

OLD GOLD AND BLACK

The Student Newspaper of Wake Forest University
Founded in 1916

EDITORIALS

SG falls short in attempt to govern

With the academic school year half over, it is a good time to glance back at the happenings of this semester and to reflect upon them. The fall semester of the 1996-97 school year has been great for some, bad for others. In the tempest that was the first semester, however there was one constant, one event that is now clear to see — the fact that Student Government accomplished almost nothing throughout the entire semester. At no point in the first semester did the Student Government actually govern the students.

In all fairness, SG did address some serious problems at this university, namely augmenting the campus communication. In previous years SG has stated that it was their wish to increase communication to the students, and indeed they have succeeded in fulfilling that goal this semester. With the campuswide student update bulletins and the open forums SG has been spreading the word all semester, and that is a definite plus for students, right?

Well maybe, but there are several problems with the new SG communication plan. First, the increase in communication is significant but the information being communicated is of no importance. Second, the open forums set up by SG serve no tangible purpose as the only students that show up are affiliated with SG. Although, granted this is not entirely their fault because they did in fact publicize them well.

SG has also succeeded this semester in finally acquiring the always festive holiday lights. While this seems on the surface to be an actual achievement, SG has in fact, merely put a minimal amount of lights on the buildings of the Quad, approximately one strand per building and strands on a stairwell. Of course, anyone who knows anything about holiday lights knows that they go in trees and on shrubbery in large quantities. This may seem very inconsequential to the total scheme of things at this university.

However, this is the perfect example of SG's inability to see anything through to completion. Even a task as simple as hanging little light bulbs from trees somehow gets screwed up and the result is horrendous. Every time SG attempts to actually do something positive for the university they run into a large problem that causes a wonderful idea on paper to become a complete failure in its application. An idea as simple as putting up decorative lights on campus has turned into an eye sore for students.

Another example of SG's inadequacies is the now infamous Shorty's. The once grand idea of

putting a pub in a new building on campus to promote intellectual climate has been transformed into yet another part of the Benson University Center. Senior Tina Schippers, SG President and the rest of SG spent all of last year planning Shorty's and telling us how wonderful it was going to be. However, after pushing the product way over budget, Shorty's came crashing down in a ball of flames.

The campus is littered with many issues and problems toward which SG's attention should be directed. The ticket distribution problem only seems to get worse the more SG focuses on it, although it was a step in the right direction for SG to try to solve a student concern. The campus wide parties are another example of SG's misuse of their time. These and other related activities should be delegated to organizations better equipped to deal with them such as Student Union, so SG can deal with real issues. With the release of the Kuh report, many glaring campus problems have come to light. It is at this point that SG should step in and utilize this report to begin correcting these many problems. Holiday lights and campus wide parties can be put on hold without sacrificing too much in order to attempt to rectify some of the many serious problems Kuh found in his survey of this campus.

In addition to the utilization of the Kuh report, SG needs to address the problems with the computer plan. In two years the class of '99 will be the only class on campus not equipped with IBM ThinkPads. This will undoubtedly cause tremendous headaches for seniors and SG should begin preparing now before this problem actually arrives. It is the duty of every member of SG, from hall legislators to the president herself, to be sure that the voice of the students is reflected in all that they do. SG members are elected as representatives of the students and they should always remember this.

If SG is not willing to try harder and put forth a real effort, then every member of SG should be forced to renounce their precious titles, give up the offices and faculty parking stickers, and look for something else to pad their resumes with. It would seem that this is the only purpose SG serves right now, filling resumes for post-graduation job applications.

Schippers was endorsed by the *OG&B* last year because she stated she had "a clear vision." Well this vision has become severely overcast. It has become increasingly difficult to figure what SG is doing and what they are going to do next. It is time for SG to decide what is really important and do it. Do what is right. Do your job.

Playing the odds is new national pastime

Gambling is quickly becoming one of the most popular pastimes in the United States. Like drugs, illegal gambling gives people a short-lived high through financial risk.

You can place a bet by merely picking up the telephone and calling the right people. Bet-takers will rarely deny a person a piece of the "action." If kept to a minimum (which is difficult), gambling can add a little more excitement to sporting events.

Professional football is, by far, the sport bet on most by the at-large public. Almost every company has the football card where you get 10 to 1 odds if you pick four games correctly with the point spread. This seemingly easy task invites many people to give it a try and find out later it is a lot more difficult than you think.

When you place a bet on a game, it totally changes the way you watch it. You are no longer hoping that one team simply wins or lose, but now they have to win by a certain amount or lose by only a particular amount in order to "cover the spread." In addition, there are extreme adrenaline rushes during "big" plays when one risks a lot of money on a game.

After people go overboard with gambling, they start to bet money they do not have or cannot afford to bet. Herein lies the major problem with gambling, as gamblers start obtaining money from so called 'loan sharks,' who charge outrageous and sometimes unpayable interest rates, to support their gambling "addiction." These gamblers fall deeper and deeper into debt until they straighten out their problem or often face physical punishment at the hands

ERIC HEWITT

GUEST COLUMNIST

of the unruly loan sharks.

Even legitimate gambling can become both addictive and financially detrimental. There are countless tales of people whose gambling is out of control going to the horse or dog track and placing large bets on a

sums of money involved in particular games.

The majority of expansion in the gambling world comes from bright lights and big bucks of the large casinos. At one time casinos were found in only Las Vegas, Nev. and Atlantic City, N.J., but now casinos are opening up worldwide, from resort areas such as Puerto Rico to somewhat obscure places, like Michi-

a certain amount of money for a specific amount of time. If one plays enough money frequently enough, they can get flown in on the casino's chartered plane and be driven around in a limosine at the casino's expense. The only drawback is the person ends up losing about 10 times the amount it would have cost him to pay for those luxury items by having to play for long periods of time.

Las Vegas is continuously expanding to make itself more family oriented so more people will stay there, thus bringing more people into the casinos to spend money. Everything in Las Vegas is relatively cheap including the package deals for vacations, which makes it an attractive place to vacation, even for families.

Going to a casino is something that one must see to believe. All you see at a blackjack table is people going into their pockets and grabbing more money to simply hand over to the casinos. There is an extraordinary sum of money being made at these establishments. They are analogous to banks where people go to deposit their money. The only difference is that you don't get your principle back and you rarely see any interest on your investment. Basically, these casinos are goldmines which never run out of gold, ever.

Gambling is slowly becoming an epidemic that has spread itself across the United States. It shows up in every state in one form or another. It has also been a great money raiser for governments, which probably will lead to just more problems.

Hopefully, people will realize that there is no easy way to make money and consequently limit or even discontinue their gambling habits.

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'sure thing,' and losing astronomical amounts of money that don't belong to them in the first place.

Gambling is also a problem in some seemingly harmless betting such as the state lotteries. These states are making a fortune off scratch tickets and Keno which people have been known to spend entire nights playing and losing their entire paychecks. In Massachusetts, there is a daily number plus another lottery option available, and there are a significant amount of people who play their "number" faithfully every day.

You would never think of this as a gambling hotbed, but Bingo is an enormous money maker, too. Bingo halls are often filled to capacity with hundreds of people, who are all striving for a common prize of \$200 or more per game. It is no longer a place for little old ladies to sit and relax, but a younger crowd of people are currently enthralled with the large

gan for instance. Next month a new casino is scheduled to open in Unkersville, Conn. called the Moheigan Sun. This new casino will compete with the already established Foxwoods. Foxwoods has been transformed from a small casino on an Indian Reservation to a massive entertainment resort, which includes hotels and other incentives to get people to come and try their luck.

These places are money-making machines in the way that they attract people to come in and gamble away their hard earned money. The owners of these casinos will stop at nothing to try to keep you at their establishment for as long as possible.

Their theory is: The longer one plays, the more likely it is that they will lose. The casinos give out free alcoholic beverages in order to impair one's decision-making abilities. They provide complimentary meals and rooms for people if they just play

MIKE LUCKOVICH ATLANTA CONSTITUTION



No, Doritos are not a food group

It is impossible not to notice what's on the trays of fellow students while I wait in line at the cafeteria. Over the last few months I have become increasingly fascinated by other people's poor food choices, feeling alternately amazed and distressed by my colleagues' weird and nutritionally bankrupt concoctions. I often wonder if anyone but me pays attention to what they eat.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture suggests that we ignore the old "four food groups" and instead base our diets around whole-grain complex carbohydrates, vegetables, and fruits. It recommends that an average person eat no more than 65 grams of fat per day, and discourages the consumption of refined foods like soft drinks, cakes, and candy due to their lack of nutrients, otherwise known as "empty calories."

It would appear that many University of Washington students aren't privy to this information. Or maybe they just don't care.

My classmates may have some vague notion of what's not healthy, and would probably turn down a hearty slab of lard if someone offered it to them, but other than that, they figure that if it tastes good, it's good for them.

Some people's meals are dripping with so much grease that it makes

ALISON DAHMEN

GUEST COLUMNIST

my arteries hurt just to look. I once had the dubious pleasure of watching my friend eat a slice of pizza so glistening with oil that it soaked through five layers of napkins and a paper plate.

If your lunch is congealing on your plate, it's probably doing the same thing inside your body.

I have seen some strange combinations on cafeteria trays. I saw one girl purchase a meal comprised entirely of dairy products — a bowl of frozen yogurt, an ice cream bar, and a carton of chocolate milk. I don't think it was ever intended that we eat all our helpings form the 'dairy' group in one sitting.

Speaking of food groups, I've observed that some UW students have devised a new set of food categories. These include the "Chunks of Unidentifiable Meat in Sauce" group, the "Deep-fried" group, and the ever-popular "This-is-so-sugary-it-hurts-my-teeth" group.

Every day I see at least one person using the "Homer Simpson" approach to rectifying their poor food choices. This method is based on the theory that eating something healthy, like an apple, has the power to "cancel out" the negative effects of a

meal that is otherwise entirely without nutritional merit.

Usually a piece of fruit is used in this absolution process, but sometimes it's a serving of vegetables. I will never forget the one boy who stood in front of me in line, his tray filled with a bag of Cheetos, french fries, a fudge brownie ... and a small pile of steamed spinach.

I suspect that some of the eating habits I've just described are lingering traces of rebellion against parents who forced their kids to eat broccoli.

If you are plagued with such memories, I can understand the temptation to revel in junk food freedom. But keep in mind that the only people who will benefit from this greasy defiance are the heart surgeons who will be scraping it from our generation's arteries twenty years from now.

I admit that it's easy to feel like campus food services were designed to discourage the consumption of healthy food, most notably vegetables. But there are a variety of reasonably healthy foods available if you seek them out, and no one is forcing you to eat all those donuts.

If you wish to improve your on-campus food choices, I have some advice. For the typical poor and hungry student, the most convenient source of the recommended whole-

grain complex carbohydrates at school is the eight-grain bagel. If you're eating breakfast, whole-grain hot cereals like oatmeal are also cheap and good for you.

If you have a little more money to spend, there are a number of pre-made vegetarian burrito-style sandwiches that come wrapped in whole wheat tortillas. Fresh juices can also provide some much-needed nutrients.

To their credit, UW Food Services have begun to offer vegetarian, vegan (no animal products whatsoever), and low-fat options on a rotating basis, and some of these are likely to fit the standards of healthy eating.

If you pick up a copy of the meal calendar you will notice that it's coded with symbols that indicate on which days such options are available. If you supplement these suggestions with ample amounts of raw or steamed vegetables and fresh fruit, then you will have succeeded in assembling a nutritious meal at the UW.

I recommend that everyone give this a try. At the very least, stop eating the kind of meals that leave grease on the table — it drives me crazy and messes up my crossword puzzles!

Alison Dahmen is a columnist for *The Daily at The University of Washington*.

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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.