

The Daily Tar Heel

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of editorial freedom

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Meditate, for better health and focus

I'd like nothing more than to include a meditative exercise in this column, but I can't: My readers are too busy to meditate — or so they believe. They have no idea what they're missing.

For everyone who thinks meditation is nothing more than sitting cross-legged and humming, let's go over the facts.

Research has shown that meditating habitually can lower blood pressure, improve one's immune system and may decrease the risk of heart attack.

Meditation also helps you focus. In a recent study, subjects trained for three months in meditation developed enhanced "attentional stability," i.e. focused thought free from mental wandering.

For these reasons, meditation must be taken seriously. But what exactly defines the act?

Rob Nairn, author of "What is Meditation?" calls it "a highly alert and skillful state of mind because it requires one to remain psychologically present and 'with' whatever happens in and around one without adding to or subtracting from it in any way."

It's a mouthful, but that last point about arithmetic is a crucial one, especially for students. Non-meditators almost never think about anything without over-evaluating, contextualizing or otherwise judging it, and that's only natural. They fail to be mindful.

Mindfulness is a concept intricately linked to meditation, involving nonjudgmental, centered awareness. When we criticize our surroundings or ourselves we miss out on the de-stressing benefits of being mindful.

And when we let our minds wander to other topics, we may also set ourselves up for a bad mood later on. Surprising new research in Science magazine has indicated that daydreaming might actually make people sadder.

The moral is: Mindful focus is good for you; unbridled reverie is bad. And while most of us can't escape to the Himalayas to drink tea and ponder, all of us can (and should) afford ourselves some time for meditation. Thousands of guided audio exercises, some as short as five minutes, are available online. UNC Counseling and Wellness Services even offer group meditation classes.

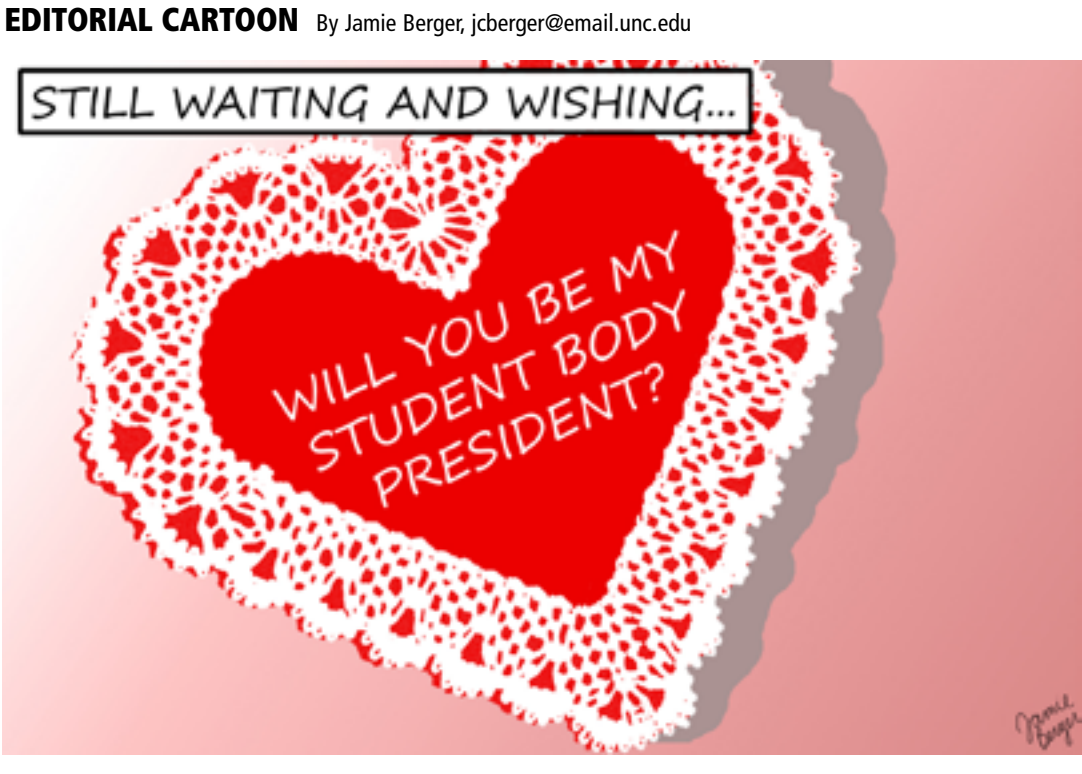
If you're still stuck in the mindset that sitting peacefully would be a waste of time, you might try an ancient Hindi practice that incorporates both mindfulness and physical fitness: yoga.

Today, in America, the link between yoga and meditation is often downplayed, but in traditional practice the former is nothing without the latter. If you want to experience the psychological benefits of meditation within a modern yoga class like those offered at the SRC, you must be mindful: Do not judge your body, and stay present in your breathing and in the sensations that the poses create within you.

Practiced rightly, yoga helps tune out the stressors in life and "tune in to what your body is doing," says Lindsey Cannon, student and yoga instructor for the Campus Rec. She learned early on "how important it is to focus on your thoughts," and believes that focus is responsible for its practitioners post-session state of rest.

I can personally attest to that rested feeling. I attended one of Lindsey's classes last spring before a morning midterm. The relaxation I procured lasted well through my exam, helping me to focus better than coffee ever has.

TUESDAY:
Sarah Dugan discusses changes in college dating.



Don't dismiss now

Everyone wants the election to be over, but not until there is real resolution to Santoro's suit

It would be incredibly fortunate for Andrew Phillips if the case against him, and his dismal interpretation of the Student Code, is dismissed tonight.

But it shouldn't happen. The suit needs to go forward, and plaintiff Deanna Santoro has the standing for it to do so.

Almost everyone wants this election to be over. And it would be great to know the results. But more important for the integrity of the Code and for student government would be genuine resolution to the Board of Elections' mishandling.

Tonight's hearing is to weigh Phillips' argument that Santoro lacks the proper authorization in the Code to bring a suit against him.

Phillips is getting it wrong. While the relevant sections

regarding ability to sue are more nuanced than the sections he is alleged of violating, his motion to dismiss is just as inexcusably wrong as the decisions he is being sued over.

He writes that Santoro doesn't meet the criteria for being adversely affected by the BOE's failure to force Ian Lee to resign from his executive position before running for president.

His motion states that her injury from resigning as speaker, which Santoro had to do in order to sue, stemmed from her "willful action." Not from the shoddy work by the BOE that drove her decision.

He also states that the complaint was not filed within the 96-hour window to challenge a BOE decision.

We don't buy any of these arguments, and the Student

Supreme Court shouldn't buy them either.

The BOE's decision to allow Ian Lee to run facilitated a conflict of interest situation, whereby Lee was in charge of updating the Code.

That affected Santoro directly and adversely as she was speaker of Student Congress, and resigning was the only way she could challenge the decision.

With respect to the statute of limitations, we direct Phillips to the definitions in the Code — they can be helpful. It defines "act" to include a "refusal to act."

And it was Phillips' refusal to act that makes up a large part of Santoro's complaint.

If the BOE thinks it avoids culpability by refusing to investigate violations, it seems sorely mistaken.

Fair counsel

Student plaintiffs deserve knowledgeable counsel

This University lacks a student public attorney that would serve those who bring suits against student government.

In light of the recent lawsuit brought against the Board of Elections that caused the student body president election results to be withheld, it's a good time to reconsider the position of a "Plaintiff's Counsel."

Presently, students who wish to file a complaint must prepare their case themselves. The student government, in this most recent case the BOE, has the Solicitor General to prepare its defense.

This leaves students at a severe disadvantage, even when they have a legitimate claim against a practice of our student leaders.

The Student Code can be a very complicated document. This most recent suit stems from the belief that the BOE misinterpreted a section of the Code when ruling on the legitimacy of Ian Lee's campaign.

Given the short period of time students have to prepare their case, it can be very difficult to organize an effective argument without the proper help or knowledge of the Code.

"It's really time intensive and you really have to know what you're doing just to get a hearing," said Anthony Dent. "A general student will be lost when they try to bring a suit against somebody."

Dent said he and Erik Davies established a program for students to obtain legal advice on the Student Code and the

Supreme Court. Davies has been working with the plaintiffs of the most recent case against the BOE, but not from an official position.

Legal advice should not be given just by volunteers to those who sue. It should be provided at all times by someone familiar with the Code in order to make the process fair for all.

This new position would be a "public prosecutor" and would serve the same role as the Solicitor General but on the opposite side of the courtroom. It would give the plaintiff assistance that would level the playing field when it comes to these suits.

It is imperative, given the time constraints of most cases, that plaintiffs have someone with knowledge of the Supreme Court process on their side.

Laying down the law

A library for studying law needs regulations of its own

As a public institution, UNC campus buildings should be available not only to students, but to the community at large.

But public accessibility cannot and should not be favored over the safety and security of the students who specifically pay to use campus facilities for legitimate reasons.

Last week, a meeting hosted by the Student Bar Association saw more than 70 concerned law students come together to discuss issues relating to safety in law school facilities on campus.

The reasons for the meeting were in response to a Feb. 3 incident in which Department of Public Safety officials received an anonymous phone

call reporting harassment in the Kathrine R. Everett Law Library.

Among the suggestions posed by law students was a buzzer system for doors and a sign-in sheet for all users. Others recommended requiring individuals to present a OneCard starting at midnight — a regulation that is already in place at the Undergraduate Library.

The OneCard system at the UL works well because it allows members of the community to use the library during normal hours while still maintaining an emphasis on the safety and security of students.

This system ought be installed at the law library as well.

Detractors from the proposed change have pointed to

possible class-based prejudices within the student community and uncomfortable feelings around homeless people.

These concerns are valid, but they distract from the real instances of trespassing that pose a risk to students. It's perfectly reasonable to have some regulation of access to a building — even a public one.

And DPS spokesman Randy Young confirmed that campus police have in all instances responded to genuine safety concerns.

Issues of safety should not be taken lightly. And the fact that recent events have created a cause for concern, we feel that it is not unreasonable to restrict access to the law library to students after midnight.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:
"I've been attacked on a daily basis for trying to stand up for what is right."
DEANNA SANTORO, ON SUING THE ELECTIONS BOARD

FEATURED ONLINE READER COMMENT:
"Wouldn't it make more sense to actually get the results before going through this big, long process?"
HUNTER, ON THE SUPREME COURT'S INJUNCTION BARRING THE RELEASE OF ELECTION RESULTS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Government recognition of commitment outdated
TO THE EDITOR:
The article from Feb. 11, "Students marrying for in-state tuition," reminded me again of my confusion about some people's belief in the sanctity of marriage.

Clearly, marriage is no longer the religious institution or even the commitment that it once was. I wonder, then, not only why some individuals insist on excluding certain people from the act of marriage, but also why others insist on maintaining it as the only form of government-recognized commitment. Why is it, for example, that only marriage ensures that a loved one can visit you in the hospital or allows loved ones to use another's health insurance? For those barred from marriage as well as those in non-traditional relationships, this exclusion can be extremely harmful. Why do we not allow for more open commitments where, for example, a couple could somehow prove to the government their commitment to one another and not have to work through a traditionally religious institution?

In a slightly more radical sense, why do we not completely rid marriage of all of its benefits and instead force everyone to file taxes as individuals, allow anyone with permission to visit loved ones in the hospital, and even make everyone use their own health insurance. To me, the insistence on government recognition of one's romantic relationships seems unnecessary and outdated.

*Anna Eusebio
Junior
Public Relations and
Environmental Studies*

Keune's narwhal campaign sounds eerily prophetic
TO THE EDITOR:
As this year's election cycle finally draws to a close, we should look to the past to learn more about the present. The real winner of this election may actually be someone who ran last year on a farcical platform with a semi-mythical mascot. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, we are talking about Nash Keune.

Sure, he was an endearing ginger with a staggering 690-page platform and a hastily constructed fortress that appeared overnight to loom over the quad. But Nash's satirically fueled campaign was more than that. He was out to highlight the silly extremes our student body president election season often reaches.

Though less comical this year, this election cycle has sustained Keune's point exactly. This year's batch of candidates has bullied, yelled and quibbled through all sorts of media — equine or otherwise. Was Keune's 2010 campaign just for parody or eerily prophetic?

No matter the winner, we should use this year's election as a lesson for the future. We may never have another "Elect Yourself" campaign, but it should be remembered as a humorous caution for elections to come.

*Alison Grady
Junior
Peace, War and Defense*

Stand and dance in place of children who cannot
TO THE EDITOR:
For the past 13 years, the UNC Dance Marathon has embodied some of Carolina's best characteristics: tireless energy, endless enthusiasm and an unmatched passion for helping others. This year, I saw firsthand the amount of time and effort put into the organization by my 13 fellow steering members, more than 300 committee members, and more than 1,000 UNC students who have pledged to take a stand for the patients and families of N.C. Children's Hospital.

"For The Kids" is a well-known phrase around campus. We stand and dance for those who cannot in a display of emotional, physical and financial support for the kids.

I could not be prouder of the students who have worked year-long to recognize the mission of the UNC Dance Marathon. I speak for the entire Overall Committee when I say thank you to the students of UNC, the doctors and nurses at N.C. Children's Hospital, and thousands of patients and their families for allowing us to be inspired by each of them every day.

The marathon is the realization of our yearlong hopes and hard work for UNC-DM. On Feb. 18 and 19, come and see why we stand.

*Katie Dight
Outreach Chairwoman
UNC Dance Marathon*

*James Whitney
Sophomore
History*

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.
- **E-mail:** opinion@dailytarheel.com
- **Send:** to P.O. Box 3257, Chapel Hill, N.C., 27515.

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