

The Daily Tar Heel

98th year of editorial freedom

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Giving students a little grace

About 2,100 students received an early present from the University this holiday season when their registrations were canceled after they failed to pay their tuition and fees on time.

This drastic measure was taken without any prior notification to those affected. Some lucky students didn't even discover that they had no classes until they returned from break.

Students who do not pay their tuition and fees should be penalized in some manner, but not without sufficient warning. The registrar's office needs to consider the difficulty many students have when attempting to add one or two classes by using Caroline or sitting in classes. When this number is increased to four or five classes, the task is formidable indeed.

This semester nearly 10 percent of the University's more than 20,000 students were faced with this challenge. This indicates that some revision of the registration cancellation policy is needed sorely.

The registrar's office must warn students and parents explicitly that it will cancel registrations if tuition and fees are not received by the payment deadline. Last year the registrar's office sent parents letters warning them about the consequences of failing to meet the payment deadline. Discouraged by the mailing's \$7,000 price tag, the office opted not to do the same this year. Not surprisingly, 700 more registrations

were canceled this year than last.

There is little doubt that warning parents and students would have minimized this number. In addition, a grace period allowing students to pay their bills after the deadline, but before classes start, would have benefited both students and the University. If a student fails to settle his account by the first day of classes, then his registration should be dropped.

A minimal fine to help pay for the warning letters could be assessed to bills paid during the grace period. The fine would be a small price for students to pay in order to keep their classes.

The grace period also would cut University administrative costs. The registrar's office cancels registrations when some pre-registered students who do not pay tuition and fees do not return to school. If a grace period were provided, needless cancellations would not be processed for those students who fully intend to return to classes but need more time to pay tuition and fees. Instead, cancellations would be made only for non-returning, pre-registered students.

It is difficult enough to return to school, move back into a room, buy books and catch up with friends without having the added task of rebuilding a schedule from scratch. With the addition of a warning letter and an established grace period before registrations are canceled, this task could be avoided.

Let the band play on

At the southern tip of the continent of Africa is a fair-sized country named, appropriately, South Africa. Historically, it has been a nation known for its diamond and gold mines and for its system of apartheid that gives political dominance to 5 million white citizens at the expense of the 25 million who are black and of millions of Asians and coloreds of mixed racial ancestry.

More recently, the country has been marked by unrest and violence caused by the government's attempts to reform and by the strife between black factions that disagree about how the reformation process is proceeding, if it is proceeding or if it is making any real progress.

The international community has decided, however, that at least some progress in the right direction is being made. Some of the long-standing sanctions are being lifted, particularly cultural ones which have barred outside entertainers and artists from performing in the country.

Paul Simon, both an artist and an entertainer, is the first American to take the show on the road to South Africa with the endorsement of both the African National Congress and Inkatha Freedom Party, the country's two main black-led political organizations. He also has been saddled with the dubious honor of being the target of violence by smaller, more militant anti-apartheid groups — specifically the Azanian Youth Organization — which believe not enough progress has been made in government reform to merit the lifting of any sanctions.

It is truly a shame that things must be this way. After all, this is Paul Simon we're talking about here, not Guns 'N' Roses.

The Daily Tar Heel

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Mad columnist reveals sordid vacation exploits

During this vacation I decided to allow myself a special treat and took myself for a nice walk. After all, I reasoned, I've earned it, and it was obvious by the way I was scratching at the door that I wanted out. So, after cutting away the bright yellow tape saying "Police line: Do not cross" that mysteriously seems to appear wrapped all over the front porch of my family's house, I began my relaxing stroll.

As I was walking, I smelled the wonderful aroma of my mother's fresh-baked bread. I followed the scent for what must have been miles (my watch stopped, I couldn't tell), but when I reached the source of the wonderful scent I was disappointed to find that it was not some stray mound of my mother's wonderful bread, but rather a pile of smoldering tires. Come to think of it, my mom never baked bread. Huh. Mental note: Mom — bread — no. Okay. Anyway, I began to look around my now unfamiliar environs.

I noticed a large knot of agitated people standing in the middle of the road. I got closer and saw the body of a young boy wedged under a stopped car. Using my vast powers of deduction, powers so great that I can tell the difference between identical twins whom I never have met simply by taking a cursory glance through their wallets. Provided they're dressed differently. Anyway, I reasoned that what had happened was that the young boy had been struck by lightning when a freak gravitational flux hurled him into the street, and a passing motorist had tried to help by applying pressure to the boy's cranium with his front tire, that old folk remedy for being struck by lightning once? Well, I was. Here's the receipt. But I digress.

Realizing that the boy was injured, I bolted over to the scene, ready to help. I was forced to shove away many people surrounding the poor youth, including two pesky guys in orange and white suits who thought that just because they came to the scene in a big, flashy, white van with all kinds of flashing lights on it that they should be allowed to pound on this poor kid's chest and blow down his throat. Sickos.

Immediately when I saw the boy I knew what must be done to help him. In fact, he practically told me himself. On his shirt, just above one of those cute little rhinos or tarantulas or whatever drawn by that "Boynont" person who does those recycled greeting cards, were the telling words: "In case of emergency,

about some thoughts that flitted through my brain.

During this past holiday season, there seemed to be a resurgence of religious icon displays. At least compared to what you see in, say, February. Regardless, you probably could have thrown a rock in any direction and managed to have hit at least one nativity scene. And I'm not just saying that, either. I tested this out. Although I found that during certain hours, such as daylight and much of the night, I usually ended up clocking a fellow human or, perhaps, one of my relatives. Also, in some more sparsely populated areas, the rock you would have to throw to prove my theory correct would require the dimensions of the meteorite that wiped out the dinosaurs. Such are the risks of science.

Anyway, I was in this one nativity scene one night, shearing the little sheep they have in there to make some mittens, when something struck me: a heavy brass paperweight, hurled by some territorial pastor who suggested that if I wished to remain bipedal, I should leave the manger scene. I guess the intense atmosphere of the yuletide season takes its toll on us all.

As I fled the church to find sanctuary, ironically, I began to think about this whole nativity scene thing. As I understand it, those of the Christian faith use them to commemorate the birthday of their Messiah, a certain Mr. Christ. Okay. That's fine. But how about this: Since Christmas is technically the birthday of Jesus Christ, why does everyone only do the first one? It might be cool to see a nativity scene of Jesus', say, eighth birthday. He'd be sitting there at his little decorated table, cutting up one tiny piece of cake to serve, miraculously, all of his 12 little friends, 11 of whom would be

administer chocolate. "Were these people blind? This wasn't some easily ignored medic-alert bracelet, this was a whole shirt! Fools! Luckily, I forwent my normal procedure of soiling myself whenever such a stressful and important situation occurred and instead sprang into action. I took the dozen or so Hershey bars I keep on my person at all times as a result of a childhood promise I made to the now-famous newsman Charles Kuralt and began cramming them in the boy's mouth with breakneck speed. The last thing I remember was that I seemed to have been making progress, for the boy's writhings were growing more violent. Then everything went black.

When I woke up, I was strapped to a small cot. I looked down and saw with much horror that one of my hands was missing. I was about to scream out in shock and fright, but then, much to my relief, I noticed my hand next to me, floating in a jar of wine sauce. Boy, did I feel foolish! Thank God I didn't scream. How embarrassing that would have been!

One of the two main resolutions I made for this new year was to try to improve the transitions in my columns, to try to write columns that were less bluntly severed in the middle, to try not to switch to an entirely new idea with the careless abandon of kudzu. I think even the moistest of us can see how well I've fared in that arena. My other big resolution, never to use the phrase "sequestered oyster" in a column, I broke about four words back. Based on these results, one easily can see that I have little or no skill at maintaining New Year's resolutions. In fact, out of all of my years of existence, and, of course, being alive, I barely can think of any resolutions I've managed to keep. Hell, you know how many times I've kept a resolution? You could count them on one hand! Seven times. Pathetic.

Enough talk of failed resolutions! That stuff is so morbid, and you, you, my readers, you look to me for morbid text and disinteresting ideas, but rather for inspiration, light and, occasionally, hot stock tips. With these goals in mind, allow me now to drivel incoherently,

READERS' FORUM

Dean Dome should echo with cheers, enthusiasm

To the editor:

This is a personal appeal to the students of the University of North Carolina to help save our basketball program. One more basketball game with no noise or enthusiasm, and the Dean Dome will become the Dead Dome.

First, I am sympathetic about your poor seating arrangement. I was fortunate enough to have had four years of Carmichael Auditorium with seats and enthusiasm the team deserves. Ground was broken for the Smith Center my senior year. When preliminary seating arrangements were first presented, I immediately objected. Although I would be a student no longer when the Smith Center opened, I still felt the students deserved better.

The University of North Carolina basketball team is made up of University of North Carolina students. That team is yours. It is not mine nor any fat-cat contributor's. You deserve the best seats to help support your team. However, it appears that even your support has become non-existent. But who can blame you? Behind-the-basket and nosebleed sections are degrading.

However, while I and thousands of other alumni sympathize with your situation, we also plead for your fanatical support. Don't let your "coat and tie" and "designer dress" around influence your behavior. You have the intelligence and numbers to put even the

Dookies to shame. Dare yourself to stand and yell the entire game, and heaven forbid, even boo Lenny Wirtz out of the Smith Center when he makes his usual 50 bad calls a game.

I am afraid that a continuous dormant crowd has or will begin to affect the blue chippers when they visit. It is frightening, but Coach Smith will actually retire someday. You combine that with poor support, and we might have to schedule Meredith or St. Mary's in order to compete. I applaud the pep band, cheerleaders and Carolina Fever for non-stop support. Let their enthusiasm spread everywhere!

I realize my children never will get to experience the excitement of Carmichael. But there is no reason why the Smith Center can't be the same.

RONALD NEALY
Class of '83
Albemarle

State needs suspension of 20 percent surtax

To the editor:

If you were a business owner in North Carolina, what would you do with the 20 percent surtax money if it were suspended by the General Assembly? Would that money enable you to invest in new equipment, keep your folks on the payroll or even hire extra employees, or to buy products to expand your business? Nearly 160,000 employers in North Carolina may have a chance soon to answer that question.

Others might think there's little harm in waiting to pass such legislation until the General Assembly returns in May to Raleigh. But the fact is that to delay suspension of the surtax would be costly to the state. The reprogramming of computers, the administration and mailing involving the refunds to employers would cost in excess of \$50,000, not to mention the additional man-hours required. Over-

all, all positive benefits of the legislation would be diminished due to the amount of time required to implement this refund process.

The amount of money that would be freed up immediately is by no means small. Actually, last year in the first quarter, when the majority of taxes were paid by employers, \$98.6 million went into the reserve fund; \$76.6 million in the second quarter; and \$49 million for the third quarter.

Finally, the General Assembly assured employers the surtax would be suspended when it no longer was needed. The facts support suspension. Now it's time for our legislators to act responsibly, save government unnecessary expenses, keep as much money as possible circulating in our local communities and suspend the tax when they come to Raleigh Monday. It would release millions into the state economy when it is needed the most.

ANN Q. DUNCAN
Chairwoman
Employment Security
Commission of North Carolina

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- Letters should be limited to 400 words.
- If you want your letter published, sign and date it. No more than two signatures.
- Include your year in school, major, phone number and hometown.

■ The DTH reserves the right to edit letters for space, clarity and vulgarity.