

The Daily Tar Heel

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Making friends without football

We're in the playoffs now. One loss and it's over. Every fumble, every incomplete pass, every missed tackle inches me closer to the end of my intramural flag football career.

On Sunday, the ball is in my hands. Whoosh. Past the first defender. The second. Feet from the line. Lift off. I jut the football out front and my body goes horizontal. The flags at my waist flutter as the yellow line passes beneath me. The Astro Turf burns on landing. Silence.

And then laughter. I'm lying on my belly five feet short of the white line, the actual goal line. It's times like these, presented with a field full of beaming faces, hands from both teams reaching to help me up and even the refs chuckling, that I get that feeling. When will I have this again? Forgive me, I'm having a moment.

Yes, it's that senior tearing up eight months early. No, I'm not going to reminisce or preach to younger classes to take more advantage of college than I did. I'm thinking about me. I'm thinking about the duration of my post-graduation purgatory, that time of confusion and isolation ending at the point in which I once again feel like this.

Like I have a community. And I'm not the only senior going through this. My friend Emily Riehl wonders where she's going to sing again after Chapel Hill. "I don't know," she said. "I can't go to karaoke every night."

College, as my friend Tom Allin describes it, is community on training wheels. Pick-up basketball at Cobb courts. Events like Masala's Night Around the World on Saturday. Chances to perform like CUAB's student stand-up comedy night Thursday. The Andrew Bird concert tomorrow night. Demonstrations, forums and social action groups, these ease us into society.

Each function is a practice session in meeting people, our time here a four-year independent study in carving out a niche. But even here it's hard. I remember as a first-year fighting to feel at home. My throwing up in the eighth-floor elevator of Granville Towers on my first night out didn't help. The elevator stopped at each floor on the way down, its doors opening to screams of disgust from the crowds waiting to party.

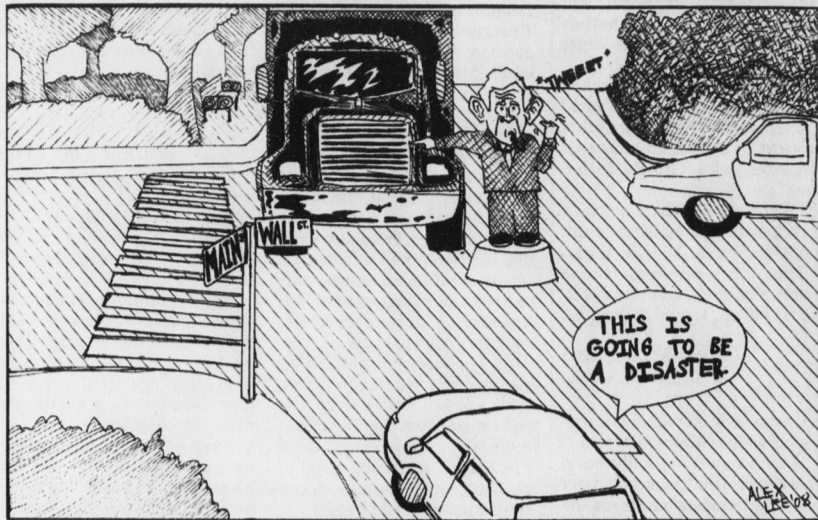
When I got to the bottom, a dis-oriented mess, two security guards asked me for my PID number. "I ... " I slowly kicked off my flip-flops and picked them up. "I don't know."

And I fled, out the door, across campus to my dorm. The benefit of being an unknown first-year meant I was never caught, but I also couldn't return to Granville Towers. And in eight months I have to go through that again? In the real world, I've heard there are community centers and churches, adult sports leagues, potlucks and community theater, yes.

And yet I'm still fighting off the haunting image of me a year from now hunched over a Lean Cuisine in a one-room apartment alone in some city. Thus I keep fighting to keep the good feelings going. We won the game Sunday, even with my over-excited dive, so we get to play again tonight.

Forgive me if I glorify this moment. It's all I got left.

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



Chapel Hill loses a leader

Bill Thorpe served on Town Council for 11 years

Chapel Hill lost an influential leader Saturday night with the death of council member Bill Thorpe. Thorpe, who lived in Chapel Hill since 1970, served a total of 11 years on the Chapel Hill Town Council. During that time, he also served as a mentor for younger council members and reached out to the

youth of the town by advocating for Chapel Hill's internship program. He helped establish Martin Luther King Jr. Day in Chapel Hill, one of the first Southern towns to do so, and he fought for the renaming of Airport Road to Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. Thorpe will especially be

missed by DTH staff, who remember him as a highly accessible politician who would come to the newsroom to speak with student journalists. Thorpe was an iconic Chapel Hill resident and politician who reached out to members of this community and made a tangible positive impact on it. He will be sorely missed.

Vacant seats in Congress

Graduate students must fill empty seats

More than a month into the semester, Student Congress still has seven empty seats that will not be filled until a special election on Nov. 5. Six out of 15 graduate student seats are empty, and there's one empty seat from Granville Towers.

Without full participation, Congress cannot function as a true representation of the student body.

Major decisions have been made by Congress affecting students on campus: Appropriations have been allocated to various student groups for the semester, changes to the Student Code have been approved and new voting regulations for Congress

designed to improve transparency have been passed. According to Tim Nichols, Congress speaker, graduate students simply do not run or vote in high numbers. However, graduate students have just as much of a stake in student government as undergraduates. Nichols said he will be working with Graduate and Professional Student Federation President Cindy Spurlock to increase graduate student participation in Congress and competitiveness in elections this year. We hope their efforts are successful and we urge students to run in this special election. It's also important to vote in campus elections. Nichols said

voter participation is high in North and South Campus districts, but decreases exponentially for off-campus elections, including Granville Towers. If you don't vote, you can't complain if your group doesn't get enough funding or controversial decisions are made. Besides, it only takes a few seconds on Student Central. Interested students should attend the meeting 21 days before the election. To everyone else: Vote. Empty seats in Congress jeopardize the long history of autonomous student governance at UNC. Full representation of the student body is essential to ensuring this tradition lives on.

Rethink eminent domain

The University should not seize land for a new airport

The new airport authority chosen to oversee the relocation of UNC-Chapel Hill's Horace Williams Airport has too much power and should think twice before using it.

We support the spirited resistance of community members who are speaking out against the proposed use of eminent domain to allocate a sight for a new airport. Because the 15-member board is headed by UNC and the UNC Health Care System, the power to appropriate the land is ultimately held by the University.

This dynamic threatens to create a rift in town-gown relations. About 300 people attended a meeting Sunday at which many

expressed concerns about the precedent set by allowing the University to seize private land. Eminent domain refers to the process through which governments acquire land and develop it for public use. But the entire public must be taken into account. The current proposal to build a new airport sells the community short. Proponents claim a new airport will promote development and attract corporate partners to Carolina North. Area Health Education Center doctors also support a local airport, arguing that a move to Raleigh-Durham International Airport would negatively impact their pro-

gram. MedAir, currently based at Horace Williams, serves AHEC doctors who fly to clinics. However, a 2005 UNC study concluded that Horace Williams could be effectively integrated into RDU at a cost of about \$2 million. This scenario was recommended by the same study. Reports estimate that \$35 million would be required for the new airport, with taxpayers footing the bill. RDU's proximity and cheaper price tag make it the most practical spot for relocation. And, we don't think that seizing private land to build another airport is essential to the mission of the University.

Know your voting rights

As the November elections approach, substantial efforts have been aimed at increasing youth voter turnout. However, in recent weeks, scare tactics and misinformation have led to the disenfranchisement of many young voters in important swing states such as Colorado and Virginia. To prevent voter disenfranchisement, UNC students should know their rights, as well as the ease of the registration and voting process.

Registering to vote at a local address in North Carolina is perfectly legal, convenient and strongly encouraged by the nonpartisan voter registration organization Democracy North Carolina. False rumors circulated in late August by a local registrar

of elections at Virginia Tech led students to believe that those who registered to vote at campus addresses could not be claimed as co-dependents on their parents' tax forms. The Internal Revenue Service quickly released a report refuting this claim as untrue. Voter registration efforts will continue on campus until the Oct. 10 deadline. After the deadline, students can visit Morehead Planetarium and Science Center to register and vote from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on business days and Saturday Oct. 25, as well as Saturday Nov. 1 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. On election day, Nov. 4, voters registered on campus will need to visit their assigned off-campus voting sites — for this reason, students are encouraged to take

advantage of early voting at the Morehead Planetarium. The importance of the youth vote holds true particularly in 2008, as North Carolina is widely considered to be a swing state. However, as of Sept. 29, RealClearPolitics.com's polling data separated the two presidential candidates by less than 1 percentage point. North Carolina's 15 electoral votes could be a deciding factor in either campaign. In such a hotly contested election year, it is important that the often-discounted youth vote surpasses historically low turnout. In order to do so, UNC voters must know their rights and recognize the importance their vote could have in North Carolina.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"There is no extra money to do anything."

JOHN ELLISON, UNC TRUSTEE AND MEMBER OF THE TUITION AND FEE ADVISORY TASK FORCE, ON TUITION HIKES

FEATURED ONLINE READER COMMENT:

"Oh that Bill Clinton. What a horrible president — balanced budget and everything. Please give me more Bush ..."

— ON "SEN. OBAMA WOULD REDUCE TAXES" LETTER

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DSP supports a bottom-up solution, empowerment

TO THE EDITOR:
Pablo Friedmann's column, ("Students can opt for better apparel, Sept. 17") completely misses the point of the DSP debate. Friedmann's alternative to the DSP is for students to buy UNC apparel from a company called Counter Sourcing, which pays higher salaries to workers in its Bangladesh factory. However, students shouldn't have to go out of their way to avoid investing in human rights abuse. As Friedmann pointed out last week, the University already has codes of conduct requiring its apparel to be made under fair, humane conditions. The problem is that factories are in virtually universal non-compliance with these codes; this has been reported by workers visiting our campus and by SAW members who have been to the factories, and was confirmed this spring by Fair Labor Association head Jorge Perez Lopez. Nor does Counter Sourcing represent change from the bottom up, as Friedmann claims. Whereas Fair Trade is an international certification and monitoring organization, the bottom of the chain are the workers themselves. They are on the factory floor every day; they know the most about their needs. A truly bottom-up solution would be to empower these workers by guaranteeing the right to organize and collectively bargain, issues that are conspicuously absent from Friedmann's column and from the Counter Sourcing Web site. The DSP, on the other hand, supports these rights.

Linda Gomaa and Charlie Soeder
Student Action with Workers

Sen. Obama's tax position appealing but damaging

TO THE EDITOR:
Sen. Obama claims that somehow, if the corporations simply pay more taxes, all will be right on the federal balance sheet. Obama's message about making the big, bad corporations pay their fair share is undoubtedly popular and appealing. What Obama fails to acknowledge, and what the average voter doesn't understand, primarily because the school systems don't see it fit to make economics a required course, is this: Corporations don't pay taxes, consumers (read: you and I) pay them. Anyone who has taken Econ 101 (Obama apparently skipped the Econ department at Columbia) knows that taxes are a cost of doing business — thus any increase in taxes on corporations, whether they be oil companies or grocery stores — eventually find their way onto our store receipts as increased prices and decreased supply. Questions, anyone?

Michael Lewis
Senior
Health Policy and Management

Dole continues to be an effective senator for N.C.

TO THE EDITOR:
Elizabeth Dole has shown leadership and devotion to American interests in her first term in the United States Senate. Yet, her opponent attempts to falsely characterize Senator Dole as an ineffective member of Congress. She quotes the "Congressional Power Rankings," which ranks Dole as the 93rd most effective. But the metrics that determine the ranking must be taken into consideration. Committee assignments have a lot of weight in the rankings. For example, Sen. Dole serves on the Armed Services which does not have the clout of, say, the Appropriations Committee, yet this committee concerns the interests of her constituents in North Carolina, for many are military personnel. Also, she is a member of the minority party, which detrimentally affects her ranking. So the "Power Rankings" is not an accurate way to measure her effectiveness as a senator. The fact remains that she is an effective senator. Recently, she joined the "Gang of 20" to develop a comprehensive energy reform bill. As a member of the Banking Committee, she is playing a key role in the dialogue between Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and Congress. She has criticized the efforts of the Democratic Congress to give Secretary Paulson a "blank check" to funnel money to Wall Street and questioned the necessity of this move which would undermine our capitalist system and grant vast powers to the executive branch. Elizabeth Dole is undeniably an effective voice for the citizens of North Carolina and should continue to serve as our U.S. Senator.

Raven Moesinger
Senior
Political Science

Anthony Dent
First-year
Physics and Economics

Writer based Obama tax policy on smear e-mail

TO THE EDITOR:

I was dismayed and disappointed in Robert Johnson's letter to the editor ("Sen. Obama should take a page out of JFK's book," Sept. 29), claiming that Sen. Obama will raise taxes on a multitude of things including houses larger than 2,400 square feet, gasoline, natural resources and estates. Every one of these accusations is based on an anonymous smear e-mail. If you go to FightTheSmears.com, these wild claims are addressed. FactCheck.org not only debunked all of the rumors that Johnson states in his letter, but also displays a copy of the e-mail that he undoubtedly was reading from when writing these falsehoods. Under Obama's tax policy, if you make less than \$250,000 a year, none of your taxes will be raised. Here's some great advice for Mr. Johnson, a first-year: always check your facts. Professors at Carolina do not accept your Webmail account as a citation.

Raven Moesinger
Senior
Political Science

Anthony Dent
First-year
Physics and Economics

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.

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