

COLUMN



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# Opining apart from the pack

This week, the summer DTH editors were asked to submit anonymous questions about each other for a Real World-style confessional video that will be shown at the DTH summer banquet tonight. Of the questions asked of me, some of the most telling were: ‘Can you name all of the editors on our staff?’ and ‘Where have you been all summer?’

Having served a year on the editorial board and a full summer as editor of the opinion section, it initially surprised me that I wasn't that well-known in the newsroom. But then I remembered, this is why I chose the opinion desk.

There has always been an odd relationship between the opinion and news sections of this newspaper, and with good reason. Opinion writers are of a different breed.

We don't write the news or report breaking stories. We wait for the J-school-educated staff writers to make the phone calls and do the research. And then we offer our most humble opinion.

Even now, as I write this column, I am sitting in a back office of the DTH, separated from my newsroom colleagues. If I need to get some facts or figures, I know where to find them. Then quickly, I'll head back to my closed-door office to consult with the board or a columnist so we can clarify our angled approach.

Serving a year and a half on this desk has been an absolute honor for me because we are given nearly free reign to spin and slice as we wish. The opinion desk is offered a certain autonomy that makes copy editors cringe, but it makes me smile.

We don't have to play by most of the rules intent on ensuring journalistic objectivity. In fact, we are required to maintain a high level of subjectivity on behalf of the students of this University and the people of this community. If not, the opinions expressed on the back page wouldn't be authentic.

So as my tenure as opinion editor ends this week, I don't regret to inform that my role on the DTH was, well, separate myself from the team.

Does it get lonely back here in the opinion office? You bet, but that loneliness is what fuels our ability to review the facts and do our best to offer a clear voice, even at the expense of being a team player.

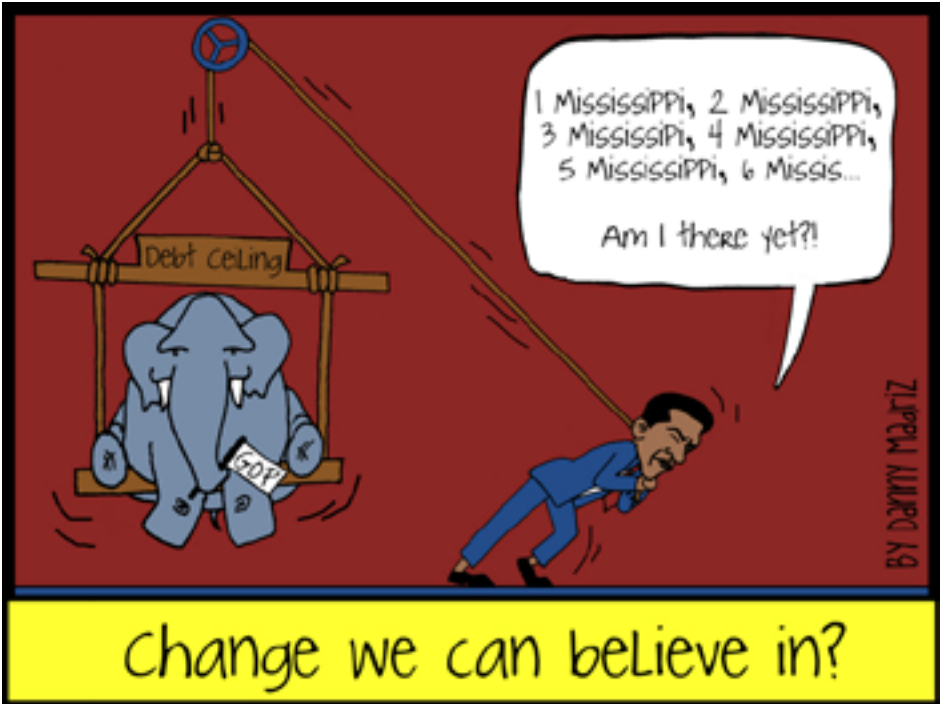
So tonight, when the editors and staff of this summer's DTH convene for a party in celebration of our final summer issue, I'm expecting a few strange looks. I may even get a “who the hell are you again?”

I probably won't get most of the inside jokes, and I definitely won't remember most of the stories.

But that's OK with me, because sometimes, you have to separate your business from pleasure.

And, honestly, having been given the opportunity to do all that I could to shape the debate at UNC over the course of a year and a half is all the pleasure I needed.

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



EDITORIAL

## Get out of the pilot's seat

### The legislature should let Chapel Hill renew its voting program.

Toward the end of this year, the N.C. General Assembly will review a proposal from the Chapel Hill Town Council requesting the renewal of its Voter-Owned Elections program.

Unlike the controversial budget decisions of the summer, this choice is obvious: Voter-Owned Elections is a good thing for Chapel Hill voters. The N.C. General Assembly should not be interfering in the voting processes of our local government.

The current program — the only one of its kind in N.C. — stipulates that candidates for the Chapel Hill Town Council cannot accept donations of more than \$20 per person in order to receive funding from the town council.

The program is both voluntary and restricted to local elections for Chapel Hill. This makes it difficult for the legislature to justify the discontinuance of Chapel Hill's program, especially when its proposal for renewal will likely be representative of the will of the people.

The state legislature need not worry about fitting this program into an already-tight budget as it does not and will not cost money to the state. All funding will come from the town council's budget.

Against common sense, support for the program in the legislature is small, with Republicans representing the opposition to its existence, an opposition that might very well be solely ideological.

Recent statements by state legislators have indicated that the program's future is in serious doubt.

Refusal to uphold Chapel Hill's application is wrong because this decision should not be the state legislature's to make.

Although it is still unclear why exactly the legislature would discontinue Chapel Hill's program, concern might stem from historical problems with voter-owned election initiatives. Other states that have pursued similar initiatives have run into trouble with the U.S. Supreme Court.

But if constitutionality is the opposition's concern, withholding renewal of Chapel Hill's program would be tantamount to ignoring its main

charge as a legislature — representing the will of the people. If the program is deemed unconstitutional, it should be by the Supreme Court of N.C., not the N.C. General Assembly.

Furthermore, ending this program at this premature date would be wrong.

On paper, the ideals behind it are sound: it puts local elections in the hands of the people rather than wealthy donors, who have their own agendas.

In practice, it is too soon to tell. The ordinance was approved in 2008 and has only been effective for one election cycle in 2009. The second election cycle will be this November.

Any scientist can attest that two trials can not produce valuable data. To really test this pilot program, it needs more time.

The N.C. legislature must consider not only the value of the program it plans to nix, but also the desire for self-governance held by the constituents who support the program.

If our local government wants to renew Voter-Owned Elections, the state should not stand in its way.

EDITORIAL

## Greek reform on point

### The reform will help problems while keeping self-sufficiency.

Last November, the Board of Trustees officially mandated that all Greek organizations would be required to have spring rush. Recently, the rest of the Greek reforms have begun to take shape.

For the most part, the new regulations seem to be exactly what the doctor ordered for a Greek system that has been riddled with controversy over the past few years.

Rather than offering a knee-jerk reaction intent on solving the problems of the past, these reforms offer students the tools they need to make these important social decisions on their own. As a University that prides itself on teaching students to think and act for themselves, these reforms capture an appropriate middle ground.

Alongside mandating spring rush for fraternities and sororities, (though fall rush remains) the Office of Fraternity and

Sorority Life has raised the minimum GPA requirement for chapters that want to recruit in the fall to the campus average by 2012. It also instituted a non-freshman recruitment quota for sororities and placed a major emphasis on new educational programs for active members of fraternities and sororities.

The goals for reform were three-fold: to make Greek organizations more academically centered, to alter Greek culture by educating members about drug and alcohol dangers typically associated with college life and to alleviate some of the pressures felt by incoming freshmen to join four-year organizations within their first week here at Carolina.

The measures taken by the Board of Trustees and the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life alleviate these core issues while still allowing Greek organizations to retain their individual livelihoods.

Raising the GPA standard further incentivizes proper academic performance and ensures that Greek organizations will strive to hold their members accountable for their

academic standing.

Of course, alcohol education programs won't solve the binge drinking epidemic throughout the Greek system, but these programs do work to educate members about certain dangers while still allowing them to make their own decisions.

Choosing which fraternity or sorority — if any — to join can be one of the most important decisions students will make in their college careers. Indeed, many students arrive at UNC ill-equipped to make a decision with such lasting implications.

By being allowed to consider both a fall and spring rush, incoming freshmen possess the ability to pledge in the fall, or to wait a semester to more accurately judge which organization is the best fit for them. Every fraternity will remain an option for students in the spring.

The same goes for sororities. Having a non-freshman admission quota ensures incoming freshmen girls the option to join the sorority they wish as a sophomore if they find themselves ill-prepared to join first semester freshman year.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Leslie (McDonald) is a very viable member of the team. He can do a lot of different things... so that's going to hurt a lot... (but) there are some guys that are patiently waiting to step in.”

Kenny Smith, NBA analyst, on Leslie McDonald's injury

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Honor Court's failure unacceptable for UNC

TO THE EDITOR:

Former UNC football player Michael McAdoo lost his reinstatement-seeking hearing last week after the NCAA ruled him ineligible for receiving improper academic assistance. That was the lead in most N.C. papers, but the disturbing part came in the middle paragraphs and moved up to the lead a few days later. The News & Observer nailed it with a Sunday headline: UNC honor court failed to find McAdoo's obvious plagiarism.

I thought the same thing when I read that McAdoo's paper, which the Honor Court found problematic last fall only because of a tutor's help with citations, was actually splattered with undetected plagiarism. And who discovered this? No, it was not the University nor its Honor Court, both of which had access to the paper for almost a year. McAdoo's lawyer published the offending paper in his lawsuit, and a few N.C. State fans spent the two minutes it took to understand the real scam of the paper. State fans figured it out.

You draw your own conclusion about Michael McAdoo given these facts. I won't say a word. But I can't stay quiet about the Honor Court.

I never had any direct experience with the Honor Court while I was a UNC undergraduate, but I was naturally curious about a system that prided itself on peer judgment. I knew a couple good people, both Morehead scholars, who sat for the court. One of them explained that cases were confidential, but I knew most of them ended with guilty verdicts. It sounded legitimate. I still wondered how high-achieving undergraduates could find the time and training to prosecute, defend and judge these numerous cases. Were they really capable and dedicated to such a significant task?

The McAdoo case might pull the curtain open to answer this and other questions. The University stated that the Honor Court does not use anti-plagiarism software, a duty reserved for professors and teaching assistants. These faculty members refer cases and evidence to the Honor Court and wash their hands. The process leaves a rickety bridge between investigation and prosecution. In fact, the Honor Court “rarely” investigates at all. It simply presents the faculty's evidence.

The aforementioned circumstance is not specific to McAdoo's case nor the cases of other student athletes. It is true

for all cases. The Observer did report one problem specific to student athletes. A faculty member wrote on a survey that the athletic department had intervened to keep a student-athlete's case out of the Honor Court. I have no words.

Nobody can fault any one person, but everyone can fault the system. I am beginning to think we will never know most of what we want to know about the UNC football scandal.

J.D. Hermann  
Class of 2006

### Kvetching board™

kvetch:

v.1 (Yiddish) to complain

To the cute boy that sits near me in Perception and Reality...I wish you were as easy as this class.

To the Math-Physics Library in Phillips Hall: So Long, and thanks for all the fish.

To my doctor at Student Health Services, I didn't break my own arm so I could just get Tylenol 3!!

To raised tuition costs, thanks for making me switch from Evan Green to Crest Winter Green.

To the girl talking on her cellphone in the 5th floor of Davis before my 8 a.m. orgo exam, you could stand to lose a few pounds.

Sounds like someone's a little cranky because they didn't get their Google+ invite.

To the athletes in Greenlaw who stated: “I hating this class. English is a joke.” Ummm...no. No, I don't believe it is.

I didn't know the state budgets would be affecting the quality of the kvetching board. I guess the cuts are really “causing damage everywhere.”

Call me ignorant, but I was completely unaware that the DTH did kvetches over the summer until recently... either way that's like dunking on a 8' basketball hoop. It's just not the same.

To the woman with the blue Nissan Sentra who double parked me on Saturday outside of GMB: was the extra 20 feet to pull up next to my car really too much for you?

To the girl in my chem II review kvetching about my issue with southern accents... Maybe if you could speak faster than one word every 5 seconds, us northerners would be able to listen to you long enough to care about your opinion. It's a northern 'thing'.

Send your one-to-two sentence entries to [opinion@dailytarheel.com](mailto:opinion@dailytarheel.com), subject line “kvetch.”

## The Daily Tar Heel

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## Weekly QuickHits

### HP7P2

The final installment of the Potter series smashed the three-day opening record at box offices last weekend. But the real show was in the lines outside the theater. What grown man carries a wand?

### Leslie McDonald

Guard Leslie McDonald tore his ACL in a pick-up game this week. We might lose him for the season, but Leslie will be back, and you don't need a perfect knee to fine-tune that golden stroke of his.

### Murdoch clan

After taking down the entire British establishment, it's only a matter of time before Rupert Murdoch's media empire crumbles stateside. Could this be the end of Fox News, fair and balanced?

### Women's World Cup

Team USA lost a heartbreaker in the WWC finals to a Japan team that simply wouldn't quit. It's sad it wasn't us, but you can't help but feel good for Japan when you consider what they've been through.