

UNC is cheating again

Will those highly educated dim witted University of North Carolina professors ever admit they knew there was a well-organized scheme there to fix it for athletes to cheat so they could play football?

Once again, another teacher went public last week and said she quit when it became obvious cheating was widespread. Mary Willingham, a reading specialist, said some of her students could not read on a college

Media Meditations

by R. L. Taylor



level and did not know what a paragraph is.

This is just another sorry episode of an on-going scandal perpetrated and operated by a respected

university. Some professors swear they never heard of the program. That is odd when a long line of the dumbest kids on campus knew everything about it. Some of the profs might have been doing research in another galaxy.

The saddest part is the number of Ph.D.'s who knew about it probably thought they were doing good deeds. I don't believe that group is capable of doing anything illegal. Therefore, like Capt. Queeg, they thought everything they did was for the good of the crew. It fit well in the "political correctness" concept. Left to fools, political correctness can be very damaging.

I suggest those good deed doers are positive that poor, fatherless students are born on that unlevel playing field and only need a little push to get started. What harm would that do to the student, the professor or the university if they helped a student? Plenty, but political correctness does not run on hard facts, it relies on the heart. It creeps out of the human brain as, "Wouldn't it be nice if...?"

How about: "Wouldn't it be nice just to herd goats on the village green and love one another?" And "Wouldn't it be nice if all the poor kids in the world had as much as the rest of us?"

And "Wouldn't it be nice if all those little four-inch fish called snail darters were saved from dying behind the Tellico Dam?"

Wouldn't it be nice if the playing field were level?" I explained it to our readers before. I will do it again: "That ###@%% playing field is level and has always been level and will continue to be level forever and a day. It is the competitors who are not equal or level or alike. Some players are larger than others. Some are smarter than others. Some are dumber than others. Some are as ugly as dogs and make a lot of money. Some ain't.

Bob Wilson, a classmate living in Fayetteville, has a better disposition than mine. He thinks the entire program was a bad idea but the university is doing all it can to straighten things out. Constant attacks are no good for the university or its students. He blames the *Raleigh News and Observer* for those attacks. Bob is another retired news man and his words have merit.

It is hard to believe the N&O would attack any liberal cause. They continued to support young liberal John Edwards knowing he has playing footsy with a bimbo. The only thing that makes sense to me is the N&O suspects one of the professors is a Republican and they cannot allow that.

R.L. Taylor is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. A newspaperman for more than 60 years, he is a 1952 graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Let's unify for success

By Randy Voller

After the results of the Presidential election on November 6th, a number of petitions for states to secede from the United States popped up like mushrooms in moist darkness. Chatham County even had one spearheaded online by a local right-wing activist. Other than fulfilling a desire to exercise a first amendment right to petition one's government "for redress of grievances" and enjoying the ensuing rush of media attention for fanning the ancient flames of secession, the entire exercise was at best conceptually flawed and at worst a narcissistic circus stunt.

This was the online equivalent of P.T. Barnum "hucksterism" utilizing modern methods to feed the media's insatiable appetite for outrageous content meant to titillate as opposed to educate. Peddling fragmentation and provincialism is as timeworn as the nomadic grifter of old offering personally brewed concoctions from the back of his wagon to unwitting innocents as elixirs for all their ills. Consume at your own risk.

Americans need to petition our government to SUCCEED as opposed to SECEDE. It is time to trade obstruction for construction and work together as citizens to rebuild our country.

In order for us to succeed let's invest in our communities by rebuilding aging infrastructure and supporting local businesses. Let's create opportunities for all of our citizens as opposed to the few. Let's ensure that our policies and laws are fair and not arbitrary or capricious. Let's demand transparency from our institutions whether they are public or private. Let's strive to ensure equality for all as opposed to allowing pockets of second-class citizenship to fester in plain view.

By personally endorsing these values, we are individually and collectively sending a message that we want to SUCCEED as opposed to dooming ourselves and our country to a cynical cycle of fragmentation, tribalism and hollow goals that will extract a vampiric toll on our future and ultimately result in a dilution of the American Dream.

Randy Voller is Mayor of Pittsboro

Controversial bus ad results in desecration of Chapel Hill church

By John Heuer

A Chapel Hill Presbyterian congregation, The Church of Reconciliation, launched a campaign this summer featuring ads in 98 Chapel Hill Transit buses that call for ending US military aid to Israel.

The campaign has drawn criticism from some quarters, and apparently inspired the vandalism of the church with swastikas and "Nazis" painted on the church education building. Ironically, the church has been home not only to Christian education, but to Jewish and Muslim education classes as well. The ad features photos of Palestinian Salim Shawamreh and Israeli Jeff Halper and their grandchildren, with the caption: "Join with us. Build peace with justice and equality. End US military aid to Israel." Halper is the founder of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAH). On the morning of November 1, Salim's home in the West Bank was destroyed by agents of the Israeli government for the sixth time.

On November 14, former Israeli Defense Force soldier, Miko Peled, spoke at the Community Church in Chapel Hill about his new book *The General's Son—Journey of an Israeli in Palestine*. Peled's father, a celebrated Israeli army general, had called for an end to US military aid to Israel after the 1967 war, arguing that such lavish military grants would tempt the Israeli government to continue its "cleansing" of Palestinians, rather than make peace with them. The younger Peled makes the same argument, and supports the Palestinian demand for equal rights. The event, co-sponsored by Balance and Accuracy in Journalism and the Coalition for Peace with Justice, came in the heat of the Chapel Hill controversy over whether or not bus ads constitute protected,

public speech.

My own view on that score is summarized by a recent letter to Chapel Hill's mayor and town council members:

"I write in support of the display of "End US Military Aid to Israel" ads which appeared in August on Chapel Hill Transit buses. Tens of Billions of dollars in military aid to Israel in recent decades has not brought peace to Israelis or Palestinians. \$30 Billion more, proposed over the next decade, is not likely to bring peace any closer. (Note: North Carolina's share of this military aid is projected at more than \$800,000,000. See www.aidtoisrael.org.)

"What we need is more dialogue and diplomacy, not more weapons. If some people are upset at having to actually think about squandering such vast sums in a counter-productive search for peace in the Middle East, while we are laying off teachers and closing libraries here in North Carolina, then that conversation becomes even more critical.

"Our Veterans For Peace Chapter has contributed, in good faith, to publicize a friendship between an Israeli and a Palestinian. We would benefit from seeing more displays of such friendship, not less."

In her forward to *The General's Son*, author Alice Walker writes: "There are few books on the Israeli/Palestine issue that seem as hopeful, to me, as this one."

In an inspiring act of grace, local rabbis have called Rev. Mark Davidson and personally volunteered to help repair the damage to the Church of Reconciliation. For more information see www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org.

John Heuer is director of NC Peace Action

Fight the Power

By Julian Sereno

Fear drove both sides during the recent election. On the left, the fear is of big corporations that chew up and spit out individuals — both customers and employees. On the right, the fear is of big government that taxes working individuals into penury and squanders the nation's wealth through hideous inefficiency, killing individual liberty to boot.

Both sides are right. Corporations — including hospitals, banks, insurance and telecommunications companies — regularly gouge individuals. Meanwhile, the government offers no help, either ignoring it all or siding with the corporation.

That certainly happened on a grand scale during the real estate meltdown of four years ago. Thieving bank executives not only didn't face prosecution but waltzed away with millions while their banks tanked.

The U.S. economy lost 27 trillion dollars, and millions of people lost their jobs through no fault of their own. They, in turn, started defaulting on their mortgages. The government rushed to the aid of the banks but let underwater homeowners drown.

How does that same phenomena affect us at the local level?

Telecom companies charge full freight for incomplete and sometimes nonexistent service. Hospitals and health insurance companies mess up bills and hold the patient responsible. They engage in what amounts to fraudulent behavior while placing the onus of proof on the patient. Banks foreclose on properties and evict people, including elderly veterans, when mortgage payments fall in arrears, only to let the properties fall into ruin.

Disclosure: of the examples listed above, the first two involve me personally, and the last is known to me personally. The first and the last have been resolved, sort of.

Briefly, I had Time-Warner digital phone service. One day in March, I was surprised to hear that I had 31 voice mail messages. When I listened, to my horror, I found that they went back to before Thanksgiving and I had never heard them before; messages from friends, even from the tax accountant, all of whom might think I had blown them off. I spent what seemed like days bouncing around Time Warner's voice mail system until I dumped them for the only other land line available here, AT&T. The problem with AT&T was that the phone didn't work at all. After three weeks of no phone, I dropped the landline entirely. AT&T, of course, expected to be paid in full, including for the three weeks when there was no service. I refused to pay, they sent a collection agency after me, I sent lawyers



after them; and it remains a stalemate.

The second incident involves the State Health Plan demanding repayment for an imaginary debt, in what amounts to nothing more than extortion. The other players are UNC Hospitals, UNC Physicians and Associates, and Assurant Health Insurance. I'm planning on going after them; I'll keep you posted.

The final incident involves an 87-year-old veteran who lost his house and his land to foreclosure in Halifax County, Virginia. He had fallen behind on his mortgage, and even though he continued to pay it, he couldn't catch up. The Veterans Administration insured his mortgage, so after he was evicted, the property went to the Veterans Administration agency that deals with foreclosed property, located in Texas. After six months, the property has not been listed, the yard has grown wild and 20 or so asphalt shingle have blown off the roof. If rain gets in, the house will be ruined.

I can't imagine my experiences are unique. I expect everyone deals with incidents such as these regularly. If you have a tale to tell concerned getting cheated by a corporation, a government agency or both, please email it to chathamcoline@mindspring.com

I can't promise that I'll print them all but I will promise to share with you the picture that they paint. If there are big institutions that are acting badly, let's call them out.

Julian Sereno is editor and publisher of Chatham County Line.