

Candidates discuss water problem, bus system, student input

Editor's Note: The Daily Tar Heel asked the seven candidates for the Chapel Hill Board of Aldermen to respond to a questionnaire on issues affecting Chapel Hill and the board. The questionnaire and responses follow.

- 1) What do you feel is the key issue facing the town, and why are you the best person to help solve it?
 2) What steps would you take as an alderman to help solve Chapel Hill's water problem?
 3) Do you feel the Jordan Lake should be filled? Why?
 4) Since bus service has been cut every year since 1975, do you feel that the present level of service is adequate?
 5) Do you think students should vote and participate in town government? Why?
 6) What should the growth plans for Chapel Hill be?
 7) Do you think the present board gave students a proper amount of time to orient themselves to new town ordinances restricting drinking in the streets and parking before enforcing them?

Marilyn Boulton



Marilyn Boulton

1) I feel the primary issues facing the town are in providing a quality water supply to its citizens and in enlarging and cleaning up the waste water treatment. To solve these and other problems, one needs to be open, informed, approachable and decisive. I feel I can meet these problems with the necessary requirements to be an effective alderman.

2) By virtue of the representation of the OWASA board, Chapel Hill can and should take the initiative in support of the acquisition of the Cane Creek land. This should be done immediately. I would also make available the stone quarry as an additional reservoir. I support the line to Hillsborough for an interregional system and access to the Eno River.

3) I feel the Jordan Dam should be filled for its original purpose of flood control, irrigation and recreation. I do not feel the quality of water is without question; therefore, the risk is too great. Experts disagree on the acceptability of this project, and we must make a judgment on the available evidence. Local experts favor the project.

4) The bus is presently at the level which was projected as the town needs by the bus study committee. I would not want to see the level drop any lower, but feel adjustments can be made within the base level. I support more rush-hour buses and shuttles to park and ride lots. As aid increases, I would support additional bus hours.

5) Students should vote and participate in town affairs as their interests and consciences direct. Many non-students do not vote or participate, and of course, I would like to see them more active as well. All citizens should share the responsibility of

good government, and I consider students a valuable resource.

6) The key to growth to a town or to an institution is management based on the availability of services. As the economic base expands, we need to be in a position to be able to provide housing. Students can well appreciate the need for lower- and moderate-income housing. I would expect to see growth regulated through the location and timing as will be dictated in the Comprehensive Plan.

7) We have yet to decide what is the proper level of information to be provided citizens on newly formed or recently enforced ordinances. This is a good place for that student participation. I would recommend that the town manager refer any information which may affect students to the Office of Student Affairs for their management of release.

Gerry Cohen



Gerry Cohen

Students should have a voice in how their money is spent.

1) I believe that the key issue facing the town is the same as that facing the country: energy. I believe that my experience in four years on the Board of Aldermen gives me the practical knowledge of ways of encouraging conservation. Better transit, for instance.

2) We are suffering from the University's failure to build a reservoir when they owned the water system. Since OWASA took over from UNC in February, it has begun building a pipeline to Hillsborough, and plans for the new lake are underway. I would also encourage simple methods of water conservation which can cut consumption without affecting lifestyles.

3) The Carter administration has finally convinced Congress that many Corps of Engineers projects are financially unsound and environmentally disastrous. Jordan Lake is one such project. Even with maximum feasible sewage treatment, much of the lake will be nuisance because of its shallowness and low flow. It should not be filled until America has the expertise to completely clean it.

4) No, I do not. I feel there is a special need for more rush hour and mid-day service. Our buses are crowded, and many potential riders have been turned away. If we are serious about energy conservation, we should increase bus service. Offering cheap passes but insufficient service is foolish.

5) Yes, I am especially sensitive to this issue since I was a student when I was elected to the Board of Aldermen. Services such as the town buses affect students. Students pay many taxes to the town: one percent sales, three percent electricity and telephone, one-cent gasoline, property tax on rents.

6) Apartments and dorms are overcrowded, and there is not adequate housing for the many new employees as the hospital expands. I believe that more multi-family units should be built, conserving trees, and planning developments so no more ugly units like Old Well are approved with no view toward the residents. Our Comprehensive Plan will help us.

7) The drinking ordinance was passed before I was born. It was enforced only because of a traffic hazard drinkers caused one evening. As for parking, we held public hearings in the spring, and there was a lot of publicity in the DTH. Two students were on the town committee which approved the plan. If we had delayed enforcement, it would have created a bigger problem because the street parking would have been closed out for UNC stickers.

Jim Merkel



Jim Merkel

1) The key issue? — The fact that we have so many major problems and that we seem to be suing everybody. Why? I believe I can help by applying to town government the things I do in everyday life — finding solutions to problems. This can be done by doing homework, evaluating the facts, understanding views of the opposition and then making the decisions.

2) To help solve the water problem, I would ensure that all of our options such as drilling wells, tapping the Haw River, filling the rock quarry, expanding University Lake and others are exercised. We can't afford any more foot dragging.

3) Yes. First it will be an excellent recreation facility. Second, it may be an outstanding supply of water capable of producing 100 million gallons per day. Why anyone would be opposed to filling the lake is beyond me. We ought to be fighting to have it filled — not fighting against it.

4) The bus system is here and we need it, but we spend more on buses than any other single item. While ridership is up somewhat, we're losing too much on the bus system and we must make it more efficient or the entire system might be jeopardized by fare increases. I oppose any fare increases because we must make buses easier to afford — not harder.

5) Yes, and I would urge them to do both. The biggest myth is that students don't pay taxes in Chapel Hill. The truth is the majority of students live off campus. They

pay taxes in their rent and in everything they buy. They also pay for water, sewer and bus transportation. We're beginning to price some students right out of an education in Chapel Hill.

6) It's not realistic to think we can stop growth. But we can insure that our growth will be "good growth" by making clear policy that safeguards the quality of life in Chapel Hill.

7) No! Additionally, I feel the postponement of the vote on the proposed anti-noise ordinance until after election was indeed unfortunate. I'm opposed to this thinly veiled "anti-student" proposal. I like to howl a bit myself after a big UNC victory.

Marvin Silver



Marvin Silver

1) Some of the key issues are (a) working with OWASA to produce supplemental water sources before next summer, (b) developing a specific employee-assistance program to help improve our employee relations and their working conditions — problem areas have been in the fire department, transportation and sanitation, (c) developing effective water and energy conservation programs for the town. Oil shortages by 1985 will dictate that we have an energy- and cost-efficient transportation system. We must continue to strengthen our bus system. My wide range and long history of public service plus my professional training make my skills unique resources for dealing with the complex problems of our town.

2) As a primary water source, I support the construction of a dam on Cane Creek. To obtain a cost-effective supplemental water source by next summer, the Department of Natural Resources recommends wells which their experts would help locate, test and maintain. Twenty-eight properly placed wells, operated by OWASA, could be drilled for \$157,000 plus land cost and would produce over two million gallons per day. I would urge OWASA to proceed on such a project.

3) The real question is reasonable water recreation vs. nuisance quality water at our door step. Few if any water experts recommend Jordan Lake as a water source within a reasonable time. While water recreation would be desirable, not in exchange for green, slimy, smelly water which the Corps of Engineers' own report projects to be nuisance even after 1985.

4) The level of service when considered alone is never adequate. The question is one of budget. The town is using its maximum allowed tax and a substantial fraction of revenue sharing to support the bus system. For further improvement of the bus system, we need federal support, for which there is a bill pending in Washington, and increased contribution from Carrboro and the University. It is also important to continue to improve the routes. Any increased efficiency here could be used to improve peak hour and evening or weekend service.

5) Students are residents in the community and as such have the right and responsibility

to vote and participate in local government. The town on its part actively seeks students for its various boards and commissions. . . . I see no basis for discriminating against anyone by reason of income, housing, race, sex, occupation or length of stay in Chapel Hill.

6) We are now considering a land use plan as part of our Comprehensive Plan to manage growth. The timing of this growth is important, however, because we must insure that we safely allocate our resources such as water. Timing and changes in zoning must also encourage moderate and low cost multi-family dwellings close to the central district to minimize the impact of the energy shortages in the future and provide affordable housing for residents.

7) The town has not enacted any new ordinances recently to restrict drinking in the street; we did enact an ordinance restricting parking on about 40 streets. We tried very hard to inform students last spring about our intention. There had been considerable coverage in the press and on the radio. In addition, this parking restriction was discussed before the transportation board, which has two student members. If these types of communication are not enough, perhaps the various student groups might consider having a legislative watch similar to the League of Woman Voters — this could provide a more direct pipeline.

Chapel Hill Board of Aldermen candidates

Bill Lindsay



Bill Lindsay

1) The most important problem in Chapel Hill is the fact that our representative form of government does not function well or in the way that it was originally intended to function. If I am elected alderman, I intend to act as a "citizen advocate" to assure that the people of Chapel Hill have a voice in their government.

2) I would advocate intelligent studies to determine the wisdom of increasing the capacity of University Lake, both by dredging (removal of 40 years of accumulated silt) and raising the water level of the reservoir by the construction of a new dam. I want a backup system. I do not like the line to Hillsborough or the Cane Creek reservoir until we have exhausted other available possibilities.

3) Yes.

4) I am an outstanding critic of the bus system. I want to "main line" it. There is no reason that non-productive routes should be maintained, and I want them eliminated. Routes having heavy ridership should be continued and even increased where necessary. The system should be more practical in reality.

5) This is a question that presents a dilemma for me because I am going to be honest — with the mass exodus of owners/residents being what it is, I am concerned about the truth of an issue regarding voting by a largely transient group of people who vote in elections that will have long range effects on another group of people who are, in fact, permanent. The vast preponderance of our student population leaves Chapel Hill when their work at the University is finished, and their interest in the affairs of Chapel Hill leaves when they leave. Now, where is the truth in all of this when students ask for the right to vote? The right to vote is sacred, and I do not question it. The demand of residency requirements is certainly not a new thing and in my opinion not an unreasonable thing. How can anyone

as a newcomer to Chapel Hill and as one who is not familiar with local problems and local issues be expected to vote intelligently on them in a local election? I would, for that reason, favor a basic period of residency. Try as I might, I cannot rationalize any other response to this question and remain honest with myself or the readers.

6) I think that growth plans for Chapel Hill must be intelligently controlled, as with our Comprehensive Plan. If the next ten years of growth in Chapel Hill are anything like the last ten years of growth in Chapel Hill, we are in for some sorry times ahead.

7) Here is another honest answer. Okay? No city in the United States, to the best of my knowledge, gives newcomers a period of grace before it begins to enforce the law. Chapel Hill has excellent police enforcement of its laws. They are aware of our somewhat unusual situation here and are somewhat more tolerant. I am an advocate of communication, and I support student input at all levels of government, including law enforcement.

Bill Thorpe



Bill Thorpe

1) The key issue facing the town is planning and growth, including the water problem. I believe that my past experience on Chapel Hill's various boards and commissions, particularly as vice-chairman of the Charter Commission, as well as my concern about our future, will enable me to make many positive contributions.

2) In order to help solve the water problem I believe that the board should be open to all possible solutions. I particularly support the proposed pipeline to Hillsborough.

3) I think the Jordan Lake should be filled, as its recreational value would be to our advantage and we should have the option to consider it as a possible water source.

4) I support the bus system, but I think that the present level of service is inadequate. We definitely need more rush-hour service.

5) I believe that students should be actively involved in town government because they are the citizens who are the lifeblood of the community.

6) The Comprehensive Plan drawn up by the Planning Board provides for an excellent quality of life for all who live in Chapel Hill. I believe the board should use this as a guide when making decisions affecting planning

and growth.

7) I think the present board did not give the students adequate warning about enforcement of ordinances. There is a need for better communication between the town and the University. I propose that the board provide students with information about ordinances affecting them, both those already existing and those proposed.

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