

OLD GOLD AND BLACK

The Student Newspaper of Wake Forest University
Founded in 1916

EDITORIALS

Alcohol policy incites paranoia

Rumors have been floating around campus that Student Health Services has begun writing up students seeking help there when drunk. Fortunately, the rumors are unfounded.

And it turns out that the undercover state Alcohol Law Enforcement officials who charged tailgating students with underage drinking at the football game two weeks ago were not invited there by the university, as some had suspected.

To its credit, the administration has not stooped to these lows. And the large numbers of students who thought that it had could be accused of overreacting.

But the fact that so many students jumped to the conclusion that both the rumors were true does not speak well of the university's new stance on alcohol.

With vague threats to inform parents of their children's alcohol violations and to suspend or expel students for as few as two write-ups, an atmosphere of fear has descended on the campus.

Indeed, one can't help but wonder whether the confusion over Health Services' policy was a part of the administration's plan.

Many changes have been made at the university recently, not all of them for the better. This semester's new alcohol policies and the paranoia they have spawned represent one more ill-conceived departure from tradition.

College should be a time for students to mature and become adults. But more and more, the administration seems determined to contain them in childhood.

This is not without precedent; after all, the campus used to be an extraordinarily restrictive place. But (in theory, anyway) the fear in its Baptist days was not of being written up but of holy consequences.

For much of the last quarter century, though, the university busied itself with removing restrictions on its students — and saw its reputation, quality and the scope of its campus life grow dramatically.

So it is especially unfortunate that, just as the university begins to win its long-deserved national recognition, it would take steps in the other direction. And this time the restrictions don't represent a diligent effort to reach a higher good.

Rather, the new alcohol policies seem mainly designed to reach a higher notch in the almighty *U.S. News and World Report* annual college rankings.

The only thing holding the university back from a coveted top 25 spot has been a low academic reputation.

And the Program Planning Committee's Plan for the Class of 2000, passed earlier this year in spite of much student opposition, should eventually make the university an academic showboat fit

to rival, oh, say, Duke University. But academic reputations, deserved or not, take years to develop. The administration needs a quick fix. What to do?

Evidently it has decided to pioneer in college social life. Having the only major campus in the country with zero tolerance for alcohol ought to impress the *U.S. News* reporters enough to bump the university up to at least number 23 or so.

Unfortunately for the would-be social reformers, stiff, sneaky punishments for drinking will not instill a sense of responsibility toward alcohol.

Anyone who has taken psychology knows that punishment is the least effective way to change behavior. Make it difficult to drink on campus and students will take it elsewhere. That would lead to an increase in driving while intoxicated.

This is not exactly a desirable end, particularly in light of the fact that the university's new bring-your-own-beer party policy was ostensibly designed to reduce the chance that fraternities would be held liable for drunk driving.

Of course, if the drinking did take place off campus, the university and the fraternities would not be legally responsible, even in the event of students' driving drunk. Is the administration really concerned about student drinking — or just about its potential monetary costs?

College students must learn to drink responsibly. If they are forever treated like children, they will forever drink like children — in secret and to the point of serious drunkenness.

Stringent policies may please some parents. But for them, too, college should be a time of transition, a time of letting go. And that means letting go completely, not merely passing the reins of authority to an educational institution.

Actually, parents (or, more specifically, parents' money) may well be the real reason behind the new alcohol and party policies and the push for a higher ranking.

Would it be too much of a stretch to say that the university is setting itself up to rake in cash from over-protective parents looking for a highly ranked university for their children to attend?

That's a poor mission for an institution with such a noble heritage. The university's Baptist founders may not have approved of alcohol, but they surely would have despised the current attempts to eradicate it for the purpose of gaining more money and a higher ranking in a newsmagazine.

As with the upcoming invasion of ThinkPads, the new social policies are an effort to make the university something it was never meant to be. The administration ought to be ashamed.



Fear of government misplaced

BRIAN C. BRADY
STUDENT COLUMNIST

The key word in American society today when it comes to government is fear. Countless times we have heard of the fear of an over-reaching, zealous federal government. Check the headlines of any major newspaper and one will be sure to find an article or editorial dealing with the topic.

This past summer provided a stomping ground for the "fear" of government. Attorney General Janet Reno was grilled over the Federal Bureau of Investigation's role and actions in Waco, Texas with the Branch Davidians.

Just last week white separatist Randy Weaver testified in front of a congressional judiciary committee that the federal government unjustly cornered him at his home in Ruby Ridge, Idaho. The tragic Oklahoma City bombing has been construed as a warning from the growing militia movement in the heartland of America that the federal government should back off.

Even more outrageous, militia members from Michigan appeared in front of the Senate this summer and had the audacity to suggest that the federal government itself was responsible for blowing up the federal building in Oklahoma City, as well as for the poisonous-gas attack in a Tokyo subway last spring.

What is generating this tidal wave of fear of

government? Is Washington overstepping its bounds, or is our nation producing an unusual amount of crazies whose extremist attitudes are a threat to the safety of all Americans?

Popular opinion has shifted this fear onto the federal government, with Capitol Hill and federal authorities carrying the burden like Atlas did the earth.

It is true that government should play a very limited role in the private lives of Americans. It is also true that when government enters into the private affairs of citizens that basic civil rights can be stepped upon.

But one must realize that these incidents are few and far between. Sometimes government and authorities are expected to step in, and while these times in the past have been limited, they are now occurring at a disturbingly higher rate today.

Some actions by groups or individuals warrant a response from federal authorities, and the incidents at Ruby Ridge, Waco and the growing militia movement are such examples. In a country where the majority rules, minorities — in this case, unsafe and vigilant minorities — should not

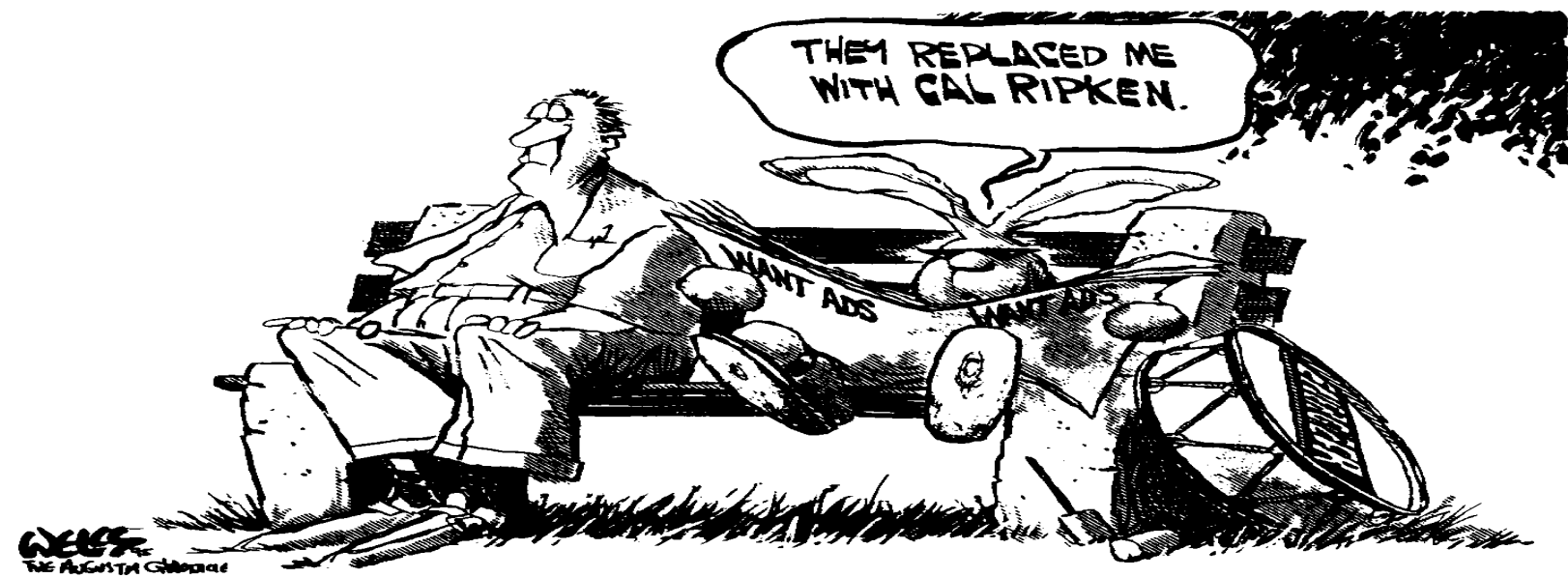
be allowed to be an exception. Some will undoubtedly argue that the federal government needs a reality check, that it has crossed the line of governance by entering our private lives in a dramatic fashion.

To what extent this assumption is true is debatable. The federal government has made mistakes, but for the most part federal authorities have executed their job well — protecting the rights and safety of American citizens who otherwise would be subject to the radical and unsafe ideas and opinions of extremist groups, whose doctrines attempt to poison America.

The fact is that government has become a scapegoat for right- and left-wing extremist actions. As a group, we holler for Washington to help us when a man like David Koresh threatens society and our well-being, then condemn the authorities after they put the situation to rest. It is this hypocrisy that is creating the tension that resides within America today.

While hasty or unjust actions by federal authorities must be questioned, we cannot stand by and let small, radical factions with venomous agendas continue to grow and fester across this nation.

For it is these individuals and these groups who generate the real fear in America.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Speech in danger

The statement below is probably unnecessary because I do not believe: that employers take seriously the efforts of Wake Forest authorities to inhibit speech and inquiry in the university, including the trustees' recent prohibition of discrimination (undefined, but see below) on the basis of sexual orientation (also undefined. Pedophilia? The missionary position? What? don't tell me.), or that they believe that Wake's graduates have become second-rate employees reluctant to express their opinions for fear of injuring sensitivities;

that the parents who were horrified by the hour-long orgy of anti-intellectualism and anti-individualism at the most recent convocation for new students, who squirmed in their seats as one speaker apologized for the "sexism" of his quotation about "the complete man" (part of his assurance that their children would not be unduly burdened with academic concerns) and another defined "the Wake Forest community" as one in which no one says anything which might give offense, were persuaded that they are shelling out \$25,000 a year for a charm school;

or that the students and faculty treated at commencement, not to the traditional reminders to new graduates of their indebtedness to society and their obligations in honor to repay those debts, but to a call to a culture of deprivation which justifies the pursuit of advantages over one's fellow citizens under the guise of equal rights, have been deflected from their responsibilities, including the commitment to vigorous inquiry in which the uncensored expression of provocative, unpopular, contentious, and irritating views are not only permitted but are vital, and will continue to reject such efforts to limit their

inquiries as my colleague's complaint last year that a criticism of the Clinton health plan constituted discrimination against him because he is gay (although I was innocent of any intention to ruffle his sensitivities; I do not know his sexual proclivities; not did I care; but he told me anyway), presumably on the ground that others should be obliged to subsidize his high-risk lifestyle by their support of a health service that takes no notice of such risks.

Nevertheless, I would like to assure outside observers whose hopes for the university have recently been dimmed by the recent outpourings of official hostility toward uninhibited expression and unchanneled inquiry that the majority of students and teachers at Wake continue to do credit to the idea of a university by their commitment to the pursuit of knowledge.

John Wood
Reynolds Professor of Economics

Gab not so fiery

In response to the editorial "Fiery Gab has Consequences" by Matthew J. Gilley (Sept. 7 in the *Old Gold and Black*), I would like to say that he overstates the problems associated with the First Amendment and that he offers no solutions to these problems.

He states repeatedly that those who merely "encourage" violence bear some unknown degree of "responsibility" for certain acts done by their listeners.

He further writes that if the speech of public commentators' just half the nature of illegal 'fighting' words, words which the Supreme Court in *Chaplinsky vs. New Hampshire* described as words which "tend to incite an immediate breach of the peace" (emphasis added), this warrants our

"serious reconsideration" of the commentators' status as public spokesmen.

It would certainly be ironic that if in our "fiery gab" about whether these "agitators" should be public spokesmen certain people became so "encouraged" and excited by our talk that they bombed radio stations.

Charles E. Moncy Jr.

Farewell to Garcia

Jerry Garcia and I used to go out for pancakes on Sunday morning, when nobody else in the house was awake. You see, it was early, maybe eleven in the morning.

The year was 1965. The town was New Haven, Conn. Jerry was a welcome visitor from the West Coast, a pretty good banjo picker with four fingers on his right hand. I was a temporary dropout from graduate school. Both of us were trying to decide what to do with our lives.

Neither of us, to my memory, knew anything about drugs. Political protest was beginning to be around, but we were obsessed with a different crisis. It was the crisis simply called "What is the true and best music?"

Between maple syrup and coffee, the discussion would stay right on course. "The pure, correct music would never use electric instruments." "The only music worth listening to is the honest music, with soul." "What is soul?" To paraphrase Duke Ellington, "It don't mean a thang if it ain't got that twang."

If you're trying to decide where to go with your life and your music, you are actually blessed, if also tormented. The more important the decisions seem, the better off you are.

Back in the '60s the people I lived with cared fervently about kinds of

music. We would gather to argue about what is right and what is wrong, the way philosophers used to gather in Vienna to argue about theories of understanding.

We never said, "Oh, I like all kinds of music," a phrase I often hear now on campus. A person who liked "all kinds of music" was an instant pariah, an airhead. It would have been as impossible to like all kinds of music as to say "I like all kinds of politicians." Our partisan feelings about music used to be a matter of fire (we hoped our opponents would burn) and mystery (nobody would teach you how to pick the banjo; you had to figure it out yourself).

Jerry moved back to California, and we didn't hear from him for a while. One day, in the mail arrived his first album, something horrible to behold, called "The Grateful Dead."

As I remember, the album cover showed a jumble of images, including motorcycles and skulls. It made no sense. We laughed and hooped.

And, being true to the only true music, which of course was bluegrass, I stopped speaking to Jerry. I couldn't forgive him for selling out. I never saw him again.

When Jerry died, I noticed that the fire had still been around. It had just moved to a different location. If you could subtract the things he did which were illegal and unhealthy, you might say he lived a good and meaningful life.

As you look for ways to remember him, I would just like to add my version of the ultimate compliment: he was a pretty good banjo picker.

William S. Hamilton
Professor of Russian
Associate Dean of the College

OLD GOLD AND BLACK

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