

# The Daily Tar Heel

98th year of editorial freedom

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## A violated 'student body'

Statue vandalism should stir further debate

Someone or some people vandalized "The Student Body" in front of Davis Library Saturday. In doing so, they not only damaged the artwork, but they also sabotaged the most serious discussion of racial tension that this campus has seen in years. Although many feel quite strongly about the sculpture's artistic merit and message, this petty action was to no one's benefit.

**board opinion**

Judging from mud left on two of the figures, a group of people kicked both of the statues representing African-Americans—the basketball player and the woman balancing the book on her head. Although the woman was left virtually undamaged, the basketball was ripped from the player's hand and that statue was bent to about a 30-degree angle from the ground.

This community may never know why the sculpture was damaged; it could have been a mindless prank or it could have been a pointed attack on what some see as stereotyping of the African-American community. But no matter what the vandals' intention, their impact was clearly hurtful. It undermined the constructive criticism and debate about the sculpture heard from both sides last semester.

In particular, vandalizing the two figures hurt the cause of those who were offended by the sculpture. Groups such as the Community Against Offensive Statues had

worked patiently with University administrators for more than two months, suggesting alternative sites and staging a non-confrontational, "lone protest" each day. This destruction devalues their efforts to find a peaceful, intelligent solution, especially because it comes just a few days before Chancellor Paul Hardin will announce his decision about moving the sculpture. The work of the protestors had gained the respect and attention of administrators that is so fragile. Now, with this incident, it could be lost.

No matter what individuals' feelings about the sculpture itself are, few would disagree that the debate it provoked was positive. After a series of hate crimes shocked this campus, the statues provided a long-overdue focus for exploring the racial tensions in the University community. Students debated the issues of stereotyping and free speech in a respectful yet serious manner. It seemed that during this time of open expression, the hate crimes had diminished.

Saturday's vandalism is the first such anonymous, destructive act since the sculpture were erected. The University community should not allow this to silence the debate; that would be the biggest crime of all.

The editorial board consists of Crystal Bernstein, Jessica Lanning, Elizabeth Murray, H. Brock Page, Jen Pilla and Kelly Thompson.

## Neglected at home

Homeless are overlooked in the wake of war

The prospect of war with Iraq has been consuming more and more space on the front pages of newspapers and in the minds of Americans as the Jan. 15 deadline approaches, and some issues that once seemed pressing are being put on hold. One group of Americans that needs particular attention during the winter season seems almost to be unnoticed—America's homeless.

As temperatures begin dropping and unemployment rates continue to rise, the homeless are especially in need of assistance from their communities. The number of people seeking shelter and food typically swells during the winter months, but support from the Bush administration and media attention to their plight hasn't risen accordingly.

Local volunteers from the InterFaith Council's homeless shelter said although Chapel Hill has a relatively mild climate, the shelter does experience increased demand for space and supplies as the weather gets colder. The shelter needs volunteers to cook meals, answer phones and work overnight or in the evenings. The shelter always

accepts donations of food and blankets and is currently working on setting up a clothing distribution system. The IFC continues to work diligently for this community's homeless.

But solutions to the problems of the homeless must be addressed on a national basis. President Bush was credited recently in Time magazine for serving as a strong leader in the international realm, but criticized for neglecting many important domestic problems. It is ironic that the U.S. is pouring billions of dollars into a military buildup overseas when America's homeless are experiencing their own crisis. If Bush truly wants to "build a stronger America," he should start by focusing attention on and increasing funding for homeless shelters and fair housing programs.

All Americans should do what they can to support U.S. troops stationed in the Middle East, but they shouldn't forget the millions of Americans fighting the battle of homelessness in our own land. — Jennifer Pilla

### Editorial Policy

The Daily Tar Heel's board opinion editorials are approved by the majority of the editorial board, which is composed of the co-editors, opinion editor, forum editor and three editorial writers. Signed editorials do not necessarily reflect the entire board's opinion. The Daily Tar Heel has three regular staff columnists who write once a week. Their opinions also do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the board.

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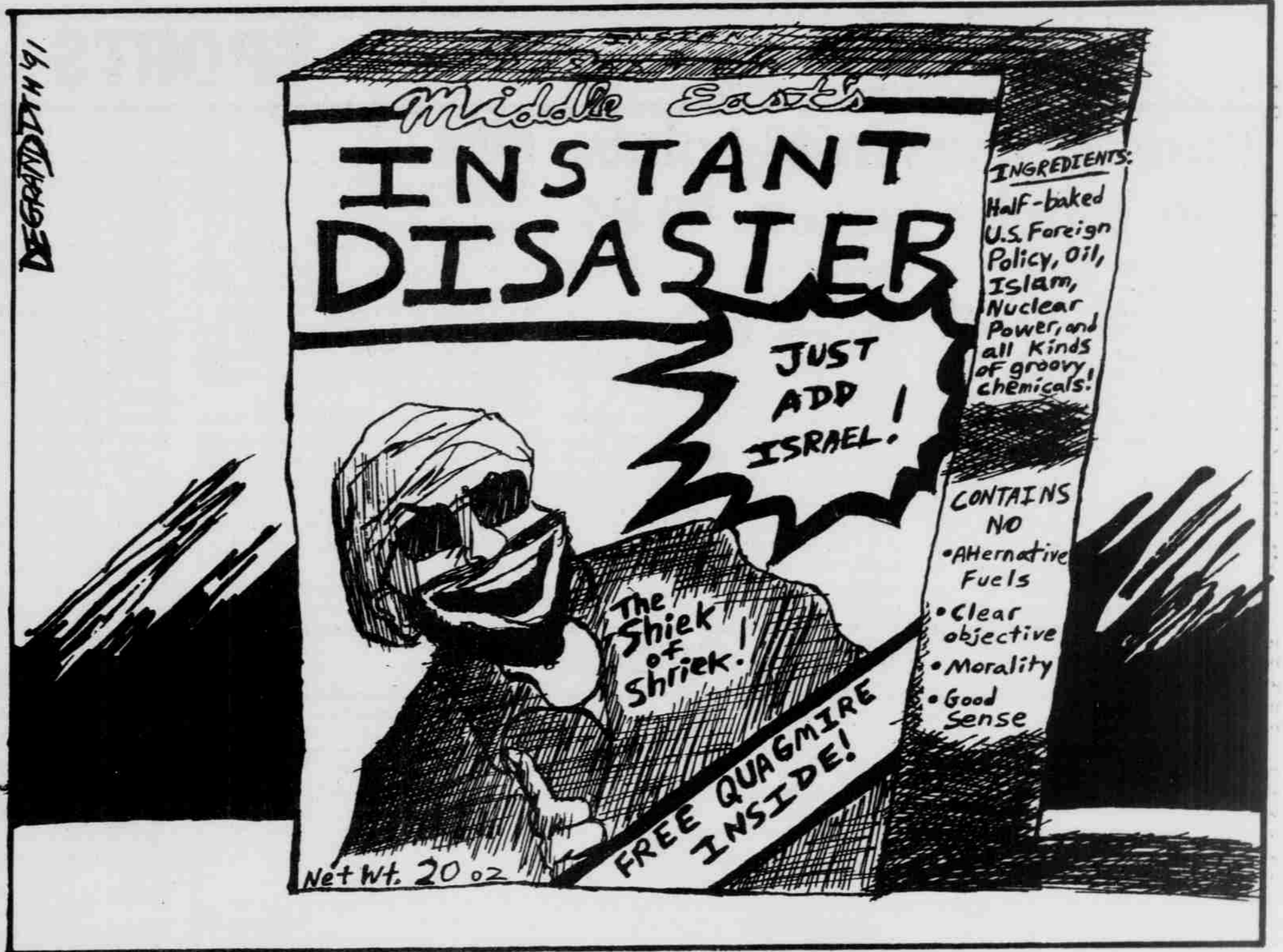
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## READERS' FORUM

### Sculpture a positive and generous gift

To the editors: This group sculpture in front of Davis Library has aroused critical debate, and its removal or relocation has been demanded by a few who see racial or sexual stereotype and bias in certain details.

"The Student Body" by Julia Balk is a remarkable sculpture. Its design, symbolism, arrangement and location seem appropriate and appealing. The sculpture captures reality and genre, with characteristics of our time, but timeless features as well. Certainly, before any action such as relocation is taken, a careful assessment and contemplation of the artwork is needed. Since the sculpture heralds "Students with Books," its association with the library seems fitting and well selected.

What a great gift it is to the alma mater by its grateful students!

Why could or would "whites" take offense for being depicted in a male-female relationship or "blacks" for playing ball along with the pursuit of learning? These are observations, typical campus scenes. The student pair could be "blacks." An offense or racial bias? "Blacks" and "whites" do play ball. If a "white" player had been depicted, would some "blacks" have complained, or some "whites" considered it not appropriate? Probably. The female artist modeled different individual postures of the couple, depicting a possible "sex difference" in behavior. Females and males are different, and the expressions of them vary with the situation. The relationship of the partners reflects the sexual "principle of difference," a wonderful and wonderful complementarity throughout nature. Why confuse biology with the civil "principle of equality" before the law, in which we strongly believe?

Thank you, Class of 1985, for this extraordinary gift! A less realistic and less committal piece of art might have been much easier to digest, albeit less expressive. Special thanks and admiration, therefore, to the artist! Congratulations

to the University for such fine students and for being graced with such beautiful and meaningful art! If any changes were pondered, I could perceive a modified base. Was the heavy all-brick frame the best choice to match composition and material of the bronze figures?

When I saw "The Students of Chapel Hill" for the first time, I was struck by the composition of the "group" and the character of the individuals, and the realism, the choice of material and the beauty of it all. I was reminded of Rodin's group sculpture, "The Burghers of Calais."

"Students by the Library" (a possible alternate and less assuming title) by Julia Balk, donated by the Class of '85, is an impressive and expressive piece of art that the University of North Carolina is privileged to have.

WALTER E. STUMPF  
Professor  
School of Cell Biology  
and Anatomy

### Peace is achievable despite policy of war

Lisa Abbott is a co-chairwoman of the Student Environmental Action Coalition.

To the editors: AAAUUUGGGHHH. Crystal Bernstein's editorial (Jan. 11, Futile opposition) is the most disempowering I have ever heard. I am outraged and disgusted that she would urge her fellow students to abandon our nation's proud history of dissent and citizen involvement by blindly submitting to George Bush's policy of war.

I will be grateful if Bernstein never again defies what is possible for me as a citizen or what is achievable through diplomacy and negotiation among nations. In her editorial she did both, stating that an anti-war stance is "not an option at this point" because "President Bush has already committed to attacking Iraq." Today's peace activists are not "unrealistic," as Bernstein asserts. Indeed, we have been assaulted by the daily reality of our president's arrogance and his unwavering drive toward war. Since Aug. 21 I have lived in fear as

I have never known before. I am all too aware that America's lifestyle and military power are unsustainable, regardless of the outcome of this immediate crisis.

Nonetheless, I am one of many Americans who are striving to find hope among these threats of global violence. My hope is not found in our president, nor the big oil interests he represents. It is not found in the United States Congress. (They seem to have swallowed Bernstein's twisted reasoning: since the President seems determined to act with the authority of a king, we should grant him that authority.) Nor is hope found in the words of Walter Royal Davis (as in our library) who bought a full-page ad in the Washington Post urging that very same blind allegiance to American supremacy and to George Bush's unrestricted power.

I find hope in this community. I am proud of this community where the Women's International League for Peace and Justice holds daily vigils outside the post office, where UNC students gather for a speak-out on the last day of classes and where high school students organize protests attended by hundreds. I find hope in the citizens who write letters to their elected officials. Many of these may be abandoned in some dingy mail room, but one was read on world television by Jordan's King Hussein as an impassioned plea for peace. All represent the actions of citizens who uphold the ideals of a world in which leaders are accountable to their people.

These are not "futile," as Bernstein asserts. They are signs of true courage and faith. They are not carried out by people who are "ignoring" the reality and gravity of the situation. Rather, they arise from citizens who are committed to the brave hopefulness of democracy and nonviolence. In the words of Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small, highly committed group of individuals can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

LISA ABBOTT  
Junior  
Biology

### Soldiers would enjoy getting student mail

To the editors: My name is Philip Sumner. I am in the Army; I am from Fort Bragg, N.C. I am currently deployed to Saudi Arabia. I have been over here for four months.

I have several people in my tent who don't get much mail. I thought maybe you all would enjoy writing to some of them. I will attempt to describe them for you all. First we have Randy Lewis. He is from Lowell, Mass. He likes heavy metal music and is an avid sports fan. Next we have William Phelps. He is from Troy, Ohio. He likes classic rock and enjoys working on his four-wheel-drive truck. Next we have Sgt. Larry Hamilton. He is from Hendersonville, N.C. He enjoys classic rock and country music and enjoys partying and drinking tequila. As for myself, I enjoy meeting new people and working on anything mechanical. I am from Bristol, VT.

Well, as I know that you all are busy with your studies, a quick note to these guys would probably make their days. Try to enclose a picture so they can see who they are writing to. The addresses are: Sgt. Larry Hamilton, 245-45-1819; William Phelps, 299-50-7247; Randy Lewis, 015-66-5195; and Sgt. Philip Sumner, 008-48-2181. Just place their name and service number above the following address and they will be assured of receiving your letter. OPER: Desert Shield, Aco 50th Signal BN (ABN), APO N.Y. 09657-3200.

### Letters policy

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- If you want your letter published, please sign and date it. No more than two signatures please.
- All letters must be typed and double-spaced.
- Place letters in the box marked "Letters to the Editor" outside the DTH office in the Student Union annex.

