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Killdeer birds in downtown Durham

I work in the N.C. Mutual Building, which is across the street from the Durham Transportation Center. There is an open field, sort of like a bluff adjacent to both the Mutual building and the bus rest stations. There are pigeons pecking there most days, crows flying around for a free meal, but most recently Killdeer have been buzzing the skies with their screechy voices.

About three weeks ago, on my way to the bus shelter, I heard one of the Killdeers making a lot of noise, puffing up to show her beautiful brown tail feathers. To my surprise, two speckled eggs were beneath her. Each day I would walk by and she would be sitting there. Then one day at lunch I noticed the grass had been cut. I went over to the place where the eggs were -- that's right, were. The mower had mowed these little creatures into oblivion.

They would have hatched in a week (gestation period for Killdeers is one month). I noticed some of them flying over another open field on Duke Street and Chapel Road, across from the church, adjacent to the unfinished furniture store.

These areas could be saved from the mower so these lovely birds could populate the city of Durham with other Killdeers. They must love Durham to make it their home and like to be near the action, right downtown.

BARRY LEWIS

Raleigh

Stop torture

Why is our U.S. Sen. Richard Burr such a fan of torture? The U.S. torture program was a disaster, and was the best recruiter al-Qaida and bin Laden ever had. Our rendition and torture program brought jihadis flocking from multiple countries to kill and wound thousands of U.S. soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Torture is also illegal, but Burr keeps defending it. Torture shamed America and North Carolina before the world, costing us allies and enflaming terrorists. Yet Burr is part of a GOP boycott of the Senate Intelligence Committee's probe of the torture program. What's he trying to

cover up? Burr also twice demanded that Attorney General Holder call off a Justice Department torture investigation. What's he trying to protect?

Bin Laden's body had hardly splashed into the sea when Burr rushed to falsely claim that torture led the Seals to his lair.

That's baloney, say veteran interrogators, better-informed senators, and intelligence experts.

Still, Burr can't stop praising torture. Can't we do better than this for a senator?

JOAN F. WALSH

Durham

Walsh is a member of NC Stop Torture Now.

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