

COLUMN



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Herbs aren't just for cooking

The next time you catch a cold, buy a pear. Any old pear will do, but the Chinese “duck pear” is the hacking cough’s worst enemy, as I recently learned.

Three days ago, in my family’s two-room apartment in Shanghai, I woke up with my head throbbing and my throat scratchy. I could barely swallow. Perhaps it was the dust that clouds the Shanghai atmosphere. Or perhaps I stood, drenched in sweat, in front of the air conditioner one too many times. For whatever reason, my immune system has not been enjoying China.

Falling ill in a foreign country is never fun, and China’s polluted and overpopulated streets are prime dwellings for all kinds of germs. But restoratives come in many different, obscure forms, including traditional remedies many of the older Chinese generation still turn to.

The first day, Mom made me gargle salt water — a common fix for a sore throat. It helped, but only for a couple of hours. I sneezed and coughed my lungs raw for two days until my aunt, a Shanghai native, suggested the pear. That night, Mom came into the bedroom with a bowl of mushy pear halves and melted sugar, which I learned must be all-natural and stuffed into the core of the pear. The entire thing is steamed in a pot of boiling water for two hours. Delicious to the taste buds, soothing to the throat.

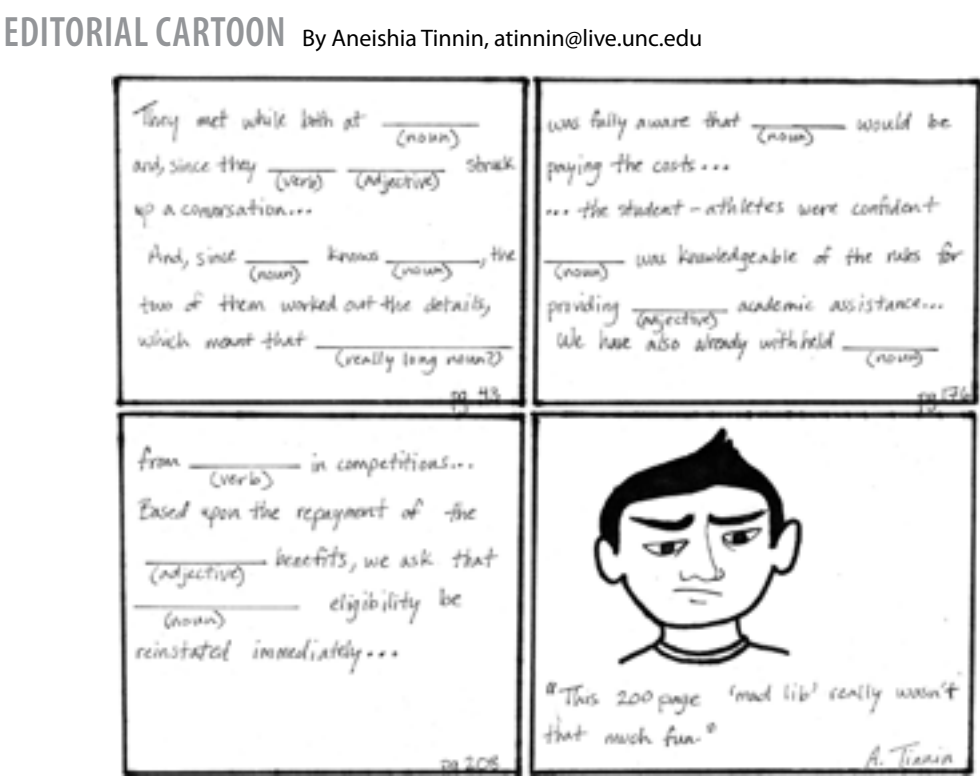
Even now, I am waiting for my second “cup o’ pear” in two days to cool. The duck pear mixture is resourceful, yet it’s one of many antidotes that have become outdated. But in China, with a history that consists of more dynasties than we have fingers, tradition is how the people hold on to their roots.

These past few weeks, I’ve seen apothecaries that would shame the shopkeepers of Diagon Alley. Barrels of smelly herbs, dried mushrooms and leaves line the hallways of these stores. Strange pastes and murky brown liquids sit on the counters with labels written in black calligraphy. Toothy ladies stand, ready to bombard customers with herby facts.

But it’s not just toothy ladies and locals who take advantage of nature’s gifts. In 2000, the World Health Organization reported about 60 percent of the world’s population uses traditional medicine. Healing properties and alternative practices, such as acupuncture, are applied even in hospital settings.

In the department of hematology and oncology at Shanghai Children’s Medical Center, cancer patients’ families occasionally request traditional Chinese healers to help with the treatment and recovery processes. According to a 2003 World Health Organization analysis, acupuncture — one branch of traditional medicine — helps alleviate pain from cancer and negative effects of chemotherapy. Acupuncture is also used to treat neck and lower back pain, hypertension and depression.

So the next time you reach for Tylenol, consider Googling a few au natural remedies. Perhaps acupuncture is a little extreme, but I guarantee you can find one to match that migraine. As for me, my pear is getting cold.



EDITORIAL

Time to tell the whole truth

Redactions show lack of transparency with public and media.

This University has always been a public institution for the people of North Carolina. Such a position demands transparency — which has been lacking in recent years.

In 2010, The Daily Tar Heel and other news outlets sent many public records requests to the University seeking the release of items such as: the phone records of Dick Baddour, Butch Davis and former associate coach John Blake, parking tickets to UNC athletes, names and employment information for athletic tutors and mentors, and all documents related to the NCAA investigation.

When those requests were denied on the basis of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the news sources filed a lawsuit against the University.

Last year the court compelled UNC to release many of those documents. Then attorneys deposed Associate Athletic Director for Compliance Amy Herman about the existence of other

documents related to the investigation.

Starting last week, UNC released some of the documents revealed in the deposition.

But the documents the DTH received were heavily redacted and almost entirely useless — a fact displeasing to the media but most especially to the people of North Carolina.

The document leaves out important dates, emails between athletes and tutors, names of individuals involved in the NCAA investigation and more.

The University argues that the information redacted in the newly-released documents is protected under FERPA and releasing such information could lead to defunding by the federal government.

But the original purpose behind the original 1974 act was to protect academic records of students against government agencies — not to defeat public records requests inquiring about misconduct by college employees. Releasing these documents would not violate FERPA.

Even if one violation was made, it wouldn’t lead to defunding.

“If you are found to be in

violation, the Department of Education puts you on a plan of correction,” said Frank LoMonte, director of the Student Press Law Center. “If you violate that, then you could lose funding. But to our knowledge, nobody’s even gotten as far as a plan of correction before.”

Former Senator James Buckley, who sponsored FERPA, has publicly said he feared the law has become “an excuse for not giving out any information (universities) didn’t want to give.” In this case and in cases at other schools, that’s exactly what it is.

Students do have a right to privacy. The media has no right to access private information such as transcripts or attendance records. However, UNC has a responsibility to both the public and to its students to disclose any and all involvement in cases of misconduct.

Redactions like the ones presented in last week’s documents seem to suggest there’s more information that UNC doesn’t want the public to know.

The truth has been trickling out in a way that makes UNC look guilty. Telling the whole truth might save face — with the media, but more importantly, with the public.

COLUMN

I am not a human doing

We need to define ourselves by who we are, not what we do.

So, what are you going to do after graduation? It’s a question that’s taken many forms throughout our lives. As kids, people asked us what we wanted “to be” when we grew up. Later, it was what we planned “to do” after high school.

Now, it’s, “What do you want to do for the rest of your life?” And the answer to this question follows an equally predictable formula.

We quickly describe our future professions, fields of study or blurt out the list of extracurricular activities we’ve memorized from our resumes.

Rarely do you hear someone answer with, “I plan to be happy and healthy and spend quality time with my grandma and her 90 year old boyfriend” or, “Actually, I’m just going to be me and see where that takes me.”

We are multidimensional human beings who allow ourselves to be defined by a small and relatively insignificant part of who we really are. We maintain an unfortunate belief that we are what we do. But the reality is that while we should take great pride in our careers, we are human beings — not human doings.

Someone recently introduced



themselves to me by asking, “You’re a fitness freak right?”

I will testify that being labeled a “fitness freak” neither encompasses my character nor moves me to dispense advice on how to work the inner thighs. But it gave me a good laugh and caused me to consider whether I was allowing one part of my identity to overshadow a multitude of traits and passions that make me who I am.

Like I said before, we should take great pride in what we are capable of. However, the tendency to judge based on action rather than self is not only unsustainable but undermines the importance of our character.

Believe it or not, you are much more than your GPA, and whether it rises or falls, you’re


still you.

Despite our propensity to fret over the utility of a liberal arts education, we are fortunate to attend a university that has well prepared us to face “the real world,” no matter how daunting its job market.


But more importantly, UNC presents us with the opportunity to engage in experiences and form friendships that shape who we are as people.

This is not to say we shouldn’t be concerned for the future or work hard to secure our dream careers. However, we must remember that we maintain an innate worth for our character that cannot be diminished by even the most horrendous interviews or “menial” jobs. Amazing opportunities emerge from unexpected places. We should embrace our experiences as contributing to our character rather than define ourselves by what we do.

So next time someone asks what you plan “to be” or “do,” consider your answer carefully. While nothing you say could adequately speak to what you hope for yourself and your future, you can avoid a lot of stress and pain if you speak to what you know best — you.




Weekly QuickHits




The Dark Knight Rises

Christopher Nolan's final installment in the Batman trilogy comes out at midnight on Friday. We can't wait to see Bane and Batman duke it out — even if we can't understand that growling voice.




Rolling Stones

The Stones are celebrating their 50th anniversary as a band. And Jagger says there may be a new tour in the works. Maybe you can always get what you want — or at least a little rock 'n' roll satisfaction.




ConnectCarolina

ConnectCarolina is up to its tricks again — introducing one big button to manage financial aid. Re-do direct deposit. Figure out a new system. You don't make life any easier, just so you know.



Olympics

There are eight UNC alumni headed to the Olympics this year. The games are fast approaching, and we're excited to see Team USA compete. Get ready for awesome competition, America.



QUOTE OF THE DAY

“It is not unlawful to not create a public document. Some would even say that’s good advice, to not create public documents.”

Melissa Trippe, attorney with N.C. Department of Justice

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Legal system in U.S. is as broken as in Argentina

TO THE EDITOR:

Believe me when I say how badly I feel for Paul Frampton, unjustly imprisoned in a foreign country for months. However, it interests me how quick we are to criticize other foreign governments’ legal systems, when our own country has a legal system that can be just as bad.

I have personally known individuals who have been imprisoned in our state in horrible conditions for over a year before being granted a trial. I thought we were innocent until proven guilty?

I also know a UNC student who was arrested and imprisoned for 3 months, having to drop out of school, losing his job and having to start his life all over again when the charges were suddenly dropped, and he was released without an apology but not without huge legal bills.

We should spend as much time cleaning our own house as we do in trying to clean others. Unfortunately, this will never happen because we entrust the legal profession to make our laws and run our courts.

There is certainly not any motivation to improve the efficiency of our courts to guarantee defendants a speedy trial. More delays mean more money, especially when lawyers earn \$200 to \$400 an hour.

If an Argentinian professor was arrested at RDU for the same charges, I suspect he would be in Raleigh’s Central Prison for a very long time before being given the opportunity to go to trial.

Let’s demand speedy trials for all defendants, including our own.

Eric Plow
Retiree
UNC School of Dentistry

But, as a matter of fact, there was just such an accident there involving a UNC student 32 years ago this summer.

Martin John Wade, an 18-year-old British Morehead Scholar had just arrived in North Carolina to begin his UNC freshman year. Not long before fall semester was to start, Martin joined a group of new acquaintances here in Chapel Hill to go rock climbing at Hanging Rock State Park. There, like Eric, he fell to his death.

Learning of this, his family made an unusual decision: since going to America with a British Morehead Scholarship to attend UNC had been a high point of his young life, Martin’s family decided to hold his funeral in Chapel Hill. That service was held at the Chapel of the Cross Episcopal Church on East Franklin Street, and was attended by a large group of parishioners and many members of the UNC community, as well as his own family which came from England for it.

His ashes were interred in the churchyard, and his name and dates (1962-1980) were among the first engraved on the large stone tablet set in the inside cloister wall outside the church.

Eric and Martin — two remarkable young men taken from us so early in their lives. How much both deserve to be remembered by us as a cherished part of our UNC tradition.

Frederick Vogler
Professor
Carolina Covenant

Kvetching board™

kvetch:

v.1 (Yiddish) to complain

To the girl in my PHIL 155 class: Sounds like you had fun this weekend — drunken confessions of love and all.

To the girl who wiped out on the bottom step in front of Phillips: way to put the flop in flip-flop.

To my crazy roommate: I’m totally psyched that you’re moving out, but is there any chance you’ll leave your Just Dance Wii game?

Bless me, English department, for I have sinned. When I saw my list of seven-textbooks for my twelve hours of class next semester, I thought about buying a Kindle.

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

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- 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.

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