

The Daily Tar Heel

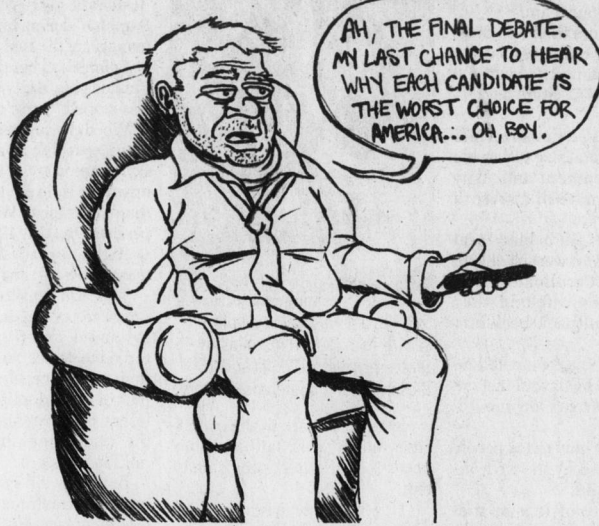
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EDITORIAL CARTOON By Alex Herrington, achctts1@email.unc.edu



Political choices dumbing down U.S.

When I brought home my report card each quarter in elementary school, my mother reviewed my grades. If I got an A-minus, she pounced on the discrepancy and, in heavily accented English, demanded, "Vat vent wrrong in English? Vy only an A-minus?" I protested, "Mother, when Joey Hughes gets an A of any kind he gets a nickel. I get one A-minus and you question me." She responded, "Joey Hughes is not my son!"

Both of my immigrant parents instilled in me the importance of working hard, aspiring to be the best and a belief that the American dream was not just a promise, but a reality. Inspired by the Bible, they

GUEST COLUMNIST:
CHARLES VAN DER HORST

also inculcated in me the value that we are to look after those less fortunate than ourselves. Now, more than 45 years later, as a physician and professor I know that my patients expect the best. If there is a procedure I cannot do or a fact I don't know, I consult with colleagues and ask for help. I expect no less from others. When I fly on an airplane, I expect the pilot to be well-trained, competent and of sound mind and body. So why is it that Americans vote for presidential candidates based upon whether the person would make a good companion for a beer? We elected such a president in 2000 and 2004, and it led to the worst terrorist attack in U.S. history with early warning signs ignored; the most expensive and unnecessary war in U.S. history; the biggest financial collapse since the Great Depression; the destruction of New Orleans with nursing home patients left behind to die of starvation and exposure; and a decline in real income for most Americans with increasing wealth disparity and a collapse of the housing market.

To top it off, the world is arguably more dangerous now after eight years of Republican "diplomacy." Afghanistan and Pakistan are disintegrating. Korea and Iran are building nuclear weapons. Russia, led by Bush's "soul-mate" Putin, invaded our ally Georgia. Osama bin Laden remains at large.

I now watch in shock and dismay as we prepare, yet again, to potentially elect another man who passes the beer test and who has been joined at the hip with the current White House. John McCain advocated for the war in Iraq. He pushed deregulation and laissez-faire capitalism that led to the banking collapse. He claims the moral "high ground," yet owns seven homes and 13 cars. He left his first wife to marry an heiress.

Let's face it — John McCain is clueless about the average American who is struggling to pay medical bills, school loans and mortgage payments.

In the only "executive decision" he's had to make, he picked Sarah Palin to ascend to the presidency should he become incapacitated. This brings me back to what my mother would have said about Palin: A woman who attended six colleges before she could graduate, was mayor of a city of 9,000 that she left in debt, is uninformed about foreign relations and is protected from public and press by handlers, this is who McCain wants to step into his shoes?

If she's feisty, charismatic and funny give her a spot on Comedy Central. But God help us all if she becomes our president.

These are serious times that demand a thoughtful and really, really smart person to take over. I hope that each American thinks very carefully on Election Day about the significance and gravity of his or her decision.

We need real change at every level and I believe that by giving the Obama/Biden team overwhelming support, we will tell the government and the world that there is a new mandate to put our country on a path toward greatness that is grounded in real American values and success.

Contact Dr. Charles van der Horst, UNC professor of medicine, at cvdh@med.unc.edu.

Let's rock that vote!

Students should utilize early voting sites

There's another reason besides the beginning of Fall Break to mark your calendars for Thursday. Orange County's One-Stop Early Voting begins on campus at Morehead Planetarium.

Between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Morehead's doors will be open for any voter in Orange County to cast their vote every weekday, and on two Saturdays — Oct. 18 and Oct. 25. And if you choose to vote the morning after Halloween, Morehead will be open Nov. 1 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

If one of the hundreds of clipboard-carrying volunteers hasn't yet reached you, or if you've somehow managed to live under a rock for the last two months, you can even register and vote the same day during any of the early voting days. You will be registered and

be allowed to vote the same day.

Morehead Planetarium will only be open as an early voting site. On Election Day Nov. 4, Orange County voters will be dispersed to multiple precincts.

Yes, the partisan volunteers on campus trying to register voters are annoying. They're everywhere. But those volunteers are needed, given the last presidential election's abysmal 47 percent turnout for 18- to 24-year-olds.

Those who argue that North Carolina will not have any sort of impact on the presidential election are deluding themselves. The state has been regarded as a swing-state by several recent polls.

The strategy of disenfranchising voters by saying that their votes cannot make a dif-

ference is inaccurate, and it's toxic to our democracy.

Although young people vote in the lowest numbers, these voters have the most at stake.

It's our generation that's fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

If the financial crisis continues to deepen, it will be our job opportunities that will start to evaporate, and our loans will become increasingly more difficult to get.

If this nation and world doesn't find a way to address climate change, the planet we inherit might be damaged beyond repair.

The tax policies set in the coming years will affect us now and in our first jobs.

There are no excuses. Vote early at Morehead Planetarium.

Price wins UNC debate

The doors closed, the campaign pins came out, and the night's battle for North Carolina's 4th District begun. But through the debate, as incumbent Democratic Representative David Price faced off against Republican B.J. Lawson, Price came out on top.

With issues ranging from mental health care in North Carolina to the current economic crisis, Price demonstrated his knowledge and experience and offered specific policy approaches. Lawson's answers were filled with idealistic rhetoric that, while atypical, seemed unrealistic and vague.

No one can deny that Price has significant experience in the House of Representatives. After serving as a representative for 20 years, Price knows the machinery of Congress and is adept and effective in formulating policy. But Lawson demonstrated that he might not have the same traits that would translate into effective leadership.

The best quality about Lawson is that he is not all that Republican. A true maverick, or misguided soul, with Ron

Paul-esque libertarian leanings, Lawson distanced himself from the past eight years of the Bush presidency. His style is unorthodox and novel. Lawson consecutively stated that he is not a typical Republican, but he has been a Republican all his life.

Throughout the debate, Lawson appeared weak and misguided on matters of national security. As a man who advocates small government, Lawson did not support military operations in Pakistan and refused to choose sides on internal conflicts, failing to recognize the connection between Pakistan, the war in Afghanistan, and the global

fight against terrorism.

Price chose to be against the Taliban and al-Qaida.

Price even voted for and supported effective sanctions in Iraq during the Clinton administration, something that Lawson oddly criticized him for.

Lawson swung at Price and stated that the Institute for Homeland Security Solutions was a center for data mining and spying on the American public.

Swing and a miss.

Price was there to remind the audience that it is in fact a research-based think tank that is working to make our nation safe.

Lawson claimed that Price voted for the initial two-page bailout that would authorize Henry Paulson to use his discretion. But Price reminded us of his actual voting record, including his vote against the initial plan.

Foul ball, Dr. Lawson.

Now, of all times, is not the time for a Congressional experiment. David Price has done a great job of representing the 4th District, and he is here to stay.

Dr. Lawson, you just struck out.

QuickHits

B-2 Bombers

We're not contesting the magnificence of the B-2 bombers that graced our sky on Saturday. It was awesome. But we're a little concerned the United States government isn't better utilizing these billion-dollar planes. Isn't there a War on Terror going on?

Ligament tears

We're very upset over ligament tears this week, after such tears ended Brandon Tate's UNC career. Tate tallied a total of 3,523 yards during his time at UNC and holds the

all-time NCAA record for kick return yards. Although he'll be sorely missed, we have a feeling his future NFL career is going to work out just fine.

Fall Break

After a hectic week of midterms, papers and PowerPoint presentations, we're appreciative that Fall Break is finally here. We're also happy about the fall weather.

Negative campaigns

We all knew it was coming. After countless declarations from both Sen. Obama and Sen. McCain

that they would be running positive campaigns, the negativity has begun. We're particularly dreading the inevitable resurrection of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright and Keating 5 controversies in the home stretch of the campaign. Dole, Hagan, McCrory and Perdue: We're not particularly happy with you either.

Toxoplasmosis

Following last week's landmark decision by the Carrboro aldermen to criminalize illicit dog droppings, they have taken up the equally noble task of curbing cat droppings, which may contain bacteria that causes "toxoplasmosis." Epidemic avoided.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"I don't have any conflicts that day. But I sure wish I wasn't going to be there."

BARRY JACOBS, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, ON THE BOARD'S NEXT MEETING

FEATURED ONLINE READER COMMENT:

"The future is bleak if school politics are the precursor for future politicians."

— ON LETTER TO THE EDITOR "DTH, STUDENT CONGRESS BOTH NEED A REALITY CHECK"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Groups' dissimulation of propaganda not helpful

TO THE EDITOR:

Kudos to the DTH for highlighting a controversy that should concern every member of this campus community. I was shocked to read about the existence of an "Islamofascism Awareness Week," but more appalled to learn that some campus organizations are actually hosting events to distribute propaganda-like materials to students.

The first event was a screening of the supposedly informative film "Obsession," which claims to accurately document radical Islam's threat to the West.

Make no mistake about it — this film has no place in a dialogue about the role of Islam in our world. As someone who has seen the film in its entirety, I can attest to the fact that "Obsession" is a blatant attempt at bigoted fear-mongering that offers no intelligent assessment of religious fundamentalism. It is simply unfettered propaganda aimed at inspiring fear among non-Muslims.

I find it deeply disturbing that Monday's screening of "Obsession" was hosted by the College Republicans and the Committee for a Better Carolina, both of which are groups that claim to have the community's best interests at heart. I would ask what these groups hope to achieve through the fostering of fear and mistrust here at UNC. Would it not be more productive to host a series of events that encourage true academic dialogue about the dangers of religious extremism, instead of dissimulating propaganda?

We need to encourage these two groups to consider who the most immanent threat to a better Carolina truly is.

Joseph Kessler
Sophomore
Anthropology

Don't put Palin second in line for the presidency

TO THE EDITOR:

I have lived most of my 55 years in Alaska. I was a state attorney for 15 years, and have closely followed Alaskan politics.

I can say with confidence as a resident of Alaska and frequent visitor to Wasilla that Gov. Palin is not prepared to be vice president.

She misleads and lies. She has touted that she opposed the infamous "Bridge to Nowhere." Yet she supported it enthusiastically while running for governor, and accepted the \$233 million earmark, redirecting it to other projects.

She holds extreme views. She opposes abortion in all cases, unless the mother's life is in danger — even in cases of rape or incest.

She is untrustworthy. For example, first she proclaimed "hold me accountable," saying that she would "welcome" a full investigation by the Alaska legislature into her firing of a commissioner. Since becoming the Republican vice presidential nominee, she has stonewalled the bipartisan investigation at every turn.

Please consider all of this, and don't put her second-in-line for the presidency!

Larri Irene Spengler
Juneau, Alaska

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

Kvetching board

kvetch:
v.1 (Yiddish) to complain

There are at least 10 trash cans in the Pit, yet you still leave your pizza boxes on the steps. Shame on you.

Dear Securexam, thank you for being so secure during the Policy 101 midterm that no one could log on. We ended up writing it in Word, which was so secure. Thanks again.

The person who thinks it is OK to steal clothes in the Morrison laundry room needs to learn what stealing is ...

No, I don't have a minute for the environment. Have a nice day.

At a time of economic crisis and petroleum scarcity, is it really imperative that fighter jets fly over Kenan Stadium?

To the girl who sat down beside me on the bus right before Tyler Hansbrough was going to do so: Thanks a lot.

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade. Don't throw them onto the Kenan Stadium field.

Attention all women! There's no reason to be depressed if you don't have a boyfriend. Go and get one. Boys are the easiest things in the world to pick up.

To all of those that I talked to about Carolina football last year: I told you so!

A quote from yesterday's DTH on student government's Pick-a-Prof plan: "The effort to get them (course evaluations) online began in 1999." Student government in a nutshell.

What kind of coffeehouse in a college town kicks a student out for studying too long? I'm going to Starbucks next time.

To whoever took the cigarette disposal units away from the LEGAL smoking spot at the Law School: You are a terrible person who loves litter and hates freedom, America, Jesus and puppies.

Dear first-year boys who have stopped shaving since your mama isn't making you: Shave anyway. It's not attractive.

Hey Professor Perky, either start wearing a bra, or turn the AC down. You make it very hard to concentrate on the lesson.

To the girl with her MP3 player blasting in Davis Library on Monday: Why don't you be a little more obnoxious next time and just bring your boom-box.

To all the girls with orange tans. LEAVE YOUR SKIN ALONE!!! If you go to this school you're probably gorgeous anyway. Besides, tanning of any kind increases the risk of getting skin cancer by 50 percent.

To the drunk girl with the tiara who high-fived me on Franklin: It's late, and I just got off work. I don't care if it's your birthday.

Dear Residents: Your obnoxious drinking and loudness at all hours is tap dancing on my last nerve. If you want to keep your housing contract, I suggest you do better. With love, your R.A.

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

EDITOR'S NOTE: Columns, cartoons and letters do not necessarily represent the opinions of The Daily Tar Heel or its staff. Editors reflect the opinions of The Daily Tar Heel editorial board. The board consists of seven board members, the associate opinion editor, the opinion editor and the editor.