

Computer study poorly focused

Usually, I do not spend a whole lot of time reading through the news section of our paper. This is not to say that the section is not good, but simply that I am bordering on apathetic. I realize this and it's something I am working on. In all sincerity though, I am usually not as interested in news articles as I am in others.

I do, however, make a point of scanning through the section to see if anything catches my fancy. There will always be a few and one of last week's winners was an article by Erin Korey, "Grant to provide funds for study on computers," Oct. 26.

"Super," I thought, "it would be really nice to have those wily things working correctly, especially since they will be in full effect in less than nine months. I think I'll read this article and see what is going to be done."

Apparently there will be three groups, consisting of professors, graduate students and undergraduate students who will work together and study how the computers will affect the campus. According to Korey, one of these groups "will focus on the attitudes and preparedness of students and faculty for the new wave of technology. They have already begun to survey students and will continue this process throughout the five years."

Oooh! How exciting. The university wants my input! (Choke, choke, gasp.) I am sorry to denounce such noble efforts, but give me a break. If the university was really concerned about using the "attitudes of students," then why are we being invaded with these computers? Last year's survey by the *Old Gold and Black* showed that this Plan for 2000 does not have an ounce of the "support" that the university claims it

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does. To say that students will now be consulted is a slap in the face.

According to Korey, another group will "investigate if computers will supplement or replace the communication between students and faculty." Michael Hazen, the director of the project and the chairman of the speech communication department, is concerned that emotion will be lost through e-mail. Not to worry, Professor Hazen, I have a solution that should (if done correctly) keep everything the same between faculty and students.

When these freshmen come next year, tell them that anytime they communicate with professors they must spell out their mood(s) while they are typing.

For instance, if I were to write you, I might start a letter like this: "Dear Professor Hazen, how are you? Please take into account that I have been feeling rather saucy as of late and this message should be read with this in mind. ..."

"But Andy," you say, "that's a really dumb way of doing things. Why are you wasting our time?"

Exactly. This third illustrious group will study whether the overall character of the university will be altered. Hmmm. Wake Forest—an excellent liberal arts education at an affordable price.

Affordable being considerably greater than the cost of a package of Goobers, and a little bit less than the cost of maintaining your own private jet for four, maybe five, years. Maybe we should change our motto to "Wake Forest: we're more than just a bunch of Goobers."

What amazes me is that there is not a group addressing the major problem that we have encountered this year: the computer system does not work.

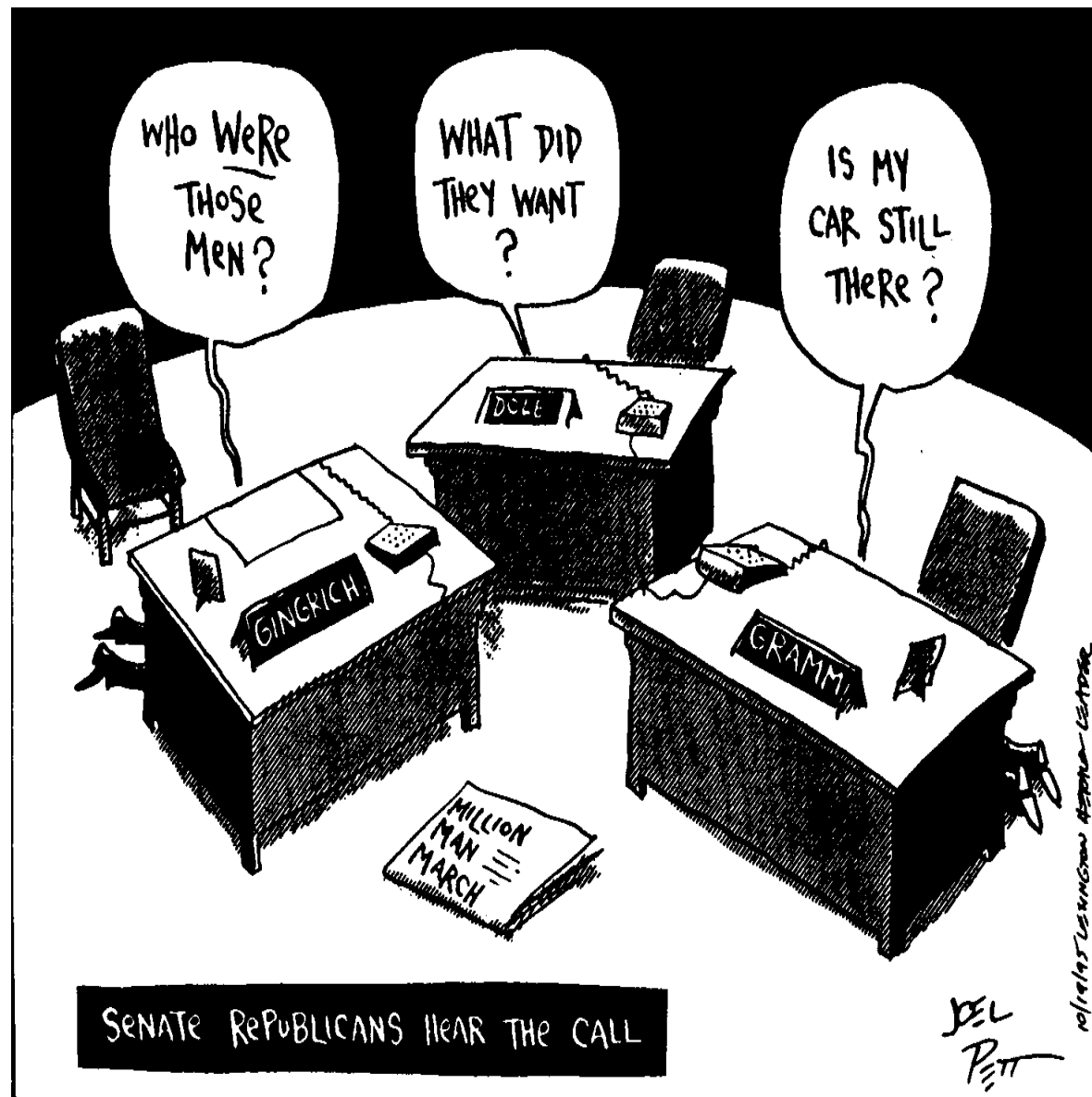
How many times has the server gone down? Even when it is up, it is so erratic that you have to hold your breath when typing something for fear of not finishing before the server decides that you are done.

The decision to use these computers has been made. Fine. It makes me queasy but I am willing to play along. Since the apocalypse is rapidly approaching though, I think that the university has a responsibility to be prepared, which it is not. It would seem that an obvious choice for a committee would be a "fixer-upper" group that does a little bit more than assess the problem after it has happened.

My final point of contention is with graduate student Dana Moreland-Mariotti, who is assisting with the study. She says that "no institution has studied the long-term effects of computerization. Just the fact that someone wants to know students' feelings is so valuable to this whole process."

Call me crazy, but I doubt that the university is really breaking its back to solicit student opinion. The university has not consulted the students in the past, so why should we believe that things will be different now? The only thing we can ask for is that these technical discrepancies be alleviated before next year.

I would hate for things to go awry and make us look like the overpriced package of Goobers you buy at an overhyped movie. We all know what happens at overhyped movies. You end up with a bunch of people who hate the movie and tell all their friends not to waste money on the Goobers.



Preregistering? God help you

As we all know, the time to pre-register for classes next semester is fast approaching. There are always many questions that people have about this process. (Actually, there probably aren't that many, but for the sake of this column, please pretend that there are.)

To guide you through the turmoil that may be created by pre-registration, I have put together a FAQ (frequently asked questions) list to make this a joyous occasion that you will talk about for years to come.

As usual, I am not responsible for the consequences that may occur (academic probation, expulsion, grade deflation) should you choose to follow this advice.

Q: Do I really have to take 8 credits worth of divisionals every semester?

A: Good question. The answer is a whole-hearted "Yes!" This requirement was implemented in order to prevent all of the seniors from taking Basic Problems of Philosophy at the same time in their last spring semester.

In order to accommodate them all, faculty had to add more and more sections as the semester progressed.

The breaking point was reached when, during commencement in 1992, one student held up the entire graduation line while trying to finish his final on the stage! Thoroughly embarrassed, the university created the policy.

Q: What happens if I don't comply with it?

A: A letter used to be sent to you warning you of your impending expulsion. That letter is now sent to your parents.

Q: How many classes do freshmen and sophomores get to choose?

A: Due to various human errors, too many freshmen were admitted into the school, thereby straining

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residence hall space and lowering the faculty/student ratio. To curb this problem and get some of the excess students out quickly, the university is allowing freshmen to register for 27 classes, which will enable them to graduate in two years. Sophomores get the normal two classes.

Q: Which philosophy professor's classes do you think will fill up first?

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Q: What if they are both on the same floor?

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Q: What if my second choice is an alternate time for my first choice?

A: Since the process is totally computerized this year (no human will even see the completed forms), there is a possibility that you will be pre-registered for the same class twice, which is bad since you would have wasted a chance to get into two different classes.

The advantage of this is that you should expect to do significantly better the second time you take each test in that class.

Q: Should I just pre-register for a not-so-popular course so that I'll be sure to get into it?

A: No. The whole principle behind pre-registration is to make it into a class that everyone wants.

Near the end of the semester, a list will go up outside the registrar's office which shows how many people pre-registered for each class, and you never want your name to be the only one under a section. You'll just always have this nagging feeling that you "wasted" your free class.

Simply put, there is no point in pre-registering for conversational Latin when you could easily get into it during regular registration.

Q: Are the classes granted on a first come, first serve basis?

A: I'm glad you asked. This year, a new feature has been added. Pre-registered classes are now given in the order of your housing lottery number.

Freshmen will receive lowest priority and seniors will receive highest priority.

To eliminate any confusion, off-campus students will automatically be pre-registered for upper-level philosophy courses.

Q: Is Deviant Behavior a popular class and do you think I can get into it?

A: You have a better chance of being struck by lightning twice in the same place on a clear, sunny day.

To see why, let us examine the figures behind the pre-registration of sociology 154: Deviant Behavior, and you will see why you don't have a chance of getting into it.

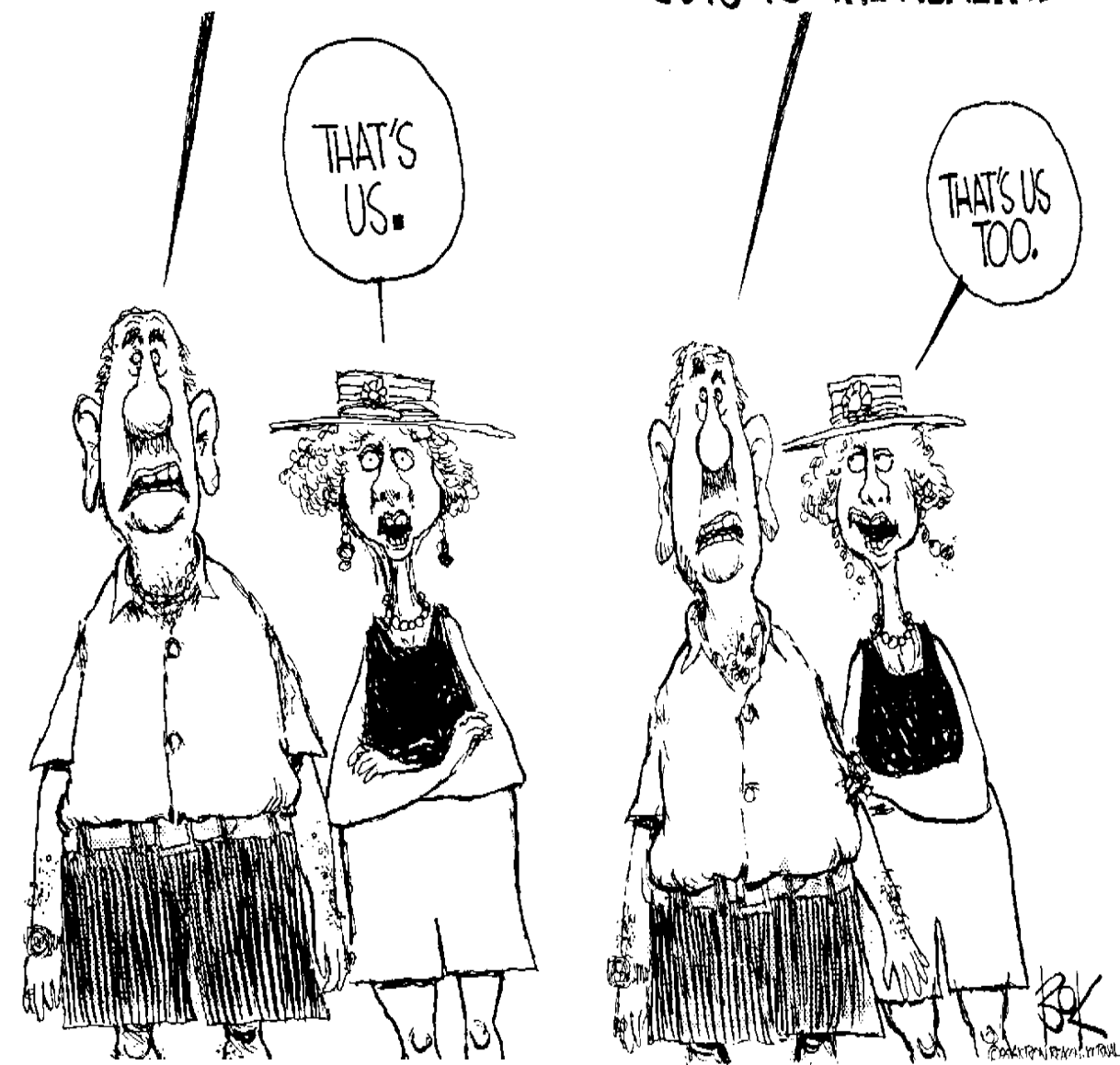
Last semester, 1,492 people were on the wait list just after pre-registration. This qualifies it as a "popular class."

Since you probably won't get into it, your best bet is to compromise and sign up for a class that is similar.

Some possible alternatives are: biology 285: Deviant Behavior in the Tree Sloth, Mathematics 315: Deviant Behavior of Imaginary Numbers or Computer Science 240: Deviant Behavior of the Campus Computer System.

THEY'RE TAKING MEDICARE AWAY FROM SENIORS!!!

SO THEY CAN GIVE TAX CUTS TO THE WEALTHY.



Off-campus eateries could give ARAMARK run for its money

If you have ever walked into the Sundry Shop to buy anything (heck, if you've ever bought anything on this campus), you may have noticed that the prices are considerably higher than the prices in the real world.

Now, there is nothing wrong with the university making a few cents off of a purchase. And I do understand that things like labor and transportation drive up the price somewhat. But charging two dollars for a two-liter bottle of soda that you can buy down at Kroger for 89 cents seems a bit ridiculous to me. This problem is not unique to our university; many of my friends from high school complain of the same problems at their schools.

If students had some other means of purchasing food on their meal cards, I'm willing to bet that the university would have to lower its prices. That is why I am proposing that our Deacon Dollars be accepted at local restaurants. Think how much easier it would be if you could just hand your ID card rather than cash to that friendly pizza delivery boy you see three or four times a week. Instead of having to run to the money machine daily, you could save your money for something worthwhile, like a new car or one of those IBM ThinkPads (which I'm sure is on top of your Christmas list anyway). Local merchants would almost certainly see an increase in business from students, and we could all get out and eat some healthier food once in a while. At Duke,

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they have a system which allows students to charge food delivered from off-campus restaurants to their meal cards. And if Duke does it, it must be a good idea, right?

Of course, I really don't expect the "powers that be" here at the university to be all that thrilled with this proposal; after all, they are making a considerable amount of money. And these profits are coming at our expense. Apparently it isn't enough that we pay \$20,000 to come here and more if you include the Deacon Shop and the bookstore.

The university could use the excuse that everyone else is doing it—which is true. But that doesn't make it right. It has to stop somewhere, and this is as good a starting place as any. If we step up and let the administration know that we are fed up with paying ridiculous prices for everyday goods, it will have to take notice. I plan to make this proposal sometime after Thanksgiving, but I can't do it alone. Talk to people in your hall, in class, in your favorite organization. Talk to that person you met last weekend (okay, there is a limit). We can try to make a change—or we can just sit back and enjoy our two-dollar Pepsi.

