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# The Daily Tar Heel

86th year of editorial freedom.

## Honor beyond theory

In recent years it became more and more apparent that a 19th-century Honor Code designed for a small state university just didn't work at a contemporary UNC. Last spring, after months of debate, the chancellor approved a sensible and modern revision of the code.

In this column last March, we praised the Faculty Council's efforts and suggestion of the new amendments. The council's understanding of the problems surrounding the code was quite evident. The "rat clause" was dropped. The minimum length of an indefinite suspension was extended, thereby adding more clout to the seriousness of a violation. An Honor Code counseling system for offenders also was suggested.

Perhaps the wisest proposal made by the council was the recommendation providing channels to inform students of what is and isn't appropriate behavior in the course of academic endeavor. Corresponding with that suggestion was the formation of a subcommittee of the Committee on Student Conduct.

This week, the subcommittee, headed by E. Willis Brooks, announced a full scale media campaign. Among the group's intentions is an attempt to both educate students on the revisions of the code and gain their support of the honor system.

To hear the initial reactions of faculty and administrators, one would surmise there is an overall enthusiasm for the new code. Thomas Isehour, chairperson of the faculty Honor Code education subcommittee, stated the philosophy behind the media drive. Rather than merely brainwash students on the code's dos and don'ts, Isehour states, "We should be able to sit down and explain the situation and the alternatives, therefore what needs to be done becomes obvious."

Good point. Not only should every student understand the basic differences between the old code and the new one, but with the subcommittee's help, a much needed respect for the honor system should be gained.

## Competency premature

The competency test North Carolina high school juniors are scheduled to begin taking this fall is part of the legislature's answer to one of the state's most critical problems: the appalling inability of many of its high school graduates to cope with the basic tasks required by our increasingly complex society.

We must agree, however, with many of the current competency test's critics, who find the test a simplistic and unjust means of dealing with an extremely difficult and complicated situation.

The value of the competency test lies in its ability to identify students with deficiencies in a number of important and useful areas of knowledge—like how to fill out a 1040 form or balance a checkbook. But without adequate programs for teaching the specific skills required, a score of 70 or above on the competency test as it now exists should not be a requirement for awarding diplomas.

It is clear from the results of a trial run of the exams that existing programs are not adequate to teach those skills. Future programs apparently will be almost as inadequate, judging from the sums recommended by the state school board for remedial instruction. More importantly, we find it difficult to imagine that any one-year remedial program can make up for the deprivations of a lifetime.

The tests of basic reading and mathematics skills to be administered statewide at lower grade levels are a worthy step toward identifying many of the students' and school system's shortcomings. If those failings are acted on, future high school students will be better prepared for learning the more complex practical skills required by the present competency test. In the meantime, depriving vast numbers of unprepared students of their diplomas seems to be a perfect means of denying them the material advancement which is the most direct way out of their present straits.

We believe there is a time for a competency test like the ones administered in February. But this is not the year. The improvement of the public school system and the performance of its pupils should be given the highest priority by the legislature on next year's agenda. In the meantime, we hope that the specific test and pass/fail curve which are chosen for the competency program will not penalize students for past and present inadequacies of the schools, the state and their own approach to learning.

## The Bottom Line

Tar Heel

Several of our readers have expressed an interest in how our school and state acquired their singular nickname Tar Heel.

We have wondered about this ourselves, as a matter of fact.

It's a pretty strange name, after all, self-explanatory, on the face of it—a heel, with tar—but enigmatical nevertheless. What, in the larger sense, is a Tar Heel?

And since we couldn't remember anything on the subject from our junior high North Carolina history course, we put our team of crack researchers right on the case.

They have not disappointed us. We quote from "The Tar Heel State, a Leaflet of Interesting Information about North Carolina" from 1941:

"It was during one of the fiercest battles of the War Between the States, so the story goes, that the column supporting the North Carolina troops was driven from the field. After the battle, the North Carolinians, who had successfully fought it out alone, were greeted from the passing derelict regiment with the question: 'Any more tar down in the Old North State, boys?' Quick as a flash came the answer: 'No; not a bit; old Jeff's bought it all up.' 'Is that so; what is he going to do with it?' was asked. 'He is going to put it on you'n heels to make you stick better in the next fight.' Creecy

relates that General Lee, hearing of the incident, said: 'God bless the Tar Heel boys,' and from that they took the name."

Cheers, Mr. Belk

A toast to anti-liquor leader Henderson Belk of department-store fame. With his divine insight he has been gracious enough to warn mixed-drink sympathizers of the wrath of the Almighty.

"When you violate the spiritual law of God, you pay the price," quoth Belk. "You watch whoever's involved in the campaign for mixed drinks and see what happens to them." Certainly the God-fearing will consider this a low blow.

But Saint Henderson's comment raises an interesting question or two—not to mention a few eyebrows. When are we going to see what happens to them? In a couple of eternities? Next Thursday? And where will we witness the results? On Earth? The Hereafter? In limbo? If Mr. Belk is going to talk politics, can't he be more specific? To be sure, if he does give the press a specific time and place, it will be after Charlotte's Sept. 8 referendum vote.

And then there's the irony of it all. Is Mr. B. aware that Belk's sells probably the cheapest bar supplies in the community? Does he think they're making Shirley Temples in those stainless steel shakers?

And that's the bottom line.

## letters to the editor

# Competency tests fair measuring stick

To the editor:

After reading the article "Competency Test Under Fire" (August 29), I am forced to voice my opinion regarding this issue. I am strongly in favor of the passage of a competency test as a requirement for high school graduation. The much publicized poor education of today's graduates is proof enough of the need for this type of examination; efforts to oppose it do nothing to improve the skills of students receiving a diploma.

Opposition groups which claim that the test is "culturally biased" against members of minority and low-income segments of society have quite shaky foundations for this claim according to the very statistics quoted in the article. The article states that, in a sample statewide test, less than half (40%) of black students tested failed to pass the basic reading skills section. I fail to understand how passage by a majority of students proves the test to be "a deliberate attempt to deny high school diplomas to black...students." Although the mathematics scores were not encouraging, I cannot conceive of how race or economic background would affect performance of basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

It seems that neither side in the argument has thought to place the blame for poor results on something other than the content of the test. I realize that many point at the education system itself as truly responsible for an undesirable failure rate. Yet, the North Carolina system has come far toward offering equal education opportunities to all students. Everyone must realize that the school system is only obligated to provide the opportunities (teachers, classrooms, books, etc.). The majority of the responsibility for education rests on the initiative of the individual student. This always has been, and always will be, the case, regardless of what the school system provides.

In view of the student's own responsibilities, the efforts of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People are sadly misdirected in its attempts to discontinue an objective evaluation of North Carolina high school students. Rather, it should concentrate its efforts

on those students, black and white, who make poor showings on the examination, encouraging them to improve their own education. Charles Finch (chairman of the N.C. Coalition for Quality Education) and others like him must realize that the "inadequate education they (blacks and poor whites) have received" was received alongside those students, black and white, who passed the test. Rather than "punishing" those who do not have a functional command of standard English and mathematics, low scores on a competency test of this nature will insure that the student will have these skills when he or she receives a diploma. As carefully constructed as this test must be (in view of the raging controversy it has inspired), blaming it for the poor

results of students taking it would be as erroneous and as futile as faulting the yardstick when your curtains turn out too short.

Elizabeth Mendenhall  
312 Spencer

### Orientation thanks

To the editor:

Each year the housing department and the orientation staff work together to provide activities and help to the freshmen entering Carolina. The effectiveness of the "opening day" depends largely upon the planning,

preparing and implementation of goals of the Orientation Commission and housing department staff. The 1978 opening day was the best and most effective in recent years. The dedication of the two staffs and the cooperation between them enabled many frosh and their parents to make the move-in short and easy. As a result, many statements of thanks and praise have been received by housing department employees.

I wish to add my thanks and praise to each member of the housing department and Orientation Commission who assisted in making this fall opening the smoothest in recent history.

James D. Condie  
Director of Housing

### Changes in order

## The 'real issues' of local transportation

By GERRY COHEN

Now that it looks like the Carrboro bus situation is close to resolution for the year, it's time to look at the real issues. We all know that the rush hour buses are full, so why isn't service naturally expanding? It's partly because of a series of decisions made four years ago that no one has taken the time to re-examine.

The initial plans for the bus system were made in the fall of 1972, long before the energy crisis, but long after town leaders realized that growth had to be handled in a different way than just by building more giant parking decks. Voters approved a referendum in January 1973, and the bus system started in the fall of 1974. When the plans were made, it was assumed that a relatively small number of people would ride the bus, and that fares had to be kept very low to attract riders. In most cities, transit costs average up to \$200 per rider per year, with a governmental subsidy of up to \$100 a year per rider. The post-energy-crisis Chapel Hill system, on the other hand, is filled to overflowing at rush hour, and the high efficiency (the highest in the state) means that each additional seat costs only about \$90 per year to provide. Most cities charge about \$100 per year for a bus pass, which would mean in Chapel Hill that bus service could be expanded up to the limit where no more people would ride. (In Chapel Hill, we could probably get 2,000 to 3,000 more riders per day if the service were increased.)

But in Chapel Hill, we are charging only \$30 for a bus pass, which means adding another full bus, which means a larger deficit. That price would make sense if people only rode because of the low bus price, but riders ride each day for a lot of different reasons—saving auto and gas costs, parking hassle, etc.

So, you say, if they haven't added more bus service, why not build parking decks? The answer,

of course, is that parking decks are even more expensive. To pay the debt, service and operating costs of a new parking deck would require charging parkers in the deck a price of \$320 for a one year sticker, compared to just \$90 for that person paid the full costs of the bus.

Every bus system in the country is subsidized, and well they should be. If we are to make a serious dent in energy use and traffic congestion, it means more bus service, and more bus service means more money.

There are four ways to get more money for better bus service, and better bus service can mean more frequent buses so that there is no overcrowding.

The first way is through higher pass prices. If people are serious about wanting bus service, we all have to realize that money does not grow on trees. Riders must pay a more substantial part of the costs. Just as there is a differential in cash fares now (15¢ on the S and U routes) so should there be a different price for bus passes. A \$25 charge for an S-U pass and a \$40 or more charge for a system pass would allow more service.

The University also must provide more money. This will require a rise in parking sticker prices, but a higher sticker for a bigger bus pass subsidy is in the interest of drivers, too. If all bus riders were housed in parking decks, the pass would have to rise from \$54 to \$112 a year. Adding \$10 for more bus service to car sticker charges will avoid a \$25 rise if UNC had to build parking decks.

Local governments can put up more money, too. Chapel Hill currently is putting up a subsidy of about \$400,000, equivalent to a 12 cent property tax. Carrboro is putting up only \$31,000, about a 5 cent tax. Some argue that "Carrboro can't afford a higher tax," yet I would argue that Carrboro can't afford to continue having so many automobiles. A 10 cent tax, which would produce \$30,000 more, would cut auto expenditures by Carrboro residents by a much greater margin, because of the

energy efficient buses. In many cases, taxes for useless programs are inflationary. But where a tax can reduce total spending, it helps. Carrboro can't vote on a bus tax in November, but it should set a February date. Two thirds of Carrboro's property taxes are paid by apartment dwellers.

Then there are the Feds. The Senate has passed a bill to allow small cities to get the same transit aid as cities with population more than 50,000. If the bill passes the House this fall, our bus system could get a \$300,000 commitment toward cutting energy use.

The problem is complex. We have a system that is hurt because of its success. Because of the way it is financed, the better ridership gets, the more money the system loses. We should be prepared to accept higher pass prices, a higher UNC and Carrboro subsidy, and hope for Federal aid. Only then can we have more bus service that everyone seems to want.

Part of the problem with the discussions between Carrboro and UNC is that neither is willing to recognize that they both must do more, and they must ask student riders to cooperate as well. Maybe this year will see a plan for more service instead of more headaches. Wouldn't more F, G and D buses be nice also?

The Carrboro Aldermen were elected last year on a platform of more bus service, and they have been diligently working toward that goal.

Let's encourage them to remember that they shouldn't be afraid to let the voter's speak on their plan for more bus service in an election this year. That commitment to a winter referendum should be made before they ask voter approval for the two bond issues on the ballot this November.

Let's also remind John Temple that it is in UNC's interest to have more bus service, too, and UNC must also put up more money this year.

Gerry Cohen, a former UNC student, is a Chapel Hill alderman.

## In search of (sigh) a woman

By FRANK MOORE

Reid Truitt's essay on freshman life rang true.

Watching those squalid incompetent creatures fumbling about their new-found Chapel Hill anthill reminds me of my smooth transition from a Shelby social butterfly to a Southern-Part-of-Heaven zero.

It is more tortuous than humorous to remember.

What is so terribly painful is that one important part of freshman life—at least for me—was relegated to the realm of never-never land. It's a right common activity, performed by most of the world's citizens.

It's not sleeping, breathing or even eating, my usual most favorite pasttime. It's—hold on now—sex.

What a letdown. My friends and I had heard the stories before coming here. The night life, the bars, the women—the wild women, mind you. To a young anxious redneck, that sounded just fine. Not that the

hometown girls weren't fine. It's just that here, the girls are sometimes awesome. It's like switching from a 1964 Ford Galaxie 500 to the Starship Enterprise. And like the spaceship we were seeking points none of us had ever gone to before. Talk about anticipation.

My equally deprived freshmen friends and I just knew the first few nights would be whirling-dervish times that not even the Spanish Galleon in North Myrtle Beach could equal.

We were incredibly wrong. Yes, people did go out at night here. The streets did not magically roll up at 10 p.m.

But those wild women we had been casually promised would magically appear, uh, never appeared.

We had been assured—by our equally deprived upperclassmen friends, we later learned—that the sun would rise, classes could be cut and women—wild women for us wild and crazy guys—roamed

Chapel Hill streets especially on Friday and Saturday nights.

Did this happen? Does a chicken have lips?

We thought then that obviously some horrendous mistake had been made. 'Cause after all, we were incredibly cool, fairly attractive (well, not ugly, geez, give us a break), had money (enough for two Big Macs, a large coke and two straws) and had seen plenty of x-rated movies. What more could Chapel Hill women expect?

The first few nights were rough. We knocked on the door of ecstasy and got our noses broken by the slamming door of rejection. We tried to endure but, finally, our betrayed minds—not to even mention bodies—became cynical, bitter, and twisted.

'Course we still went uptown or to a party somewhere every Friday and Saturday night. It's kinda like looking for the Holy Grail—you know it's out there somewhere.

Our passion for looking (never

talking to girls, like normal guys) slowly dwindled. We took an inventory of the bars on many nights and kept in shape by doing 12-ounce elbow curves.

Kirks, Town Hall (now the Mad Hatter), the Bacchae (now Mayonnaise's), Harrison's, Trolls (the best of all the rest) and He's Not Here (she wasn't either, dadgummit)—we hit them all.

I saw the bars change; they witnessed the changes in me. From an exuberant optimistic neat guy to now—burned out.

Now as a graduate student—actually, I'm just on an extended undergraduate schedule—I can offer some advice.

Don't go uptown with great expectations. Stick around familiar and friendly areas like Polk Place. It's a lot more fun and a lot less frustrating.

You sometimes catch a Frisbee.

Frank Moore, in his first year as a graduate student in the School of Social Work, is from Shelby.