

# Fran proves interesting

KYLE HADEN

STUDENT COLUMNIST

My first hurricane. I was so excited. Coming from western Pennsylvania, I didn't have much experience with hurricanes at all. The only ones I had ever experienced were the invisible ones that my mother said hit my room all the time (I never saw them).

So when a random newscaster appeared on my TV screen the afternoon of Sept. 4 to warn the Piedmont about the approaching disaster, I was very intrigued.

Because this was infinitely more interesting than doing homework, I sought out some of my more weather-experienced friends to find out what a hurricane was really like.

Most of the conversations went like this:

Me: Did you hear that we're supposed to get hit by a hurricane?

Friend: Yeah. I hope it misses us.

Me: Why? What are they like?

Friend: Pretty bad. High winds, heavy rain, lots of lightning, power outages, falling trees. They're unbelievable.

Me: Well, do you think classes will get cancelled?

Friend: Are you kidding? This is Wake Forest. Didn't you know *Pro*

*Humanitate* means *Classes all day, every day?*

Me: This is going to be so cool!

Friend: Don't you have homework to do or something?

When I realized that it was possible for us to lose power, I decided that it would be wise to stock up on essentials. I remembered the last power outage here, and I had to make sure I was ready this time.

So being the "always prepared" Boy Scout that I am, I went out and bought a bunch of candles, peanut butter and a couple of magazines. I figured I could live off of that for a few days, if I had to.

Of course I didn't have a lighter or any matches, but that didn't matter — I could rub sticks together, or something. I also called home to update the parents on the meteorological situation; my mother, a veteran of more than one hurricane, said, "Don't get too excited. You guys probably won't even get hit too hard." Of course I didn't believe her...

Well, needless to say, we got a couple of showers and lost power for a few hours, but missed the brunt of the storm, although Fran did provide us with a belated Labor Day holiday.

Don't get me wrong, I am definitely relieved at the way things turned out since hurricanes are known to cause quite a bit of damage. As stupid as it sounds, in all the excitement I kind of lost track of this very important fact.

I was kind of disappointed for a while, until someone reminded me that we've had a natural disaster each of the last two semesters.

That kind of cheered me up, because I realized that I still have a few semesters left, so Mother Nature has to have something sly left up her sleeve.

I just hope that it's something that is more visually impressive than physically destructive. All things being the same, I'd rather not have to go to my English class in a tent set up on the Magnolia Quad.

Oh, did I mention that I was cheered up by the day off? But now it's back to the grindstone we call home, Work Forest.



# University provides wealth of knowledge

PAUL FYFE

GUEST COLUMNIST

In 1837, the great Ralph Waldo Emerson published an essay titled, "The American Scholar." On the subject of formal education, he wrote: "Colleges ... have their indispensable office — to teach elements. But they can only highly serve us when they aim not to drill, but to create; when they gather from far every ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and by the concentrated fires, set the hearts of their youth on flame."

In the late summer before, and upon, beginning a new world of higher education, the rising student is overtaken with anxiety.

Whether due to the impending change in season or the restlessness of brainless summer employment, a certain awe fills our capacities, and an ocean of motivation and ambition crashes against the rocks of time. It is a greater undertaking than most realize, but we are timidly fearless. We are coming to Wake Forest.

With naive sincerity, we search out our place, and are welcomed into the arena by myriad embraces; beckoning with such promise. The atmosphere is sensational — completely untranslatable.

All the surveys on intellectual climates and the benefits of technologies will never tell you how it feels to walk across campus with people you trust you will know; to walk into the cafeteria, overwhelmed with exuberant faces and over-loaded trays; to walk into a class with every expectation of nothing at all.

Bring me the survey and I will show you youth. Give me a computer and I will elaborate upon its various metaphors of existence; unopened, unused. Bring us new students and I shall tell them of uncountable resources and opportunity, all at their doors.

We are young and impressionable; this is an important time. Send a brilliant e-mail. Follow your dreams; let your soul sally forth into the unbounded infinite.

Yet to these new students, even diehard incumbents, I am a solitary voice. It is a challenge unto themselves to grasp the complexity and profundity of this preg-

nant labyrinth; a challenge unto us all.

However, it is a *necessity* for the profound and undying realization of ability, nay, possibility to occur. The student must separate, abstract and reattach, revealing in the limitless possibilities of the self, shown to him by this institution.

This is our privilege to undertake, and our duty to bestow. Let us keep this romance; let us keep the delightful reality of youth, opportunity and academia present in our hearts and minds — an inexhaustible well of positive drive.

I do not appeal to the students alone, but to the faculty and staff as well. It is all of our responsibilities to dust off the ideal romance of dedicated, progressive experience and make this university an inferno of endless self-invention.

Every moment is rare and precious; a delicate ornament upon the masterpiece of life and time. Do not lose sight of the fragility of human experience. Instead, take each instant with the delicate severity of an artist, meticulously applying the fragments of life upon the greatest canvas.

Too often do we get caught in the means and the distractions of process. The frustration of correctly operating a computer soon overtakes the higher goal of accelerated learning. The machinations of design can throw us into confusion and desperation, searching the surface of steel beams when we have only to step back to see the skyscraper.

Significant motivation is not found on the Internet and ambition should be more than a Friday night. This is college, a time to learn more than you ever imagined. Enlighten yourself to higher ends. Do not lose perspective, do not lose suspicion, do not lose yourself. Now is the greatest of times.



# Responsibility of drinkers extends beyond self

AMY BARNETT

GUEST COLUMNIST

Have you ever heard someone say any of these: "I've only had a few." "I am not that drunk." "I am okay to drive."? Have you ever said any of these? I don't think a weekend goes by that I don't hear someone who lives off campus trying to convince everyone that he or she can drive home from a party, or that someone is insisting that he or she can make it home from a bar.

For many of us, as intelligent as we all are, these are acceptable excuses for getting behind the wheel of a car after consuming alcohol. It's no wonder older generations believe that we think we're invincible.

Well at about 10:30 p.m. Sept. 4, any of our claims to immortality were dashed. Not because six of our classmates were acting foolishly on the basis of their thoughts of indestructibility, but because someone thought he was "really not that drunk" and was "fine to drive" because he had "only had a few."

Now this man, who robbed Maia Witzel and Julie Hansen of their lives, did not go out that night to become scorned for the rest of his life. He did not go out that night to kill two people and injure four others.

He was most likely out to have a good time, but for him to not drink and drive was too much to ask. Trying to find someone to drive sober was too much of a hassle. Paying a few bucks for a cab would have been a waste of money. Sound familiar?

How much anger do we all feel for this man who took away two young women with bright futures who were loved and cared for by so many people? Two young women who had so much life to look forward to. Two

young women who were just out having fun with their friends.

On the other hand, how much different are any of us from this infamous intoxicated driver? What separates students who drive drunk from a Kernersville man who does the same? The distinction is that those students have all been lucky.

Some of us put lives in jeopardy on a regular basis and never suffer any negative repercussions, but that Kernersville man's luck ran out. He used the same excuses we use and took the same risks as we take, but unfortunately for him and six others, his dangerous behavior caught up with him.

So how much anger are you now going to feel toward yourself and toward anyone else who might even think about getting behind the wheel of a car after they've been drinking; the next time they put everyone around them in danger? Are you still going to be of the opinion that drinking is such a necessity that you would rather gamble with your life and other lives than refrain from doing it? Driving while intoxicated is not an individual choice. It is not our place to decide the fates of the passengers in our cars or those of other drivers and passengers on the road.

For those of you who have driven drunk since the accident or who plan to drive drunk again, not only are you disrespecting yourself, but you are also disrespecting the memories of two innocent young college women.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

our day-to-day existence.

At Wait Chapel last week, over 1,000 members of our community gathered together — faculty, staff, students and administration — to console each other if not to reflect on the meaning of these recent tragedies. Hurricane Fran also gave us all perhaps a timely emotional and spiritual reprieve as classes were canceled on Friday and most of the university offices were closed.

It seems as if it is by and through events such as this wherein the "spirit of community" is re-discovered. Through such tragedies, either those which are natural catastrophes or acts of God, we are reminded of two things: one, our vulnerability, that which makes us human, and two, the importance of the role that each one of us plays within the lives of our community and families.

Graham, Julie, Matthew and Maia were not given the opportunity to reflect upon the meaning of their lives and how their lives contributed to the spirit of our community, as their deaths were so unpredictable and sudden. But we "know" that

their lives have affected us in some positive way.

This also provides us with a unique "window" within the context of our own lives to reflect on what it is that creates "meaning" and "purpose" for us ... and most importantly, a time to act on our dreams.

The essence of the human spirit is capable of achieving many wonderful things. Even in the wake and aftermath of tragedy, the healing occurs.

We have a lot of things to look forward to this fall — the Year of the Arts events, Convocation, Family Weekend, a great football season (our team having two consecutive victories) — just to name a few.

Perhaps the "gift of life" which Graham, Julie, Matthew and Maia gave to each one of us lies in our discovering the capacity within ourselves to "find a purpose in life so big it will challenge every capacity to be at your best" (*The Little Book of Virtues*).

And as the memories of their lives go softly into the night, so we are reminded that we now have an op-

portunity to re-engage ourselves in the wholeness of being in "community" (taken from the Latin word, *communio* — "mutual participation") with one another.

Joanna Iwata  
Director of the Benson  
University Center

## Legislative change

In the past, Student Government has been perceived by some on campus as an organization that may lack initiative and action, and does not have adequate contact with the students. We in Student Government have pointed to student apathy as a primary reason for this, but are very encouraged by the turnout for this fall's elections, which is higher than it has been in many years.

However, we also recognize the need for action on our part to bring SG closer to the student body and more active in representing your needs.

In the past, there has never been a

true, bottom-line sense of accountability to the student body other than the sense of responsibility among each legislator and the absence rule (two absences from meetings equals expulsion from legislature). I want to present to you some changes to the SG legislature which will take place this year that will fundamentally change the obligations that all legislators must fulfill.

First, all legislators will be required to sign a Student Government Legislative Contract. The following duties must be met, all of which must be fulfilled or an absence will be given (with the two-absence rule still in place):

1. Attend all committee and general assembly meetings.
2. Turn in a printed copy of e-mail sent to constituents as an update of Student Government's activities. All students will be divided among legislators for this to occur.
3. Complete all door-to-door campaigns to garner student opinion on issues. These will be more frequent this year than previously.
4. Participate in all other SG com-

munication efforts (including phone polls and other initiatives).

5. Take action on and complete all projects assigned by committee chairs by a certain deadline.

6. Work at least a one-hour shift at a poll during elections.

These obligations are not exhaustive, but will provide a bottom-line sense of duty for each individual legislator. Those not performing all of these duties will be expelled from legislature after two absences.

In addition, the responsibilities of the committee chairs have been modified this year to increase accountability, because the productivity or inactivity of a committee can often be the product of its leadership. The committee chairmen will serve semester-long terms this year, and their reinstatement in the spring will depend upon a mid-year report on their committee's activities.

The committee chairmen will also have to sign a contract in addition to that signed by all legislators which includes such items as charting all issues on issue logs which will be kept on file in the office, and setting

deadlines for the issues to be completed by those on their committee.

My personal goal for the year is to have a more active and accountable legislature, and these measures will help to increase communication between SG and students, possibly foster campus-wide debates and ensure effective representation in the legislature of the constituency of SG, the student body.

Will Ashworth  
Speaker of the House

## Year of the what?

WFDD is celebrating the university's first-ever Year of the Arts by dropping the Saturday Metropolitan Opera broadcast, its traditional gift to western North Carolina, and replacing it with football. Certainly our opening convocation speaker, Beverly Sills, former operatic star, will appreciate that.

G. McLeod Bryan  
Professor emeritus