

OPINION

People in power abridge free speech

Viscio/Odell
Guest Writers

Freedom of speech is being abridged here at UNC. On Tuesday, April 23, we and some friends of ours conducted a little theatrical event in the Pit (smashing a TV and planting a potato and American flags in it) in order to make a political, cultural and artistic statement. We took great care not to harm or interfere with anyone else, yet we were subject to undue harassment by the UNC College Republicans and two UNC police officers.

The police officers first of all approached us before we started and questioned our right to be in the Pit and our use of the name "Young Republicans" on our flyers. Apparently, the UNC College Republicans felt that the Young Republicans were slandering them. This is not true; the Young Republicans who co-sponsored the event have nothing to do with the UNC College Republicans, and we made no claim that the Young Republicans who co-sponsored the event were a UNC chapter. Thank you, UNC College Republicans, for attempting through false pretenses to prevent the free expression of our views.

After we finished our event, the UNC police gave Randy Viscio a trespass. It warns him that if he comes back on

campus during the next year, he will be subject to arrest. It is clear that they were unconcerned with any actual legal issues regarding our event. If they were, they would have gone instead after Eric Odell, the person who actually smashed the TV. But they didn't; they went after Randy, who was just standing in the Pit speaking and who, after giving the police his name and address, refused to continue to answer their personal questions. When Randy refused to answer any more questions, they followed him around the Pit accusing him of "being disruptive" and of "trying to stir the crowd" through getting himself arrested. During the whole event, the police officers were consulting the College Republicans as to how they should proceed. At one point a College Republican approached Randy and asked for his name, as if he were a police officer. When Randy refused, the College Republican went back to a police officer,

who once again began to harass Randy. One of the arguments the police used was that we hadn't registered to be in the Pit. Why did we need a permit? The entire Pit, with the exception of one table dozens of feet away on the other side of a tree, was completely open and empty. Did the people sitting in the Pit watching us need a permit? No. Do the Pit preachers need a permit? No. If someone were to bring a portable TV into the Pit, sit down, and watch it, would they need a permit? No. Did the College Republicans need a permit to throw water balloons at the Peace Village in the Pit in February? No. It was the fact that we were trying to make a political statement, and not our presence in itself, that made them want to require of us some kind of prior permission.

Another claim that the police made in giving the trespass to Randy was that someone had lodged a complaint against him. When Randy asked who this was, the police officers mumbled a bit and said they couldn't tell us. The other group tabling elsewhere in the Pit said when asked that they didn't have problems with our being there. The police officers seemed almost as confused as

we were about why all of this was necessary.

Our right to free speech is something that must not be compromised. We acted in a responsible manner that harmed no one and created no disruption. The disruption was created by the College Republicans trying to impose their values and beliefs on the rest of us. If we allow people like this to infringe on our basic rights, they will use that as an opportunity to selectively harass the people with whom they disagree. This is not what education and academic freedom are all about.

Freedom of speech shall not be abridged.

Freedom of speech shall not be abridged, as long as you have a permit and don't say anything that certain people dislike.

Freedom of speech shall not be abridged, as long as you say in cleared in advance by Those in Charge.

Freedom of <censored>.

Randy Viscio is a history major who does own a television and Eric Odell is a physics major who does not.



Student leaders must come together

Lumsden/Epps
Guest Writers

Communication. This has been a problem that has plagued our campus for many years. The goals of the Black Student Movement are to unify the UNC community to support the goals of African Americans. Seeing how the success of these goals has been undermined by questionable practices, we must assess our mistakes and put them behind us. Due to the events of the recent Black Student Movement elections, we have decided that now is the time for members of the University community to come together and set the tone for next year. We came to this conclusion because it is the necessary strategy to insure success for the 1991-92 academic year.

The UNC campus is plagued by competition. The stakes are high. By becoming a student leader, or being designated one, there are certain rewards that are offered. We feel that this competition has undermined the effectiveness of the university community as a whole. This competition is the result of a "spill-over" of the competition that has plagued student government for so long. The problems of the last two Black Student Movement elections have not so much been problems of ideology, or even popularity (this is exemplified by the closeness of the election) but competition among individuals. Epps is president of the BSM. He will need the support of everyone in the community

in order to have an effective year. We cannot do it over again. The elections are behind us, so let's deal with the issues that affect the community at this university.

The Daily Tar Heel printed an article in a space that it normally reserves for editorial board opinions and titled the article "The BSM seeks cooperation." This is a sad assessment of an organization that exists for the advocacy, support and needs of the African-American community on campus. The BSM does not exist at UNC solely for cooperation. Where the needs and the goals of the African-American community are in any way parallel to the needs and goals of other organizations, cooperation is greatly appreciated, however, this is not the case all of the time.

Fortunately, this year, student government and the Black Student Movement will be cooperating on many issues.

Unlike student government, the agenda of the Black Student Movement has remained fairly static for the last 10 years; the creation of a Black Cultural Center building and a the institution and

support of a more diverse curriculum are just two items of importance.

We feel that Epps, in his role as BSM president, along with the BSM, will educate the UNC community about the need for a Black Cultural Center and the necessity for a multicultural curriculum.

The organizing of the BSM has been done through the efforts of this year's past administration, now is time for implementation of those plans and more. Lumsden, in working as head of student government's Academic Affairs Committee, can help Student Body President Matthew Heyd facilitate both of these efforts; improving the relationship and communication between the Development Office and the BCC Planning Committee will insure that the BCC becomes more than just a topic for discussion. Student government involvement with the dean of the School of Arts and Sciences' committee on implementing a more multicultural curriculum will help facilitate the inclusion of African-American culture, among others, in the academic experience of a UNC student.

We challenge others to come together and work to make this a better community.

Dana Lumsden is director of academic affairs for student government and Arnie Epps is president of the BSM.

Mysteries left after four years at UNC

Susan Greenwald
Guest Writer

As I have traversed these hallowed brick walks, to these many — four — years here at what we fondly call school, I have pondered many questions in my search for knowledge. And some of them remain unanswered to this day. I think I will share them with you in hopes you may have the answers.

If I could, I would offer a reward for answers. But as I am still unemployed, much like 99 percent of the graduating seniors, there will be no monetary benefit for any insight you can share with me. You can only benefit from the sheer joy you will experience from sharing your knowledge with others.

Just why is Marriot food so bad? I probably shouldn't start with that one because it's a toughy. But if anyone knows the reason and can offer some insight on the subject, please fill me in.

Why is it that everything I have ever needed from the library:

- a) "is being bound."
- b) is only available on microfiche, which we all know takes a whole day to locate one article, not to mention the 15-cent copying fee. I can hear the Copier Man on "Saturday Night Live" now ... "Susan ... Suz ... the Suzmeister ... making 15-cent microfiche copies ..."
- c) the library doesn't have anymore; or the library never had, doesn't have and never will have? Despite this trend to eliminate anything popular or up-to-date from the libraries on this campus, I

am hoping to find at least one book I need for any class by May 12.

And speaking of libraries, what do those banners hanging in Davis Library mean? I thought it was a secret Carolina code that would be revealed to me sometime during my four years, but it's getting very near the end (I think that's a line from a song ... I'm not trying to plagiarize), and I still don't know the answer. Maybe it was something I was supposed to learn in a class, but I missed that day because ... something suddenly came up. I hope that line isn't before your time; then I'll feel really old.

Why is it that Student Stores charges an arm and a leg for books (I know it's time to graduate when I start talking like that) but only pays back a finger and a toe? Isn't that a creative parallel? Can I copyright that line?

Why is there a wind tunnel between Davis Library and Lenoir (pronounced: len-wah and usually followed by a very unpleasant sound similar to gagging) Dining Hall no matter what season? I think some senior class gift should be signs that read: WARNING! Entering a wind tunnel. Hold down your skirt, hold

on to your hat and your children. Perhaps if the budget cuts get worse, the administration could rent out the area to General Motors so they can test the aerodynamics of the latest GM models.

Why is that 50 percent of the student body (the real one, not the statues) lives off campus? Could it be that we pay to sleep and study in the dorms, among other things, and it is impossible to do either of those two very important student functions as a campus resident?

Why is it that a bagel and cream cheese in the Union Station costs \$1.04? Would it be all that difficult to charge 1 cent more or possibly 4 cents less (how silly of me to even suggest the latter) just to make life a little easier?

After four years, it's my prerogative to compile this bitch list. But I can't leave Chapel Hill and the wonderful people I know on a cynical note. It's been a great four years, with the usual ups and downs, but I think I'll remember the ups. I wish everyone in the Class of 1991 tons-o-luck in the real world.

I can only hope that UNC remains the fine institution that is about to hand me a diploma. The budget cuts will make things difficult, but I have faith that UNC will maintain the high standards it let slip for a single unaccountable instance when I was admitted.

Susan Greenwald is a senior journalism major from Washington, D.C.

READERS' FORUM

Dangerous, unfounded assertions merit response

To the editor:

I am writing to clarify some issues brought up in two letters to the editor on April 22. Mr. Roth ("Homophobia could result from homosexual activism") and Mr. and Ms. New ("Homosexuals destroy moral fiber of United States") all seem to be interested in theories of homosexuality as "natural" and "innate." In the process of proclaiming their views, the authors have made assertions that are unfounded and even dangerous if left without response.

Mr. Roth goes as far as suggesting that homophobia may be a product of "natural selection." The idea that homophobia is inborn is ludicrous. Your knowledge of physical anthropology is obviously on the rusty side, Mr. Roth! Homophobia could never have been a product of natural selection simply because it does not provide for the perpetuation of the species. To hate members of one's own species for developing relationships that are not for the express purpose of procreation does not enhance that species' chances for survival. Homophobia cannot be inherited or passed on because it is a learned behavior. It is ignorance expressed as hatred, not an instinctual response to a stimulus.

In "Homosexuals destroy moral fi-

ber of United States," the authors assert that "there is no genetic, hormonal or chemical difference between homosexual and heterosexual individuals." Further, they say that "some homosexuals change their behavior," and therefore it is not an inborn trait. These assertions are dangerously untrue.

As far as the assertion that there is no "genetic, hormonal or chemical difference," this is an outright manipulation of extant data. At this point, no one knows whether homosexuality is determined by genetic or environmental factors. Almost everyone in the research fields agrees that there is no "gay gene." It is probably a combination of factors, a balance of environmental and genetic factors, that determine sexuality.

It is also generally agreed that sexuality is determined by age 5. It is then no longer a question of accepting or rejecting one's preferences and orientation. The fact that some homosexuals do change their behavior does not mean that they have changed their sexual orientation. If behavior changes, preference and orientation do not.

I am shocked not only that such mundanely archaic attitudes proliferate our society, but that these particular ones have oozed out of the Health Policy and Administration and Pharmacy departments, both supposedly interested in fact, not fiction. Perhaps the purpose of higher education has not been met in these cases, if that purpose is to expand

one's perspective, to replace ignorance and fear with the ability to see the truth.

CELIA CARVER
Graduate
Geography

SVATI SHODHAN
Junior
Anthropology/Biology

Homophobic letters reveal glaring ignorance of writers

To the editor:

The recent homophobic diatribes by Robert Roth ("Homophobia could result from homosexual activism," April 22) and Jeffrey and Pamela New ("Homosexuals destroy moral fiber of United States," April 22) demand a rebuttal.

The News' letter is pure, unadulterated swill. Gays and lesbians are not immoral monsters whose relationships are based on promiscuity. We are not child molesters, mental incompetents or comparable to prostitutes, adulterers and people who have sex with animals.

The bald-faced lies, half-truths and irrational fears these authors put forth as public discourse serve only to feed people's fear and loathing of gays and lesbians. If their statement that "homosexuality is a self-destructive choice that is infecting and destroying the morality of our society" is not homophobic, then I would rather not

know what homophobia is.

Gays and lesbians refuse to accept the blame for the failings of society. A 10 percent minority whose unions are not legally recognized or recorded cannot account for a 50 percent divorce rate among heterosexuals. Nostalgic views of a world that never existed and "Just Say No" platitudes haven't helped solve teenage pregnancy, drug abuse or any other social ill. Selfishness and a refusal to accept responsibility for one's actions are the cause of society's problems.

With regard to the News' contention that we want recognition of "alternative" families, they are right. Wake up, WARD AND JUNE CLEAVER ARE DEAD. They were a fantasy anyway. The push for legal recognition of gay and lesbian relationships will allow everyone, gay and straight, to construct relationships which best suit their needs. If you choose a traditional marriage, it will be because that is the best choice for you not because that is the only governmentally approved option.

Robert Roth's "blame the victim" attitude is inexcusable. Being quiet and waiting until our oppressors deem it an appropriate time to deal with our needs just won't cut it. Women had to fight for the franchise are still fighting for equality. African Americans found that silence was keeping them second-class citizens. Look around and it will be obvious that the fight against blatant racism continues. As for staying in the closet, the gay and lesbian community, nor any other minority community, is not here to make your lives any easier or more pleasant. You don't have to like, endorse or hug us. The struggle for gay and lesbian equality has just begun.

Roth's calm and seemingly well-reasoned proposal that homophobia is a naturally selected trait is even more dangerous than the News' vitriol. This sort of unfounded rationalization allows people to reason away behavior that has no place in our society by attributing it to something innate, beyond their control. The "Natural Order" has been used time and again to defend the status quo, keeping the oppressed in their place. Read Stephen Jay Gould's essays on biological arguments used to support past social orders — racism, sexism, etc. Roth uses genetics to defend homophobia, yet the News discount genetics as a factor in homosexuality. Like statistics, genetics can be carelessly employed by the ignorant to "prove" the indefensible.

What do we want? Not much. Simply the ability to lead quiet, undisturbed lives with the same rights and privileges afforded any other member of society. As long as our community is denied

basic civil rights and freedom from violence, we will be in your face, angry and inconvenient. Yes, we're here, we're queer — get over it!

MIKE HOLLAND
Graduate
Chemistry

Heterosexual couples don't always make good parents

To the editor:

Mr. New's and Ms. New's letter to the editor, "Homosexuals destroy the moral fiber of the United States" (April 22) contains a misguided statement: "Homosexual couples cannot provide a healthy environment for children, who need moral role models and stability." This sentence has been horribly misworded. The fact that a couple is heterosexual does not intrinsically imply that the familial environment will be healthy, moral and stable.

There are plenty of heterosexual parents who head families in unhealthy, immoral and unstable environments. Let's not overlook the fact that many children living with heterosexual parents are abused and/or neglected. Many children are victims of continual family break-ups due to separations and divorces. Many children suffer because their parents are alcoholics or drug abusers. Many children see Dad abusing Mom, whether physically, sexually or mentally. Families with these characteristics certainly can't be deemed healthy, moral and stable.

I don't deny that homosexual couples may suffer from some of the same characteristics, but heterosexual couples cannot necessarily be idealized, either. It's impossible to define a healthy, moral and stable familial environment as a heterosexually based one. These family units are capable of having their own flaws.

Heterosexual parents don't necessarily come hand-in-hand with what children need. A family headed by heterosexual parents does not guarantee that children will receive the love, protection and nurturance that they need. The increasing number of dysfunctional families in our society serves to help prove this point. Children need parents who respect one another. Children need parents who love one another. Children need parents who love their children.

Parents, whether they be heterosexual or homosexual couples, who live up to these characteristics, are the parents who are able to give and foster the love, honesty, self-worth and respect that children need. While I don't necessarily consent to homosexually headed families, I think that it is hasty to assume that

just because a couple is homosexual, they are unable to promote a healthy, moral and stable environment for children to live in.

JENNIFER KOLB
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Health Behavior and
Health Education

Bloody noose exists instead of non-existent moral fiber

To the editor:

I was somewhat surprised by the letter, "Homosexuals destroy moral fiber of United States" (April 22) particularly by the reference to the idea of a "moral fiber" that seems to have been holding our nation together for some time now.

Now, let me get this straight ... Are we talking about the same "moral fiber" that drew us together as an infant nation and endorsed the razing of nearly all native societies, literally paving them over so that we could then start fresh to work on our new moral society? Or is it the fiber that was picked in the fields of the South for a hundred (or so) years, yielding the grotesque harvest of oppression and prejudice that is still reaped today, in this moral society? Or rather, is this unifying thread of American ethics the one that, in order to prevent the plainly immoral practice of masturbation, sanctioned the removal of women's genitalia until as recently as 1936? Or, it could be that nationalistic bond of racism and xenophobia about which we are proud to rally when we need to encamp a few (hundred thousand) Japanese, or burn down the businesses of Iraqi-Americans, right?

Let's just get one thing straight: as Americans, we have no moral fibers. What we have instead is the makings of a bloody noose that threatens to choke the conscience of every thoughtful, ethical individual having the misfortune of birth into such a freakish, contradictory society. We are a country based upon and immersed in a perpetual desire to subjugate and destroy everything non-"American," justifying this with a vague reference to a transparent set of so-called "morals." If you don't believe me, go read the book of American History for yourself.

JOHN BELL
Sophomore
Spanish/Mathematics

Have a good summer. See you in the fall.

