

The Daily Tar Heel

Established 1893,
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of editorial freedom

ALLISON NICHOLS
EDITOR, 962-4086
NALLISON@EMAIL.UNC.EDU
OFFICE HOURS:
MON, WED, 2-3 P.M.
ERIC JOHNSON
PUBLIC EDITOR
ERICJOHNSON@UNC.EDU

HARRISON JOBE
OPINION CO-EDITOR
HJOBE@EMAIL.UNC.EDU
GREG MARGOLIS
OPINION CO-EDITOR
MARGOLIS.GREG@GMAIL.COM

EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS
LISA ANDRUKONIS
YANIV BARZILAI
BEN BUCK
JAMES DING
MICHAEL LEWIS
ANDREW STILES
SARAH WHITWORTH



BROCK BAKER
THE INVISIBLE HAND
Senior biology and Spanish major
from Nashville, Tenn.
E-MAIL: BRBAKER@EMAIL.UNC.EDU

Don't vote based on politics of personality

Over the course of this presidential campaign, I have certainly learned a great deal about both candidates. But throughout all the debates, news stories or observations of sign-waving students in the Pit, I feel I have learned even more about another person altogether: the American voter.

And what I have learned greatly concerns me. It concerns me not just for the near future regarding this election, but also for the long-term future of this fine country. The voters in this election show a number of disturbing trends that if continued will threaten the health of our democracy in the future.

First among these trends is a growing sense of entitlement among the American people. After the second presidential debate, CNN interviewed undecided voters. One man said, "Well, I felt that neither candidate did a very good job addressing what they would do to help me and my situation now."

Whatever happened to "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country?" JFK's ethos of personal responsibility and service to one's country has been replaced by politics which preach that if you buy a house you can't afford, you should be bailed out instead of foreclosed and that fairness is taking even more money from those who have earned it and redistributing it to those who haven't.

Today's voter eschews personal responsibility in favor of government dependence and involvement, a trend that can only lead to further erosion of the values that shaped this country into the most prosperous in the world.

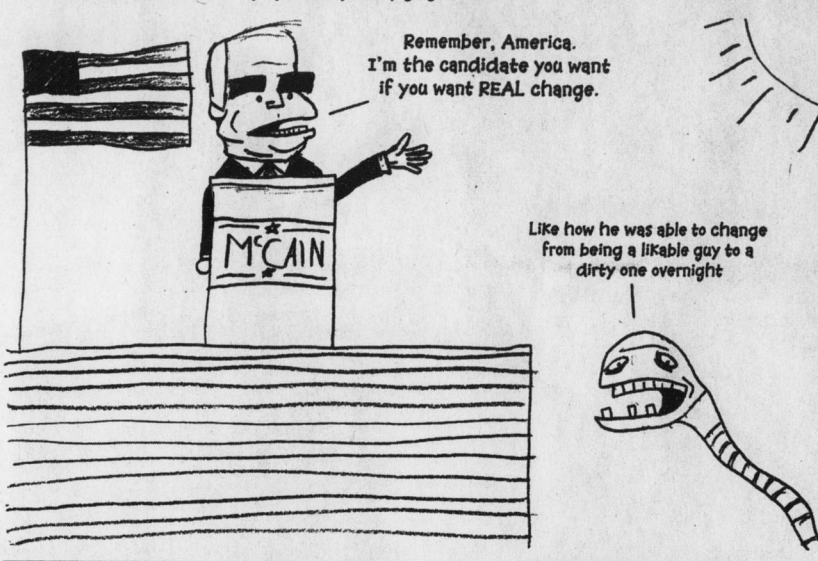
Also disturbing is seeing voters swept up in the fervor surrounding a candidate's personality. During the primaries, I asked a friend who was an ardent Obama supporter about which of his policies won her support. She was unable to name a single concrete idea other than "hope" and "change," insisting repeatedly, "I can't say exactly what it is, I just like him."

This kind of reaction to a candidate is unfortunately all too common in both parties. Now with the addition of Palin to the GOP ticket, hockey moms and Joe Six-packs across the country have united to support a candidate because, golly, she's a down-to-earth regular person I can relate to. Palin has been carefully shielded from the media to hide her lack of experience on the issues, with the focus instead on her carefully-crafted persona.

And this emphasis on a candidate's personality suggests a third disturbing trend: that of a decreased emphasis on the actual issues at stake in an election. Ads targeting college-age voters on campus encourage us to vote straight-ticket Democratic, which encourages blind party loyalty over actual research and knowledge of the candidates. Such voters (of either party) put on ideological blinders so that they see things only in terms of Democrat and Republican, and what gets lost in this whole process are the issues themselves.

Such blind obedience to a single candidate or ideology is dangerous and inimical to healthy democracy. This attitude transforms individual and free-thinking voters into a group of mindless automatons (or Obamatons, if the shoe fits). It is not too late to reverse these trends, however, and it is up to our generation to do it. Please, when you vote, do so because you support the policies and issues that a candidate stands for. An uneducated vote is worse than no vote at all.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Dylan Gilroy, lukerpig@gmail.com



Obama for President

These difficult times call for a president who can both inspire us and challenge us to tackle the major problems we face. Sen. Barack Obama is the candidate who can best provide this leadership.

This is a generational election, and we will feel the consequences if we fail to act on long-term issues such as global climate change, energy independence and the creation of a 21st-century economy.

Obama articulated these challenges and provided a promising vision of a country that is once again respected in the world.

He has laid out a vision of government's role not as the only answer but as a positive resource and safety net.

This vision comes out in his focus on national service and health care reform, plans which appeal particularly to young people.

He plans to expand AmeriCorps and the Peace Corps

programs and would also award college students who perform 100 hours of service in a year a \$4,000 college tuition credit.

Obama's health care plan also appeals to young voters. Not only does his plan reduce the number of uninsured by millions more than his opponent, Republican Sen. John McCain but will also allow young people to continue receiving coverage through their parents' plans until age 25.

In addition, he has brought countless numbers of Americans into the political process — including many young Americans — to voice their concerns, share their solutions and work together.

His campaign has actively courted young voters, and in the process empowered them to voice concerns not only through votes but through an increased level of activism seen on college campuses across the nation.

We're under no illusion that



Obama will be able to solve every problem we face. And he's frequently been criticized for his lack of experience.

But throughout his grueling 21-month long battle for the presidency he has remained unflappable and has proven himself adept at quickly mastering complex issues and presenting them clearly.

He is the right candidate to inherit the mess of the last eight years and lead us through the next four.

Cultural exchange improves

The Carolina Hispanic Association and Carolina Indian Circle's recent cooperation over events and projects exemplifies much-needed cultural exchange on campus.

The two groups found common ground in the cultures they represent and were able to co-sponsor meaningful events to reflect those commonalities.

Chispa and the Indian Circle together held a candlelight vigil for Indigenous People's Day and will continue to co-host events throughout November, which is Native American Heritage Month.

And these collective efforts are part of a trend at UNC. For instance, the Black

Student Movement and the Asian Students Association co-hosted the Diaspora Festival of Black and Independent Film a few weeks ago, highlighting interracial relationships between African- and Asian-Americans.

Cultural groups acting together can benefit all parties involved more than organizations acting alone. Nevertheless, collaboration of this sort remains rare among UNC cultural groups.

"It would be very beneficial if there was more collaboration on campus so that members of cultural groups learn about other cultures," said Tammy Chen, president of the Asian Students Association.

Some organizations cite the

number of cultural groups on campus as an obstacle to communication between select groups.

"There are a large number of cultural groups on this campus and it can be difficult to really get a sense of what each one is about, which is key to developing collaborative projects," said Sherina Ritter, president of the Carolina Caribbean Association.

Certainly, the number of events and projects occurring simultaneously can make collaboration difficult, but many cultural organizations on campus have similar goals. By working more closely together these groups can promote valuable cultural exchange among the student body.

Hang on to election fever

The election of our lifetimes is a day away and its outcome is uncertain. Regardless of whom we support, we all know that agonizing loss and blissful triumph are equally probable tomorrow.

But are we really prepared to accept either? Or will we believe that the incentive for recent activism — to secure the election in our favor — will be gone once the ballots are cast?

Looking back, this election of unparalleled importance has been the *raison d'être* for much of student-led activism this year. Cobb Community's "Tunnel of Political Oppression," the Young Democrats' "March to the Polls," and the multitude of candidate appearances on campus — all this activity has stemmed from one historic, impending election.

Simply put, all of these events were the symptoms of this year's election fever, a contagious zeal for discourse that has increased the vibrancy of political dialogue on campus.

Indeed, even the most heated controversy has been worthy in retrospect. The abortion dis-



JAMES DING
Editorial board member from New York, NY.
E-MAIL: JDING@EMAIL.UNC.EDU

play and its ensuing debate, for example, have threatened to pop the "Chapel Hill bubble."

But unfortunately, the same election fever that has been building for more than a year will be cured in but a few days.

Assuming the worst, the winners will drift from political elation to political hiatus and the losers from disillusionment to apathy. We must not let that happen. This election is not the end, but instead the means to achieve our different interpretations of "change."

Therefore, we must not resign to apathy if our chosen candidate loses tomorrow. The merits of our political system lie in the

controlled efficiency of divided government. Failing that, political minorities consistently empower themselves in even the most unfavorable of positions. Candidates might suffer political deaths, but the issues they champion remain as alive as the activism of their supporters.

And if our chosen candidate wins tomorrow, we should remember that respite does not lead to results. More so today than in decades past, the active spirit of the electorate shapes the actions of elected officials as much as it ushers them into office. Therefore, in the words of one get-out-the-vote campaign, we must "care all of the time as much as we care some of the time."

Tomorrow, we renew the investment we have made for the past year or more. It will require four more years of our vigilance, interest and input.

To look backward in either regret or celebration does little to brighten our future. In looking forward, we can make Tuesday the dawn of real change in America.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"Sometimes you feel obligated to give back in college, especially after nights like Halloween."

ALLEN SPICER, SENIOR AND HABITAT HOUSE VOLUNTEER

FEATURED ONLINE READER COMMENT:

"I know people say to use the buddy system, but ... that isn't working as well as we would hope."

— ON "CAMPUS LIGHTING QUESTIONED"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editorial board gets two issues wrong last week

TO THE EDITOR:

How dumb can you be? The editorial board got it wrong on two issues last week. David Price has been a nonexistent representative. It's time for him to step down. Eve Carson's killers should get the death penalty and the DA has jurisdiction in the matter not the Carson's family. The federal government should step in because Orange County has the worst record on crimes in the country. Wake up.

Robert J. Page
Chapel Hill resident

Carson's voice is still here, death penalty not helpful

TO THE EDITOR:

In response to last week's article ("Parents told DA they're anti-death penalty," Oct. 29), I support Eve Carson as well as her point. No one should have judgment over ending another human's life. What does it accomplish to sentence someone to death?

I am not suggesting that people who perform violent acts should be on the streets. We should be focused on preventing future school and student shootings. Individuals who cannot function properly in society need to be under maximum supervision that promotes rehabilitation, education, and most importantly, compassion.

Sometimes, segments of our society forget to give guidance and set examples for doing what is right. Perhaps individuals who conduct crimes are missing the influences or an environment that demonstrates, reminds and exemplifies what it means to be a human being.

Finally, I disagree with those who say she is not here anymore. Her thoughts continue to matter. Like us, her voice is still here.

Piran Jadali
Senior
Psychology

Vandalism was disgusting and unacceptable at UNC

TO THE EDITOR:

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill prides itself in its social activism and diverse student population.

But while walking through the Pit today, I was taken back to a time when diversity and acceptance didn't exist in our culture when I saw a campaign sign vandalized with an offensive word for homosexual.

An ignorant individual vandalized my best friend and roommate Jeremy Crouthamel's homecoming king sign. Ignorant seems a strong word; however, I feel like ignorant describes the action of the individual who took their time and energy to use a

CORRECTION:

Due to an editing error, Friday's endorsement "Price for U.S. House" incorrectly states that Rep. David Price supports a National Bio-and Agro-Defense Facility in North Carolina. He has voiced neither support nor opposition to this facility's placement in North Carolina. The Daily Tar Heel apologizes for this error.

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

demeaning word to inaccurately describe Crouthamel. The action was unnecessary and disgusting and shouldn't be tolerated.

Not only does the individual owe Crouthamel an apology, he or she owes the University and the gay community an apology as well. He or she also needs to understand that ignorance doesn't have a place at our University or in the 21st century. It belongs in the past.

I just want them to know that we will campaign even more in order to help Crouthamel fight for the change he wants, which is to stop gang violence.

Taylor Meadows
Senior
School of Journalism and
Mass Communication

Regardless of Tuesday's vote, Americans must unify

TO THE EDITOR:

With so much division coming from our political differences, it sometimes seems like we're two countries.

But, to paraphrase Jefferson, we are all Democrats, we are all Republicans — we are all Americans. We all want the best for our country, though we disagree often about what that is.

Sure, if Obama wins, Republicans will probably hide under a rock trembling with terror, and if McCain wins Democrats, religious or not, will be praying day and night for his continued good health (at risk is a President Palin), but we won't be reduced to a pile of ash for not having gotten what we wanted.

Elections matter. It matters who the president is. But what's most important is that we recognize our unity as one nation even in the midst of all our differences. So let's cast our votes, see what happens, and, if the count be just, live with the results.

Benjamin F. Ossoff
Junior
History

Spanish-language section has no place in the DTH

TO THE EDITOR:

I feel it necessary to speak out on the "La Colina" section of the DTH. I have nothing against immigration, but I am speaking out against the catering that is done for our neighbors to the south, by having seemingly innocent sections such as La Colina, or adding Spanish subtitles to our signs, and even voting ballots.

What about the millions who read or write different languages? Are we going to start having signs with Chinese and Hindi subtitles?

We should not have ballots in other languages — does congress hold sessions in multiple languages?

I have nothing against the La Colina section, if they created their own publication, but by having it in the DTH represents the movement of catering to our neighbors to the south.

When did we become the United States of Northern Mexico?

Yatin Shastri
Senior
Business

EDITOR'S NOTE: Columns, cartoons and letters do not necessarily represent the opinions of The Daily Tar Heel or its staff. Editorials 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.