

# OLD GOLD AND BLACK

The Student Newspaper of Wake Forest University  
Founded in 1916

## EDITORIALS

### Rats should pay tuition or leave

Is it just us, or do rats seem to be everywhere these days? No, we're not talking about the folks in Reynolda Hall, though we've seen some of the rodents scurrying about the entrance to the Pit.

Our gripe is with real vermin. We've seen the not-so-little beasts all over campus.

Of course, a certain number of rodents is inevitable. And the burgeoning rat population may not be the university's fault. The local city and county governments have cut back on pest control programs recently, creating rat problems elsewhere.

But when rats become as commonplace as squirrels, it's time for the university to do something. The case against rats is pretty solid: Not only are they creepy, but they also carry diseases that can be spread to the people.

For a university that expends so much energy keeping the campus aesthetically pleasing to the eye, surely something can be done to get rid of these unwanted creatures.

The suggestions that we've heard range from buying a few hundred large mouse traps to hir-

ing exterminators to poison the rats. We'll leave those decisions to the experts, we just ask for God-speed.

Of course, these days, if it's not the rats, then it's the hot water pipes. Students in Davis House and Efirid Residence Hall have been the unlucky victims of bursting pipes. Many had personal items like clothes destroyed by water. The pipe problems may also pose a risk to student education. In Efirid, ethernet connections were also damaged by water.

But since computers are deemed to be so vital to education, it's a shame the university has not done more to protect the connections from water. Of course, the best time to fix the problems with the pipes would have been during the recent renovations of dorms like Davis.

Whatever the case, students should have a reasonable expectation that their personal items will not be subjected to damage. If the university cares to uphold their end of the bargain, they should check the hot water system now in order to prevent problems before they occur.

### Worrell schools merit better press

The university has made several efforts recently to improve education. Often these changes have taken the university to the cutting edge of academe.

But an article appearing in *The Wall Street Journal* serves to remind us that being on the vanguard can potentially be embarrassing when changes do not work as planned. The article argues that the university's attempt to link the law and business schools more closely together has been a failure.

The university's program was conceived because businessmen and lawyers must work closely together but often fail to understand each others' fields. The university's solution was to make the programs more interdisciplinary in nature to promote understanding and improve working relations between the groups. Law students were encouraged to take business classes, and vice versa. The schools also would be joined together under the roof of the Worrell Professional Center. A lounge was even built for students from the two schools to share what they had learned with each other.

According to the article, however, not much has changed during the program's three years. Most students have not ventured from their chosen fields. Likewise, pro-

fessors have been slow to change their curricula much.

We disagree with the article's implication that the program has failed. It certainly is not surprising that deep-seated educational traditions have not magically changed overnight. In fact, it's probably wise to move slowly so that the students' education do not suffer because of hasty changes.

On the other hand, the university should not be surprised when the media and students critique their lack of progress. Students too must guard their own educational and monetary interests when they choose schools.

If nothing else, the slow rate of change over at Worrell should be a reminder that programs often do not offer all they promise in the first few years of their existence. For example, the university has promised much with the computer part of the Plan for the Class of 2000. Nevertheless, the program has already received media attention, not all of it positive.

Of course, problems are to be expected. But with the school's reputation and so much student money at stake, the university had better make sure the program lives up to its expectations. Otherwise, bad press may not be their only concern.

# Football parallels ups and downs of life

This column will be different from the ones I have written in the past. My desire to create something different is not motivated by any illusions of "finding myself" as a writer or that my previous submissions have somehow offended any lofty literary standards to which I hold myself.

I'm just really bored with putting my spin on "important" issues and I'm sure that readers are becoming more than a little weary of my persistent harping. Considering my boredom and the fact that I have wracked my brain without finding anything of consequence to write, I've decided that it is time to step out and have a little fun. I've come to the conclusion that I should write about something I enjoy, and which, for me at least, reflects life in various and sundry ways: football.

Everyone has one of "those days." Sometimes you have one of those weeks, months, years or lifetimes. Do you often find that your problems overwhelm you? Do you feel that your very existence is pointless, totally meaningless, and utterly devoid of hope? Well, just observe this year's edition of Northwestern Wildcat football and take heart, my friend.

For about the past six or seven generations, this academic powerhouse has been cranking out grid-iron patsies and making Homecoming a pleasant occasion for the rest of the Big Ten Conference. In a conference packed with football powerhouses, you could always look forward to a leisurely Saturday afternoon each fall when you were afforded the opportunity to watch your alma mater mercilessly pound the overmatched Wildcats into submission. Even worse, their uniforms were the color of an extremely nasty bruise.

MATTHEW GILLEY

STUDENT COLUMNIST

No more. These purple and black warriors from Evanston, Ill. have literally flipped the college football establishment upside down by toppling such perennial national championship hopefuls as Notre Dame, Michigan, and Penn State. What's more, they beat the Irish and Wolverines on the road, an impressive feat for anyone. All of this from a football program that last year appeared pointless, totally meaningless, and utterly devoid of hope. Hmm ... small time football program suddenly goes big time. I wonder if this trend could be catching?

Yet football, just like life, will suddenly yank the rug out from under you just when things seem to be in order and going your way. For instance, you find something that you can take heart in, something you can count on, something in which you can find hope amidst the vicious betrayals of day-to-day life, and then it moves to Baltimore.

Yes, the Cleveland Browns, who arguably have (had) the most loyal hometown following in the NFL, spurned the Great Lakes for the more prosperous shores of the Chesapeake Bay. Or something like that. Maybe they just figured that Cal Ripken couldn't have been wrong all 2,131 times. Ironically, though, they are moving to a city whose beloved football team, the Colts, was snatched ten years ago by the enticing metropolis of Indianapolis.

But chin up, Cleveland—I hear that the Houston Oilers are looking for a new home. It's a perfect match, especially considering your prime

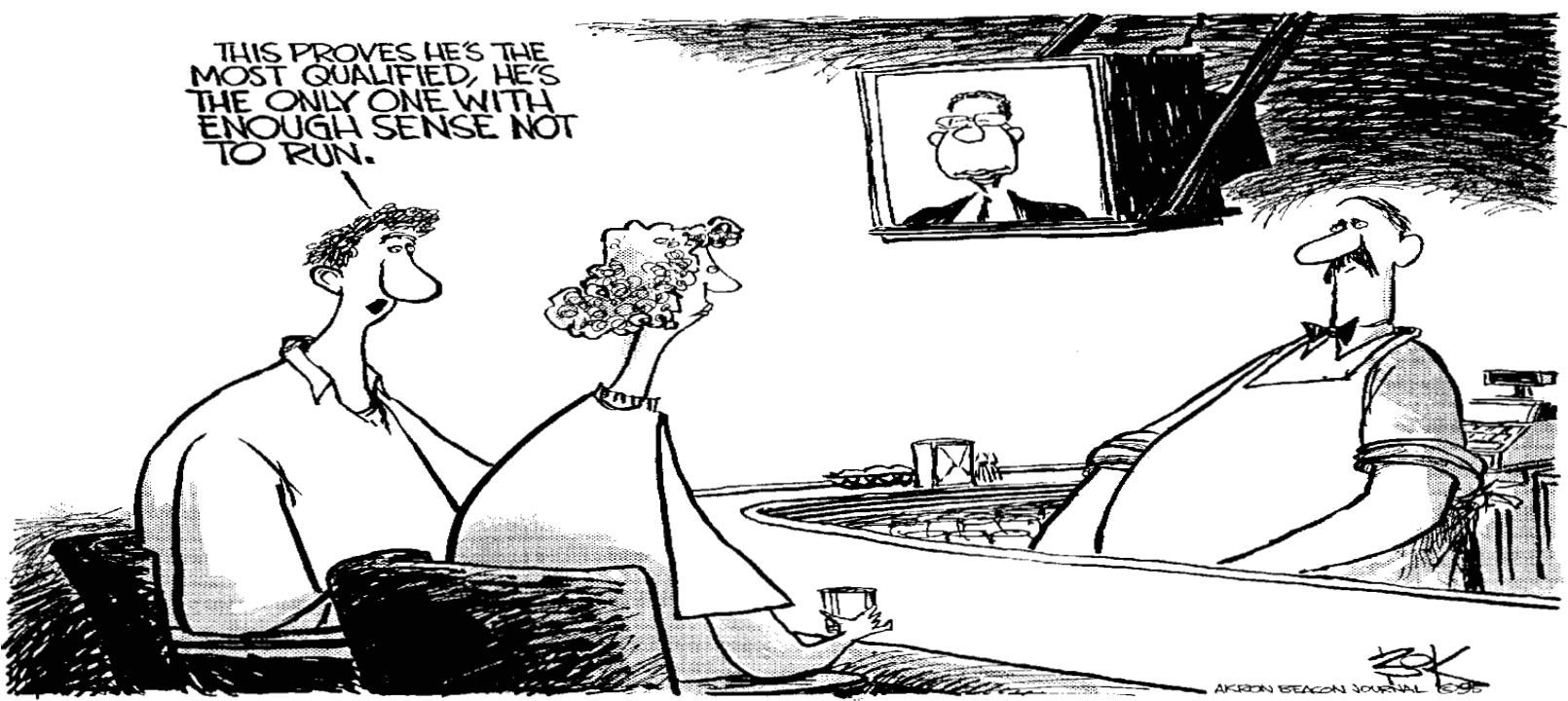
location on the shore of that oilslick you call Lake Erie.

Football may put a smile on your face but it definitely will not set your world in order. About ten years ago, the Oakland Raiders determined that their fortunes would be greater in Los Angeles and took the life out of a city that had adored them for decades. However, about ten years of careful consideration and poor attendance led Raider owner Al Davis to the conclusion that Oakland was, in fact, the best place for the Silver and Black.

Which would not have been so bad for Los Angeles if the crosstown Rams had not already been hypnotized by the copious amounts of money and a new domed stadium that the city of St. Louis dangled in front of them. Not to mention the fact that all of this had to come about when one of LA's brightest personalities and greatest sports heroes, O.J. Simpson, was on trial for murder. Strange things are afoot in the City of Angels.

But in football, just as in life, there is always a brighter side. Browns fans should realize that their loss of a football team could be punishment imposed by cosmic forces for turning Don King and George Steinbrenner, two native Clevelanders, loose on the sporting world. Yet they should see the silver lining in their dark cloud: the Indians won the pennant this year after decades of crushing ineptitude.

Even hard-luck Los Angeles has reason for optimism, for the city can still profit in a small way from this mess. All that its citizens have to do is choke back the sorrow, take a deep breath, and say, "Well, while we're at it, we might as well get rid of the Clippers."



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Grades justified

Judging from the discussion abounding within the university community, students and faculty must be evaluating the grading system at the university. Within the last two weeks alone, two columns have appeared in the *Old Gold and Black* about the issue, ("Escort battles windmill of grade inflation," Nov. 2 and "Grades accurate," Nov. 9). However, most of the discussion on the part of the students has been self-righteously indignant, and the need for an honest assessment has become obvious.

As has been stated in an earlier column, ("Grade evaluation," Oct. 5), students at the university tend to view grades as a form of currency, something which they can barter for careers and graduate admissions. One has only to read the Nov. 2 column by Rachel Sheedy to find evidence of this attitude, which to some extent holds true in today's society. Grades are a determining factor in career and admissions applications. Notwithstanding, grades are primarily an evaluation of a student's performance in a class; however a company or graduate school uses grades, and the grade itself must remain the professor's appraisal of the student's work.

It is perhaps true that the university must change its grading system to reinforce the meaning of a grade. Students might respond better to a grade-free system, a system where faculty write paragraph evaluations instead of choosing grades. However, it seems that the current grading system will stand for the moment, and the current dialogue is based on this assumption.

The argument about grade inflation at the university hinges on the question of the quality of the typical student. No one debates the point that approximately 70 percent of the graduating class will graduate with honors this year and that the average GPA is climbing.

In fact, very few people even dispute the claim that students at the university have improved in the past ten years.

However, the question must be asked, with respect to quality of work (and thus grades), whether the typical student is of such a caliber that seventy percent of students should graduate with distinction, and this question must be answered honestly.

Honestly, the answer is no. The typical student is simply not of any excellent quality. While some students at may compare with the best students at the Ivy League schools, the overwhelming majority do not. Even leaving aside the issue of the average capability of Wake Forest students, which is at best only moderate, students at this university are not model scholars.

As a number of professors have remarked, most students here are not intellectually stimulated or stimulated. They do not invigorate their classes; instead, they leave that enervating job to the professor. Outside of class, most students do the minimum amount of work necessary and disengage themselves from academic or other intellectual pursuits whenever possible. Nor is the social climate at Wake Forest beneficial for students.

Intelligence and success in course work is not respected here; they are envied, and envied with such hostility that students just hide them out of fear.

Connor states that if grading standards are raised, Wake Forest students will continue to meet the challenge. They will spend more time working, not out of love for their work, but in order to earn a grade: their key to some bright financial future.

Connor may be correct. However, good students would spend more time working for their courses, not for the grade, but out of sheer love for learning. It is this one difference between a good student and the typical student that deadens classes and stifles the academic atmosphere of the university.

This disinterest in academics is why Wake Forest students have no right to protect their grades "with a complete sense of self-righteousness and with a free conscience," as Geoffrey S. Connor, the author of "Grades accurate," claims.

And until the average student becomes more interested in academics and begins to love learning for the sake of learning, Connor and Wake Forest need not worry about becoming like the Ivy Leagues or even like Duke University. Until the student population changes, the university will never compare to those schools.

Andrew Frey

### Coverage lacking

I was deeply disappointed in the coverage of Homecoming Weekend that appeared in the Nov. 9 edition of the *Old Gold and Black*. The headline of the article, "Homecoming offered myriad of activities," was certainly appropriate, but the article focused mostly on the activities that were sponsored by the Student Union. What really confused me was the picture of Racial Harmony that appeared with the article, particularly since it had nothing to do with the article. Some information in the caption was incorrect and showed carelessness in obtaining the correct information about the picture.

I'd like to now give a brief synopsis of events that were sponsored by the Office of Multicultural Affairs and the Black Student Alliance, since it was missing from the "myriad" of Homecoming activities.

On Friday, Nov. 3, a panel discussion called "Life After Wake Forest" was held featuring area alumni. BSA and Asian Student Association then sponsored a jazz mixer at the NIA House for students and alumni. On Saturday, Nov. 4, a pre-game tailgate was held.

After the football game was the Homecoming Show, which featured Alpha Phi Alpha step teams as well as vocal groups Racial Harmony and NiShati.

Comedian Michael Colyar then performed for the audience. He has appeared on HBO's *Def Comedy Jam*, his own comedy special and *Star Search*. Following this show was the Homecoming Jam which was sponsored by Alpha Phi Alpha in the gym.

I think I was most disappointed in the coverage of the Homecoming King and Queen.

Last year, I almost missed the picture of the queen because it was buried in some obscure spot in the paper.

This year, there was no picture, just one sentence in the article about the fact that they had been crowned, in which the classification of Jamey Spencer, the king, was incorrect. He is a junior, not a senior.

While the reason for the decrease in coverage of the Homecoming king and queen is quite another letter to the *OG&B* (and quite a lot of people know what I'm talking about), I feel that Spencer and Ingrid Hoover, the

queen, deserve a little more acknowledgement than what they got.

Now I know jumping on the Homecoming issue may be a little nit-picky relative to other issues that affect us as students (to some extent it is to me!), but what I hope this letter does is bring to light the fact that what some segments of the university community saw as an important social event was treated poorly by the *OG&B*.

The reality is that the carelessness that was shown in the coverage of Homecoming seems to be commonplace, because I've noticed this kind of misinformation and lack of information just about every time I've opened this newspaper.

Ronda M. Bryant

### Reduced spending

Kyle Haden's article, "Off-campus eateries could give ARAMARK run for its money," (Nov. 2, 1995) proposes to combat unreasonable on-campus prices by enabling students to use their meal cards at off-campus establishments.

While I will make no judgement about the necessity or justification of higher food prices on campus, I have noticed that prices are often lower off-campus. Mr. Haden's proposal is one way to reduce food spending and will also increase competition for ARAMARK.

I have another suggestion: keep (part or all of) the cash in your bank account instead of depositing it into a Deacon Dining account. It will be as safe at Wachovia as it is at ARAMARK. Surely college students do not need a benevolent overseer (i.e. ARAMARK's dining plan) to make sure we do not spend our food money on other things. And I believe college students can save money by buying, at least sometimes, off-campus. Also, cash is a better competitive equalizer: all establishments accept it, not just ARAMARK, and not just the selected eateries that (if Haden's proposal is implemented) will agree to accept meal cards. Since a meal plan is required for freshmen, Mr. Haden's proposal is more practical for them. But keep in mind that even if his proposal is not approved, we have another option.

Chiree Spencer

# OLD GOLD AND BLACK

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We do not accept public thank-you notes. Corrections will run in the corrections box on page two. All letters to the editor must include the author's name and phone number, although anonymity in print may be requested. Submissions should be typewritten and double-spaced.

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