



SAM PERKINS
THAT'S WHAT HE SAID

Sam Perkins is an environmental studies and journalism double major.
E-MAIL: SSPERKIN@EMAIL.UNC.EDU

Students playing real-life Frogger

Everyone is sick and tired of it. Everyone on both sides is part of the problem. There isn't enough room on campus for both pedestrians and motorists.

Other campuses don't have this problem (at least not this bad) thanks to much more intelligent planning. Go to the University of Florida or N.C. State University — or most any urban campus — and you find tunnels routing pedestrians under roads.

At UNC, however, our dense campus makes for dense traffic of both pedestrians and vehicles. The Yield to Heels campaign has mostly been a joke, obviously not changing the issue.

It's because, at this point, there is a fundamental conflict between the number of pedestrians and motorists crossing the same spaces on campus.

In this land of chivalrous Southern hospitality, it's amazing that pedestrians and motorists refuse to coexist peacefully. The situation is so bitter, it's close to an all-out war, each day and class change a battle. I wouldn't be surprised to walk out one day and see blood and sweat mixed with oil and gasoline in a road littered with bodies and chassis, limbs and tires and flesh and glass.

Both sides have legitimate claims to the end-all right of way. Pedestrians are benefiting the environment as well as their own health by getting exercise. Walking also eliminates the need for and congestion of parking.

But motorists have legitimate claims, too. Many of them do not live near the University or even in the city because of expensive housing. Some motorists carpool. Others need vehicles for transporting things a single person could not carry for a distance.

But like Jekyll and Hyde, we support the side we are momentarily a part of. Driving to campus, you wish you could plow through every arrogant or aloof person crossing Cameron Avenue. But once you park and start to walk, you wish you could toss cars out of your way like Hot Wheels.

Ultimately, you have to side with motorists. Especially at crosswalks, too many students expect any car to come to a screeching halt — even if going 20 mph and just 15 feet away — so that a student does not have to break stride. Other times, students carelessly hold up traffic. Remember that you're crossing the street — cars aren't crossing the sidewalk.

Finally, there are students who treat the street like a sidewalk. Anyone on Church Street knows there are many stubborn souls asking to get hit by walking down the right side of the street — often in the dark while wearing dark clothing — when there is a perfectly good sidewalk 10 feet away.

Perhaps the network of pipes under the roads would not permit tunnels under roads. Nonetheless, something needs to be done. It is just as scary to nearly hit someone as it is to nearly be hit, and at some point soon on campus someone is going to get NAILED.

It will be one of those things someone waiting for a bus will see coming from a mile away: Someone with an iPod earbud in one ear and a cell phone in the other is strolling up to Cameron between Old West and the Old Well, walking straight ahead as though they are entitled to the next 100-plus feet in front of them. Meanwhile, a car accelerates from the stop sign in front of New East.

The paths of both parties will meet in both time and place, and the campus will have a tragedy — (hopefully) a cathartic tragedy.

Such an incident has not yet happened in the heart of campus, but it is bound to occur. Were a preventative measure ever needed, this would be it. Don't just hand out pamphlets or jaywalking tickets (unless it is to those who seem to be intentionally trying to exit the gene pool). Make a fundamental change. If the University fails to do so, the blood will be on its hands.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Alex Lee, lobin@email.unc.edu



Social insecurity

Increasing elderly workers signals need for reform

The labor pool is getting a little more crowded these days.

According to a report recently released by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of people 75 years and older currently employed in North Carolina has risen to almost 58,000, a number that appears likely to increase in the future.

The 2,000 extra workers from this demographic every year draw attention to several growing needs in U.S. domestic policy, including, most importantly, a revamping of Social Security.

Although 58,000 might seem trivial for a state with a population of almost 9 million, it's not. In fact, it's nearly 10,000 more people than the town of Chapel Hill had in the last census.

Clearly, problems with health insurance and Social Security are contributing to the increase in the number of people employed who are elderly.

As a nation, we spend more than 15 percent of our gross domestic product on health care, or about \$6,500 per person.

For many older people, who are more likely to have health problems than younger generations, such costs cannot be covered without supplementing their income by working.

Unfortunately, at a time when funds for Social Security benefits are beginning to run dry, the system is coming under greater strain than ever before. The first baby boomers began collecting Social Security this year, and as more of their counterparts begin to retire, the stress will only worsen.

In addition, the Social Security crunch creates added uncertainty regarding the fate of the fund. People are unsure what kind of benefits they will have a few years down the road because the retirement age could increase or, worse, the fund could be wiped

out altogether.

Still, the reasons for the increase in the number of workers 75 and older aren't all bad.

One important factor has been the increase in the quality and length of lives for Americans. Indeed, the average lifespan for Americans has risen more than 30 years since the beginning of the 20th century.

Not only are there more people 75 years and older in America, but they're in generally better health, too, thus helping to explain why more of them are staying employed even a decade after they can begin to draw Social Security benefits.

However, it's essential to remember that many are working just to make ends meet.

Fixing Social Security would go a long way toward mitigating this problem and making sure that retired people don't have to return to work unless they want to.

Follow the rules

NAACP can't deny federal law in redistricting suit

Let's make a list of things that the rest of the nation associates with North Carolina outside of her sweet borders. Tobacco? Check. Basketball? Absolutely. The partying habits of Duke lacrosse players? Yeah. Gerrymandering? Most definitely.

A suit filed by Bob Hunter, former chairman of the state Board of Elections, claims the Tar Heel State's General Assembly electoral districts are about as legitimate as Jesse Jackson's babies and should be redrawn before the 2008 election.

But the issue here is not the suit. North Carolina has been there and done that a dozen times in the past decade.

The issue here is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's protest of the suit, asserting that redrawing the districts in accordance with federal law will weaken black voting power.

The NAACP claims that enforcing the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in this instance will cause under-representation of minorities in state government.

The group's solution? Ignore the Voting Rights Act.

Unfortunately for the NAACP, the state Supreme Court has already found the districts to be in violation of the federal law. They'll have to be redrawn, preferably so they're less convoluted this time around.

Gerrymandering is the practice of redrawing a voting district for political gain. The bad habit started in Massachusetts in 1812 and has since migrated south.

North Carolina's infamous 12th U.S. Congressional District is an example of the metamorphic powers of redistricting.

There's a running joke that if you were to drive down the I-85 corridor with the car doors open, you would kill everyone in the 12th District.

All that unites the 12th District is an abundance of off ramps and irritable state troopers.

But the NAACP claims that while the districts are oddly designed, they ensure that minority votes are represented in the GA. It claims that by redistricting, legislators would end up 'black-packing' the vote

in certain population centers.

The claimant, Hunter, asserts that the effects of the redistricting will do the opposite, giving minority groups influence in more local districts.

Sidestepping the underlying political intrigue that hides under this cover of racial equality (16 black legislators' seats could be put at risk), the fact is someone cannot advocate a state government to violate federal law purposely.

There's a well-known precedent for this concerning South Carolina — it's called secession. We all know how well that turned out for them.

Maintaining districts that violate federal law runs contrary to the ideals of federalism.

The NAACP would be better off dropping the protest for some quiet time with a poli sci book. This is one argument it can't win.

But with the 2008 election coming up, we ask just one thing of the GA: Get it right this time.

Then maybe groups like the NAACP won't be forced to advocate the absurd.

High-class environment

N.C. needs balance between business and other interests

North Carolina might be failing when it comes to anti-smoking regulations — at least according to the American Lung Association — but it's top-notch in other areas, and we don't mean just basketball.

Chief Executive magazine ranked North Carolina the third-best state in the U.S. for business.

While that's certainly good news for the state, it's important to strike a balance between attracting businesses and meeting the needs of the populace.

The magazine polled 605 top business executives who rated states based on a variety of criteria, including taxation and regulation, workforce quality and living environment.

This survey just goes to show that North Carolina has a lot going for it in terms of business, a lesson certain Chapel Hill officials should heed.

It also provides some insight into what conditions constitute a business-friendly environment.

The state strikes a fine balance between giving businesses incentives to set up shop in the state but also guaranteeing the state receives something in return by tying those incentives to performance initiatives.

Business leaders, however, clearly dislike areas that are overregulated and overtaxed.

North Carolina as a whole received a B+ for taxation and regulation, but individual areas (read: Chapel Hill and Carrboro) could use some advice.

Overregulation is unnecessary and easy to fix: Cut the red tape. There's no reason to make simple things, like acquiring a building permit, overly complex.

Low taxation, while good for business, puts pressure on the state to find alternative sources of revenue or to cut spending.

In fact the CEOs interviewed criticized the lower quality of the education and infrastructure systems in low-tax states.

And as Chapel Hill and Carrboro town leaders well know, a lack of a commercial tax base puts a greater tax burden on the residents.

It's important to find the middle ground. But just by looking at Franklin Street, Chapel Hill hasn't done it yet.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"The Carolina First Campaign isn't just good to great; it's great to preeminent."

JAMES MOESER, CHANCELLOR, ON FUNDING CAMPAIGN

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

Go to game barefoot; donate shoes to charity

TO THE EDITOR:

I was reminded by a story on ESPN about how blessed we are here in America. This story was about Samaritan's Feet (www.samaritansfeet.org) and basketball coach Ron Hunter of IUPUI.

Thursday Hunter coach(ed) barefoot to raise awareness about Samaritan's Feet.

Samaritan's Feet works to bring a message of hope to impoverished children around the world through sport-focused programs and equipping their feet with shoes.

Hunter (was) hoping not only to raise awareness about this cause but also to raise 40,000 pairs of shoes in honor of the 40th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday.

I ask all UNC students and fans in attendance to join me on Feb. 6 at the Duke-UNC game by attending the game barefoot to help raise awareness about Samaritan's Feet and to bring an old pair of shoes to donate.

I ask the University and the Smith Center, if possible, to provide collection bins at the game. Working together we should be able to raise 21,750 pairs of shoes (one pair per fan) for this cause.

So, on Feb. 6 lets all take a stand for Samaritan's Feet.

Brandon McClain
Class of 2007

Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility isn't a concern

TO THE EDITOR:

Regarding the letter about the Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility ("Bio- and Agro-Defense Facility raises questions," Jan. 24), I find it interesting that there is even debate about this.

Bio- and agro-defense is the subject of my honors thesis and something I've spent the past year and a half researching. To address (Jodi) Mills' safety concerns, the government has a very bizarre system for building labs like this; the more dangerous the things inside, the safer and more secure they make the lab.

The odds of anything getting out of a Level-4 facility are roughly the same as you being killed by aliens two weeks ago. Statistically they are comparable.

Why does Homeland Security run it? Well, terrorism, and conventional military attacks, are not always like Hollywood. In fact, this sort of attack goes back to the Assyrian Empire, which used rye ergot to poison wells.

The Department of Agriculture isn't running it because this facility specializes in defense. Security overlaps every aspect of life, and that's why the DHS is such an umbrella organization.

The Department of Agriculture, on the other hand, is specialized and probably doesn't have as many experts on military-grade biological weapons as it does on pigs.

North Carolina is one of the leading states for food defense, and this facility would greatly enhance that status. I urge everyone to actually take 10 minutes to research the subject before devolving into unjustified hysterics.

Ryan Jenkins
Senior
Peace, War and Defense

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 eight board members, the associate opinion editor, the opinion editor and the editor. The 2007-08 editor decided not to vote on the board.

Kvetching board

kvetch:

v.1 (Yiddish) to complain

Back in my day at Carolina, we didn't have these fancy blue books. We had to write our answers in dirt. And we had to walk seven miles, barefoot, through the snow, uphill both ways to get it.

What with our miserable male-to-female ratio and the state of college men in general, it seems like the chances of finding a nice, single guy at Carolina are about the same as getting basketball tickets. So when I give a "nice guy" BOTH of the ONLY tickets I've gotten and he turns out to be not so good, where does that leave me?

That noticeable blue sign that says its ILLEGAL for you to smoke that thing near my dorm is not just there for kicks. Please move; it's the law.

For the love of God, stop telling everyone about your "hilarious" walk of shame this morning. Bragging about shacking up with an intoxicated, womanizing, bow-tie-wearing douche bag doesn't make you cool — it makes you a dumb skank.

Based on the number of water conservation fliers posted on campus, people interested in conserving water are not so interested in saving trees.

Thank you ABC for making a mockery of our fan base by showing a bunch of freshman girls crying after losing to Maryland. What a bunch of tools.

Why am I having to dry my clothes for two hours? Honestly, if you're gonna make me pay \$1 for one hour of "drying" how about actually working instead of making me turn my room into a makeshift clothesline?

Dear ABC, last year, you aired two of our men's basketball games at 3:30 p.m. on Saturdays. This year, you have also aired one of the team's games at the same time ... we have lost all three games. Please remove this curse you've placed on our team. (And bring back "Whose Line is It Anyway?" too!) Thank you.

I am thrilled you love each other, but there are more intimate ways to show your affection than canoodling in Lenoir using chopsticks to feed each other french fries.

Why are the only African-Americans this paper ever praises on the basketball team? It might come as a shock that there are those of us who can't dribble or dunk — but damn, DTH, we're newsworthy too.

Send your one-to-two sentence entries to editdesk@unc.edu, subject line 'kvetch.'

The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893,
114 years
of editorial freedom

ERIN ZUREICK

EDITOR, 962-4086
ZUREICK@EMAIL.UNC.EDU
OFFICE HOURS:
MON, WED, FRI, 1-2 P.M.

ADAM STORCK

OPINION EDITOR, 962-0750
ASTORCK@UNC.EDU

JONATHAN TUGMAN

ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITOR, 962-0750
TUGMAN@UNC.EDU

ANDREW JONES

PUBLIC EDITOR
JONESAW@EMAIL.UNC.EDU

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

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