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## Letters to the editor

Originally published in:

**The Herald-Sun**

Tuesday, August 17, 2004

Edition: Final

Page: A10

### Wasteful spending, not taxes, is city's problem

What has made all the wasted money in Durham city government so bad is that I, for one, don't mind paying for tax-supported programs and infrastructure. I just don't like to think that the programs and facilities I feel strongly about are being shortchanged because City Hall is wasting our tax money.

I fully expected, when I voted for the Durham Bulls Athletic Park bonds (which failed) and for the Carolina Theatre bonds (which passed), that the city would need to continue to support these important city services. Our park system is not profit-driven, nor are our roads, solid waste pickup or the myriad of properties the city owns or leases to provide these services. What is different between these and the Carolina Theatre and the DBAP?

Why would we expect two facilities such as the DBAP or the Carolina Theatre to break even or make a profit? These properties are for the use and enjoyment of taxpayers. We should be glad to pay for them. The bonus is that they are so nice, and taxpayers come from other counties to subsidize our enjoyment.

So let's forget about brow-beating the the folks who run these facilities. Let's worry about those who would tax us, waste the income, and not use it to benefit the city and her taxpayers.

DAVID DeBERRY

### To help middle-schoolers

We are pleased to learn of the increased focus on Durham's middle schools, and the efforts to ease the transition from elementary school ("District focuses on task of educating, nurturing 6th through 8th graders," Aug. 10). Making the transition a smooth one is critical, but research has found additional ways to increase learning once middle school begins.

A combination of high expectations, challenging curriculum and instruction, and personalized support is what leads to more effective middle-grades education. More than ever, our middle school students need: Well-trained

teachers who know their subject and how to communicate it to young adolescents; small learning communities, where teachers and students know one another well; and mentoring programs and other supports.

By all means, let's focus on the transitions in and out of middle schools, including input and suggestions from teachers, parents, and students. But once students enter those critical middle grades, let's continue to offer them all they need to succeed.

DEBORAH KASAK

Newton, Mass.

The writer is executive director of the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform.

Believe Kerry's crew

Wanting to clarify as much as possible who the real John Kerry is, I took Todd McDonald's suggestion [Herald-Sun, Aug. 3] and went to the Web site about Swift boat veterans and their relationship with John Kerry. I spent a good two hours studying the information. My conclusions were the opposite of McDonald's. Swiftboat Veterans for Bush did not know Kerry personally in Vietnam, but the men who vouch for him served directly with him.

Having had several close friends die in the Vietnam War, I understand why veterans are infuriated when one of their league parts from their position on war as Kerry did. Having absorbed Vietnam and its aftermath into my total being through those years, I understand the powerful emotions are felt on all sides from that war.

Everything I read on the Web site that directly quoted John Kerry back in the 1970s demonstrated to me that he had a mature view in his position on the war and of those who opposed him in spite of his rather young age. He understood what he was asking of his fellow troops and of the nation, and he was most sincere. History has proven his reasoning to be accurate. By the way, the ad on TV by the "Swiftboat Veterans for Truth" is not accurate. If you peruse their Web site, you can see that.

BARBARA ROBERTSON

Questions for Kerry

Congratulations to Senator John Kerry's campaign.

He has been able to get all of us to concentrate on less than four months of his controversial time in Vietnam rather than:

- \* Why he abandoned his shipmates at his earliest opportunity to return to the United States in 1969.
- \* Why, in 1970, he privately met with the Viet Cong negotiators in Paris.
- \* Why, after his return from Paris, he joined and then led the anti-war protesters in trashing the reputation of his former shipmates and his government.
- \* How he worked hand-in-glove with Gov. Michael Dukakis as his lieutenant governor during 1983-84.

\* Why he voted, over 20 years, as one of the most liberal senators, to gut the defenses and the intelligence-gathering ability of the United States.

While President Bush is fighting terrorists, Kerry is talking about them, not even bothering to interrupt his campaign to vote on most of the issues of the country.

THOMAS HAUCK

Ferrington Village

A successful program

I was so pleased to read your wonderful article about the Partners for Youth mentoring program for teens in southwest central Durham. [Herald-Sun, Aug. 1]

DeWarren Langley, a rising sophomore at Hampton University, is a shining example of many successful graduates of the program, which was developed by director Leigh Bordley with support from Duke University. In the seven years since we were founded, 17 of our students have graduated from high school; 16 have entered college.

Duke University's Office of Community Affairs has funded this worthwhile program since 1998 with help from The Duke Endowment, Duke United Way and Duke alumni. It continues to locate funding sources to help support the organization's efforts.

MAYME WEBB-BLEDSOE

The writer is board chairwoman of Partners for Youth.

Endless liberal hypocrisy

There is literally no end to the hypocrisy of leftists in this country. They constantly whine about how mean-spirited the evil Republicans are. Any degree of criticism of the left by conservatives is decried as a partisan attack. But when the left criticizes the right, it is reasonable discourse.

Now, as if the four-year-long assault on our president's integrity has not been enough, the American public can look forward to a novel from author Nicholson Baker called "Checkpoint." It tells the heartwarming story of two men plotting to assassinate President Bush, and a Broadway play titled "I'm Going To Kill The President, A Comedy." What a knee-slapper that must be. Imagine the outcry if the target of such "works of art" were Bill Clinton and the writers were Republicans.

Now substitute George Bush for John Kerry in the whole Swift Boat Veterans for Truth story. This is how the media would react: The veterans' story would immediately become front page news on hundreds of newspapers and magazines. It would be the lead story on network newscasts nationwide for weeks. Instead of being pilloried as liars, these 250 vets would be heralded as truth-telling heroes and the 10 veterans standing up for Bush would be scorned and discredited.

JAMIE HUFF

Oxford

## School bus driver's pride

On the day before school opening, I passed the school bus parking lot on Milton Road and observed a female bus driver applying tire dressing to her school bus tires. With cloth in hand, she was painstakingly applying the solution to make the tires look new and shiny.

I could only think about the pride she must have in her job, wanting to make her school bus stand out and look attractive for the students she would transport to school. I also thought about the lessons that could have been conveyed to her student passengers should they realize what she did -- put your best foot forward, take pride in what you do, look your best, do something positive to make you stand out, etc. How fortunate parents and students are to have dedicated school bus drivers like this woman who care enough about this very important but often thankless job to display such pride.

Hats off to the driver with the shining tires and to the many other drivers who safely transport precious cargo to and from school each day.

KENT FLETCHER

Edwards is an insult

I have written before about John Edwards being a liar when he ran for the U.S. Senate, because he did nothing but run for the presidency after he got elected. He has done nothing for the people of North Carolina, for which he was elected and for which I voted for him. Now that John Kerry has picked Edwards for the vice presidency, Kerry has lost my vote.

Edwards would be an insult to the people of this state and this country if elected. I guess I won't vote for any presidential candidate. I don't like it, but that's the way it is.

BARRY W. CATES

Butner

Citizen Cranford

Durham lost one of her premier citizens with the passing of H.C. Cranford Jr. He will be fondly remembered by literally thousands of Durham residents whose lives were made better by the many civic causes and organizations to which he contributed during his more than 50 years of community service.

H.C. Cranford was one of the finest, most decent men I ever had the pleasure to work with during my 33 years at the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce. He was a public relations genius. He was also a caring supporter of a host of community causes and programs, including Rotary, United Way, the Chamber and the City of Medicine.

Durham is blessed to have had the benefits of H.C.'s talents for so long. Men like him don't come along very often. We are all fortunate that he chose to stay in Durham all his life and invest his remarkable talents here.

ROBERT H. BOOTH

The writer is former president and CEO of the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce.

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