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# Winds of change and riots of spring

1848 was a bloody year in Europe, full of revolt against tyranny and poverty. Disenfranchised, dispossessed and all-around pissed-off souls poured into the streets, threw up barricades and fought for their lives against their common social and class enemies. Despite the eventual victory of reactionaries, 1848 changed the face of mass politics. Historians refer to this watershed year as the "Springtime of the Peoples."

In many ways, 1968 was 1848 redux. In Czechoslovakia, when students and workers were denied democracy, they bum-rushed Soviet tanks and ruffled totalitarian feathers in a dramatic political awakening known as the "Prague Spring." In the famous Mai '68, Parisian students went out on strike, joined by millions of workers, and caused so much downright trouble for the autocratic, conservative French President Charles de Gaulle that he temporarily fled to Germany in fear.

UNC had its own reputation as one of the most radical schools in the South during the political spring of '68. Students here agitated for progressive change on a range of issues, from black power to women's lib to the Vietnam War and often times broke laws to do it. Even Dean Smith, patron saint of all things Tar Heel, felt motivated to enter the fray, attending multiple anti-war rallies at the courthouse on Franklin Street that year.

And here we are, perched at the top of 2008, sinking into the muck of party politics and campaign malaise. Most Americans think our presidency is heading down the wrong path, and there's a lot of talk flying around out there about "change."

But what is this change? And who is going to deliver it?

Many of us find it intoxicating to believe that Barack Obama will be our savior. Even Ted Kennedy says he will pass the torch to the new generation. His smile, his youth and his energy all speak to that JFK instinct in us: hope, vote and relax, 'cause it's in good hands.

And try to forget that John F. Kennedy never got much done.

Even if Obama gets the nomination and untold numbers of progressives turn out to vote for him, it's unlikely that the 2008 election will redefine people's conceptions of American democracy. A gross number of us still won't vote. And why bother when there's always something more titillating on television? Many other Americans are too depressed to vote. They've seen too many JFKs, LBJs and Willy Clintons to actually believe anything is going to change.

1848 and 1968 were rough years. Sometimes things got ugly. Sometimes people got hurt. But one thing that people knew back then was that sometimes you can't fit all of your democracy into a ballot box. Sometimes, it has to pour out into the street.

The vote is certainly a great thing, a hallmark of freedom. But it is not, and can never be, a comprehensive political expression. When taken alone, it dissipates popular energy. Notice how quickly Kennedy's torch for the new generation went out? The people who actually change the world, who give us new freedoms and new thoughts, aren't those who give a cheap vote once every four years, much less those receiving the cheap votes. It is the people who move and never stop moving who change the world, whether it's 1848, 1968 or 2008.

Lenin once said revolutions are "festivals of the oppressed." What we need is a festival of the depressed. We are emerging from a political winter and need something creative and invigorating, which will blossom and bear fruit rather than wither and die on the vine. Somewhere between a general strike and a national street party lies this new American spring. With enough momentum and raucous energy, good change will come with the season.

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



# Misdirected

Duke lacrosse players' suit targets the wrong party

Almost two years after the 2006 Duke lacrosse team held a party that became the subject of a heated and eventually discredited rape controversy, the rest of the members of that team are suing Duke University and the city of Durham for damages.

The lawsuit is not only misdirected, but it will only serve to rekindle an overdrawn struggle that needs to be put to rest.

At a press conference in Washington, D.C., on Thursday, lawyers for 38 former and current players announced they would be suing Duke and the city of Durham for the emotional distress they suffered.

Leading attorney Chuck Cooper said plaintiffs had suffered a "horrifying personal nightmare" and "unspeakable suffering."

The emotional distress resulted from Duke's response to the case, including firing the

team's coach and staying silent about potentially exonerating evidence.

Also among the plaintiffs' chief complaints were Duke's decision to cancel the lacrosse season after the rape allegation surfaced and the school's silence during the investigation.

We find no reason why the players can fault Duke for its actions. Under the circumstances, with evidence still being acquired, the school did the right thing by remaining silent.

And with the majority of the team under suspicion of having been party to the rape at the outset of the investigation, Duke acted wisely by suspending the season until the case was resolved.

Furthermore the plaintiffs are not suing the source of the botched case. Duke and the city of Durham are simply caught in the crossfire, while former Durham District Attorney Mike

Nifong is the party at fault.

Granted, Nifong's request for bankruptcy protection precludes him from being a viable defendant though the suit accuses him of both hiding and fabricating evidence.

Cooper said the suit doesn't name the escort service dancer who made the allegations because she is mentally disturbed and dependent on drugs.

Hindsight is always 20/20, and looking back it is clear that the situation was worse than it could have been, but given the information that Duke had available, it made good decisions.

The only thing the plaintiffs have to gain with this lawsuit is money — not justice from the people who wronged them and not relief from media scrutiny and the court of public opinion.

It's time for the Duke lacrosse players to take the noble route and let the case reside where it belongs — in the past.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"Your neighbors will shame you if they see your green lawn. We don't want (them) looking cross-eyed at us."

BOB BUYSSE, CHAPEL HILL RESIDENT, ON WATER USE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To read the full-length versions  
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Post your own response to a letter, editorial or story online.  
VISIT [www.dailytarheel.com/feedback](http://www.dailytarheel.com/feedback)

Bushes surrounding Old Well support N.C. State

TO THE EDITOR:  
Now that the red paint has been removed from the bloodied Old Well, ("Campus awakes to a red Old Well," Feb. 21) why could the Facilities Services' grounds department not complete the job by also removing those blood red azaleas in the planting beds surrounding "UNC's most iconic landmark"?

One of the oldest inside rivalry jokes repeats annually with the spring blooming of the azalea garden surrounding the Old Well resplendent in RED and WHITE.

Yes, a lovely campus scene in springtime colors — if not the most photographed spot on the UNC campus. But past gardeners and landscapers, many of whom were products of N.C. State horticulture school, who initially designed this area will smile as you enjoy their springtime handiwork in total oblivion.

These offending shrubs could easily be replaced with an entire pallet of blue and white blooming plants — many better suited to the specific growing conditions there — so that at anytime during the year there would be no mistake that the Old Well is at the center of Carolina.

F. Marion Redd  
Class of 1967  
Chapel Hill

Thomas can lead UNC to a championship if we let him

TO THE EDITOR:  
Someone's got to say it because no one seems to be thinking it, and you should at least be considering it. ... Carolina's better with (Quentin Thomas) at the point.

Our vaunted secondary break might run more like a '92 Corolla than the Porsche Boxster we're used to. Q may not be able to hit the three, and there are still moments where the ball gets dribbled off knees and feet when it shouldn't. But with Thomas we have the senior leadership we've been sorely lacking, and we actually play defense.

Now before you tell me I don't know what I'm talking about, go back and watch some old tapes. Watch the difference Q makes when he's in the game.

Heck, watch now. Watch how we play more like a team than a month ago. Watch how all the little things come together. Basketball can't be measured purely by statistics or flashy dunks. With Q out there, we're getting to loose balls and stopping dribble penetration. In the single-elimination NCAA's, defense wins championships.

With our high-octane offense, Carolina has the potential to blow out a lot of teams, but what happens when we get in that gritty game against a good team? I don't want to see a repeat of the Maryland game when all the cards are on the table. Give Q a chance. He just might take us all the way.

David Rabinowitz  
Senior  
Interdisciplinary Studies

STI testing is an acceptable use of our student fees

TO THE EDITOR:  
Abstinence will not cure or diagnose an STI. Therefore, screaming, "Don't have sex!" is not a solution to this problem.

Not having sex might prevent an STI from occurring, but this particular admonition does nothing for students who already have an STI and are spreading it. Trying to impose your moral standards upon a group of sexually active student population is pointless. It will not solve the problem and is incredibly judgmental.

Just because a student is sexually active does not imply that they are not "morally self-controlled" as Kathy Arab ("UNC is right not to include STD testing in student fees," Feb. 21) so eloquently and nonjudgmentally stated. Aside from the fact that one's personal morality has no bearing on the morality of other people, I hope that (Arab) will realize that STI testing is for the benefit of the health of UNC's population.

Heck, I haven't been to student health in two years, and I don't mind paying for it because I like having healthy people on my campus. Making people pay money for STI testing will not "discipline" them into abstinence; it will make them forgo testing.

Perhaps it would be more constructive to educate students about safe sex, rather than brow beating 'self-discipline' and 'morality' into them.

We do not attempt to coerce people to higher moral standards by forcing them to choose between money and their sexual health. I'm sure fear of an STI is a stronger reason to check one's behavior, not avoiding paying for testing.

Jennifer Bellis  
Junior  
Environmental Studies

Iraq dialogue came after the DTH stopped watching

TO THE EDITOR:  
The "dialogue" that the editorial board was searching for in their most recent job at UNC Students for a Democratic Society ("Live in your own reality," Feb. 22) took place on Thursday evening at a teach-in entitled "What is life really like in Occupied Iraq?". There, 75 students spent two hours listening to and discussing the experiences of an Iraq War veteran and an Iraqi-American who oppose the war and call for an immediate withdrawal of U.S.-led occupying forces.

The UNC Draft Board's appearance in the Pit earlier that day resulted in the appearance of dozens of new faces at the teach-in. So clearly, the action was neither misguided nor unproductive.

The DTH should consider actually showing up to an event, in its entirety, before writing yet another reactionary commentary on the actions of SDS.

It also bears mentioning that the March 19 UNC Coalition Against the War, which is organizing a day of action against the Iraq War on its fifth anniversary, is united in demanding an immediate withdrawal of U.S. Troops from Iraq.

The students are speaking. Iraq for Iraqis — Troops out now!

Tamara Tal  
Member of UNC Students for a Democratic Society

# Intelligent investment

Clean, efficient nuclear energy makes sense for N.C.

North Carolina-based Progress Energy filed for federal permit Tuesday to add a second nuclear reactor to the Shearon Harris plant in Wake County.

Considering the efficiency and cost of nuclear energy, we're glad to see that North Carolina could become more reliant on the energy source.

For some, the word nuclear bears a negative connotation, and images of mushroom clouds and radiation-caused deformities immediately come to mind.

There have been a number of infamous accidents at nuclear power plants, including the 1986 disaster at Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine.

But events like these are very rare. It's kind of like flying in an airplane — yes, there are crashes, but they're unlikely to happen.

Nuclear reactors actually are extremely safe, with all new reactors having passive nuclear safety, which automatically shuts down the reactor in the case of an emergency.

Nuclear energy is also cheaper and cleaner than alternatives.

In a study by Swedish energy company Vattenfall, researchers found that nuclear power is the cleanest energy source, emitting less carbon dioxide than any other method.

Progress Energy considers nuclear energy to be the best possible long-term energy source as far as environmental standards and cost are concerned.

There were proposals for varying alternate energy sources, including animal waste and solar energy. But Progress Energy officials say that these renewable sources can cost up to 10 times more than traditional energy.

However, nuclear energy isn't perfect. There is still no ideal way to dispose of nuclear waste.

The main byproduct of uranium enrichment, U-238, has a half life of 4,468,000,000 years, but it's also relatively harmless.

However, the resulting elements from the decay of U-238 are more radioactive and therefore more dangerous, which necessitates secure storage.

For the time being, nuclear

waste is buried, kept in dry cask storage facilities.

While this isn't a sustainable long-term practice, by using and studying nuclear energy, it's possible to develop better methods of waste disposal or create energy that produces less waste.

Nuclear energy is quite popular in France, which otherwise has few natural resources for producing energy. While we'd normally advocate the opposite, in the case of nuclear energy, it's not so bad to be like the French.

Nuclear energy has made France energy-independent, which looks even better for the United States considering our dependence on oil from the perpetually unstable Middle East.

By adding another nuclear reactor in Wake County, North Carolina can continue developing long-term energy while also adding hundreds of jobs.

We hope that residents' initial reaction to nuclear power doesn't scare the state away from this energy source. Economically and environmentally, nuclear makes sense for North Carolina.

# Make sure it's humane

GA should pass statewide animal euthanasia standards

Nobody likes to see an animal put down, but sometimes it's a necessary evil.

With that in mind, it's good that the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services has taken steps to standardize euthanasia procedures across the state.

We hope the Rules Committee of the General Assembly passes them on March 20.

The standardization seeks to ensure that this difficult process is handled smoothly and humanely while also assuring the safety of the veterinarians performing the euthanasia.

Most animal shelters usually use either lethal injections or carbon monoxide chambers for euthanasia.

While the processes generally run smoothly, some animal shelters resorted to sickeningly cruel modes of delivering the carbon monoxide.

For example, reports indicated that some animals in Stokes County were placed in a box and asphyxiated with car exhaust.

Whether you're a passionate member of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals or an indifferent nonanimal-owner, it should be clear that this conduct is deplorable.

Establishing statewide standards for animal euthanasia will ensure that the process is uniformly conducted as quickly and painlessly as possible.

The proposed changes will regulate the use of carbon monoxide chambers such that

only commercially compressed bottled gas is used in a commercially manufactured chamber.

Also, the technician directing the process must be certified, and that license can be revoked by the state if necessary.

And while carbon monoxide chambers sound bad, they are a safer alternative to lethal injection when a thrashing animal endangers the veterinarian.

Sending a sick pet or a stray animal to be euthanized can be a traumatizing experience, and either process ensures the animals pass away quickly and painlessly.

The most important thing is to make sure that the process is as humane as possible, and standardization is the best way to achieve that.

The Daily Tar Heel

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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.
- 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.

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