



CLINT JOHNSON
BECAUSE SLEEP IS THE COUSIN OF DEATH
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American people are worth defending

As a writer, I consider myself to be, above all, an observer of people — not in the binocular-brandishing fashion of a stalker, or in the syringe-wielding manner of one who experiments on rats.

No, I prefer to think of it artistically and anthropologically, as if I'm a full time ethnographer. Maybe that's wishful thinking.

At any rate, amid the wealth of peculiarities and idiosyncrasies exhibited by this human race here in America, one stands out: people, by and large, dislike people.

Even here beneath the poplars at the "University of the people" (cue Charles Kuralt inspirational mix), we don't think too highly of others

— especially of other Americans. **OPINION EDITOR**

Maybe the thin air atop the ivory tower has gotten to us, or maybe we can blame it on the lead we had in our drinking water last year.

Whatever the case, the symptoms are clear.

"People are stupid," I hear. Ask someone to describe his or her 300 million American neighbors and listen to the disses drop faster than they do on a Jay-Z album. Greedy. Drunk. Selfish. Lazy. I'd list more of the insults, but (as they'd expect, I'm sure) I'm hungover, and, well, I just don't feel like it.

The haters cite facts and statistics compiled, I suppose, in some sort of anti-people handbook.

"Americans know more 'Simpsons' characters than protections in the First Amendment," they cry, as if "The Simpsons" doesn't teach important values (and in an entertaining fashion). Lisa might as well be Thomas Jefferson.

"As of 2005, almost half of the American public believed Saddam was responsible for 9/11," they say. But people who point to that statistic are wrong, too.

Like any legitimate Internet surfer, I know that "9/11 was an inside job" (and that we should all join the "Ron Paul Revolution").

Is that the best you can do, haters?

It's hard to pin down when exactly people-hating became fashionable. In the United States, the tradition runs deep.

Inside government, it was James Madison — one of the Founding Fathers — who declared that the ruling body should "be so constituted as to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority."

In the media, it was the influential Walter Lippmann — a crucial figure in the history of journalism — who said that the "public must be put in its place" so that we can "live free of the trampling and the roar of a bewildered herd."

Fast forward to 2008, and you'll find Vice President Dick Cheney echoing the same sentiment: on behalf of the government.

When told that two-thirds of Americans believed the Iraq war was not worth it, he replied: "So?"

White House Press Secretary Dana Perino defended Cheney, telling the public that, "You had input. The American people have input every four years, and that's the way our system is set up."

Of course the "minority of the opulent" dislike people. We're a threat to their hold on power, which means we're feared.

Americans might not know facts, but we have good instincts.

We want an end to the Iraq war, we want universal health care, we want all nuclear weapons eliminated and we want the government to take action on the environment.

We breathe the values of our democracy, even if many of us cannot recite them.

And that puts us light years ahead of the ruling class.

According to a poll, 81 percent of us think we should have input in government more than once every four years.

Even if the haters disagree.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Don Wright, Palm Beach Post



Ballot laws hurt democracy

N.C. obstructions thwart third parties, independents

Any analysis of the strength of our American democracy must consider an oft-ignored element of our free speech: ballot access.

There's a powerful and inspiring political ideal that rings out from phrases such as "land of opportunity," and that's expressed by children when they say they want to grow up to be president of the United States.

It's the simple notion that elected office (even the highest office) should be open to all, regardless of color, creed or, perhaps most important, cash flow and that the only barrier should be the public's opinion of you.

But in North Carolina, our American notion of fairness is preached and not practiced. As a state, we have some of the most obstructive ballot access laws in the country.

Any independent candidate seeking the presidency must

collect 69,734 signatures of registered voters and turn them in to the State Board of Elections by June 12 to qualify. For a party to be guaranteed ballot access, it needs 104,601 signatures.

By contrast, Massachusetts requires 10,000 signatures, while Louisiana requires \$500 for a candidate to be on the ballot, and many states don't ask that the petitions be submitted until the middle or end of July.

As if this weren't bad enough, the application of these laws exacerbates the injustice.

To ensure ballot access, third-party candidates routinely have to submit petitions well in excess of the required number as a precaution against legal challenges.

Independent presidential candidate Ralph Nader has had ample experience trying to overcome these election laws.

Because of legal complaints, often filed by Democrats (the

party with whom he most heatedly competes for votes), his campaign needs to submit twice the required number of signatures, as many will be discounted on allegations of being faked or otherwise ineligible.

At a campaign rally July 12 in Raleigh, Nader announced he will not be on the ballot in North Carolina. The estimated cost of collecting enough signatures — more than \$250,000 — was simply too hefty.

And Nader's campaign must submit 500 signatures to even have his write-in votes counted.

State election laws should not obstruct candidates from gaining access to the ballot, nor should they deny voters the chance to vote for the third-party candidate of their choice.

Further, North Carolina should work with other states to standardize ballot access requirements.

It's only fair.

A step back on pollution

Court rules against Bush, EPA on clean air provision

It's official: George W. Bush will never be remembered as an environmentalist president.

While that statement might seem obvious, given Bush's record, recent developments have doomed the administration's most significant effort to reduce pollution.

Last week, a federal appeals court unanimously struck down the Clean Air Interstate Rule. Drawn up in 2005, it would have required utility industries in 28 states to cut back on emissions of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide by 70 percent and 60 percent, respectively.

The rule, which represents the cornerstone of Bush's environmental reform, came under fire in a lawsuit filed by several plaintiffs, chief among them the state of North Carolina and Duke Energy.

But even these companies did not intend for the rule to be thrown out entirely.

Rather, many utility companies sat in eager anticipation of the cap-and-trade provisions

within the Clean Air Interstate Rule, which would have allowed companies exceeding emissions standards to buy emissions credits from complying companies. Many in the utility industry, including Duke Energy, are disappointed at the loss of these provisions.

Coupled with the Environmental Protection Agency's new decision not to regulate CO2 emissions, despite overwhelming support in favor of doing so under the Clean Air Act, it seems that the environment will be an issue for Mr. Bush's successor to "fix."

And lately, it seems as though the government is getting in its own way when it comes to the environment.

Congress is sluggish in pushing new laws through, and when it does manage to pass significant legislation regulating pollution, it is often struck down by a federal court.

Some judges are quick to cite the 10th Amendment in these cases, arguing that the responsibility of managing pollution

lies with states, not the federal government.

Stranger still, the EPA seems reluctant to truly exercise its power.

Rather than protect the environment, the EPA would rather not regulate carbon emissions because of the anticipated effect on the economy and because of the expansion of the agency's power. Appeals courts further limited the EPA's power in the July 11 decision.

With the environment fast becoming a critical issue, we cannot afford an ever-weakening environmental policy.

Yet where the federal government is weak, the states have picked up the ball. In an effort to cut back on the state's infamous smog problem, California already has comprehensive pollution legislation in place or in the works.

And Duke Energy itself already follows North Carolina's 2002 pollution legislation, which is widely regarded as more stringent than the standards proposed by the Clean Air Interstate Rule.

Floating around town

Mice, humans depressed after quitting alcohol

Summer here doesn't exactly make "Chapel Thrill" live up to its nickname. The buses are emptier, the quad is quieter and life happens as slowly as the summer breeze.

Even the night life is low-key. Entertainment is hard to come by between basketball and football seasons.

What better way to stimulate bored college students than an interesting study coming out of UNC involving alcohol?

Using apparently alcoholic mice, study senior author Clyde W. Hodge, Ph.D., and his coworkers discovered that ending even moderate drinking could lead to depression-like symptoms.

The study, by the Bowles Center for Alcohol Studies,

tested mice that drank their hearts out voluntarily for 28 days (they are in college, so to speak) before being cut off by UNC scientists/bartenders.

"In mice that voluntarily drank alcohol for 28 days, depression-like behavior was evident 14 days after termination of alcohol drinking. This suggests that people who stop drinking may experience negative mood states days or weeks after the alcohol has cleared their systems," Hodge's report read.

If you were wondering how to identify a depressed rodent, it's actually quite simple. It's called the Porsolt Swim Test. Essentially, the party animals are placed in a water-filled beaker for about six minutes,

where they swim around and enjoy themselves.

But at some points during their swim, the mice just float idly in the water. The amount of time the mouse spends floating is measured as the degree of despair. A floating mouse is a depressed mouse, and, after stopping their alcohol consumption, many a mouse could be seen floating sadly in its mini-swimming pool.

Humans are very similar to mice; this much is obvious after hearing about this study. That means humans, too, could be susceptible to periods of depression after quitting drinking, even at moderate or casual levels.

As if sweaty, bored college students needed another reason not to stop.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK:

"It was probably a big moment for you guys and a big moment for everybody else, but not for us."

DANNY GREEN, TO THE MEDIA, ON ANNOUNCING HIS RETURN

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Due to space constraints, letters are sometimes cut. Read the full-length versions online at the letters blog, or post your own response to a letter. VISIT apps.dailytarheel.com/wpblogs/archives/category/letters

Sidewalk closure necessary for dental school upgrade

TO THE EDITOR:

As a college student and a UNC dental school hopeful, I have found the topic about the occupied sidewalk ridiculous and disturbing.

First, I would like to point out that UNC School of Dentistry is a very highly regarded learning institution and research center. For the dental school to keep its reputation, it must renovate.

They are trying to improve the health of people in under-served counties, while Chapel Hill occupants are complaining about a sidewalk.

The detour adds three minutes to the pedestrian's walking time by adding two more crosswalks into the equation.

It is interesting how self-focused individuals propose that removing this shortcut away from the public is a safety hazard when the fence itself is there as a means of safety. No, taking away the sidewalk isn't a safety hazard; people's decision to use bad judgment without greater understanding is the safety hazard.

When a detour route is placed in front of a pedestrian and that person chooses to put his or her self in danger, that decision compromises his or her safety and possibly others. If the construction team believes walking on the sidewalk could be dangerous then ... take the one parallel and leave three minutes earlier.

Construction for the greater good often means changes for some. Let's stop complaining and strive for community improvement in the spirit that this University was founded.

Scott Davis
Research Assistant

Other communities hurt by Eve Carson's murder

TO THE EDITOR:

As the Carolina community mourns the loss of our inspirational leader Eve Carson, I want to urge each of us to remember that there are more victims in this horrendous crime.

An employee at Duke School of Medicine, I recently discovered that a close co-worker watched one of the accused grow up down the street from her for 10 years. From a distance, she watched him ride his bike, play four-square and basketball and trek up the street to the bus stop.

She watched him love his family.

When we think of Demario Atwater and Lawrence Lovette,

let us remember their families' hearts are breaking along with ours. Let us remember the kind words of Eve's father, who said, "The irony of Eve's murder is that she, along with these blessed friends and fellow students, are the ones who can solve the most pressing problems of this time."

Let us remember that no amount of hate or sadness will bring our beloved Tar Heel back.

As her trial approaches, we'll see our wounds are still raw and our hearts still saddened by this crime. Please have the courage to see we aren't the only ones in pain, and we aren't the only community affected by her tragic death.

I know this is what Eve would want.

Kathryn Marie Blackmar
Senior
Journalism

We need citizens to push for regulation of markets

TO THE EDITOR:

The lack of regulatory controls on financial markets has spiraled the United States and international community into a humanitarian crisis.

In the U.S. an effort is underway to reach every household via numerous communication pathways that include direct mail, churches, youth leadership programs, schools and media.

Recently, OPEC has clearly articulated that the future markets have failed to function, and the lack of international regulatory controls has resulted in a speculative bubble.

Speculative trading of infrastructure vital commodities and structures must be permanently eliminated, and contingencies implemented to stabilize the current global economic crisis/emergency that is directly attributed to this variable.

The supply and demand excuse is a fabrication created by those involved in a trading-based poker game of lies, disinformation and deception. The chips are human lives and people's life savings.

Citizens are urged to contact their elected officials today.

Stephen M. Apatow
Humanitarian Resource
Institute

CORRECTION:
The July 10th editorial, "Rails would link Triangle," incorrectly states that the TTA has two bus stops in Chapel Hill. They have many stops in the town, which can be viewed at <http://www.ridetta.org>. The Daily Tar Heel apologizes for the error.

The Daily Tar Heel

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Editorial Production: Stacy Wynn, manager.
Printing: Triangle Web Printing Co.

Distribution: Stacy Wynn.

The Daily Tar Heel is published by the DTH Publishing Corp., a nonprofit North Carolina corporation, Monday through Friday, according to the University calendar. Callers with questions about billing or display advertising should call 962-1163 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Questions about classified ads should call 962-0252. Editorial questions should be directed to 962-0245.

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Chapel Hill, NC 27515-3257

Member
ISSN #10709436

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. It consists of editorial board members, the opinion editor and the summer editor. The 2008 summer editor decided not to vote on the board.