

THE CARRBORO CITIZEN

Since 2007

Your Community Newspaper
Locally Owned & Operated

FROM THE EDITOR

Your ideas sought for Carrboro celebration!

This is the year that our little town of Carrboro turns 100.

The community existed for years prior, of course, first as a collection of businesses and homes around the railroad spur and later as the incorporated town of Venable.

On March 3, 1911, the community's name was changed to Carrboro and we began a century-long journey to become what you see all around you. It's been a remarkable journey through a remarkable century extending from a time of mules and privies to one of fiber optics and a surge of "urban farming."

Come March, we will have our first formal celebration, and on Carrboro Day, which is May 1 this year, there'll be a larger-than-usual shindig commemorating the anniversary.

A lot of citizens and officials are busy planning these events, and we've no doubt they'll be splendid and very Carrboro.

But, to be honest, this was not the best of times for the town to throw a party, and the budget is a little tighter than many had hoped.

Still, we look forward to publishing updates on the plans for the festivities and will encourage your attendance with great enthusiasm.

In the meantime, *The Citizen* would like to solicit our readers to contribute their ideas – big, small, earnest and whimsical – for the celebration of all things Carrboro.

We'd also like our readers, especially you old-timers, to contribute anecdotes and reminiscences about our town and the characters that have inhabited it along the way.

It will be our delight to publish your stories, along with any guidance you might wish to offer those in officialdom as they prepare for the centennial. And perhaps your idea will garner enough popular support to be folded into the festivities.

So don't be shy. Send your thoughts and ideas on the subject to the email or snailmail addresses listed below.

As always, we'll print the ones we can and pass the others around the office to amuse our hard-working staff.



We neglected to tell you that the gorgeous photograph of a cardinal in the snow that graced the cover of this month's MILL, folded into last week's *Citizen*, was the masterful work of local shooter Stan Lewis. You can see Stan's work at stanlewisphotography.com

LETTERS POLICY

Letters should be no more than 425 words in length and must be accompanied by the author's name, address and contact information.

We will publish one letter per author per month. Lengthy letters written in longhand will mysteriously become lost. Emailed letters are preferred. That said, send your letters to:

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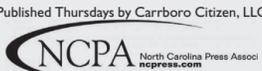
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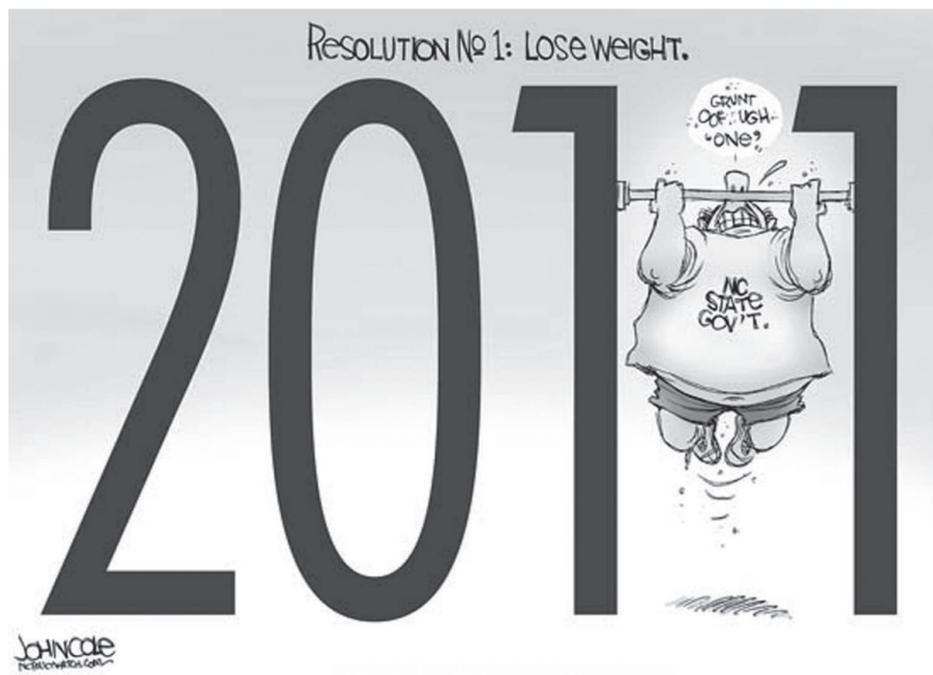
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MEMBER, NCPA



Not having to lie

PERRY DEANE YOUNG

The repeal of "don't ask, don't tell" was a moment in history this old queer never thought he'd live to see.

Like many thousands before and since, I lied when I came to this line in the Army's health questionnaire: "Do you now or have you ever had ... homosexual tendencies?" I had been actively, if secretly, homosexual since early puberty, but I also knew the brutal consequences of being open about those "tendencies."

There came a moment of terror for me in February of 1967 when I stood at the alphabetical end of hundreds of soldiers posing for our graduation picture at the Fort Gordon Military Police School. Lost among that anonymous sea of olive drab, I was stunned to hear my name called out by one of the officers standing down front. Words cannot begin to describe the fear and dread going through my mind as I slowly made my way to the front. Like all homosexuals at that time, I lived in constant fear of being "found out." I honestly felt my hopes and dreams for the future would come crashing down. In fact, I felt I would never have a future except as some silly societal category of lesser human being.

My fears turned out to be unfounded. An officer handed me my diploma and I slowly made my way back into the stands, amid the whispers of "what's he done, why's he so special?" To this day, I have no idea why I was singled out. All I know is that in that moment, I realized that I could not live with that sort of terror. Some day, somehow, I would have to deal with it. I could not live a lie. A wise old survivor of the death camps in Nazi Germany said it best: "Freedom is not having to lie about who you are."

How can anybody believe that being homosexual is some sort of moral choice? Nobody in his or her right mind would choose to live the way homosexuals were forced to live in the 1950s and '60s. Even now, the taint of being homosexual is so strong the suicide rate among gay teenagers is several times that of heterosexuals. The suicide of the young Rutgers student last year dramatically illustrates how far we have yet to go.

During my time as a correspondent in Vietnam, I simply got up one morning unafraid to be myself. And, yes, there were some wonderful loving moments I cherish from my days among the military in Vietnam. In his book, *Dispatches*, Michael Herr mentions two Marines "making love" one night during the battle in Hue. And in my own memoir, *Two of the Missing*, I describe having sex with a Marine in Danang, a Navy Lieutenant in Saigon and an Army captain in Phu Bai. Sim-

ply put, there have been homosexuals and homosexual activity among service men and women for as long as there have been service men and women. John Horne Burns' *The Galleria* was a barely fictionalized account of gay American soldiers in World War II Italy.

The Marine Corps commandant is simply overreacting to outdated images of homosexuality and masculinity in his recent statements against repeal of "don't ask, don't tell." He does a disservice to homosexuals and to the Marines. He helps perpetuate the myth that homosexuals are weak and can't be trusted to control themselves in a professional manner – and he also seems to think the Marines are redneck rubes who can't handle being around somebody different. The truth is, the commandant is not nearly as aware of societal changes or as sophisticated as the troops he commands. He is concerned about image, and nothing more. The current Marines grew up in an environment of sexual and racial tolerance where being gay is simply not an issue. They also know that the old stereotypes of homosexuals as sissies, pansies, fairies are no more valid than the old stereotypes that denigrated people of color in our country.

The Marine commandant is wrong about homosexuals and wrong about the kind of men and women who serve in the U.S. military. Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joints Chiefs of Staff, gave an eloquent summary on both counts in his testimony before a senate committee on Feb. 2, 2010: "Mr. Chairman, speaking for myself and myself only, it is my personal belief that allowing gays and lesbians to serve openly would be the right thing to do. No matter how I look at this issue, I cannot escape being troubled by the fact that we have in place a policy which forces young men and women to lie about who they are in order to defend their fellow citizens. For me personally, it comes down to integrity – theirs as individuals and ours as an institution. I also believe that the great young men and women of our military can and would accommodate such a change. I never underestimate their ability to adapt."

As a gay man swiftly slouching toward the age of 70, I am dismayed by the attitudes that still cause gay men and women to kill themselves. But, I am heartened by changes in the laws that will make it possible for young gay Americans to grow up with the same freedoms everybody else enjoys. It reflects a healthier time for homosexuals and for America.

In addition to Two of the Missing, Perry Deane Young is the author of The David Kopay Story (with Kopay) and Gays and Lesbians in Sports. He lives in Chapel Hill.

Finding efficiencies, but at what cost?

SARAH PRESTON

North Carolina faces one of the worst budget crises in memory, so it makes plenty of sense for Gov. Bev Perdue to seek out ways to cut costs and find efficiencies within the government. But as estimates about how many teachers the state will lose and proposed class sizes creep up, we should consider how much of this budget crisis we want to balance on the backs of North Carolina's children. Indeed, close consideration of some of the proposals under consideration may give us cause to look for other options.

Here's a case in point: Recently, as part of a much-publicized move to reduce the number of state departments and agencies, Gov. Perdue presented an option that could damage our children's future – namely, merging the Department of Correction, the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety and the Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP) together to form a new "Department of Public Safety."

Unfortunately, the plan seems to be based more on a kind of quick and off-hand combination of organizations that "sound" similar than any kind of serious and thoughtful analysis.

Without showing any evidence that the proposal could produce cost efficiencies, the plan would merge one department with a core mission of treating, training and rehabilitating children who have made a mistake with two departments that protect public safety through sanctions and incarceration – in effect, uniting a group dedicated to rehabilitation with jailers and law-enforcement officers.

In a state where school resource officers roam the halls of nearly every school, 41 percent of juvenile offenders are referred into the juvenile justice system from schools and one in 10 children is suspended, this is the last thing we need. North Carolina already has an efficient "school-to-prison" pipeline. There is no need to seek efficiencies there.

Taking such action would jeopardize a remarkable track record at DJJDP. Since the establishment of the department in 2000, North Carolina has witnessed a dramatic decline in the juvenile-delinquency rate. In 2009,

DJJDP reported the happy facts that: (a) juvenile-delinquency complaints had reached a 10-year low and (b) the number of children committed to its Youth Development Centers had fallen by two-thirds. This remarkable progress has all been achieved without full funding and with substantial budget cuts over the last several years.

In establishing DJJDP's mission of rehabilitation, the legislature recognized that most troubled children remain in (or will return to) our communities. As such, the goal of supporting juveniles who are adjudicated delinquent so that they may become law-abiding, responsible and productive members of the community was set.

In marked contrast, the focus of the Department of Correction is punitive and provides far fewer services and training opportunities.

And not surprisingly, the evidence shows that sanctions-oriented systems only increase recidivism in juveniles. Consolidating these departments would almost undoubtedly create a punishment-oriented system for handling juvenile offenders that would increase recidivism and diminish the state's ability to reduce the juvenile-delinquency rate.

The current system is far from perfect; but given the significant strides the Department of Juvenile Justice has made, it would be a shame to cut all this progress short and jeopardize the investment the state has made in children over the last decade. If some kind of merger is absolutely necessary, DJJDP ought to be combined with a department like the Department of Health and Human Services, where most of the focus is on treatment and providing services, not punishing children who have made a mistake.

Let's hope that, as lawmakers return to Raleigh in January, all of Gov. Perdue's proposals for combining agencies and departments receive a thorough vetting. While many may show themselves to be worthy ideas, her plan to merge juvenile rehabilitation with adult law enforcement and prisons will surely fall short.

Sarah Preston is the policy director of the ACLU of North Carolina.

Year of the immigrant

DOMENIC POWELL

Last year was a difficult one for those who worked for a sane immigration system.

While liberals were keen to call the system "broken," their frustration spared those who broke it: businesses like J & A Framing and Carpentry, which is being investigated for, in part, allegedly hiring human traffickers to bring immigrants to North Carolina, and meat producers like Pilgrim's Pride, which continued to hire immigrants without verifying their status (it faced a civil suit over its hires in 2007). Conservatives who talked about "enforcement," like Sen. Richard Burr, never did so in reference to malicious employers – favoring cheap shots against the politically vulnerable.

(You may note that I use neither "illegal" nor "undocumented" above to refer to immigrants without a current immigration status. Reason being: Can someone who files annual tax returns be either of those?)

Also in 2010, the president of the national lobbying firm ALI-PAC, Raleigh's own William Gheen, asked if Sen. Lindsey Graham was blackmailed into supporting immigration reform by liberals who claimed to know he was secretly gay. Local and national media continue to quote Gheen as someone with a legitimate opinion. Unfortunately, those ugly words successfully deterred Graham. When the time came for Sen. Kay Hagan to vote on the DREAM Act last month, she sided with Gheen over the progressives and minority constituencies that elected her. Let me know if you want to run against her in the primary.

In the meantime, 2011 promises tumult for the immigrant community. We have the first Republican General Assembly in over a century (emboldened, in part, by anti-immigrant furor) as well as a Democratic Party that lacks the spine to stand up for immigrants. Georgia banned students without papers from its universities; our legislature could do the same. It may choose to ban them from community colleges, or even pass a version of Arizona's S.B. 1070. In 2010, those students paid out-of-state tuition and were forced to wait to register last for their community college classes. At UNC, no less than six students could be kicked out this year because of their status.

There is a word for what is happening, an ugly one: segregation. North Carolina has returned to segregation – to putting people in the back of the bus. To answer, Carrboro should be the first community in North Carolina to stand up and say that it will be a community of conscience – that it will lead in a new movement for civil rights.

Hundreds of students in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools are making their way toward graduation, and doors are already shutting on them. Fifty-one thousand youth statewide would have been eligible for the DREAM Act, meaning they came to the U.S. before age 16, have a clean criminal record and have lived here for at least five years. With the bill, they could have become legal residents by going to college or joining the military.

Educators know these young people and their potential. They know that without the legal and financial barriers in their path, college and successful, productive lives would lay ahead for them. America has yet to show them mercy, forcing them now to demand justice. We need to empower these young people to lead. We need to tell them that they have a voice and it's time to use it.

"Change" for immigrants failed to come through the ballot box in 2008. Deportations reached record levels last year; many of those deported were DREAM Act-eligible. Despite that, young people who couldn't vote in 2010 managed to successfully lobby Congress, organize and rally others to their cause, reminding citizens that democracy is about so much more than voting. This year will be the Year of the Immigrant.

Domenic Powell is a member of the immigrants' rights group the NC DREAM Team. He is a recent graduate of UNC and former columnist for the Daily Tar Heel.