

MIKE LUCKOVICH ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

AMERICAN OUTRAGE CONTINUED OVER A SCHOOLS CALLING A SIX-YEAR-OLDS KISS ON A CLASSMATES CHEEK, SEXUAL HARASSMENT...

...IN OTHER NEWS, CLINTON TODAY SIGNED THE "SIX-YEAR-OLD WHO, KISSES A CLASSMATES CHEEK PROTECTION ACT..."



Students at university to experience life

JOE DOBNER
GRAPHICS EDITOR

Last week in a letter to the editor, Beth Rymeski made the statement, "my advise to Angela Minor is to wake up and realize that those who have no computer skills have no future at all. There is no stopping today's technology, so just deal with it."

This attitude is disturbing, primarily because it is quite flawed and undefined. Sadly, it is also pervasive in popular culture and to a certain extent, here at the university.

Ironically, Minor submitted her column on a disk in an MS Word-readable format, while Rymeski handed in a printout that had to be re-typed.

The notion that those who have no computer skills have no future at all is bogus, because the very concept of "computer skills" is essentially worthless. It has no clear definition.

Does "computer skills" mean a working knowledge of the latest Microsoft product? Is it the ability to solve all problems that arise with a computer? Is it having the expertise to assemble a machine from scratch and install and configure an operating environment?

The best definition of "computer skills" that comes to mind is being able to make a computer do what you want it to. Sadly, few people will graduate from the university with knowledge this extensive.

At best, most students will graduate with a working knowledge of the standard load of applications that the university decides to make us use, and whatever operating system that has the university's favor.

This working knowledge will pass for "computer skills" in the business world, as most of the people who make hiring decisions know how to use a word processor, spreadsheet and presentation package.

If a potential employee can mention proficiency in an application that they have heard of as trendy but are not themselves familiar with, they will be impressed.

The listing of "computer skills" on a resume is not so much an indication that a potential employee can function in a corporate (or other) computer environment from the start. Rather, it tells an employer that the potential employee is willing to use a computer and can learn to use whatever system the employer has in place.

Every student who graduates from the university now, even if they aren't members of the Class of 2000, can list "computer skills" on their resume. Those include minimally a familiarity with some operating

system and a knowledge of how to use a particular word processor, and possibly a spreadsheet.

Members of the Class of 2000 will be able to list Lotus Notes and Powerpoint, in addition. However, the idea that knowing how to use these two additional applications will determine whether one even has a future is laughable.

A GPA probably says more about the fitness of a prospective employee. What's more, an employer can train a bright and well-educated, but computer illiterate, hiree, but getting a thoroughly netted moron to function in any job other than working directly with computers is far more difficult.

The thought that, "there is no stopping today's technology, so just deal with it," is similarly problematic. On the contrary, today's technology is very easily stopped, and the words 'general protection fault' come immediately to mind.

Today's technology is profoundly limited in what it can do. The ideal computer would figure out what you want and do it for you. None of today's software or hardware can even come close. Currently, computers can (theoretically) make one's work easier, and make the final product more polished, provided the user has the requisite knowledge.

This knowledge can only be acquired by consistent use of a computer to do the tasks that they do well, and by trying new things despite setbacks, frustrations and the occasional fried motherboard.

"Computer skills" are not intrinsically valuable, save in getting a job where the primary task is making computers work. This university shouldn't be in the business of teaching "computer skills." The university is supposed to educate, and the ThinkPads are supposed to aid in that task.

The ThinkPads are nice. The Class of 2000 is paying about \$1,500 a year more than the Class of 1999 for the little black boxen, so they may as well use them. However, I hope that the members of the Class of 2000 realize that they are here to learn about the Han Dynasty, Redox reactions, and the Milgram experiment, and not how to install RealAudio extensions under Windows 95.

Parking solutions needed

SCOTT PAYNE
PERSPECTIVES EDITOR

Since the passing of my 16th birthday, I have been licensed to drive an automobile in the state of North Carolina.

With this license comes the privilege to cruise the highways and byways of this state at my leisure, to go anywhere I please, anytime I please, at a reasonable (reasonably excessive) speed.

In addition, my driver's license comes with the understanding that once you get where you are going you will be able to park your vehicle in some fashion, whether that be vertical, horizontal, perpendicular or parallel.

However, since my arrival at this university a year ago, it has become painfully evident to me that many people have no clue about the right way to park a car.

Just a few helpful hints: the parallel white lines in the parking lots designate individual spaces and the object is to put the vehicle which you are driving between them, not with the middle of the car straddling the line, or horizontally across, but right down the middle.

It is always fun to pull into a space and then not be able to open your car door because the Ford Festiva in the spot next to you is two feet into your space, or when the only vacant spot for two miles is being occupied by the left half of a Honda Accord.

Also, the signs with the capital "P" with the circle around it and then a slash through it indicates No Parking. And don't complain about my patronizing tone because some people seem to forget what it means.

SCOTT PAYNE
PERSPECTIVES EDITOR

The other night as I was driving in the lot behind Collins Residence Hall where on the far side of the lot is a sign that clearly states "No Parking," there was a long line of cars parked right in front of the signs. Consequently, I had to grease the sides of my car with Crisco to squeeze

The only way to beat this parking demon is if we all join together and decide to ... forget it. It's every man for himself.

out of the lot.

I have this nightmare where one day I walk out to my car and find the rear bumper ripped off and laying beside my car with a note under my windshield wiper saying "Sorry, but I don't have any insurance. Guess you're on your own."

I realize that the parking woes on this campus are not the entire fault of the inept drivers.

There is a glaring need for more parking spaces on campus, a need that requires immediate attention. I don't think that prohibiting freshmen to have cars is the answer either.

Let's just bite the bullet, get a few chainsaws and some asphalt and, boom, instant parking lot. I know

that it is cruel to cut down trees and all that environmental mumbo-jumbo, but, forget it, I want to park within half a mile of my dorm.

On a similar note, I am livid that last week one of the members of WFU Blue, a.k.a. the campus police, issued me a parking ticket. My crime, parking in a spot labeled "Motorcycles Only."

Realize that a car doesn't qualify as a motorcycle, but here's my argument: 1) How many people on this campus, barring the inception of a Harley-Davidson enthusiasts club, ride motorcycles which would thereby warrant the creation of said spot? 2) If the spot is designed for motorcycles why make it the same width of a car? and 3) All the other spots in the lot do not say "Cars Only" so what makes the motorcycle so special that it deserves its own space?

The only way to beat this parking demon is if we all join together and decide to ... forget it. Its every man for himself.

In the prophetic words of Norm Peterson, of the famed television show *Cheers*, "It is a dog-eat-dog world and (we're) wearing milkbone underwear."

So, good luck in finding a spot, and if you find that perfect spot, make sure that if you have to drive somewhere, it's worth losing your space. Is a trip to Super K-mart for laundry detergent really worth sacrificing the Holy Grail that is your parking spot?

And before I go, does anyone have any extra Pearl Jam tickets?



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

What universities does George Kuh deem comparable to the university? Does anyone believe a truly objective comparison can be made utilizing only four polling pools?

To base an accusation at the reputation of the university based on a minimally circulated questionnaire and just one or two test criteria is foolish.

I agree with what Ken Zick, the vice president for student life and instructional resources, suggested as a possibility. The caliber of students is very high. They are expected to do more in less time, and therefore are presented with a heavier work load.

The distinction lies in finding out if students spend 40 hours doing work that is extremely difficult while students at "comparable universities" spend the same time figuring out if the "Green" in "Green Eggs and Ham" applies to the eggs or the ham.

One of the major reasons I chose to attend the university was because of its reputation of being a challenge. In high school I was a straight-A, 4.0 student, and now I work my hardest to keep a 3.0.

If I actually believed I could get the same education somewhere else, I would have gone to the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill where many of my high school buddies are breezing through classes, and saved myself several thousand dollars.

It is also widely accepted (call it a myth if you would like) that a B or C at the university is the same level of achievement as an A or B at other universities.

I know this draws protests woven together with grade inflation arguments of the past. No one wants to accept that students achieve great things because they are capable and choose to.

Zick warns against Kuh's finding being used as justification to mag-

nify student workloads, but we all felt the effect when the administration screamed "Grade Inflation! Gasp."

The Kuh report needs to broaden its horizons much more for it to have any credit. How much time is spent by students on other responsibilities outside of schoolwork?

What is the margin of error in the Kuh style polling? What are the statistics for those universities more or less than "comparable?" What is the percentage of students at the university that came from the top of their class compared to the percentage at those three other "comparable universities?"

I am not certain whether the low value of the Kuh assessment should be attributed to the assessment itself or to Childs' report of what was contained in that assessment. If sixty-two percent of students feel academics monopolize too much of their time, they can not all be having delusions.

Brian Ostasiewski

SG ignored

This letter is regarding the new men's basketball ticket distribution system. Last semester, the 1995-96 Student Government officers met with Judy Cunningham, the director of ticket office operations, and Joel Nielsen, an associate director of athletics, to brainstorm alternatives to the basketball ticket distribution procedure.

The officers left that meeting expecting that they would be contacted in the future to formulate and approve a concrete policy. They understood that the meeting was simply a brainstorming session in which many ideas would be discussed.

No one told them that any definite

policy would result. SG was never contacted for the remainder of the spring semester or throughout the summer despite the fact that SG President Tina Schippers was here for the second session of summer school and could have been contacted at any time.

Since the beginning of the fall semester, SG has received an overwhelming amount of negative feedback regarding the new lottery system.

Students are specifically disturbed by the provision stating that "having a number does not guarantee that a ticket will be available" to all undergraduate students.

More importantly, SG is frustrated and extremely disappointed with the athletic department for falsely using SG's name by explicitly stating that SG helped to form this new policy.

SG was shocked to see its name used in such a fraudulent manner by the athletic department. SG never devised or agreed to this ridiculous policy.

According to Schippers, in a meeting she scheduled with Ron Wellman, the athletic director, Wellman said that he was not aware that students were unhappy and that the athletic department does not need student approval or support to change its ticket allocation policy.

The Campus Life Committee of the SG legislature has written a petition in protest of the new policy and in support of an alternative that is acceptable to the student body. Petitions will be circulated by student legislators, effective as of yesterday.

We encourage all students who disagree with this policy to sign the petition. As the basketball season starts in just over a month — and this season promises to be one of the best the university has ever seen — we urge students to ensure that their

voice is heard.

SG believes that student opinion must be taken into account when decisions are made that directly impact student life.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact SG (Benson 304), or e-mail (sg@wfu.edu), or by phone (Ext. 5293). We look forward to hearing from you and making your voice heard.

Tina Carlucci and Deborah Tyson
Campus Life Committee
Chairwomen

Artist's series

I am writing this letter in frustration and disappointment because the first event on the Secrest Artists Series, the Klezmer Conservatory Band (a Year of the Arts event), is in conflict with the North Carolina football game at Groves Stadium, also scheduled for the same evening at 6:30 p.m. That means that anyone attending the game in its entirety will not be able to come to our event, which begins at 8 p.m.

I realize that this conflict comes about as a result of the complicated process involved in scheduling sports events and was, in this sense, unavoidable.

Our program of Klezmer music, which is almost unknown in this area, is a kind of Jewish soul music, a ragtag of folk themes from Russia, Poland, Germany and all the byways of the Diaspora.

From the shtetl (small towns) of Eastern Europe through the emigration to America, from the jazz clubs of our cities and the stages of Yiddish theater — even the nightmare of the Holocaust — comes the music of the Klezmer Conservatory Band. *The Washington Post* has said: "... the

ensemble's uninhibited verve translates into any language and will no doubt leave anyone inclined to dance along gasping for air."

(There is an amusing clause in KCB's contract: it is not responsible for injuries sustained by anyone in the audience who insists on dancing in the aisles.)

The university and the Secrest Series, I am happy to say, is covered against any choreographic mishaps — although I doubt that anyone here will go that far.)

Let me encourage those who are not exclusively sports-oriented to come to an inspiring and joyous Klezmer Celebration Saturday. Tickets for students are available, free, at the Benson University Center Information Desk.

It will send you back to your research papers with renewed zest and vigor.

George Trautwein
Director, Secrest Artist Series
Boycott PepsiCo

Many of you may be unaware of the totalitarian situation occurring in Burma today. The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) is preventing the introduction of democracy into Burma, even though the people have voted for a democratic leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, who won by a landslide in 1990 elections.

According to the "Invitation to Join October Fast for a Free Burma," *Threshold*, October 1996 (a publication of SEAC), the SLORC continues to practice its genocidal policies and proceeds to jail and torture multitudes of students, civilians, monks, political activists and elected representatives from the National League of Democracy (NLD).

They also use young girls and women for sexual slavery, humans

for mine sweepers in battlefields and destroy indigenous communities for economic and political purposes.

The SLORC receives much of its funding from several multinational companies, including PepsiCo, Total, Texaco, ARCO, and UNOCAL.

Due to the pressure from activists, Stanford, Harvard and Colgate universities have rejected business from PepsiCo at their campuses.

While several companies such as Columbia Sportswear, Oshkosh B'gosh, Levi's Strauss, and Liz Claiborne have ceased their business relations in Burma, PepsiCo continues to collect profit at the expense of the people's democracy.

Activists for the Free Burma Coalition want to create an international outcry against corporate funding of SLORC's totalitarian rule. We, as consumers of PepsiCo at the university, must insist that PepsiCo discontinue its business dealings in Burma.

To relay our message to PepsiCo, we strongly urge everyone to boycott products of PepsiCo and write to them with your objections to their involvement in Burma.

In the coming weeks, we will be circulating a petition to present to PepsiCo about our concerns. We hope each of you will join us in the struggle for democracy.

To write PepsiCo:
Consumer Relations
PepsiCola Company
1 Pepsi Way
Somers, NY 10589

Kathy Huffman and
Carmen Vaughn
Environmentally Concerned
Organization of Students
(ECOS)