

The Daily Tar Heel

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HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Sophomore Arabic and peace, war and defense major from Atlanta, Ga.

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Are you really happy here?

While giving a campus tour last month, I noticed an elderly woman accompanying her grandson on a visit of the school. She was in the back of the group, eyes fixated on my mouth and the words I spoke. She didn't talk or ask ridiculous questions. She just walked along quietly whispering to her grandson every now and then.

When we reached the end of the tour near the Old Well and McCorkle Place, she waited around until the rest of the group went their separate ways to address me personally. In the most simplistic demeanor she asked, "Baby, are you really happy here?"

Immediately I knew she wasn't asking if I was happy with my class sizes or living arrangements or weekend plans. She wanted some signal of reassurance that I was comfortable here at UNC. In proceeding to list reasons why I was indeed happy with the time I've spent at UNC thus far, I realized my answers would never suffice.

Would she be comforted by a few anecdotes from nights in Davis or a handful of fourth-quarter comeback victories on a Saturday afternoon? Could stories of late-night conversations with my roommate or "Late Night with Roy" really measure up to a woman who experienced the Great Depression, World War II and Jim Crow?

Once finished, she put a hand on my shoulder and said, "Make sure to take care of yourself, baby," then walked away.

In light of this story, I think it would be a waste of column space to simply write another story on the importance of Black History Month. I could reemphasize the history of the black men and women who have so honorably paved the way for my generation today.

I could uncover more little-known facts about the lives of our renowned black civil rights activists, scientists, inventors, musicians, writers, politicians and doctors. I could even attempt to dispel some common myth about the black experience. But what would you take away from it? What would you learn?

This woman approached me with an honest concern for my well-being here at UNC. It was not asked in light of budget cuts, tuition hikes and admissions caps. She wanted to know if I was okay. If anything, her need to ask me this question should be a testament to the role history plays in shaping one's interpretation of the future.

No doubt, February is necessary to honor the memory, spirit and actions of the fearless men and women of a quintessential era in U.S. history. But it isn't until history walks up to you after a campus tour asking you (subtly) if you're "happy" for you to realize — that though there may be a difference in year, decade or century — history, and the constructs and fears it leaves behind, aren't forgotten. And the men and women who lived through it don't just disappear either.

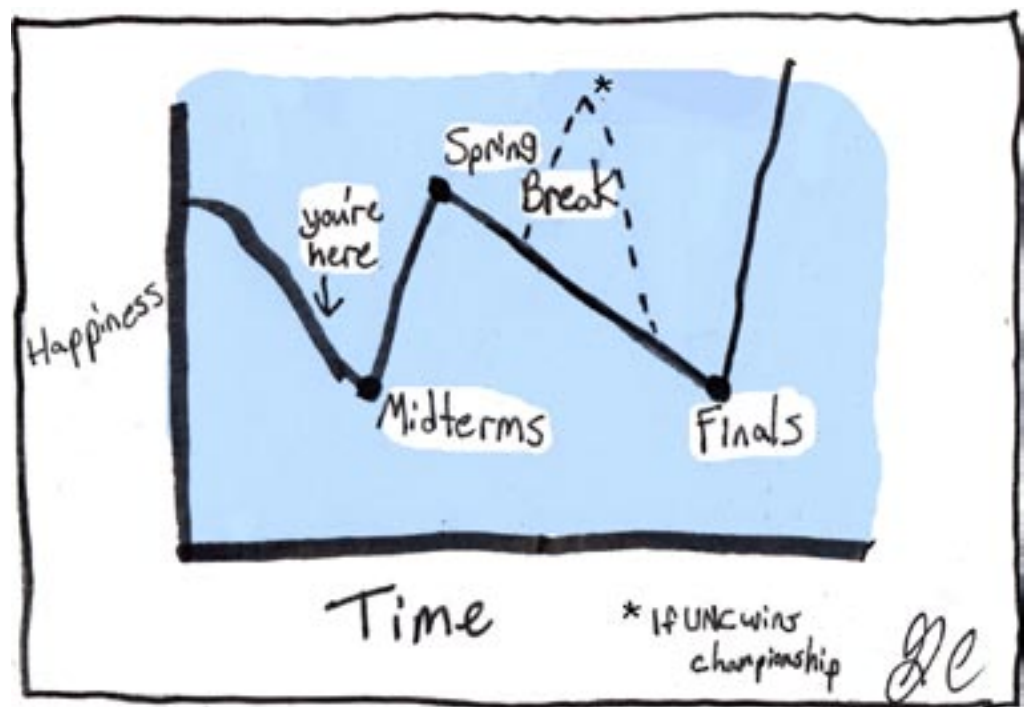
Whether or not we celebrate Black History for a day or for the entire year, the best thing we can do is to apply it, not just remember it. Make history tangible. Consider whether or not we truly are the so-called "next generation." If we are, Black History Month isn't just a month. It's the acknowledgement of U.S. history as well.

If not, well, it's just another month.

FRIDAY:

Blair Mikels and Alex Walters offer up another tasty food column.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Guile Contreras, gcontrer@email.unc.edu



Making the grade

If grading practices are a problem, punish the professors, not the students

UNC's attempt at transparency through disclosing a grade index on student transcripts is the wrong weapon to use when fighting grade inflation.

Contextual grade reporting would mean including features such as class size and median class grade on transcripts. The proposed changes could be put into effect by fall 2012.

These new features are being pushed so transcripts can eventually reflect a student's raw academic performance. Some might see this as an innovative way to address the plaguing problem of grade inflation. But it's addressing the symptom and not the problem.

If UNC wants to counter grade inflation, it must hold professors accountable for their teaching practices and

standards, not undermine their students.

Sociology professor Andrew Perrin stated that the contextual grade reporting would improve transparency.

But it also sacrifices concision on transcripts. With students taking 120 credit hours to graduate, transcripts are already filled with information. Adding grade indexes fills a cluttered page even more.

UNC should not be the only school fighting grade inflation with contextual grade reporting. If UNC were to implement contextual grade reporting without many other schools joining the action, it could potentially undermine UNC students' achievements compared to other schools.

It is imperative that solving grade inflation be a collabora-

tive effort so students across the nation are held to comparable academic standards.

Contextual grade reporting also dilutes UNC's definition of grades.

According to the Undergraduate Bulletin, an "A" is defined as a student's "mastery of course content at the highest level of attainment," meaning a student should only be graded on their mastery of the subject.

If every student in a class deserves an "A" according to a professor's standards, then they should receive that grade. The proposed contextual information seems to discount that achievement just because others attain mastery.

For now, the problem of grading practices should be solved in the classroom, not on the transcripts.

Minimize, move forward

Short-run efforts must be matched with long-term vision

Chapel Hill Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt recognizes that universities do not exist in isolation, but rather they have far-reaching economic impacts.

To that end, collaborating with mayors of other university towns around the state to get that message to the legislature is an important effort in the short term.

Unfortunately, the foreseeable future looks significantly frugal for the University. In the longer term, the town needs to continue to leverage recent development efforts to ensure continued economic vitality.

The disadvantage that the University and town face is that many of UNC's economic benefits are indirect and extend well-beyond hiring local labor and paying taxes.

The value of the research

and intellectual capital that UNC and other universities draw also impacts communities locally and the state broadly.

Kleinschmidt acknowledges the unique need to get mayors both near and far from universities to get this message to legislators. After all, the legislature saw a historic turnover after last November's elections and is now far more fiscally conservative.

Getting mayors around the state on the same page could have a meaningful marginal impact.

Fortunately, the town adopted a strategic vision for economic development in the summer of 2008. A lot has happened since then, but Kleinschmidt believes this strategy will keep the town up to the task of attracting fresh economic development.

In the longer-term, it seems like the town will need to do just that in the face of the University's diminished economic presence. The economy may be improving, but no one should count on UNC becoming flush with funds anytime soon.

With Greenbridge, 140 West Franklin and the redevelopment of University Square, the University's community appears to be heading in the right direction. The task going forward will be ensuring the success of these projects and improving the density of the town.

Chapel Hill has fared relatively well in tough economic times. But the challenges are far from over. Still, it's nothing that solid leadership and vision can't solve by leveraging the appeal of one of America's best communities.

QuickHits

Kendall Marshall

He deserves all the accolades we can give him. The guy plays his heart out — and probably his lungs, too — every time he goes onto the court. He has been a force as a point guard and is better than ... who?

Ralph Byrns

Professor Byrns gave his last "Economics of Finding True Love" lecture on Valentine's Day. Byrns is beloved by students from all walks of life. His lectures and banter have captivated students for years. He will be missed.

Chapel Hill tourism

The National Trust for Historic Preservation named Chapel Hill a top 12 tourist destination. So long as Carrboroites steer clear of Franklin Street and Dukies stop frequenting He's Not, we agree.

Protest

Protesters decrying the price of education chanted outside the building the BOG meets in. Only, they arrived after the meeting adjourned. If these are the people a costly education produces, imagine what would happen if it were free.

Bieber-mania

Bieber — a Canadian citizen — said in an interview with Rolling Stone he never intends to become an American citizen because "Canada's the best country in the world." Good. Although we could use his tax dollars.

Graduation gowns

They're \$5 more expensive because they're made from 23 plastic bottles, and they have a white panel on the front that sort of looks like a bib. They're a good shade of Carolina blue, though. And Julian designed them.

QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"It really was a challenge to have this opportunity to do something ... new in a totally new environment and that's what I was looking for."

ELMAR BOLOWICH, FORMER UNC MEN'S SOCCER COACH

FEATURED ONLINE READER COMMENT:

"The saddest thing is how we desperately try to legitimize such immoral, hedonistic lifestyles."

JOE DADDY, ON HOOKUP CULTURE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

N.C. congressmen should reject upcoming EPA bill

TO THE EDITOR:

This week, the U.S. House of Representatives is considering a bill that amounts to the broadest and most dangerous assault on the air we breathe and the water we drink in recent history.

This "Continuing Resolution" would abandon America's core environmental and public health programs by attacking the Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act and severely diminishing funding for public lands. Specifically, the bill would block the Environmental Protection Agency from cleaning up carbon dioxide pollution from coal-fired power plants in North Carolina and nationwide. In addition, budget cuts to the EPA would threaten the Neuse River and the streams that feed the drinking water supplies of 4,719,825 North Carolinians, as well as the Campbell Creek Watershed Project.

To ensure that the health and environment of North Carolina's families are protected, North Carolina's members of Congress should reject the Continuing Resolution, and instead stand up for cleaner air, cleaner water and preserving our environment.

Parris Smallwood
Sophomore
Environmental Studies

Petty 'feminist' complaints are trivial, a waste of time

TO THE EDITOR:

I was extremely annoyed after reading a letter to the editor on Feb. 16 titled "Gendered language could be comparable to racism." I can appreciate the sentiment behind it, but I believe this letter brought up an important issue of the continued lack of common sense on this campus. I'm all for gender equality as much as the next gal, but these complaints from so-called "feminists" are getting a little ridiculous. Real feminists, the ones fighting for our rights in the workplace, government and other areas, would be ashamed to see this going on.

As a woman, I'm annoyed with the implication that I can't be successful unless my friends stop greeting me with a "hey dude" and I stop getting manicures because the word implies it's only okay for men to have nice looking hands. I'm embarrassed by these "feminists" that choose to victimize themselves over petty things in order to find an excuse as to why they're not successful. In fact, comparing greetings to racist comments is borderline desperate. I actually feel bad that they fail to see that it's their senseless complaining, not the language, that makes others lose respect for them.

There's been way too much complaining lately. We're all smart and competent, so let's skip the bandwagon. In this case, it's better to be the "odd man out." Oh, wait...

Frances Carrera
Freshman
Business Administration

Join youth movement to help the environment

TO THE EDITOR:

The year 2010 brought us the largest industry-made environ-

mental disaster in history, not to mention the worst coal mining disaster in 40 years and the hottest year on record. Clearly, it is more urgent than ever that we start to address the climate crisis.

Throughout history, youth have been at the forefront of social movements. But it's time for our elected officials in Washington to start following our lead.

A clean energy economy is also the best opportunity to employ our generation. Investments in clean energy technologies like wind, solar and energy efficiency create more electricity and more jobs per dollar than dirty fossil fuels like oil and coal.

That's why we're going to Power Shift 2011. This weekend-long conference will be the largest convergence of students advocating for environmental justice in the country, bringing together more than 10,000 youth leaders for trainings, workshops, lobbying and music in Washington, D.C., April 15 to 18.

Come to Student Union, Room 3203 at 6:30 p.m. today and join us for the UNC Kickoff Meeting for Power Shift 2011!

Stewart Boss
Maggie Morrissey
Coordinators
Power Shift 2011

Anti-abortion legislation has far-reaching effects

TO THE EDITOR:

Two bills currently sit in the House of Representatives, Title X Abortion Provider Prohibition Act (H.R. 217), and No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act (H.R. 3). This week the House will vote on legislation that could significantly cut family planning services and basic health care from Planned Parenthood clinics nationwide. The bills aim to restrict federal funding from any organizations that perform abortions. However, current law already restricts federal funds from being used on abortion services.

Thirty-three percent of Planned Parenthood's current funding comes from government grants. If the pending legislation passes, the organization will lose more than \$70 million in annual funding. Although these bills are aimed at restricting abortion services, abortion services account for only 3 percent of the services at Planned Parenthood. Almost 70 percent of Planned Parenthood's services go toward contraceptive services and STI/STD testing and treatment.

Planned Parenthood delivers health care to more than 3 million patients a year in more than 800 clinics. About two-thirds of its patients lack health coverage, and 85 percent of Planned Parenthood patients live at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level.

The passing of the pending legislation would restrict millions of women from receiving birth control, regular exams, HIV tests, prenatal care and other necessary health care. I urge you to contact your representatives and ask them to vote against legislation that would restrict funding from Planned Parenthood.

Bethany Hargis
Junior
Political Science

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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