

The Daily Tar Heel

STEVEN NORTON EDITOR, 962-4086 OR EDITOR@DAILYTARHEEL.COM  
C. RYAN BARBER OPINION EDITOR, OPINION@DAILYTARHEEL.COM  
DAKOTA WILLIAMS ASSOCIATE OPINION EDITOR

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Steven Norton  
Editor-in-chief  
Senior comparative literature major  
from Elizabeth City  
Email: editor@dailytarheel.com

The DTH is out to keep you informed

The Daily Tar Heel didn't out Will Thomason. In the past 24 hours, some have refuted that fact. What those responders didn't know was that before the story was published, Thomason was already out to the people who mattered — his friends and family. Those who took issue with our decision also wouldn't have had a full understanding of the story if the line, "Thomason, who is gay, ..." weren't included in a story about his beliefs on homosexuality and their direct correlation to his ouster from Psalm 100. The DTH didn't take that line lightly. The decision to come out can be a difficult one, and we know that broadcasting one's sexual orientation atop the front page isn't always appropriate. It was in this instance — but not without a few questions first. Would the DTH essentially be outing someone who might not want or feel comfortable with such attention or exposure? Would it appear to readers that the DTH was attacking a group simply for the religious beliefs it holds? Would readers assume we were just substantiating UNC's liberal stereotype? Was Thomason's removal from his a cappella group an isolated situation, or did it represent a larger campus issue?

Would we fail in our job to hold the University to account if we didn't run the story? The editors and I discussed these questions and more at length. We weighed the DTH's mission to inform campus and hold the University accountable without doing undue harm. We ultimately decided we needed to run the story for many reasons. First, we were able to talk to all parties involved. Both Thomason and Blake Templeton, the group's general director, agreed to on-the-record interviews. We didn't need to rely on anonymous sources, which would have harmed the story's credibility. We refined our wording to make the article as accurate as possible while remaining sensitive to all parties involved. That involved consultation with all sources from every side to make sure the issue was portrayed accurately. Second, we ran the story because of the real dilemma it presents: Thomason's removal shined a light on a University policy that is far from clear. We saw Psalm 100's case. Its right to control membership based on adherence to the group's constitution has some grounding, according to the rules in place. Meanwhile, one could make a case for the group's interpretation of that rule as a contradiction of the University's non-discrimination policy. The story went to print and addressed the policy's blurriness. But it was ripe for follow-ups. When does a decision like this cross the line? Is there a line at all? Who gets to decide? It might take a while to get answers, as the University treads lightly in its response. Until then, I'll only make a few promises. We'll report both sides, we'll reserve judgment (outside this page) and we won't turn down the heat on getting the answers you deserve. We didn't when we asked Will.

**NEXT** Columnist Mark Laichena discusses efforts to motivate faculty — and Andrew Harrell gets mysterious.

EDITORIAL CARTOON



EDITORIAL

Bev v. Irene

Gov. Perdue showed the urgency N.C. needs for hurricane relief.

Hurricane Irene came and went with little ado here in Orange County, but the havoc it wreaked up and down the East Coast last weekend will not soon be forgotten. From the shellfish beds of Chesapeake Bay to the cotton and tobacco fields of North Carolina, the damage has made Irene one of the costliest hurricanes in the nation's history. And because much of the damage was done not by winds but by flooding, many of the costs will not be covered by homeowner's insurance. With this in mind, Gov. Bev Perdue took the swift action North Carolina needed this week, bringing federal disaster relief assistance to the state in its time of need. She announced

Wednesday that seven N.C. counties have been approved for low-interest loans and grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency. After asking for disaster relief Monday, Perdue moved quickly to expedite the funding approval process. She showed an immediate understanding that many survivors were uninsured for the damage and had U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack fast-track the approval of seven counties, with the possibility of more to come. Residents of those counties — Beaufort, Carteret, Craven, Dare, Hyde, Pamlico and Tyrrell — can now begin to piece their lives together, even with insurance covering less than 40 percent of the costs, as Kinetic Analysis Corporation estimates. The approval underscored an already concerted effort by Perdue to waste no time in responding to Irene. On Aug.

24, she declared a state of emergency in advance of the storm. President Barack Obama then followed suit, approving a federal emergency declaration for 34 counties that helped cover the expense of shelters, search and rescue missions and other emergency measures. Together, those responses should help redeem Perdue in the eyes of many North Carolinians, who rightly criticized her for a slow reaction to last spring's tornados. Furthermore, they should help Perdue and other Democrats make the case for preserving federal spending at a time when some conservatives, like Rep. Ron Paul, call for eliminating agencies like FEMA in the name of deficit cuts. Perdue has a tough re-election bid awaiting her next year. She can count her response to Irene, so far, as something to show off to N.C. voters.

EDITORIAL

The right not to know

The Right to Know Act costs too much for the state, women's rights.

North Carolina has had its share of fiscal problems, but you wouldn't know it by looking at abortion policy in the state. Set to take effect in October, the Woman's Right to Know Act is nothing more than a peg in the Republicans' social agenda. The bill burdens both women and the state itself in a manner that could easily be avoided. Planned Parenthood, which is currently in the midst of an injunction in the fight to retain funding, is evaluating its options in filing a lawsuit against the controversial legislation. The law requires that any woman seeking an abortion be provided information

about the development of the fetus and subjected to a 24-hour waiting period, as well as offered an ultrasound. Those in support of the bill argue that the law is constitutional and, according to a poll taken by the conservative Civitas Institute, a majority of the state is in support of the legislation. But conservative legislators are losing sight of their priorities. There is nothing wrong with ensuring that all information is available to a woman in order to help her make an educated decision — but this bill doesn't have the woman's best interest in mind. And at such high costs, with initial printing of this new information costing the state more than \$60,000, this bill will be hard to swallow for the state, as well. Janet Colm, chief executive officer at Planned Parenthood

of Central North Carolina, said the costs to women seeking abortions would become burdensome. The cost of birth control will likely triple, she said. Planned Parenthood's funding is already in turmoil due to a ban preventing the organization's funding from receiving money from the state's budget. Currently, those funds support prevention programs and health services in Durham. The Woman's Right to Know Act places an undue burden women by requiring them to spend more time and money on appointments. Certainly, there are individuals who would benefit from additional information. But the true intention of this act is to dissuade women from taking advantage of their rights. That isn't something the state can ever afford.

QuickHits

**Football season**  
Football season is finally here, even if our team is less than intact. But football season still brings beautiful weather, tailgating and the annual molting of fraternities into bow ties and argyle.

**Boobies**  
Topless rallies have swept the country protesting the social stigmas and laws preventing women from publicly baring their breasts. We support the effort to free hooters everywhere — even if bras don't.

**Second week back**  
It's still good to be back, but now that we've been shown how to use Blackboard — and maybe even Sakai — by every single one of our professors, it's time to start getting assigned real work.

**No booze, no boys**  
Sorry guys (and girls, where applicable), but it's that time of year again, when sorority sisters abstain from all things enjoyable. Just be sure to wear Nike shorts and Uggs so we know who to avoid.

**NCCU credit rating**  
Moody's Investors Service downgraded N.C. Central University's credit rating from A2 to A3 this week. Good thing we didn't consider their vice chancellor for finance as a replacement — or did we?

**Hog hunting**  
Rick Perry signed legislation allowing any Texan with a hunting license to shoot feral pigs from a helicopter. Despite the appealing parallels with Sarah Palin, we can't condone this less than fair game.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"With her connections and her knowledge and her support and knowing what my intentions are, she has definitely signed on to develop me into all that I need to be."

Trisha Stafford-Odom, New UNC assistant women's basketball coach

FEATURED ONLINE READER COMMENT

"I can't join groups that I fund that only allow girls, even though I have no control over me being a boy. I declare discrimination."

Boy, On Psalm 100 and the non-discrimination policy

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Statement of support for Will Thomason

TO THE EDITOR:  
The UNC Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Straight Alliance (GLBTSA) expresses its support for Will Thomason and the University's non-discrimination policy. GLBTSA hopes to participate in a campus-wide discussion about faith and sexuality in order to bring attention to these intersecting identities. We urge the understanding that all organizations on campus must abide by the non-discrimination policy and are confident in the future actions of the university in working to build a more cohesive future.

Executive Board  
UNC GLBLTSA

Scott Neidich  
Graduate Student  
Biochemical Nutrition

Bible condemns homosexuality, not debatable

TO THE EDITOR:  
You are perhaps the most liberally-biased newspaper in existence. Trying to argue that homosexuality is a debatable topic among Christians is ridiculous. The Bible is clear in every translation, Old and New Testament, that homosexuality is a sin, and a person living in a pattern of sin is not a true follower of Christ. Yes, I have researched this topic and can take you back to the original Greek translation. I suggest you do the same before making an argument on a topic you know nothing about apart from what you read on biased web sites.

Oh, and just because God loves the world (John 3:16) does not mean that everyone in the world is a Christian and going to heaven. God loves sinners and Christians alike. To close, Psalm 100 was perfectly within their rights to dismiss a member who disagreed with the group's core constitution, which is the Bible.

Will Jacobsen  
Junior, PWAD

Psalm 100 should rewrite constitution

TO THE EDITOR:  
There are two ways in which Psalm 100 should be required to reverse their decision to remove Will Thomason from the group. The first way is acknowledging an alternative interpretation of the Bible which does not hold homosexuality as a sin, and the second is by revising their constitution to omit the clause forcing adherence to the "ideology of the Bible." In the case of the first, acknowledging an alternative interpretation will ensure that the mandate of adherence to the Bible is permissible under the University. I am sure that many biblical scholars can offer such an interpretation, and that they would be quite convincing. Should such an interpretation fail to be accepted by the members of Psalm 100, Psalm 100 will be forced to claim that their constitution

violates the University's non-discrimination policy. As such, they would then be required to re-write the constitution, and leave the part about adherence to the Bible out. Either way, Psalm 100 would be compelled to reverse their decision. If there are other reasons Thomason was dismissed from the group, then Psalm 100 may still bar him from participating — but his dismissal under the reasons given indicates a clear conflict between the organization's constitution and the University's non-discrimination policy, and must be rectified.

Young Democrats in Congress acted unfairly

TO THE EDITOR:  
As a two-term member of Student Congress, I have always supported the body for its ability to provide all UNC students with an enriched experience. Students from smaller universities marvel at our ability to support numerous groups, a tradition that should be protected and should always be kept ethical. However, this tradition was grossly violated Tuesday in an unprecedented way, as personal politics influenced the votes of numerous representatives. Requesting \$20,768 to bring pundit and author Ann Coulter on Sept. 20, the College Republicans were appropriated \$5,000, and loaned \$15,000 to be repaid to Student Congress. Members of the Young Democrats serving in Congress made the blindly partisan motion to make the College Republicans return \$15,000. This is an unprecedented move that severely damages the reputation of this University. While in Congress, I have supported the Young Democrats in their efforts to host events. As chairman of the College Republicans, I understand the grave necessity of being involved politically, as members of both organizations have a shared interest in shaping our future by being politically active. This is why I voted in favor of allocating just under \$16,000 to the Young Democrats, none of which has to be paid back, and would never put them in the position of having to raise \$15,000. If we pride ourselves on being a university that supports equality and the free marketplace of ideas, then we must ensure that people of all viewpoints are given equal representation, not allowing personal biases to persuade our votes as elected representatives.

Greg Steele  
Junior, Political Science  
Chairman, UNC College Republicans

SPEAK OUT

**WRITING GUIDELINES**  
• Please type: Handwritten letters will not be accepted.  
• Sign and date: No more than two people should sign letters.  
• Students: Include your year, major and phone number.  
• Faculty/staff: Include your department and phone number.  
• Edit: The DTH edits for space, clarity, accuracy and vulgarity. Limit letters to 250 words.  
**SUBMISSION**  
• Drop-off: at our office at 151 E. Rosemary Street.  
• Email: opinion@dailytarheel.com

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