



**SARAH HODGES**  
FROM MY WORD PROCESSOR TO YOUR EARS  
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## Don't judge me because I'm liberal

I have a confession to make: I am against abortion.

It's not something that I actively try to hide. It's that the people around me assume that I must be pro-choice because the majority of my political opinions place me in the category of "liberal hippie chick." Political stereotypes like these are bad news for outsiders and hinder any hope we have of expanding our country's two party system.

Stereotypes are not negative in and of themselves. Evolutionarily speaking, they were developed to protect us. Everyone has these split-second reactions. What separates prejudiced people from

those who are not is whether they base their actions on their judgments or are able to dismiss those gut reactions. Unfortunately, groups ranging from activists to political parties unwittingly perpetuate political stereotypes.

We think of pro-life activists as religious zealots. Pictures of unkempt hippies pop into our heads when someone brings up legalizing marijuana. The mention of gay rights conjures images of pride parades. We make assumptions about people because of what they wear, what they say in class or just because they are part of our liberal campus.

We all go through different experiences, grow up in different environments and come from different religious backgrounds. All of this influences our political views. To stereotype these views is to question the validity of a person's feelings based on their assumed experiences.

Students can be especially harsh when it comes to conveying their beliefs to others. In Chapel Hill, conservatives need to fight hard to get people to listen because they are in the minority. And sometimes it seems that liberals think they must be right because they have everyone on their side. And so the match escalates. When philosophies butt heads, stereotypes are formed about the opposing group as well as one's own.

We are used to dismissing social, racial and gender stereotypes because we deal with them on a daily basis. We need to learn to recognize that we stereotype people's political opinions as well, as it has an impact on campaigning and the election process.

Activist groups sometimes work together in order to draw a bigger crowd to their events. They use political stereotypes to align themselves with groups that are supposed to appeal to their supporters. I'm sure that the networking helps their cause and that some of their goals are the same, but by working together, disparate groups alienate people who don't believe in both causes. If your views align with more than one group, then get involved with both. Having activist groups collaborate is just perpetuating political stereotypes, but they aren't the only ones guilty.

Candidates frequently pander to their party's stereotypes, flipping their positions in order to please the most voters. Presidential candidates are the worst because they have a wider range of people to please than local politicians, so they fall back on the old standby of their party's stereotypes. This stifles the variety of options in an election, leaving each party with cookie-cutter candidates. I've resigned myself to the idea that I'm never going to find a viable candidate who shares all of my opinions, nor will anyone who doesn't fit into either the typical liberal or conservative image.

As wrong as this tactic is, it is in the candidates' best interests to use it since many people vote along party lines without researching their options.

We've got to work past these stereotypes if we ever want to break out of our two party system.

Start small by listening to someone with a viewpoint that opposes your own. You don't have to like what you hear, you only have to be willing to hear them out.

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



## Time is running out

It's time for the senior class to start donating, and fast

With a mere 54 days until graduation, only 153 seniors have donated their \$20.08 or more to the senior campaign.

We hope that the lack of participation is a function of our propensity as college students to procrastinate rather than a lack of interest in giving by seniors.

The senior campaign is a great way for UNC students to give back to the school that has given them so much.

And seniors can give to a litany of campus organizations, not just the senior class-sponsored campaign, Carolina for Kibera.

The importance of donating cannot be stressed enough, since if 30.5 percent of seniors end up donating before graduation, \$25,000 will be donated to

CFK by an anonymous donor.

In addition, seniors who donate directly to CFK will double their money, since private donors have pledged to match up to \$25,000 toward the organization.

There is still good news. Despite the pallid turnout thus far, the class of 2008 is still ahead of the curve when it comes to the actual monetary amount of money donated.

Seniors this year have donated nearly \$14,000, even though less than 4 percent of the senior class has donated money.

This is far better than last year, in which with two months left, 5.5 percent of the class of 2007 had donated a total of \$8,000.

Participation in senior class giving has not been very high at

UNC in recent years. Only 16.5 percent of the members of the class of 2006 donated. Contrast that with Duke seniors' giving in 2006: 61 percent.

With the ability to give to practically any group or cause that has had a positive impact on seniors during the course of their four years at UNC, it is amazing that our giving rate isn't higher.

After all, most people spend more on one trip to the bar than the traditional donation amount, which is supposed to match the givers' graduation year — this year \$20.08.

We already beat Duke on the basketball court. Let's also beat them in the percentage of the senior class that donates. Get out there and start donating.

## Ain't no sunshine

Only darkness every day under Easley's e-mail policy

What do the local weather guy and N.C. state politicians have in common? When they forecast sunshine, you ought to keep your umbrella within reach.

We'd like to take this space to wish Gov. Mike Easley a very happy Sunshine Day, a day that he proclaimed as a conclusion to Sunshine Week, a nationally recognized event raising awareness of government transparency and emphasizing access to public records.

Unfortunately, Easley is making it rain for Sunshine Week.

But when the sun starts to shine, at least he'll be prepared. The N.C. Republican Party sent him some sunblock and aloe in case he gets burned.

With a recent survey ranking North Carolina in the bottom quarter of states nationwide on public records access, extra clouds over Raleigh aren't helping anything.

Easley has come under fire for an office policy he enacted that instructs state workers that they can delete e-mails when their "reference or administrative value" has expired.

This clearly violates North Carolina's Public Records Law, G.S. 132, which mandates that all state records be available publicly unless another law specifies otherwise.

While it doesn't necessarily lead to deceit, this naive and rather illegal mandate, supported by Easley's legal counsel Andrew Vanore, opens the door for bringing the dark skies of corruption to town.

In response, and to his credit, Easley has launched a comprehensive review of office policy regarding e-mail correspondence, but that is a little like going to the tanning bed in July. Sure, you will still get tan, but it's better just to be out in the sun in the first place.

Fortunately, Easley and the panel seem to understand the importance of public involvement in the process and have vowed to hold public hearings on the matter.

When all is said and done, we hope the review panel sees the flaws in the current policy, which gives state officials an enormous amount of leeway in deciding just when an e-mail has lost "reference or administrative value."

We salute Easley's administration for taking a closer look at the transparency of public records, but the public would do well to closely monitor this process because Easley's stance on openness is more than a bit disconcerting.

And with a little luck, that happy refrain that took us to Sesame Street soon can be sung about the governor's office: "Sunny day sweepin' the clouds away ..."

## Make the Wright move

General Assembly should vote to expel Wright today

We hope it's finally curtains for Rep. Thomas Wright, D-New Hanover. Two weeks ago, a special bipartisan House ethics committee voted unanimously to recommend showing Wright the door, possibly bringing his capitol antics to an end.

Since the General Assembly is currently in recess, Gov. Mike Easley called a special session in order to bring this pathetic saga to a close. The legislature will vote on the ethics committee's recommendation for Wright's expulsion today.

The last time a representative was told to pack up and leave Raleigh was 128 years ago. It's time to end that trend today.

We're glad Easley and House Speaker Joe Hackney, D-Orange, are tackling this issue head on, and we hope the House makes the right decision and gives Wright the old heave-ho.

The House ethics committee found that Wright mishandled \$340,000 in loans and campaign and charitable contributions. This accompanied six

felony charges and eight charges of ethical misconduct.

All of this came to light when Wright either failed to file or fraudulently filed quarterly campaign finance reports continuously for the last five and a half years.

There is no excuse whatsoever for this kind of corruption. As if disgraced ex-Speaker Jim Black wasn't enough, his former right-hand man Wright had to carry on his torch.

And after the new, more stringent ethics laws passed by the legislature last year, it's about time they started living up to their own standards and punishing those who don't.

It should be simple enough for the House to see through Wright's defense.

Wright's attorneys declined to submit any evidence for the ethics investigation because of fears that his defense strategy for criminal trial could be compromised.

Wright instead issued what can be considered one of the worst legal arguments in the history of jurisprudence.

He claimed that \$8,900 of the money he took from a loan marked for charity was "sweat equity" he was owed for his work for a charitable group.

As for the remaining money, Wright's attorney claimed it's common practice for lawmakers to be allowed to fix errors in their campaign finance reports and requested the committee allow him to set the record straight.

Forgive us for pointing out the obvious, but there's a significant difference between a small filing mistake and swiping \$340,000 over the course of six years.

Committee chairman Rep. Rick Glazier, D-Cumberland, called Wright's fraud "breath-takingly massive."

In light of this, Wright's defense falls flat and hopefully by close of business he will find himself unburdened by the duties of public service.

This would serve the dual purpose of leaving Wright free to revise his defense tactics and allowing the General Assembly to begin operating the right way — not the Wright way.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"When you have a war that has been going on half your life, it's background noise."

ANDREW WASZKOWSKI, UNC SOPHOMORE

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Feel strongly about something that has been printed? Post your own response to a letter, editorial or story online.  
VISIT [www.dailytarheel.com/feedback](http://www.dailytarheel.com/feedback)

#### DTH and other newspapers must have honest forums

TO THE EDITOR:

Recently, someone has been writing comments in my name on The Daily Tar Heel Web site. The remarks were malicious, horrifying and, most importantly, not my words. The Web site allows commenters to post under any name.

Several readers who did not know me contacted me in disbelief that someone could write such horrendous things. Once they learned it was a fraud committed by unscrupulous people angered by my published opinions on immigration, they were sympathetic. This malicious tactic has only intensified my resolve to fight publicly for my beliefs.

Online impersonation with intent to defame or harass is a crime. My attorney tells me that suits against such cyber criminals are increasingly successful.

But it is also important for DTH and other Web sites that host comments to change their systems to prevent defamation. Anonymous commenters can too easily forge the names of those who write columns and letters to the editor in a cowardly attempt to undermine their credibility. The newspaper must encourage discussion by enforcing an honest and safe forum.

Rachel Craft  
Junior  
Spanish, Intl. Studies

#### Graduate students deserve collective bargaining rights

TO THE EDITOR:

I was disturbed to read Graduate and Professional Student Federation President Lauren Anderson's assertion that UNC graduate students have had little need for a union and her suggestion that a push for collective bargaining rights might jeopardize their already favorable wages and working conditions ("UM's union efforts falter," March 17).

Anderson either ignores or is unaware of some important UNC labor history. Graduate assistants received their most significant pay boost in recent years (nearly \$1,000 per course) in the spring 2001 following a campaign of education and agitation led by graduate students affiliated with N.C. Public Service Workers UE 150A.

To be sure, graduate students and other N.C. workers have had a tough time sustaining unions due to N.C. General Statute 95-98, a Jim Crow-era law that prohibits state agencies from collectively bargaining with public employees. That law led the International Labor Organization of the United Nations last year to cite North Carolina for violating the basic principle of freedom of association, which much of the world considers a human right.

But Anderson's comments also suggest that the labor movement will continue to struggle on campus and in the state as long as unions like UE 150A are erased from the memory of the graduate student employees to whom they have given much. If you would like to take part in the campaign to restore collective bargaining rights for N.C. public workers, you might start by visiting this Web site: [www.nchope.org](http://www.nchope.org).

Kerry Taylor  
Southern Oral History  
Program

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

#### Immediate withdrawal in Iraq would be detrimental

TO THE EDITOR:

In light of another Students for a Democratic Society protest of the anniversary of the commencement of the war in Iraq, there should be a counterargument.

One of the problems SDS touts against the war is the number of casualties. Granted even one military death is extremely tragic and too many, the following numbers help put things into perspective.

As of June 2, 2007 there have been 8,792 military deaths during the Bush administration. During President Clinton's term, there were 7,500 military deaths. President H.W. Bush's term saw 6,223 military deaths.

The point is that ever since 1980, there have been usually well over 1,000 military deaths per year, no matter who is president, no matter the conflict and no matter which political party is in power.

The irony behind SDS's point of view is that a swift, immediate withdrawal of troops from Iraq would result in countless more American deaths than if we maintain our current strategy. Instead of advocating a strategy of immediate withdrawal, which just will not work, SDS should consider other strategies to support.

The best way to support our troops is to advocate strategies that will best ensure their survival, not directly damage them or the great work they are doing in Iraq.

Chris Buchheit  
Former DTH Editorial Board  
Member

#### Students should follow Obama's speech on race

TO THE EDITOR:

It seems oddly fitting that Eve Carson's memorial service fell on the same day as Sen. Barack Obama's memorable speech on racism in America. Through their subtleties they were overwhelmingly powerful.

Obama's brave words addressed a critical problem facing our community in the aftermath of Eve's and Abhijit Mahato's slayings. Increasingly evident is the friction between racial polarization by education and wealth. The flame ignited by that friction demands to be addressed. It is strengthened by our silence.

Education and health care inequalities lead to inequalities of income, which perpetuates geographical segregation. This most recent act of hatred is a manifestation of this reality.

As we mourn together, we must include the members of this community who never had the opportunity to don Carolina blue cap and gown. In our search for answers we must take an honest look back to move forward.

Obama called for legitimate discussions of racial inequalities in order to end the cyclical fear and violence that continue to terrorize this country. We should choose, as this historic speech suggests, to bind our grievances and demand change with a unified voice.

Kathryn Hughes  
Senior  
English

### The Daily Tar Heel

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