

COLUMN



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Opinion Editor

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Textual healing is worth the wait

They say the first step toward recovery is admitting that you have a problem. Well, my name is Sam, and I have a problem.

No, I'm not an alcoholic (you can't be an alcoholic if you're still in college, right?), I'm not a drug addict or even a smoker. I do, however, use my cell phone while I'm driving.

I've justified this irresponsible act for all six years I've had my license because I'm a pretty safe driver and have never been in a serious accident (knock on wood).

But I'm sorry to say that it is only a matter of time before my youthful arrogance catches up with me. So, from this point forward, I pledge to the University community, nation, Mom and Dad, to stop calling, texting and brick-breaking while I'm in the car.

The Chapel Hill Town Council is currently considering legislation that would ban the use of cell phones while behind the wheel. Texting while driving is already illegal. And while I won't speak for everyone, I can say that I personally have ignored that law for a long time.

I don't know if enacting some legislation will actually deter anyone from using their phones while they're driving. In fact, I have been in states where cell phones are banned while driving but still knowingly broke the law. But from this point on, regardless of whether or not the law is passed, I am going to spare the roads of my Blackberry-dominated driving habits.

The drivers and pedestrians of Chapel Hill deserve better because the statistics speak for themselves.

According to a study conducted by psychologists at the University of Utah, motorists who write text messages while driving are six times more likely to crash than those who don't.

Can you honestly be surprised? Even if you're an expert text messenger like me, the act of sending a text requires that you look away from the road for at least a few seconds. Texts can be confusing, and often alarming (especially if you're a N.Y. congressman). So it would make sense that texting while driving can be a major distraction.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, 5,474 people were killed on U.S. roadways in 2009 in incidents that were reported to have involved "distracted driving." Of those fatalities, 995 involved reports of a cell-phone as a distraction.

And this statistic hits home the hardest: the age group with the largest proportion of "distracted drivers" was the high school and college-aged group.

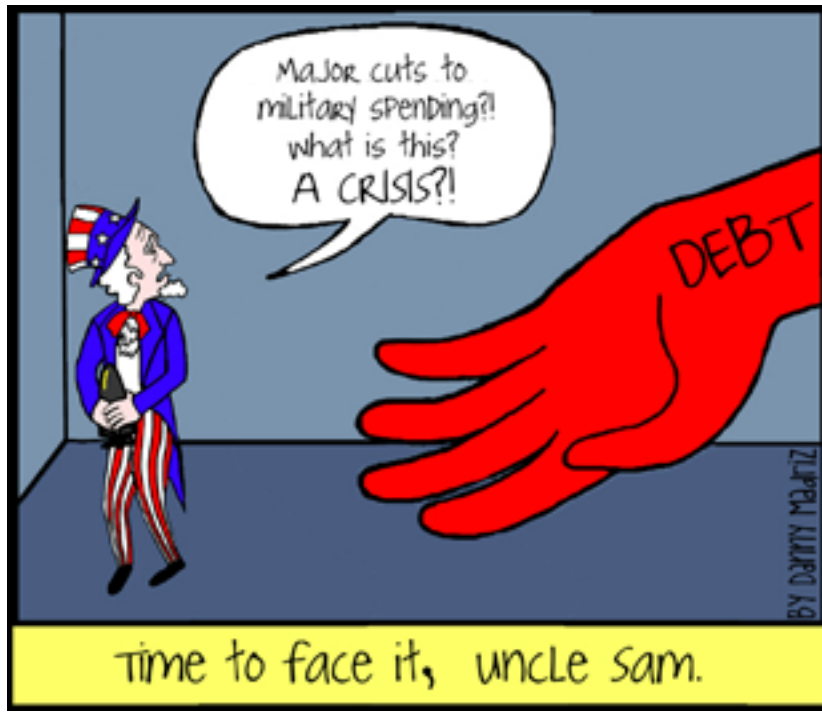
I'm not telling you anything your parents haven't already told you. And I'm as guilty as anybody has ever been.

So Mom and Dad, this week, I'm going to dig up the headset you bought me when I got my license (which would still be prohibited by the proposed law, but it's a start). And I'm going to use it.

This new policy (if it passes) may or may not change your driving habits. But I don't need a law to tell me what the responsible choice is.

So to the Brett Favres and Anthony Weiners of the world: wait until you reach your destination to send that text.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Daniela Madriz, madriz@email.unc.edu



EDITORIAL

What doesn't kill you...

UNC football has a unique opportunity to reset and reload.

Five years ago, UNC declared its commitment to football with the hiring of superstar head coach Butch Davis. Since then, Tar Heel nation has gotten a taste of both the positive and negative aspects that often accompany the ambition to become a power player in college football.

On the one hand, the miserable memories of two- and three-win seasons now seem distant in the wake of three consecutive eight-win seasons. And, to borrow from an old adage, if ifs and buts were candy and nuts, the outcome of the 2010 football season would likely have seemed like Christmas to the UNC faithful.

But this was not to be, as the 2010 season was plagued by the consequences of NCAA rules violations committed by members of the football program.

Last week, the NCAA ended the investigative portion of its inquiry into these improprieties and handed down its findings.

The allegations are a stinging blow to the integrity Tar Heels have long held paramount to the "Carolina Way." But the circumstances have also provided an opportunity to fix a flawed system and forge a stronger football program.

By proactively withholding 13 athletes suspected of wrongdoing from competition and cooperating fully with the NCAA during its investigation, Chancellor Holden Thorp, athletic director Dick Baddour and Davis demonstrated their willingness to make tough decisions that will ultimately be in the best interests of UNC football.

But the University must also do a better job of preemptively mitigating the unique set of risks that come with the development of a dominant football program, such as impermissible benefits from agents and issues of academic dishonesty.

To this end, athletes are now required to complete a sign-out sheet before leaving campus for 24 hours or more. Oversight measures such as this will ensure that coaches and administrators can adequately keep track of athletes,

which will be more critical than ever, given the near certainty of probation as one form of punishment.

In addition, the athletics department has beefed up efforts to educate players about the rules surrounding impermissible benefits.

This strong leadership exhibited by administrators deserves a vote of confidence from the UNC community.

There is no doubt that members of the football program violated NCAA rules, and we will bear the punishment for their transgressions. But if the program heeds the lessons of its past mistakes, it will come out stronger on the other side.

With the right combination of community support, leadership and adequate awareness about the dangers involved with a highly competitive athletics program, this strength will continue to grow.

UNC football has no choice but to take its first step out of the fire and into the 2011-12 season. If members of the program incorporate the lessons learned from this unbecoming experience, there is no reason fans shouldn't bury the hatchet and get behind this team.

EDITORIAL

It's the principle of the thing

A 'Founding Principles Act' will distort American history.

The Founding Fathers are everywhere these days.

The invocation of their names is used to justify every new law, every ideology — liberal and conservative.

This habit represents an unhealthy use of our nation's history, and one that, unfortunately, is intensified by a new North Carolina law.

"The Founding Principles Act," a law passed by the Republican legislature and signed by Gov. Bev Perdue, requires the statewide implementation of a new high school course called "American History I — The Founding Principles."

Studying the founding documents — including the Constitution and the Federalist Papers — was already required by state law. But the new law makes what was one class — U.S. history — into two, the first of which will be solely devoted to these

"founding principles."

The error here lies not in the stated intention, which is to better inform a public that ranks poorly in knowledge of the philosophy of America's founding.

Rather, the devil is in the details. The law gives local school boards the authority to determine the course's curriculum. And this move coincides with the legislature's decision to cut off funding for state-administered social studies exams.

These recent events amount to an extreme and harmful localization of history teaching in our public schools.

It's often said that history is written by the winners. "The Founding Principles Act" lowers even that dismal threshold by allowing history to be written by any teacher or member of a county school board.

The idea of teaching national history with major regional variations is ill-advised for a few reasons.

First, there is a strong temptation to alter faraway history — especially something as abstract as the "founding principles" — to suit regional

biases. For a state that carried the load for the Confederacy in the Civil War, the temptation could be strong to overemphasize the idea of limited government at the expense of other important concepts.

Second, advances in communication technology have made regional control of historical curriculum obsolete. Rural youth with no link to other countries or even other states might not have been disadvantaged by a limited perspective previously, but in a globalized world, these people are now virtually nonexistent.

As we celebrate our country's 235th birthday, it is important to acknowledge that teaching its founding philosophy is, of course, an important part of being an educated citizen.

But special and regional focus on assorted ideologies will only encourage their misuse and will make it easier for North Carolina's youth to pervert the truth for argument's sake.

For a topic as important as our nation's founding, differing versions of history cannot suffice.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"(People who don't like UNC) just started filling their guns with acorns and shooting at us. Now what this (notice of allegations) shows (is) it was acorns. It was not bullets."

Steve Reznick, chairman of the faculty athletics committee

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

University leaders have censored free speech

TO THE EDITOR
In late April, Chancellor Holden Thorp revoked Professor Emeritus Elliot Cramer's access to the UNC (computer) network. What did Cramer do to UNC to lose his privileges?

Essentially, nothing. A man named Joseph Villarosa — who has exactly zero ties to the University — dragged UNC into an email dispute between himself and PAWS, an animal welfare group that Cramer runs. The only connection to UNC was that Cramer's UNC website linked to the PAWS website.

Villarosa pestered the University to delete Cramer's UNC email account, calling Cramer "clinically deranged and a VERY poor UNC representative."

Rather than stand up for Cramer and ignore Villarosa (against whom Cramer has a restraining order for cyber stalking), Chancellor Thorp revoked all of Elliot Cramer's network privileges.

This effective censorship of Cramer by the UNC administration is outrageous, and shows a total disregard for free speech.

This is not the first time that Chancellor Thorp has punished Cramer for his speech.

As former advisor to student group Youth for Western Civilization, Cramer was targeted by campus fliers publicizing his home address.

In an email he sent to Thorp to make him aware of the fliers, Cramer joked about defending himself. But Thorp didn't get the joke and asked for Cramer's resignation.

Cramer stepped down, but it seems Thorp continues to hold a grudge.

Thorp fails to understand that freedom of speech includes the speech you disagree with.

Until UNC stands up for free speech, I promise that they will never receive another dime from me. I hope other alumni who feel the same way will join me in withholding their support. I love UNC, but that love is not unconditional.

Thorp's continued censorship of Cramer breaks this Tar Heel's heart, and it's going to take more than a bouquet of roses to win me back.

Tom VanAntwerp
Class of 2010

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

Kvetching board™

kvetch:
v.1 (Yiddish) to complain
Dear Advanced Calculus TA, prove to me why we are submitting 5 or 6 lengthy homework problems every 2 days if only 3 of them are graded... it's a cruel, cruel summer.

To the girl who started the take-home exam essay for our 9:45 a.m. class at 8:00 a.m.: Respect.

To the girl who made out with my friend on Saturday because, "he was the only one who hadn't passed out." Get your life together.

Was there actually a letter to the editor about shorts?

To the guy yelling right outside of my window at 1 a.m., I'm really sorry that your friend slept with your girlfriend, but screaming "f**k you" at him 1,000 times isn't doing anything except keeping me awake.

Definition of "creepy worker:" a man with darker skin than yours who checks out what you've propped up to display to the entire world while he is sweating to earn an honest living while you are jiggling about in your quest to land a lawyer-to-be with your "Mrs" degree.

Just because I am from New Jersey doesn't mean my Facebook wall needs to blow up every time the words "cargo" and "shorts" are used in the same sentence.

Boston Brah: the good news is that I doubt the adversity you're sensing is personal; the bad news is that we certainly discriminate against people who use poor grammar. And we do breathe freely, thank you very much.

Wow, nine violations? Too bad Butch can't Ferris Bueller the NCAA's computer to two...

Oh how I've missed riding in your elevators, Cherie Berry. #backinNC

If you love guns and hate taxes and the government, move to Somalia.

Gave Obama \$10 three years ago. Now he won't stop texting me.

Internet Explorer: the #1 browser for downloading a better browser.

Why is there a woman driving that fire truck? Women can't even drive cars.

To the free tampon gods in Fetzter: can you come back in 28 days?

Send your one-to-two sentence entries to opinion@dailytarheel.com, subject line 'kvetch.'

The Daily Tar Heel

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118 years
of editorial freedom

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The Daily Tar Heel

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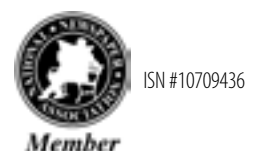
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Weekly QuickHits

Marriage equality

New York became the seventh and most populous state in the Union to legalize gay marriage last week. Not only is equality awesome; the ensuing NYC pride parade was one for the record books.

Unemployment

To all the recent UNC grads still packed into Deep End on Tuesday nights, this thumbs down is for you. It's not your fault, so live it up while you can still blame your weeknight binges on the tough job market.

USA vs Mexico

USA jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the opening minutes of the CONCACAF Gold Cup Final this weekend...then Mexico scored four straight goals. Worse was the Mexican-American ratio at the stadium. #californiasucks

Jessica Breland

Former UNC basketball star Jessica Breland won the Honda Inspiration Award after being diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma in May 2009. Compared to cancer, the WNBA should be no sweat for Breland.