

MIKE LUKOVICH ATLANTA CHRISTIANITY



Howler lacking originality

EMILY BREWER

GUEST COLUMNIST

Leafing through the pages of the 1996 *Howler*, I had to question whether this was a glorified postcard collection or a college yearbook.

The book opens up stating its purpose, "to create a picture of student life on campus and to tell the story of a year at Wake Forest," the hallowed book so confidently purports. Whose story is it telling? I should hope that most students lead a more interesting life than the book reflects.

Past *Howlers* were more than just mere picturebooks. They each had a personality of their own and reflected the spontaneous, sprightly and often defiant spirit of youth and collegiate life. I've enjoyed perusing through the *Howlers* of an era goneby — you can find them in the Baptist Historical Collection in the library. It's amazing how entertaining the yearbooks used to be.

Some used lots of quotes from notable leaders and writers as well as students. Others spunked up their design with caricatures and illustrations. Still others ran witty captions. Don't see any of those here. These devices could be used to prevent the overabundance of white space that marks the 1995-96 *Howler* from plaguing future yearbooks.

And about the pictures. The newest *Howler* has some gems, but repetitive and posed gems. I have jotted down a couple of potential Kodak moments to look out for.

You can start off by cutting down on Wait Chapel pictures. Yes, it's beautiful from all 205.7 angles, but two or three will suffice. There are

one of those hip little jeeps and churning out the parking tickets would tell more than 10 of the flower and Chapel pictures.

For last year, there could have been a whole page devoted to campus construction. South campus and Davis Field were utter eyesores and mudpits for much of last year. Who'd have guessed from looking at the yearbooks? These are things that are not only important, but that can be presented in a comedic light.

Finally, despite the belief of many sheltered students, there is life outside of our little gated shell. I think the yearbook could benefit from an American "year in review" section chronicling popular culture outside of campus during the year. Popular bands and songs. New fashions. Films. World issues. Like it or not, these events do affect our lives and our generation — directly or not.

My apologies to the *Howler* staff. They are a fine group of people with a monolithic task. Somehow the job of representing an entire year for approximately 3,500 undergrads and capturing the essence of life and community lies on their collective shoulder. I don't envy the work, but I do think that perhaps they could have applied to the muses of creativity for a little inspiration.

Years from now, we probably won't flip back to the old economics notebook to show our children what college was like when we were young. But we will dust off the old yearbook and hope to find a record of a time and an age long since past.

Remember to cover the not-so-pretty. As we painfully recall, the neon lights glaring from the Pit — the university's answer to Las Vegas — were new last year.

Don't forget the parking gurus who so dutifully and meticulously badge our cars with tickets all year. A photo of an officer patrolling in

PC course next on agenda

MATTHEW SMITH-KENNEDY

GUEST COLUMNIST

A little over a week ago on Oct. 1, I was so confused by an article in *USA Today* that I thought it was really April 1. The article, titled "Subtle Racism on Trial," seems to be a case of political correctness gone awry.

Recently, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia ruled that juries can decide for themselves whether 'code words' constitute discrimination.

What are code words? Code words, according to the court, are the way bigots communicate discrimination and harassment in the 1990s. In *Aman vs. Cort Furniture Rental*, "those people," "poor people," "that one," "you people," "that one in there," "them," and numerous other combinations of pronouns and prepositional phrases are code word phrases.

These code words are a problem for employers because they represent another threat of lawsuits. These code words are also a problem for those people who practice illegal discrimination.

But how are code words discriminatory? Well, some say that pronoun phrases are being said in place of derogatory comments and names. For example, a couple of sentences before this one, I used the words "those people" in place of prejudiced employers. Similarly advocates of the *Aman vs. Cort Furniture Rental* ruling say that white workers and managers say "those people" and "that one" in place of "stupid nigger" or "stupid woman."

Clearly, if the latter was said to an employee, it would constitute discrimination and harassment. Under this ruling, if a white manager or worker repeatedly addresses in some manner a black or female worker with pronouns, then the afflicted may sue. Might rudeness be misinterpreted as subtle racism? It seems that juries will have to read the minds of those accused of this form of racism. Remember, that employers have the right to think anything they want, but they may not always express thoughts which threaten employees.

This part of the political correctness movement often has confused me. As a student, soon to be entering a profession, I would like to better understand the policies for proper corporate conduct.

So, I propose, somewhat sarcastically, a new course for the university. I would entitle the course "Coping With Political Correctness." Professors from many different departments should teach this course. Stu-

dents need this course to educate the future managers, lawyers, doctors, teachers and scientists about the perils of political correctness litigation.

Imagine a classroom setting in which students can study discrimination, harassment and political correctness by case study. Students could take turns role-playing the harassers and the harassed, the discriminators and the victims. Students of both sexes would be graded on responses to sexual and racial harassment.

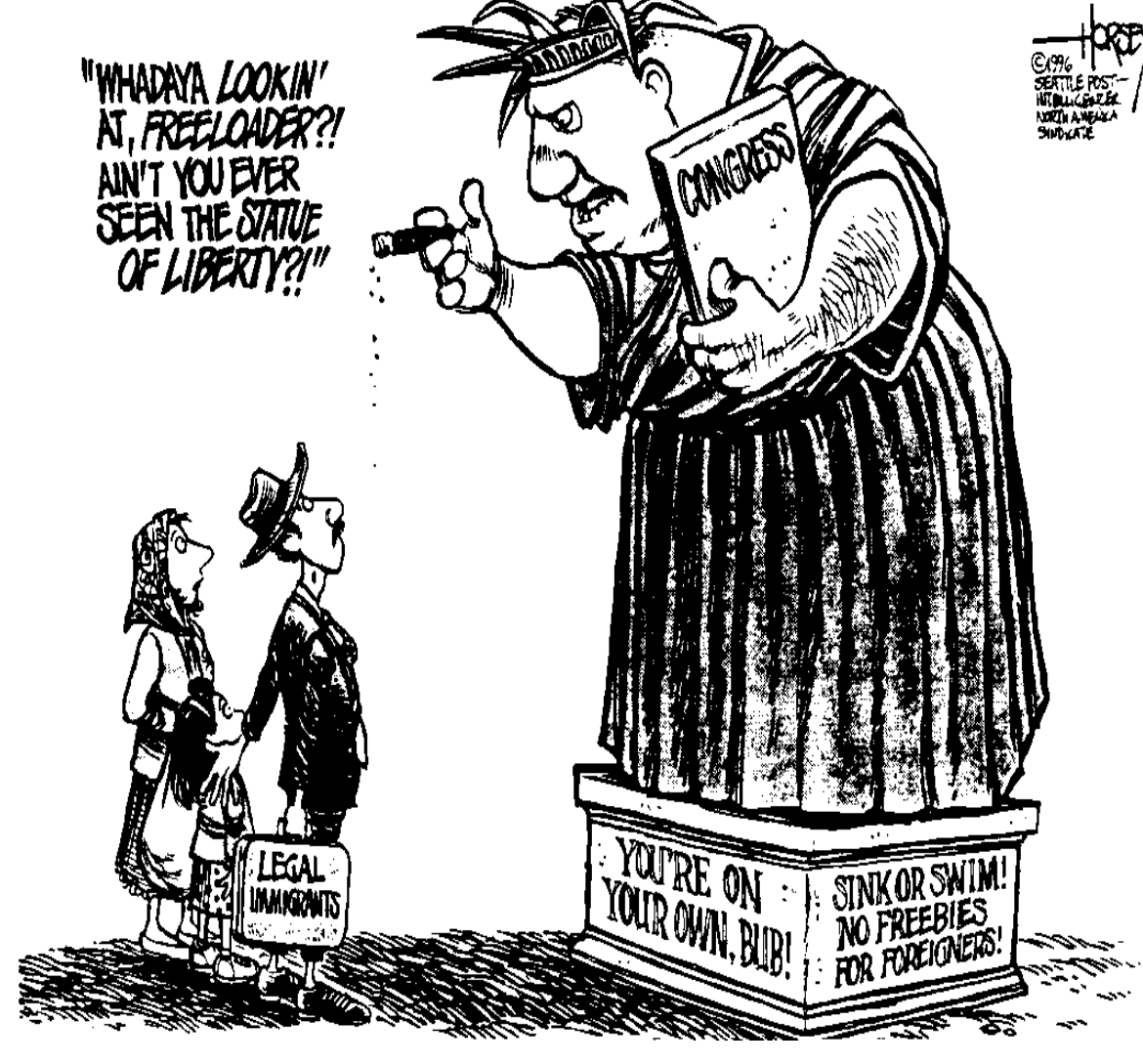
In this way, students of all genders and ethnicity could claim to have felt the "feminine experience," "black experience," or the "white male experience." Every student would also learn how to dodge inaccurate discrimination claims, to quickly produce gender-neutral company documents and to attribute no kind of progress to the efforts of European males.

In summary, the honest intent of the course would be for students to understand the doctrine of the politically correct movement, to recognize its consequences on every day life, and to implement its appropriate policies and actions.

The benefits to the university could be great. I am willing to bet all of the school's endowment that *U.S. News and World Report* would write a special article about the university's required course in next year's "America's Best College Guide." The university's foresight might very well increase its coveted national ranking by promoting such an academic cause.

Additionally, "Coping With Political Correctness," by its very political nature, would be a valuable addition to the liberal arts curriculum. I speculate that other liberal arts colleges will so admire our required course that, again, *U.S. News and World Report* will also rank the university as a liberal arts college, thus giving it the sole honor of a dual-ranked university.

This is a serious proposal, if you believe that the PC movement is serious and legitimate. I recommend that the university administration consider pursuing this proposal as an amended part of the Plan of 2000. "Coping With Political Correctness" prepare students in the matters of race, gender, religious and ethnic equality; however, I hope it is as unnecessary as giving students parking tickets. Unfortunately, in the real world, tickets are given and so are subpoenas.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Women lost their lives over there when an Army barracks was hit by a SCUD missile. Two women who were "not engaging in combat" became prisoners of war. Wake up and smell the coffee: SCUDs, bombs and chemical agents do not discriminate based on gender.

No one should kid themselves about the seriousness of what's expected from them in the military. It is understood, no matter who you are, that you may be sent to war, or a dangerous conflict, and in doing so, give the ultimate sacrifice: your life.

And don't think that when women do serve during war, we are going to be the weaker, less dependable ones. I served with strong, disciplined men that broke down and cried under the pressure; one of whom took his own life. But here I stand. It is foolish and dangerous to generalize and categorize people to fit preconceived stereotypes. The fire that melts the ice is the same fire that makes the steel strong. People will break down under, or rise above, adversity. It's a human thing, not a gender thing.

Kristene Clark

Gender bender

In response to Robert Keller's column Oct. 10 ("Equality standards cannot waver"), I agree with his contention that the military and the military colleges have not achieved true equality with their current double-standard policies regarding

gender. However, I must point out that the Virginia Military Institute has no plans to capitulate to the forces of political correctness, a stance which will most certainly land VMI back in court.

On Sept. 21 VMI announced that it will go coed rather than go private in order to comply with the Supreme Court ruling outlawing VMI's single-gender admissions policy.

VMI also announced that the only changes made to accommodate women would be separate bathroom facilities and blinds on the barracks room doors. All other aspects of the rat line (first-year system), shaved heads, physical standards and adversarial treatment would remain the same.

This policy of not instituting a double standard was immediately challenged by the Justice Department, American Civil Liberties Union and the National Organization for Women who proclaimed that this policy creates a harsh, abusive environment toward women and sets them up to fail. That sounds exactly like the rat line I went through.

The first year at VMI is particularly harsh by design and it is intended to make 25-33 percent of the rats reconsider their college choice and go elsewhere. If the system were weakened to the point that almost everyone passed, the validity of the process would be severely compromised. Of course, everyone would have very high self-esteem despite the fact that they had accomplished nothing.

In opposing VMI's policy, the

feminist lobby has indicated that it favors a gender-blind admissions policy and the implementation of a double standard from that point forward. Apparently back in 1990 when VMI was initially sued, no one considered the possibility that VMI might treat women as genuine cadets if they were successful in gaining admission. To that notion I say this. Be careful what you wish for, you just might get it.

John R. Fisher
VMI '89, Babcock Graduate School of Management, '98

Gate problems

An event that occurred tonight has made me very upset about one of our campus' newest additions. While entering campus tonight, I was stopped at one of our glorious and useful (I will get to that in a minute) gate houses for not having a parking sticker, as I should have.

Instead of waving me through after showing him my ID as the security guards (neighborhood police) do in actual upper-class gated neighborhoods, I was harassed for not yet having a sticker and threatened with a ticket.

He then asked me my destination. In my opinion, this is none of his business, and is also an invasion of my privacy, but key card monitoring has gotten rid of privacy, has it not?

With my ID I have displayed reasonable proof that I am a student, and that should be enough.

To be blunt, I pay his salary, and should therefore be given his respect. I understand that I should have a sticker, but realistically, I have only had my car for a week, and the parking permit offices' hours of 9-4 do not cooperate well with my 19 credit, two lab course schedule.

This harassment happened because the administration is creating more and more policies that the students neither want nor support.

Student Government is supposed to represent us, but there has not been an incident that I can remember as a student in which SG has done what the students want. But that is another letter entirely. Back to the issue at hand.

What does this harassment give us? A lower crime rate? If the assault last weekend was of any indication, no. Has anyone else noticed that surprisingly few details were given out about the crime? She was attacked in which residence hall and treated at which hospital?

I should not have been harassed, but until someone stands up for the student, it will continue.

Byron Miller

Weekend retreat

Student Government just returned from a successful weekend at the Presidents' Leadership Conference in Virginia, sponsored by President Thomas K. Hearn Jr. and senior Tina Schippers, the president of SG. The conference included the many

student leaders at the university, faculty and administration. The conference involved group sessions discussing pertinent topics at the university that affect us every day.

These topics included communication, multicultural affairs, academics and community in general. The overall theme of the conference was "Strengthening Our Community," and with the many new ideas created at this conference, we were successful at accomplishing our purpose.

One of the main intentions of the conference was to have groups that normally would not interact communicate together and brainstorm ideas to strengthen our community. Michael Hyde, a professor of communications, raised the question, "What is the good life at Wake Forest?"

He questioned the term "goodness" and how people react to this complimentary phrase. This point aroused many questions and discussion throughout the weekend.

Junior David Slade, the secretary of SG, initiated discussion about multicultural diversity on the campus. This became a very popular and passionate topic among a majority of the participants.

We learned from Paul Escott, the dean of the college, that four of the 20 new professors this semester are black, and that was the largest number hired at a single time to date.

People began to realize how little was known about the minority population at the university, how important these people are and what they are able to contribute. Many people

pledged their efforts to make a difference involving multicultural diversity.

Discussion was aroused by the topics of academics and community. A major concern of many people present was the lack of attendance by faculty.

There was a total of six very enthusiastic faculty present at the conference and their presence was well noticed.

They were extremely active throughout the weekend and wondered, along with the students, why more faculty weren't present.

Students and faculty learned it is important for the effort to be made on both sides, but that it must be made effectively to get results. Along with faculty, many members of the administration were present and cleared up any confusion that existed on particular topics in their respective departments. Their attendance was extremely appreciated by everyone.

Overall, the weekend was a success. Many people were able to make the acquaintance of others who characteristically, they would not have met.

This weekend was the opportunity for people to work together, develop ideas to strengthen the community and to come back to campus and put them into effect. Throughout this semester and the next, be on the look out for new initiatives, and please take part in them to make a difference.

Jennifer D. Steinberg