

COLUMN



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150 years later, race conflicts remain

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War. With North Carolina commemorating its secession decision on Saturday, I find myself wondering if reality and the reenactment differ in any way besides the style of dress.

It was, of course, not just the war itself but the aftermath that defined the next century and a half of American history. The topic of race relations since the end of Reconstruction should be well known to the rest of you all and if they're not, well, I suggest a quick return to high school history and an even quicker kick in the rear for ignorance.

We remember this period every year during Black History Month and through the required classes we take. The recent anniversary, however, has led me to question whether this is truly an effective way to approach race relations in this country.

Some seem to believe that the struggle towards racial harmony reached its conclusion somewhere between Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous speech and the election of President Obama.

While the violence has largely ended and legal forms of racial discrimination have been swept away, there are still signs that all is not as it should be.

No one group is to blame, but one can see examples of the troubled state of race relations across the country and even here on campus. At our University, the different races have arranged themselves into set and separate activities, bars, Greek institutions and even apartment complexes.

The number of times per day I hear a character flaw blamed solely on race is shocking.

The troubled state of racial affairs in this country is not a secret. However, despite nearly universal recognition of the unresolved issues which still exist, it appears many are too scared to talk about them in any serious manner.

Instead, Americans allow the issue to simmer under the surface until a black man running for the presidency or a state's attempts at buckling down on Hispanic immigration brings out hidden racist attitudes. In a country where we pretend not to see race, it seems that, in fact, it is all we can see.

The 150th anniversary of the Civil War should not simply make you casually remember how painful memorizing all of those battles was before returning to your carefree summer. It is a reminder that many of the same underlying issues are still relevant today.

So while you're droning away at your unpaid internship, soaking in the sun at the Chapel Ridge pool, or studying abroad in a far away land, give some thought to your own hidden prejudices. Admitting their existence is the first step, so they say, and you might find that the issues surrounding the Civil War live on in more than just your history books.

NEXT

6/2: Summertime at UNC
Editorial board member John Hamlin comments on sunny Chapel Hill.

EDITORIAL CARTOON By Alec Mercolino, amercoli@email.unc.edu



EDITORIAL

It's the economy, stupid

Two N.C. Bills overshadow pressing economic issues.

North Carolina is the only Southern state that does not constitutionally prohibit same-sex marriage, but two bills currently in the N.C. General Assembly (SB 106/HB 777) seek to define marriage as exclusively between a man and a woman.

Although the editorial board recognizes that the issue of gay marriage is undoubtedly important to many North Carolinians, we wonder if introducing legislation surrounding a contentious social issue should be replaced by attempts to fix the ailing economy.

The bills have garnered heavy protest from gay rights groups, yet Republican representatives, led by Senators Harris Blake and Jim Forrester, push full steam ahead. A decisive issue for both sides of the aisle, the gay marriage debate rages in Raleigh.

Introduced on February 23 of this year, Senate Bill 106,

also known as the Defense of Marriage Act, has spawned such outcry that groups like Equality North Carolina have embarked upon fundraising campaigns to stop its progress.

Add to this a recent Elon University poll that shows 57% of North Carolinians support "marriage, civil union, or partnerships for same-sex couples."

Still, Republican senators truck along, hoping to prohibit same-sex relationship recognition.

Such heavy focus on the two bills is unjustifiable given the state of the economy. Time and money should be better spent.

As the debt ceiling rises and the unemployment rate in North Carolina climbs to 9.5%, the board believes that Senate Bill 106 and House Bill 777 must recede into the background — at least for the time being.

Forget about party lines, religion or sexual preference. It doesn't matter if you're gay, straight, conservative, liberal, religious or atheist. The two bills are detracting from more pressing economic issues. It's common sense — fix the leakiest faucet first.

Right now, Republicans and

Democrats can both agree that economic problems in North Carolina are gushing.

The worst recession since the Great Depression has caused North Carolina to make drastic spending cuts, but the budget is still far from balanced.

The bill is likely intended to rally ultra-conservative voters to the polls in November. But we do not believe that it is worth disenfranchising an entire demographic, especially considering that North Carolina does not legally recognize gay marriage anyway.

According to the Center on Budget Policy and Priorities, the upcoming fiscal years are shaping up to be extremely tough, with a projected \$2.4 billion shortfall in 2011-12 and a \$2 billion shortfall in 2012-13.

Add these daunting numbers to a high unemployment rate, a struggling housing market and overall economic unease. The board can only conclude that legislators in North Carolina must back away from divisive social issues, and focus on doing what they were elected to do: fix the economy first.

EDITORIAL

State Wide Web

Perdue's decision lacks backbone and hurts rural communities.

Gov. Bev Perdue decided to neither sign nor veto a bill restricting the ability of municipalities to provide broadband Internet access to their citizens.

In doing so, Perdue allows the bill to become law, albeit under pretext of opposition — a move that may be good for politics, but is certainly bad for North Carolinians.

The bill protects private corporations by limiting the competitiveness of cities and towns. Under the Level Playing Field/Local Government Competition Act, municipalities cannot subsidize service fees or borrow money for projects without specific taxpayer approval. They even have to set up separate budgets for their services so they can pay taxes as though they were private companies.

Time Warner Cable has pressed for similar legislation since 2005, when a state appeals court upheld the right of municipalities to provide broadband. The cor-

poration's argument pivots on an illogical and unrealistic appeal to the ideology of free-market capitalism, complaining that it should not have to compete with the government.

But Time Warner seems to forget that it owes its ability to gouge and neglect entire communities to the very governments it now opposes. Like most U.S. cable providers, Time Warner was granted local monopolies for bearing the cost of infrastructure.

So, while Time Warner blames local governments for tipping the sacred, invisible hand of capitalism, reality begs to differ. Rather than investing in the infrastructure it needs to provide competitively fast service for low prices, the corporation has paid lobbyists and made campaign contributions to preserve its monopoly.

The impending bill has generated national criticism from technology analysts and Internet-advocacy groups to news media and legal scholars.

Critics ranging from Harvard law professor Lawrence Lessig to Red Hat Vice President Michael

Tiemann, have written open letters to Perdue imploring her to veto the bill.

Only Gov. Perdue's response can rival Time Warner's argument in its deception and destruction.

Perdue needed only to lift her oft-used veto pen to protect her state from anti-competitive corporations. Instead, she issued a press release stating to the legislature that North Carolinians deserve fair access to broadband. From the other side of her mouth, she effectively told Time Warner to continue to defraud her constituency.

Time Warner's political action committee directly contributed \$6,250 to Perdue's 2008 campaign, according to the National Institute on Money in State Politics. While the donation was paltry compared to the \$14.9 million she raised in total, it still placed well above the median contribution of \$250.

Rural North Carolinian mill workers, farmers and textile workers watched as the Internet helped carry their jobs abroad. In refusing to veto this act, Perdue has shredded their passports.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"The main reason I like (Hog Day) is that it's slow cooking so you can sit down and socialize with the people and have a beverage of your choice."

Jeff Whitney, participant in Hillsborough's 29th Annual Hog Day

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Don't cut academics, leave scholarship intact

TO THE EDITOR:

On May 19, about 800 North Carolinian university student winners of a Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship received an e-mail informing them of no funds this year. "The program is also scheduled to be totally eliminated in 2012." Not once in its prior 25 years of existence has funding been denied to the program.

The scholarship was \$1,500 renewable for each year of a student's undergraduate career, awarded based on SAT/ACT scores and performance in high school. \$1,500 a year may seem an insignificant portion of the astronomical costs of a university education, but the help of \$1,500 less in loans or out-of-pocket payment cannot be denied. At the least, it confirmed that hard work in school is noteworthy. If we believe education is a tool for better workers and citizens, why do legislative actions indicate otherwise?

The Byrd scholarship cut was a part of the April 12th federal budget signing, meant to help balance the nation's deficit. But when military spending increased \$5 billion in the same signing, really how much scrimping was the \$42 million that would have gone to the Byrd scholarship? How can we deny that investing in students is the best way to invest in the future?

Let's reevaluate where we want to make our savings and whether eliminating education funding — especially to merit scholarships — sends the right message about our nation's priorities. Speak up, because we need to be heard.

Jackelyn Ngo
Junior
Environmental Sciences
and Mathematics major

Apply to lead Board of Elections in 2011-12

TO THE EDITOR:

The executive branch of student government is currently seeking applications for the position of Chairman of the Board of Elections (BOE).

A fee-paying student (either graduate or undergraduate) enrolled at UNC-Chapel Hill for the 2011-2012 academic year, the chairman will be responsible for selecting and managing the members of the BOE. It will be the responsibility of the chairman to conduct fair and

impartial student elections, including special elections as necessary and general campus-wide spring elections. The chairman is tasked with a large responsibility and must be willing to work under pressure, ensuring the proper interpretation of the Student Code to hold candidates accountable for their actions during election seasons.

Applicants must demonstrate a history of leadership, objectivity and a strong work ethic. Interested students should contact Student Body Vice President Zealan Hoover at zthoover@live.unc.edu. Completed applications, including cover letter and resume, should also be directed to him. Consider this your chance to leave your Heelprint and get involved with student government!

Zealan Hoover
Student Body Vice President

Kvetching board™

kvetch:

v.1 (Yiddish) to complain

I wish my boyfriend was as bold as the foot fondler.

To the girl who said "Trying to find a job is like trying to find a decent guy in Chapel Hill", I've got a job that will help both of your problems. You set yourself up for this one.

To Michael Jordan who I saw hanging out at the Washington Duke hotel this weekend: blue cups on me at He's Not tonight.

To the girl who can't find a "decent" guy, maybe it wouldn't be so hard if you weren't so focused on your career...

To the guy who predicted the Day of Rapture: if I got to reschedule as much as you do, I would have a 4.0 GPA.

When I agreed to sublease your room for the summer, you didn't tell me you were also subleasing to cockroaches. Are they paying more or less than I am?

Dear ex-roomie, hope you learn hygiene habits while at home this summer. Brushing your teeth might be a good start.

To Alert Carolina: Thanks for keeping us updated on the tornado watch while I'm home in California but not telling us when there is a gun in my dorm.

To my sex friend: you finna take me on a real date?

To my waitress at Waffle House who kept talking about IHOP: are you a spy?

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

The Daily Tar Heel

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of editorial freedom

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The Daily Tar Heel

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Member

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Weekly QuickHits

Freshman slugger

UNC freshman third baseman Colin Moran was voted the 2011 Atlantic Coast Conference Freshman of the Year. The Tar Heels take on Miami today in the opening game of the ACC Baseball Championship.

Sperminator

The news broke this week that Schwarzenegger fathered a love-child with his maid. The former governor kept this a secret for more than 10 years, so maybe he is a talented actor after all...

Bear Sighting

A black bear was spotted roaming the fairways of Finley Golf Course and near an elementary school this week. Listen, bear, you can take our golf balls, but leave the kids alone!

We're alive!

The Rapture came and went, and yet all is well. To the thousands of people who spent their entire life savings warning the masses of their impending doom: well, this is awkward...