isn't a half-bad idea.

Let's face it: If it were up to the masses, and every president that lost the public's favor had to face the music, the incidence of impeachment in our presidential history would be comparable to the number of times in his career Tyler Hansbrough has lost his contact mid-game.

While admission is free, there is limited seating. If you want to attend, be sure to secure your spot at [coalitionfortheconstitution.com/registration](http://coalitionfortheconstitution.com/registration).

### QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"We wanted it to be clear that there have been no laws broken. ... We're comfortable with where we are."

DICK BADDOUR, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR, ON SETTLED LAWSUIT

### 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](http://www.dailytarheel.com/feedback)

#### UNC women's soccer team supports Coach Dorrance

**TO THE EDITOR:**  
As the captains of the 2007 UNC women's soccer team and speaking on behalf of our teammates, we stand in total support of our program and our coaching staff in light of the settlement reached Monday in the lawsuit against coach (Anson) Dorrance and the University.

Playing for coach Dorrance and his assistants, Bill Palladino and Chris Ducar, has been a true honor for us all.

We have great pride in our program and our University, and we are thrilled that the lawsuit, along with the allegations that have hovered over the program for the last 10 years, have come to an end.

It is time for the program to move forward and to continue to win championships while, most importantly, representing UNC with class and sportsmanship on the field and with dedication and excellence in the classroom.

Playing women's soccer at UNC is a unique and special opportunity, the dream of youth soccer players around the world.

We have been fortunate to have had that experience firsthand because of the faith coach Dorrance had in us as players and representatives of UNC.

Jessica Maxwell, Robyn Gayle,  
Yael Averbuch, Katie Brooks  
Captains  
UNC Women's Soccer Team

Editor's Note: The two-signature limit was waived.

#### ID holders are responsible for alcohol sales to minors

**TO THE EDITOR:**  
I am 19 years old. If I have a fake ID, then I deceive someone when I use it. It may say that I am 21, and they may sell me alcohol as a result.

The person I bought this alcohol from has made every attempt to enforce the law. He observed that I appeared to be underage and asked for ID for verification. I then lied, which should place all the blame on me.

So when Adam Bliss may or may not have served alcohol to a minor, the minor was to blame, not Bliss ("Bar faces alcohol infraction," Jan. 11).

Ami Offenbacher-Ferris should be ashamed of herself; just because she cannot control her daughter is no reason to try and shut down an honest business.

If Offenbacher-Ferris really cared about her daughter and this town, she would have taken whatever ID her daughter was using and shredded it, imposed whatever punishment she could think of and not try to have a contributor to our local economy shut down.

Adam Bliss told me one day when I was in his store that he would buy me a Young's Double Chocolate Stout on my 21st birthday and not a day before.

(People) who think that this man would not make every effort to stop underage drinking need only meet him to learn that they are wrong.

Scott Neidich  
Freshman  
Undecided

#### Paul's views and policies make him a bad choice

**TO THE EDITOR:**  
I was disappointed in Monday's Ron Paul article ("Road Trip" for Ron Paul," Jan. 14) because it left out several crucial facts about Ron Paul.

First of all, there is strong evidence to suggest he is a bigot; he accepted a campaign contribution from a known white supremacist and had a newsletter printed in his name that railed against blacks, Jews and homosexuals.

Second of all, Ron Paul supports removing any and all government regulation on business.

Ron Paul would attempt to institute the "laissez-faire" economic policy of the industrial revolution, a policy famous because it resulted in Upton Sinclair's book, "The Jungle."

Ron Paul also supports disbanding the Food and Drug Administration.

Third of all, Ron Paul supports teaching creationism in public schools, as he indicated in the Florida "values voter" debate.

Fourth of all, Ron Paul is a strong supporter of the gold standard, which nearly every top economist agrees is completely infeasible and a terrible idea.

Last of all, Ron Paul was the only "nay" vote in the entire House on a bill that divested the U.S. government from industries in Darfur that were helping to perpetuate the genocide.

Ron Paul might be a tempting vote because he is so different from all the other candidates, but there is a reason that he is so different: Most of his policies are terrible.

If you want your civil liberties protected and you want us out of the war in Iraq, just vote Democrat.

John Wait  
Sophomore  
Physics

#### Even Italian fascists can get a bus to run on time

**TO THE EDITOR:**  
The degree to which the Chapel Hill Transit buses are running late is beginning to become absurd.

I was forced to wait 20 minutes for a bus because the first J bus that came along was full (as is usual most mornings), and the D bus that was supposed to come a few minutes later never showed. I was forced to wait for the next J bus and resign myself to being late for class.

Unfortunately this is not an isolated incident and is quickly becoming somewhat of a theme.

With all the money Chapel Hill Transit spends on these new buses, you would think they could get them to run on time, or at least reasonably close to it.

I mean, if Benito Mussolini can get public transportation to run on schedule, surely Chapel Hill Transit can.

If not, perhaps it's time I invest in a black shirt.

Chris Garrison  
Senior  
History

### The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893,  
114 years  
of editorial freedom

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### 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](mailto: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 eight board members, the associate opinion editor, the opinion editor and the editor. The 2007-08 editor decided not to vote on the board.