

The Daily Tar Heel

96th year of editorial freedom

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Not caring, or not knowing?

Sunday night's debate between Michael Dukakis and George Bush signaled the beginning of campaign season in earnest. For the next month and a half, this nation will eat, breathe and sleep the presidential election.

What is probably being lost in the shuffle are the student congressional campaigns which have just begun, as Student Congress tries to fill its seats with new representatives. Unfortunately, these elections could hardly be called earnest.

In last spring's student elections, with open seats in every district, 1,464 undergraduate students, or nearly six percent of the entire undergraduate population, voted for their congressional representatives. These are woeful totals, to be sure, and inevitably they are attributed to student apathy and disinterest.

Apathy may not be the whole problem, however, and a look off-campus may provide a better answer. While off-campus students number slightly more than their on-campus peers, the four off-campus congressional districts accounted for only 272 votes. This accounts for one-sixth the total votes cast in the congressional elections and one percent of the student population.

Moreover, off-campus seats are often uncontested and determined by write-in campaigns; District 18 had three candidates deadlocked at two votes each. Apparently, the farther away one lives from campus, the less likely one

is to run for office or to vote. To blame this on apathy suggests that living off-campus is somehow conducive to disinterest. Of course, this isn't true. But it does imply that Student Congress' meager efforts to inform students about the campaign process don't reach off-campus students, and so are lost upon at least one-half the student population.

The election process itself, with low campaign fund limits and single day elections, contributes to this lack of awareness, especially for off-campus candidates. Their districts, composed of several apartment complexes, make posters and other advertising ineffective and door-to-door campaigning nearly impossible. Also, many of their would-be supporters do not go to class every day of the week, and so miss the one-day elections.

Eliminating this "disinterest" is simple. Students can't vote for someone they don't know; the spending cap on campaign funds should be raised for off-campus students, to allow them to campaign more effectively. If this is found to be unfair, student government should sponsor forums at apartment club houses. And vote totals would rise with two-day elections, guaranteeing that all students attending this University have an opportunity to vote at their convenience. Thus, the decriers of apathy might find they have only confused "not caring" with not knowing. — David Starnes

Still no apple pie at Love Canal

Love Canal was for many people a picture-perfect American community, the type of place that conjured up images of apple pie, football and Oliver-North jingoism. That was until 10 years ago, when residents discovered a smelly, black sludge oozing into basements and through backyards.

Thus began one of the most tragic and sensationalized environmental disasters in our nation's history. The incident even spurred the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Superfund, a fund reserved for cleaning up toxic wastes.

But 10 years after the Love Canal catastrophe, nothing has been done to clean up the mess. The same steel barrels originally used by Occidental Chemical to store the wastes remain in a field at Love Canal, their temporary home until officials decide how to dispose of them.

There are many reasons for the delay, the primary one being cost. The cleanup at Love Canal has already cost the EPA \$250 million, and the actual destruction of the wastes is an estimated five to seven years away. Yet financial problems could delay work even more.

A second problem is the notorious government bureaucracy. Even David Cohen, EPA press director, admits to the inefficiency of the Superfund. "The

Superfund process can be very cumbersome and slow; it was set up to be that way."

Another factor is a lack of the technology needed to clean up most of these wastes. Even if such technology existed, no uniform procedures exist to guide waste clean-up. New York authorities and federal officials not only can't decide whether to move all the waste or to leave an "acceptable" percentage in the ground; they also have no idea how to pursue either of these options.

Yet, in spite of all of the known health risks, New York authorities are considering reopening the town for habitation. Unfortunately, the officials will make the decision without the benefit of any substantive scientific data.

Amazingly, given the importance of this issue, no studies have been conducted on the health of current or past residents in nine years. In addition, of the estimated 200 toxic chemicals found in the town, only seven have been monitored by state authorities. Thus, any number of carcinogens may be leaking from the drums without the state's knowledge.

Needless to say, officials need more information before permitting people to return to Love Canal. The potential for a future calamity is too great to allow the town to "unghost." — Dave Hall

Readers' Forum

Tearing butterfly wings and other cruelties

I am not writing to express a strong political opinion, nor is my intention to castigate one of our campus's many organizations. My major concern and preoccupation is with the treatment of animals, which are very dear to me.

Over the years I have seen some horrendous acts perpetrated upon God's less fortunate creatures, from the beating of horses to the plucking of butterfly wings (the latter barbarity committed by a six-year-old child). This is my sentimental letter addressed to the students of Carolina in hopes that it will bring more awareness of the abuse animals receive.

I don't know how many of you have witnessed cruelty. It comes in many forms; let me enlighten you.

Whaling. When a mother and a calf humpback are discovered by whaling ships, the baby is speared first to lure the mother closer where she, too, is then harpooned. Have you ever heard a humpback sing? Or cry when the blue ocean turns red with her baby's blood?

How many of you are familiar with the dolphin dilemma? Dolphins run together in large schools and a certain kind of tuna (pardon my not knowing the name, but it's on the shelves of your grocery store) runs with the dolphins. Tuna fishermen track the dolphins to find the tuna. Men in small speedboats surround the dolphins with a net, thus capturing the fish. The tragedy occurs when the net is pulled closed. Its weight bears the air-breathing

Regina Sutphin
Guest Writer

mammals underwater, where they drown. Some survivors become entangled in the net and are hauled out of the ocean completely. And some become crushed alive in the net's pulley system.

I watched all of this on a Greenpeace live-coverage tape. I saw the dolphins bobbing up against the net, fighting to gain air but quickly succumbing to exhaustion. I watched as the fishermen shook the corpses out of the trap back into the sea, the lifeless forms floating where moments before they had been so vibrant and alive. It tore me apart. Is it really so much more economical to waste millions of dolphin lives rather than seek out tuna using other means?

I could go on forever with these examples of abuse. At some horse shows, riders drive nails into the bottom of horses' feet to make them step livelier. The Black Rhino is endangered for the want of its worthless horn, which is coveted by some people for special ceremonies. Calves are locked in stalls so tiny they cannot move enough to swat flies away. They stand in their own feces day after day until killing time. And some of the things done in the name of research make my skin crawl. I have read articles about chickens being

spun at amazing speeds just to study the effects of centrifugal force. The catch: this experiment has been performed many times before. Why do an experiment repeatedly when the results are already in and conclusions made? I'm sure all of us have a horror story we could recite if we thought a minute.

No, I am not anti-social, and I don't hate humanity. I am all for helping our fellow man, but I realize that humans are not God's only creatures. Animals can love. And they can feel pain.

Someone once suggested to me a very simple kind of logic: God's omnipotence over us is much like Man's authority over the animal kingdom. Just as a child has the power to pluck the wings from a butterfly, God has the power to tear the wings from humanity. Maybe part of God's judgment of us depends on our judgment when we hold something's life in our own hands.

If any of this has affected you at all, do something to help. There are several organizations, on campus and off, that work toward improving the lives of our animals.

Regina Sutphin is a sophomore with an undecided major from Robbins.

Editor's note: Brian McCuskey's column, "In the Funhouse," will reappear next week.

Big spending conservatives

To the editor:

For years, conservatives have stigmatized their opponents as "big spending liberals." With George Bush attempting to place this label on Michael Dukakis, a look at history may be surprising.

Since 1940, Republicans and Democrats have each controlled the White House for 24 years. Over this time, the Democratic presidents added \$398 billion to the public debt while the Republicans added \$1,337 billion, or 3.4 times as much as the "big spending Democrats." The only president over the same period who did not add to the debt was a Democrat, Harry Truman.

Even if the deficit for each year is tabulated as a percentage of the gross national product, so that inflation and other biases are discounted, the Republicans still added to the federal debt at more than twice the rate of the Democrats. In all fairness, the Republicans did raise taxes less and also had to contend with Congresses controlled by the Democrats. However, in light of these deficit figures, a more appropriate label is "big spending conservatives."

MICHAEL BOYLES
Graduate
Dentistry

Smokers aren't persecuted

To the editor:

Although Randall McBride's piece on the persecution of smokers ("Cigarette smokers are persecuted minority," Sept. 22) did not inspire me to buy Ritz Crackers, I was struck by several statements which warrant rebuttal.

At one point, McBride states that efforts to eliminate smoking are unjustified because "... many greater risks (exist) out there." I wonder to which risks he refers. An American Cancer Society article recently labeled cigarette smoking "... the largest single preventable



PETE CORSON

cause of premature death and disability ... in the United States." In addition, the article attributes 30 percent of annual cancer deaths to cigarette smoking. With the exception of nuclear war, what else poses this serious a risk?

McBride then attempts to justify smoking by pointing out the many economic advantages North Carolinians enjoy because of the tobacco industry. Granted, the philanthropy of certain tobacco companies is commendable, but what other examples of such a system exist? Take, for example, South American drug lords. They keep the locals employed, support the area economy and may even contribute to noble social institutions at home. Meanwhile, they peddle addictive drugs to countless people. By McBride's reasoning, are not both acceptable?

Carrying his economic arguments further, McBride bemoans cigarette taxes paid by smokers. He also ignores many costs related to smoking. A report by the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment estimated that every pack of cigarettes costs our nation \$2.17 in health care and lost productivity. That added up to \$65 billion in 1985. This figure did not include tobacco price support programs. Is a

cigarette tax too much to ask in return?

Finally, I find fault with McBride's concept of courtesy. He feels that non-smokers should have to ask smokers to extinguish their cigarettes. In the interest of courtesy, shouldn't the smoker, the individual engaging in the potentially offensive behavior, ask before lighting up?

WILLIAM CRONE
School of Medicine

Towing needs consistency

To the editor:

I am a supporter of the increasing dialogue between students and the Department of Transportation and Parking Services. Moreover, I attended the traffic forum in the Morrison Rec Room last Thursday night. However, a lack of communication regarding areas subject to towing during home football games needs to be improved.

Last Friday night, I parked in one of the L lot spaces along Ridge Road (next to Chase Hall). This lot was formerly a part of the S-5, or Ramshead, parking lot. The latter area is subject to towing and is designated by a sign at the lot

entrance. No signs indicating towing enforcement were around the L lot, which includes areas adjacent to Morrison and Craige residence halls.

Nevertheless, my car was towed when I arrived at my initial parking space. Am I to assume that all areas along Ridge Road, regardless of lot designation, are reserved during home football games?

I am aware that all parking permits are technically for "Monday through Friday" use. I am also aware that cars towed will merely be placed in the S-6 lot, next to North Carolina Memorial Hospital, at no expense to the owner. (By the way, last year's policy placed cars in the F lot. Where was the publicity regarding the change?)

Nevertheless, the Department of Transportation and Parking Services should exercise consistency in the areas that are towable, as well as publicize them more visibly. I am almost certain that others who parked in a resident lot but had their cars towed were as infuriated as I was.

WALTER MURRAY
Senior
Biology

Legislating drug morals doesn't work

To the editor:

In his less than competent letter against the legalization of drugs ("Just say no to legalization," Sept. 23), Scott Logan makes several errors. People have abused narcotics for centuries, and will continue to do so, no matter how many laws are passed to stop them. By making the sale and use of drugs illegal, you at best impose a restriction on the supply of drugs, not the demand. The result is higher prices and bigger bank accounts for those who sell drugs, whether it be the corner pusher or the Reagan administration.

The majority of violent crimes associated with drugs occur precisely because drugs are illegal. Every day we hear about gang wars for control of the streets in large cities. Do you think these gangs are fighting because they want to play stickball on the streets they control? They are fighting to corner the drug trade on those streets, and no matter how many you arrest, there will always be more to take their place, because the trade is too profitable to pass up. If cigarettes and alcohol were illegal, you would see the same gangs shooting it out for the right to sell these items. Indeed, those most opposed to drug legalization are the dealers and traffickers themselves because they have the most to lose from

the drop in drug prices that would inevitably accompany legalization.

One may argue that preventing people from using drugs prevents them from committing crimes under the influence; but such an argument is irrational for two reasons. First, you have no way of knowing that someone who commits a crime while on drugs would not do the same thing otherwise. Second, you can't justify the restriction of a person's liberty for what they might do. If one believes such action is justified on those grounds, then one can make an argument for the imprisonment of all poor, unemployed, young black males, because they have a high crime rate. The reasoning in both cases is the same. What Logan claims to be his biggest argument is really no argument at all. He claims that legalizing drugs would amount to "giving up." My question is, what is being given up, and by whom? If Logan means that the government is giving up its power to legislate morality, then I am all for "giving up," because such power cannot be justified.

The fundamental issue at stake is one of individual liberty, a principle that this country was ostensibly founded upon. It seems curious that Logan, who is ready to suppress the will of hundreds of

thousands of people, compares this violation of individual liberty to the gaining of independence from the British. He wants to educate our children and "show them strength through example," yet the only example he sets is that might makes right, and that those who are in power can set the moral rules for the rest of us. Morality does not emerge from coercion.

Finally, I wish to take issue with Logan's quote of John F. Kennedy: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country." The quote would be more appropriate in Logan's letter if we substitute the "government" for "country." How can someone who advocates denial of individual liberties do so in the name of the country? The country is nothing more than the people who live there, and if Logan wants to grant the government the right to tell these people how to live, he certainly can't logically do so in their name. I agree that drug usage is bad, but I certainly have no right to make others live the way I feel they should, nor does Logan, nor does the Congress itself.

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The Daily Tar Heel

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