

OLD GOLD AND BLACK

The Student Newspaper of Wake Forest University
Founded in 1916

EDITORIALS

Words of wisdom for the bright-eyed

We, at the *Old Gold and Black*, feel that because we produce an issue that is dedicated to welcoming new students, along with providing helpful information about the university and the city of Winston-Salem, we should be allotted some room to give our opinions and advice on the months to come.

So, without further delay, here are some things that any student can expect to happen in his or her first year.

Academics
Remember all of your older friends who told you that they found college to actually be easier than high school. Well... not here. While there are some easy classes, there is no way to avoid the sobering fact that you will have to work hard to succeed.

The university's academic reputation is well-deserved. The only way to breeze through your next four years is to transfer to Duke. There are a few steps you can take, however, to make life easier. A general consensus of students say that it is to your advantage to take your divisionals first and work on your major in the last two years. Even if you know for sure what you are going to major in, it cannot hurt to wait. Chances are your interests are going to change as your world expands.

Also, with the wide array of divisionals students can take, you will probably be pleasantly surprised by a class that you think you will hate. Do not discount anything. Perhaps the most important thing one can do to adjust to academia is to embrace your new reality. While you are still the cream of the crop, so is your roommate... and your neighbor... and the person behind you at the Pit.

Although it may seem like everyone is starting off pre-med, not everyone will finish this way.

Activities
One of the best aspects of this university is that pursuits outside of academics extend far and wide, and, because this is a smaller school, you will be able to try many different things without being cast aside.

Be careful, though. It's great to participate in different things, but make sure you leave time for studying. Pick a few things and do them well.

It will not serve you to participate in activities simply to build a resumé, as you may have done in high school. Make sure the activities you choose are meaningful to you, and make sure you enjoy them.

Also, participate in the *Old Gold and Black*. We are the best.

Social Life
Obviously, the most overwhelming aspect of a college so-

cial life revolves around parties. If one so chooses, this experience can easily be had here, either in conjunction with a Greek organization or independently.

Remember that even though you now have more freedom than you could possibly imagine, you do not have to exercise it at all times. The first week away from home is the easiest time to do something you will regret. Try not to.

While Greek functions dominate the party scene on campus, there are a plethora of activities to do around Winston-Salem.

The city has coffee shops and theaters to boot, if one is so inclined. There is a climbing wall on Silas Creek Parkway and Pilot Mountain is 20 minutes away by car.

Now is the time to try new activities and find different interests. Although the campus can seem like its own city, remember that there are many different things to do right around the corner.

Being Away From Home
Inevitably, even the most outgoing and personable will get homesick. This is normal, to say the least. How you deal with it is important though.

It is easy to call home every night and to stay in your room watching television. It sounds very clichéd, but adjusting does take time.

Everyone is in the same position, so, even if you feel stupid, take comfort in knowing that everyone else feels stupid too. Do not let homesickness make you transfer.

During the next year, it is also very likely that you will have a fight with your roommate. Once again: normal. Remember, courtesy is more important than being best friends.

Also, as much as you would like to remain best friends with everyone from high school, it is not realistic. Set modest goals on how often you will contact your friends.

Campus Myths
Lastly, here are some campus myths that should be squelched immediately.

The Pit is unsanitary. That 95 percent on the Health Inspector's Test is not for show.

Your future spouse is walking amongst us. Those gates out front are not for the Emerald City. While some students find their true loves, it is not written in stone that this will happen.

We have a Division I football team. No comment.

If your roommate dies, you get a 4.0 for that semester. Seriously, people. Half of us would have criminal records if this were true. The amazing part about this rumor is not that it got started, but that it still exists today.

Time to buckle up stupid signs

While driving toward school, I came across a series of road signs in West Virginia that captured my fancy.

As my car was speeding along the interstate, I looked up and saw a green rectangle that read, "When you're driving in our state." About 50 yards later, another green rectangle answered my quizzical look, reading, "Buckle up and don't tempt fate." This catchy rhyme was completed with a third sign, "Fasten your seat belt. It's the law."

"Wow," I thought, "what a stupid idea."

I think that West Virginia is trying to assert that it really is a "cool" state after all. Something intuitive tells me that this is not the way to convince people, though.

Cool states have a certain panache that our poetic West Virginians seem to lack. For example, in cool states, the women have all of their teeth. And saving them in a jar does not count. Secondly, and probably more important, toilets are indoors.

Pioneering the first rhyming road signs campaign is not grounds for

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EDITORIALS EDITOR

leapfrogging the first two rules. I wonder who the brainchild behind this idea was? I can almost picture the meeting at the Turnpike Commission.

Billy-Ray: Okay, gang, I've been thinking a lot about this whole seat belt thing. We're dealing with a new generation of drivers. Kids today want something hip, something trendy. I suggest we build a series of signs warning them to use their sturdy safety buckles. And we can put them on the interstate so the kids will see them while they're driving.

Betty-Ray: Fellas, I believe we need to do something different. Something that captures the essence of West Virginia.

Bobby-Ray: We should post signs on outhouses and port-a-jons everywhere.

Sonny-Ray: I say we rhyme the signs. That way, people are not just driving. Now, it'll be more like a party. Parties are cool.

Bobby-Ray: I bet this will make West Virginia cool, too.

Apparently, some of the ditties that did not make it through the final draft had potential, but they just did not convey the proper message.

"Wear a seat belt when you travel. / Or we'll have to peel you off the gravel. / Please wear your seat belts."

Something about it just did not sit well with the entire crew.

"So you think that seat belts are underrated. / We'll see how you feel, once you're decapitated. / For the love of God, use the damn straps."

Once again, too much.

Our very own Winston-Salem is another area trying a new, hipper method of increasing seat belt use. It is in the form of an incentive program.

Picture a green rectangle. It reads, "Seat belt Use / Last week 93% / Record 97%."

North Carolina has always been one of the cooler states, with its rolling hills, waving fields and glorious weather, as well as toilets that flush.

These signs show, however, that North Carolina has some work to do

within individual cities before it becomes a truly cool state.

The leaders of Winston-Salem must think that people are going to get in the car, look at their seat belts, make the decision to buckle up, and then think, "C'mon record."

Did you know that people who drive without buckling up see the signs and change their actions, just so they can say they contributed to a record-breaking week? How exciting for the citizens of Winston.

We need to get one thing cleared up right now. People wear seat belts to keep their bodies from flying through windshields in the event that they are in a high-impact crash.

I have never worn a seat belt because it was the cool thing to do. (I did, however, own more than a few pairs of multi-colored Jams shorts in junior high school. When the girls screamed at the sixth-grade dances, they screamed for Andy.)

It's great to see that states are concerned with driver safety. I could not be happier. As far as the nifty slogans, though, its time to go back to the drawing board.



Fridges too friggin' expensive

A couple of weeks ago the Resident Student Association mailed out its annual "memorandum" pertaining to refrigerator rentals. Unfortunately, the university does not issue "Consumer Reports" or have a resident Ralph Nader to help prevent people from being ripped off. I've learned my lesson, having rented a refrigerator last year.

In the letter, RSA lists a few "benefits" of renting a refrigerator from them, none of which hold up if examined. The following are excerpts (with commentary) from the letter dated August 1996:

"As in the past, (RSA) will provide students with the opportunity to rent reasonably-priced refrigerators for the school year."

"Reasonably priced?" Maybe if your last name is Trump or Perot. Just a couple of miles away at the nearby Wal-Mart, comparably-sized dorm room refrigerators sell for \$99

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STUDENT COLUMNIST

and \$149. These prices are slightly higher than the cost of renting a unit from RSA.

At the end of the school year, however, you actually have something to show for your money instead of just fond memories of your old fridge.

It doesn't take a finance major to realize that \$89 (the price of the small refrigerator) a year for four years equals \$356, which is roughly the cost of three similar refrigerators from Wal-Mart, with money left over to spend on food and beverages to put in it.

"At the end of the school year you don't have to worry about storing a refrigerator or carrying one home."

That's just great! In May you will have absolutely nothing to show for your \$89 or \$126, but, hey, isn't a

little extra car space worth about a hundred bucks? Many students get storage space anyway, so additional car space is not a concern.

"During the school year, if your refrigerator stops working, it will be repaired or replaced at no extra cost."

In my two years at the university I have never heard about a person's refrigerator breaking. I'm sure RSA could provide me with the number of services requests they've received, but that's irrelevant.

A lot of stores offer extended warranties for a small percentage of the purchase price. Also, the people working in the customer service department will often let you return a product, even if it is past the stipulated 30 days, if you make enough noise.

Finally, you don't know how long it will take to get your refrigerator restored or replaced. Last year I was curious as to the price of the refrigerators, so I called up RSA and told

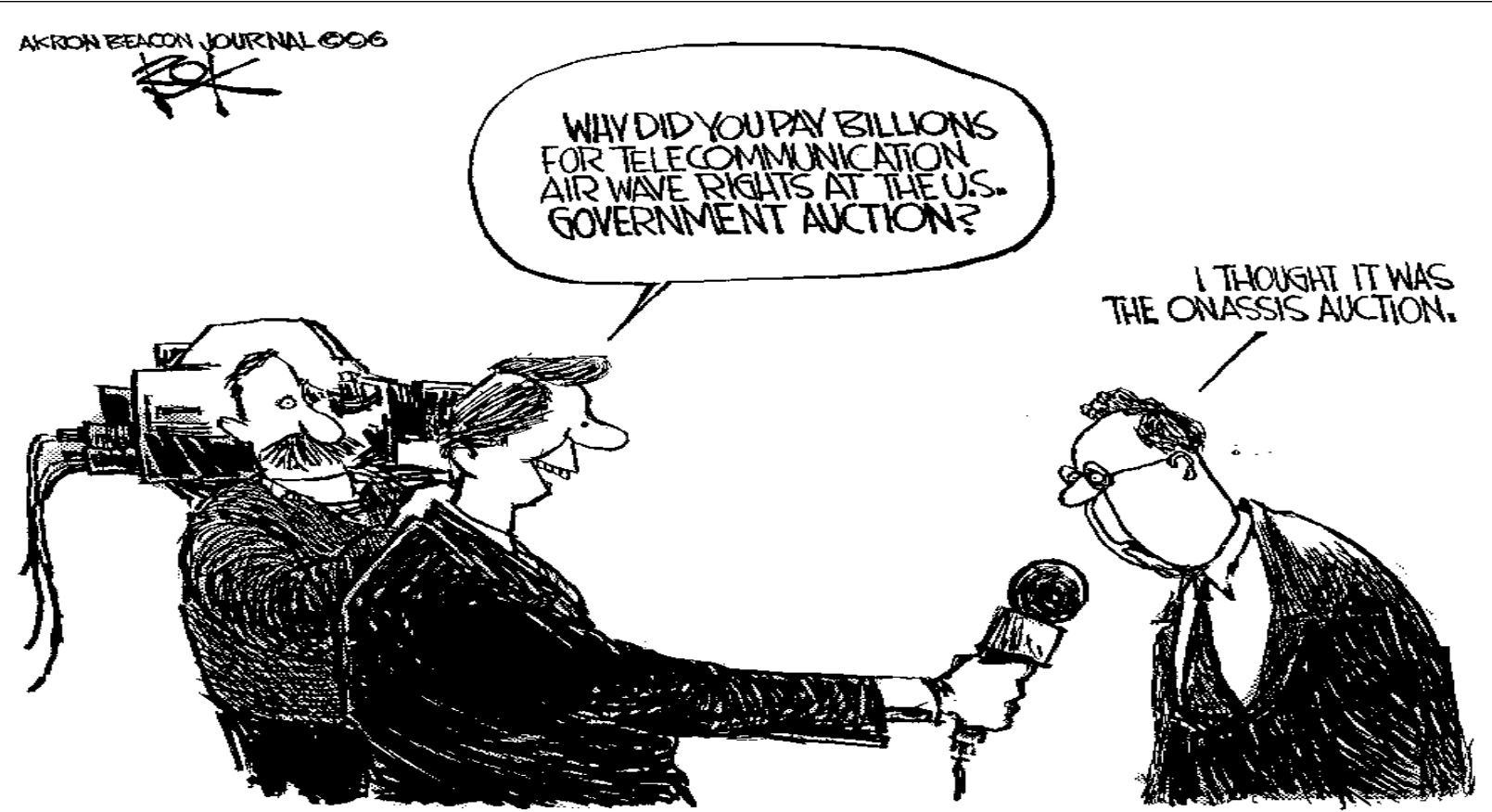
them that my unit was broken. I inquired as to the cost of the unit.

A few days later I received a message on my voice mail saying that they weren't sure. After talking to another person who also didn't have an answer, I dropped the whole thing and told them that my refrigerator was working again. Who knows how long it would have taken if my fridge really wasn't working.

"As you can see, there are numerous benefits of renting a refrigerator from UP, Inc. (the company that provides RSA with the rental units)."

RSA only mentioned two advantages of renting from them. Regardless of the rationality of their argument, RSA did not provide "numerous" reasons.

I made this mistake last year and learned from it. Hopefully less people will rent from RSA in the future, thereby forcing them to lower their prices until they are, in fact, reasonable.



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