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From: Stanford, Donald [<mailto:stanford@unc.edu>]
Sent: Sunday, November 03, 2002 11:18 PM
To: Town Council
Subject: Posting of Bills

I write to express my opposition to changing the current town ordinance which bans the posting of bills on utility poles, etc. on the following grounds:

1. There are already numerous alternative avenues of expression readily available within our community.
2. The attempt to make this a 1st Amendment issue is laughable. The current ban is clearly consistent with the 1st (which is why, for example, the Town can even regulate the placement and maintenance of newspaper racks).
3. What is really going here is an attempt by a commercial advertiser to get free advertising by littering the downtown neighborhood utility poles. This is nothing more than low-tech spam. Have you ever seen one of these litterbugs retrieve their outdated ads? Economists have a word to describe this type of person: "free rider" - that sums it up nicely.
4. How about private property rights? Virtually every utility pole in Chapel Hill is on someone's private property pursuant to an easement. These easements are granted for the benefit of the property on which they are located, and are not general invitations to freeloading litterbugs spreading visual blight.

By any fair measure, the repeal of the ban on posting of bills would be a step backward. Once again, downtown neighborhoods are being threatened - why should we have to bear the brunt of freeloading litterbugs and their low-tech spam? It is vital that you concentrate on improving the quality of life in our community - we don't need to waste time fighting rear guard actions in areas of sound and settled public policy.

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