

Basketball ticketholders should show some respect

Certain students with good seats acted rudely.

Sunday night a couple weeks ago found me parked in a large brown tent outside the soccer stadium, playing cards, drinking hot chocolate and generally having a good time. This mood was augmented by the anticipation of picking up tickets for

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really good seats at the remaining three home basketball games the next day. However, there were a few factors that made my time in the tent a bit less pleasant than it should have been. First, when I arrived on Sunday afternoon to claim a place in line, I found the Freakin' Deacons to sign up on the list. The Freakin' Deacons have the job of being list keepers because they're always the first ones out to the campground.

So, I put my name on the list, and discovered that before my name there were 22 members of a certain fraternity listed. Wow, I thought, what dedication ... 22 members all camping out. They must have a great pledge class, for all of them to volunteer to spend the night for tickets like that.

I looked around, but I didn't see any sign of 22 guys hanging out together. In fact, I later heard that only five or so of this very dedicated pledge class were planning to spend the night. The others were going to show up in the morning. Needless to say, I was rather annoyed. If my group and every other group there were planning to have the same number of members camping out at night as would be receiving tickets in the morning, what right had this particular frat to bring in so many extra? With a bit of grumbling, I returned to my hot chocolate and card playing. Soon the air of fun returned; even with an extra 22 people in front of us, our seats still wouldn't be that bad.

Around two in the morning, the people in my tent decided it was about time to get some sleep. Unfortunately for us, another group showed up right about then, and pitched a tent somewhere close to ours.

From the moment they arrived, every word that came from their mouths emerged as a shout, and many of the phrases and stories that issued forth made us blush in our sleeping bags. I don't blush easily. Again, I was not pleased. I covered my ears as best I could, and tried to get some sleep, although the graphic high-decibel discussions in the tent behind us continued throughout the night.

In the morning, as I stood in line, quite groggy from lack of anything resembling peaceful rest, I was happy to note that not all 22 members of the fraternity had actually shown up. There were considerably more than the five or so who had spent the night, but at least it wasn't 22 more. We walked away with tickets about halfway up the lower level — not too bad at all. A step down from the front row seats we had after the second ticket pickup, but from down there it's hard to see over the cheerleaders and the Deacon mascot. We were pretty pleased.

So we showed up at the Georgia Tech game, tickets in hand, right before the starting lineups were announced. Lo and behold, almost the entire section below us was empty. Where were all the members of that fraternity who had claimed all

those seats? Mystified, we moved down to the fourth or fifth row, since it and most of the section were unoccupied.

Many minutes into the game, guys started trickling in and taking the seats in front and behind us. "Sit anywhere you want, we've got this whole bottom section!" was heard many times. I had a cold, so I couldn't smell anything, but some of my friends noted a distinct smell of alcohol. Okay, fine — they're late, they've probably been drinking, there's nowhere near enough of them to fill all these seats that they hoarded tickets for, but maybe at least they'll cheer, I thought.

They cheered with great gusto — for one of the cheerleaders. They cheered for the team, with somewhat less enthusiasm. And one of them tried to pick a fight with one of the Freakin' Deacons, because they weren't cheering enough, calling him names I haven't heard since middle school. Hmmm.

Then they left before the end of the game, as the team was making a great comeback that ended in a heartbreaking one-point loss. The team is struggling with all they've got to pull off a win, and the bottom half of the section is empty, except for one or two rows. That can't be

good for morale.

I think it all comes down to a lack of respect — for the team and for each other as fellow students. It's not about who has the biggest block of the best seats, it's about cheering for the Deacons and showing some respect for other people.

I hear that the Student Government might be working on ways to better organize the ticket pickup. I'm a senior, so whatever happens won't affect me, but I submit that the system we have now is much, much better than last year's lottery attempt. However, if the system continues to be abused, things will have to change.

Basically, what I want to say is this: Have some respect for other people, which means doing things like keeping the noise to a reasonable level at the campouts and actually camping out all night if you're going to pick up tickets. Pretty simple. And if you have good seats, try to see that they are used. Give them away if you can't be there. Get there within a few minutes of the start of the game at least, and join the Screamin' Demons, the Freakin' Deacons and the rest of us in cheering for the team. It's the ACC, after all; they need all the support they can get.

Editorial column writing gives 'He-man'-like power

New columnist experiences the joys of journalistic influence.

Hello, Wake Forest University! You may have noticed that I have progressed from being the obnoxious ranting voice at the bottom of the editorial page to being the obnoxious ranting voice in the middle of the editorial page.

Yes, boys and girls, the editors of the *Old*

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STUDENT COLUMNIST

Gold and Black have followed that old adage which states, "the squeaky wheel gets a bi-weekly column." Twice a month, you devoted readers get a round-trip ticket into my psyche, and let me tell you, it ain't Disney World.

Many of you must be thinking, "Why is she doing this?" Actually, no, most of you aren't dwelling on that at all, but I will pause to let you do so. (Insert thought here.)

Ah, I'm thrilled that you asked! The first thing that leapt to my mind when offered this position was "expense account." I mentioned this to the staff, and after the hysterical laughter died down on the other end of the phone I had to reevaluate my own motives; they had also denied my suggestions that my photo be run beside this column, that the fifth floor of the Benson University Center bear my name, and that I have the use of a university vehicle any time I need to go to Super K to replenish my supply of canned asparagus.

It wasn't long until I was hit with my inspiration like a brick through a window. Actually it was a brick through the window, because my neighbors don't enjoy my compact disc of rousing German beer-drinking songs the way I do.

Anyway, why am I entering the journalistic world? Honor? Integrity? Valor? HAHAHA, I am scoffing in your general direction. This is all about power! Through this column, I have the entire campus at my mercy!

I have not had this amount of influence since I was six years old and the priest at St.

Francis de Sales Catholic Church made the error of uttering Pee Wee Herman's Secret Word.

Now, any of you devoted *Pee Wee's Playhouse* watchers will recall that when any fool made the mistake of saying the secret word (which was usually something obscure like "the" or "yes") you were to scream in that manner which only pre-pubescent children are able to, the kind of high-pitched squeal that makes even Mariah Carey's eardrums vaporize.

So, when Father McGuire said that word, I threw my head back and emitted a shriek that caused the heads of several elderly women on the next pew to explode, a shriek that I hoped would reach Pee Wee Herman in his playhouse — or the adult movie theater. My parents turned shades that I was unaware humans had the capability to achieve without the use of radiation.

My mother couldn't decide between yanking me out the door or giving one of those patented "Yes-I-Know-My-Child-is-A-Hellion" grimaces. If I recall correctly, she split the difference and dove under the pew, hoping the 500 people staring at me would assume I belonged to the woman beside me who was frantically trying to jam the fragments of her tympanic membrane back into her skull.

Long story short, that was a *long* ride home. Confession that month was even worse. I walked into the confessional and the priest gave me an "I've been waiting for you" look. I think I should *still* be saying Hail Marys for that one.

So, through this column, I can scream every time someone on this campus hits one of my nerves. Like that unlucky congregation, all you can do is just stand and watch me yell.

I'm prepared to deal with all of you, both the other kids who wish they'd been the one to notice the secret word and the old women sitting in front of me wishing I was their kid so they could teach me a lesson.

I hope this job won't result in eternal damnation, but who can tell? Welcome to my world, kiddies. Keep your hands and feet inside the vehicle at all times, and try not to throw up.



A bump (or lump) along the road can point toward the future

One student's hypochondria prompts a look into life's possibilities in the face of death.

Whenever my father hears of someone's misfortunes, be it an illness, an accident, or whatever, he recites the Biblical line, "There but for the grace of God go I." Throughout my life, I have also tried to exist under this same statement. The irony is that my father's agnostic and I'm an atheist, but nevertheless, I sometimes scare myself into thinking I

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could be sent to the big casino in the sky at any moment. As Al Pacino said in "Heat," "You can get killed walkin' your doggie." Amen, brother.

I was typing my column on Wednesday night when I noticed a sharp pain coming from my lower back. I'm currently taking fiber pills for chronic constipation and I have yet to develop my unavoidable hemorrhoids, so I was naturally curious as to what was bringing me this discomfort.

I looked around the apartment to make sure all my roommates were asleep before I stuck my bare hands down the back of my pants. And there, on my lower

back, was a lump. As the same highly neurotic boy who once mistook a coughed up chunk of hard phlegm for a major organ when I was 12, I knew right then and there that this lump was a tumor.

My Lord, I have cancer! Is this all that crazy to believe? I've stood over the open casket of my uncle who died of this plague and I have another uncle fighting it as I write. Cancer is hereditary and it just decided to nail me early on in the ball game. It's kinda funny: in my final column last semester, I joked that I was indeed getting the big C because of this odd wave of colon cancer hitting young males. I had jinxed myself and my days were numbered.

So I sat there at my computer at 3 a.m., rubbing this lump on my ass and seeing my every dream, hope and desire being obliterated by God's big pink eraser. I'm sure my depression wouldn't have hit as hard if I had discovered the lump during the day and had my mother to comfort me. But it was late, I was alone and I was scared. My future life shimmered before my baby browns. Now that I was going to die, I thought, I would never get to cruise down Hollywood Boulevard in my red '64 Impala convertible after wrapping my first big-budget motion picture: a feature-length version of "Lick the Bat."

I had always planned to blast Dr. Dre's "Nothin' But a G Thang" out of the car stereo and to let the California sunshine scorch my pointy nose that day. Who's sitting shotgun? Claire? How about Sarah Michelle? Oh, it wouldn't have mattered. Just as

long as they were sleeping with me. Now that I was going to die, I thought, I would never fall in love. I would never feel the sensations that being in love is suppose to create, like getting the munchies and squinting your eyes all the time. I always pictured lighting my future wife's cigarette in between sips of her martini the night I met her at the Dresden in Los Angeles. Her name would have been Carmen, formerly of Grand Rapids, Mich., and she would have loved to take rides on dune buggies and eat pitted prunes. Oh Lord, I would have loved her so.

Now that I was going to die, I thought, I would never get to have that bouncing baby son, Obi-wan Catalino. I would have taught my son how to properly shake his Yoo-Hoo, told him that picking his nose is not offensive, but rather an art, and that you can never be too annoying. I would have smiled when he said his first word, "propaganda," and would have cried when I tied his tuxedo's bow tie for the prom and explained that, despite legends, there was no way in hell he was getting laid that night. I would have loved Obi-wan.

Now that I was going to die, I thought, I would never get to take my parents to Italy. I could see my father in Italy now, consuming amounts of pasta the natives thought only a pregnant water buffalo could eat. Despite being on vacation, my mother would have constantly made sure I was eating properly at every sitting of Italian cuisine; I wouldn't have been allowed to eat the meatballs until the salad was

devoured and I got the right about of nutrients my body needs. It would have been a fun trip. What a future it would've been.

I could almost hear Bill Paxton shouting in my ear, "Game over, man! Game over." My life was done. Dead at 21 without leaving the world a thing but smelly tube socks and some unreel video. I worried myself to sleep that night, expecting to wake up the next morning with black-hooded death in the kitchen, making me eggs and bacon. Over easy, Mr. Death. Over easy.

Last weekend was spent abrasively with my hand constantly rubbing that lump, hoping it had receded in the 15 seconds since I had last touched it.

Well, it's a week later and the lump on my ass has miraculously gone away. What the hell was it? A Mount Saint Helen-sized zit? A junior goiter? Did "The Brood" try to grow out of my lower back? Who cares? It's gone, baby, and I'm looking down the pike of a long and happy life.

Despite the end of my panic, I can't help but think back to the fear that slapped me a mere week ago. I never realized how many plans I had for my life. Some were silly, some were real and some were heartfelt. I'm just anxious to see if I really get that '64 Impala. Until then, I'll raise my chilled Yoo-Hoo high and say, "There but for the grace of God go I" and try to live my life happily.

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