

# OLD GOLD AND BLACK

The Student Newspaper of Wake Forest University  
Founded in 1916

## EDITORIALS

### Construction causes campus concerns

When one thinks of this university's campus, many vivid images are pictured: the Magnolia trees, the green grass of the Quad, the red-brick buildings, the backhoe parked behind the Benson University Center, the temporary fence erected by men doing construction. What?

That's right. With the beginning of this academic school year this university has seen a marked increase in the amount of construction being done around campus.

It is indeed typical for some form of minor construction to be in continual progress, to keep Facilities Management busy. In fact, construction is typically more abundant at other campuses around the country.

This year, however, the campus seems to be rather densely populated by construction. The sum total of all this ongoing construction raises serious issues for students, namely safety and disturbance.

Last weekend, with little to no notice, the main parking lot for Student Apartments and north was abruptly closed for the purpose of construction.

Some students were not made aware of this closing until after the fact, when it made little difference because their cars were already towed away.

This is not merely to say that it was wrong to tow the cars, because that really goes without saying, but in fact the closing of this lot causes a much bigger problem. With the closing of this lot, the path between North Hall and campus, the most direct path to campus for students residing in the vicinity, was also closed. The path is currently blocked by a large chain-link fence erected by the construction workers as part of what appears to be their standard operating procedure: dig up ground and put up lots of fence.

The inability of students to travel this path to campus forces them to use an alternate route from their residence walking along Allen Easley Road, that is by no means as safe. In recent weeks the university has experienced security problems which have many students a little more cautious than usual.

The inconvenience of the elimination of this path as a direct route home only adds to the safety problem.

In addition, the closing of this lot has created a shortage of parking spaces in this region. The campus was already in dire need of parking spaces, but now the problem for students in Student Apartments has been compounded, forcing students to park their cars in awkward positions on the curbside

and in distant parking lots, creating another problem with flow of traffic in this area, and many dented doors and bumpers may result in addition to the safety problem. The people who give out tickets seem pleased by the lack of parking spaces, as an unusually high number of cars can be seen sporting tickets.

It was the right of all the students affected by this construction to be given fair and adequate warning about the closing of the lot and the walkway.

Someone in authority at this university had to know of this construction for some time in advance, because in order for this to occur there had to be bids entered by contractors, blueprints, and other contractual obligations prior to breaking ground.

It should be the obligation of whomever is responsible (administration, Facilities Management, etc.) to report upcoming inconvenience to students. For such major construction as this, students require more than a weekend's worth of notice.

In fact, if the administration knows that a major undertaking is to be begun far enough in advance, students should be made aware of this prior to the housing process in the spring semester.

This may seem to be an insignificant detail, but it is indeed the right of every student to know of future construction that may be very problematic and irritating. Even if the exact date of such a project is not known, just letting students know that it will happen would be helpful. In any case, students should get several months notice before such major projects occur.

This is not to say that students must be made aware of all construction, but merely the construction that will have a direct effect on the quality of life students will experience. Part of the uniqueness of living in satellite housing is the quiet atmosphere as well as the short walk from your car to your room. All of these benefits are now gone.

Construction is a constant and sometimes necessary and beneficial part of the university. Few would dispute the benefits students have received from past construction projects such as the Benson University Center and no doubt students at the time complained about the inconvenience. We cannot ask that all construction but students do have a right to be informed of major disruptions to their daily lives well before their cars are towed and bulldozers invade their backyard, and that their safety during these projects be more seriously considered. It is not too much to ask.

### Social Security poses threat to 'Gen X'

In this year's election, most viewed Bob Dole as the Republican candidate, and Bill Clinton as the Democrat. I saw one candidate who remembers World War II and the Depression, who is a member of the first generation to benefit from social security. The other candidate and winner, President Clinton, belongs to the generation wrecking social security. Clinton's baby boomers are a demographic anomaly created during 1945-1961 by a post-war growth surge in drive-in movie attendance.

Before the baby boomers, each age group usually had more people than in older age groups. Teenagers slightly outnumbered people in their twenties who outnumbered middle-aged Americans. Most importantly, the middle-aged alone outnumbered everyone over 60. This pyramidal population structure has meant that a relatively large young population has been economically supporting retired persons. Unfortunately, the baby boomers make the entire pyramid top-heavy because they are living longer. Living longer is a good thing, but as the Vulcan greeting says, we need to live long and prosper.

The Social Security program is the means by which most Americans have planned for retirement. Guess who is going to pay for it? No, those retiring won't be paying — we will. That's right. This isn't a baby boomer thing, and we can't let the media label this a 'Generation X' problem.

The economists are only speculating at the levels of taxation necessary to keep Social Security and other entitlement programs afloat as they are now — 60 percent, 70 percent, 80 percent? Sure, Bob Dole and some team of actuaries just de-

**MATTHEW SMITH-KENNEDY**  
GUEST COLUMNIST

laid the Social Security bankruptcy by a few more years, until 2009. Both parties have concocted many ways to delay real action — taxing Social Security benefits, eliminating benefits to the rich, postponing

#### For years politicians have been seeking short-sighted solutions and lying through their teeth about the viability of the Social Security system.

the retirement age, and so on. Their proposals are only temporary solutions designed to delay political fallout from the collapse of an important American institution.

For years politicians have been seeking short-sighted solutions and lying through their teeth about the viability of the Social Security system. Well, guess who is going to pay for their false teeth?

The answer to that question may be up to us. There are three possibilities: we abolish Social Security, we pay for it, or they pay for it. Immediately abolishing Social Security is not a pleasant option.

It is a conservative pipe dream to believe that senior citizens will be able to maintain their quality of living, or that today's workers will adequately save for their retirements. Americans need some economic security to protect them from recessions, depressions, inflation and their own money squandering tendencies.

Even though the baby boomer generation has invested like no other before in mutual funds, stocks and other securities, these things pro-

vided by pure market capitalism are not enough to sustain the social security of many retired Americans.

The second option is difficult to stomach — everyone under an undetermined age, perhaps 40, will not receive Social Security benefits, but will pay the taxes anyway for the benefits of the elderly. Any first-year economics major here will tell

you that this no-benefit tax will wreak havoc on our economy and slow growth.

People paying the tax will have to save even more of their salaries for their own retirements. Many may not be able to retire or afford chronic health care late in life. Furthermore, we cannot expect older Americans to hold laborious jobs, to all work as Wal-Mart greeters, or to lead the Microsoft Windows 97 development team.

This scenario scares people because there would be no security, no safety net, and the government would suck the income from the working people and place it into the pockets of those who created this unfair income redistribution scheme.

The third option, and the least popular among baby boomers, is that they pay for their own retirement. It's true in civilized circles that younger generations do have an obligation to care for generations in old age.

However, I charge Bob Dole's generation with unintentionally creating a system too burdensome for us

to maintain, and I charge both Dole's and Clinton's generations with allowing the system to endanger the future social security of Americans — our security.

The Social Security system has been changed from essentially a savings plan to a plan transferring the wealth from younger generations to the next. And when the baby boomers outnumber in old age the generation after them, the income from present taxes will not be sufficient to keep the Social Security 'trust fund' solvent. The tax base needs to be enlarged, not by taxing workers in twenty or thirty years, but by taxing workers today before they retire. Let's end the wealth transfer by enacting laws to require people, perhaps over 35, to pay a higher social security tax. The tax must not be passed on to the employer since older employees might then suffer discrimination.

The additional tax must be placed into a real trust fund and allowed to grow until it can pay for that generation's retirement. In this way, people in the age bracket 35-67 would make their sacrifice to remedy the Social Security dilemma. Americans now under 35 would also have to sacrifice something by making the morally correct sacrifice of not unfairly indebting the young.

The point is that it is not right for the children and younger workers of today to pay the bill for the ruling elite's mistakes. We already are inheriting trillions of dollars of debt, and a nation tainted with racism, AIDS, pollution, spoiled lands and many major league sports problems. In the Presidential debates, Bob Dole attacked President Clinton for 'scaring senior citizens' into the Democratic fold. If I had been debating them, I would have accused both men of scaring my generation.



# OLD GOLD AND BLACK

**Karen Hillenbrand**  
Editor in Chief

**Brian Dimmick**  
Managing Editor

**Jim Myrick**  
Business Manager

News: Danielle Deaver, editor; Emily Brewer, Zach Everson, assistant editors; Jennifer Gough, Mike Beabout, Brian M. White, Jenny Springs and Poppy Durant, production assistants; Theresa Felder, copy editor; Aaron Grose, WorldWide editor.

Editorials: Andy Ferguson, editor; Sam Newlands, production assistant; Rachel Avon, copy editor.

Arts and Entertainment: Charles Starks, editor; Jenny Blackford, assistant editor; Chris Grezlak, music editor; Heather Mackay, copy editor.

Sports: Mickey Krainyak, editor; Patrick Kelley and Paul Gaeta, assistant editors; Adam Rothschild, copy editor.

Perspectives: Scott Payne and Erin Korey, editors; Laurie Parker, copy editor.

Electronic Edition: Julie Davis, David Marshburn, and Andy Snyder, editors.

Photography: LeeAnn Hodges, editor.

Graphics: Joseph Dobner and Jamie Womack, editors.

Assistant Business Manager: Jaak Rannik.

Advertising: James Lewis, advertising sales; Brad Gilmore and Victoria Pham, advertising production; Matthew Beldner, circulation manager.

Adviser: Wayne King.

The Old Gold and Black encourages members of the Wake Forest community to address current issues through letters to the editor. To reserve a guest column call the editorials editor at Ext. 5280 at least one week in advance of publication.

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.

We appreciate contributions submitted via floppy disk or the university network. Letters should be delivered to Benson 518, mailed to P.O. Box 7569 Reynolda Station, Winston-Salem, NC 27109, sent via electronic mail to letters@ogb.wfu.edu, or faxed to (910) 759-4561.

The Old Gold and Black reserves the right to edit, without prior notice, all copy for grammatical or typographical errors, and also to cut letters as needed to meet layout requirements.

The deadline for the Thursday issue is 5 p.m. the previous Monday.

The Old Gold and Black is published each Thursday during the school year, except during examinations, summer and holiday periods by Piedmont Publishing Co. of Winston-Salem, N.C.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Election error

This is to correct an error in the Oct. 31 issue of the OG&B. On B5, your headline announces that the Nov. 5 election was the last presidential election of this century. The presidential election to be held in the year 2000 is still in the 20th century. The numbers for the end of decades, centuries and millennia end in "0."

**Ralph D. Amen**  
Professor Emeritus

### Electrical update

I would like to respond to the article and editorial "Power surge raises safety concerns" in your Oct. 24 issue regarding the power outage which occurred on Oct. 22. First of all you should know that most power outages which we have incurred in recent years have been due to problems

on the Duke Power distribution side rather than a campus problem. We would like the campus community to know that we are currently, and have been for some time, working very closely with Duke Power trying to get them to upgrade their distribution facilities to the campus so that we will have two independent sources of power from different directions, thereby decreasing the likelihood of a campus power outage caused by distribution.

However, as you accurately pointed out in your Oct. 24 article, the outage on Oct. 22 was indeed caused by an on-campus problem. Lightning which had occurred sometime prior to that day, and there was no way to judge how long it might have been prior to that, damaged a lightning arrester on a transformer in the Wilson Wing of the Z. Smith Reynolds Library. That damaged piece of equipment finally failed on Oct. 22 which caused a series of events leading to the power outage which you wrote about.

In your editorial in the same issue, you indicated cause for concern when something of this nature occurs due to the age of the high voltage distribution system here on campus. Again, we would like the campus community to know that we began some four months ago a study and engineering investigation to examine all of our underground distribution system and to plan for an upgrade of the entire system.

We have hired an engineering services group, which is a subsidiary group of Duke Power Company and which has great expertise in high-voltage distribution, to do this study and to design for us a modern system of distribution for electrical power on this campus. It is our goal to have the preliminary design completed, priced and ready for a presentation to the administration the end of this calendar year.

As funding can be arranged, we will then begin replacement of the existing system with new and mod-

ern equipment to provide dependable power to the campus. This system will be designed in such a way that a problem in any particular area will affect only the building at which it might occur and not several buildings as is the case under the current system.

You should also know that we are currently designing building automation systems under our energy management program which will not only help control the use of energy resources in all of our buildings but will give us the capability of monitoring such events as a power failure or an equipment failure in a particular area and thus giving us the ability to respond to it and correct it much faster.

Finally, you should also know regarding fire alarm systems that we have been for some time in the process of replacing and upgrading fire alarm equipment and systems in campus facilities. We have recently installed in the police com-