

# OPINION

This column represents the views of the Old Gold and Black Editorial Board.

## Roofies should cause caution, not panic

The university has been investigating an alleged incident involving a female student who may have been drugged Feb. 7 while attending a series of parties. The administration sent letters to all students Feb. 25 informing them of the investigation. Attached to the letter was a fact sheet on the drugs Rohypnol and GHB. As the letter pointed out, Rohypnol, commonly known as "Roofies," has received frequent media attention in recent years as the cause of many cases of rape and sexual assault across the country. Victims who inadvertently ingest Roofies, usually as a result of the drug's being dissolved into alcoholic drinks without their knowledge, often experience amnesia, among other symptoms.

The administration should be commended for their responsibility in informing students about the possibility that an incident involving Roofies happened on our campus. Since students often acquire a false sense of security on the small, tight-knit Reynolda campus, it is especially important that they be reminded that incidents of crime, even sexually-related crime, can and do happen here.

But it is also important that students remember that this incident, as well as other, unofficially reported allegations of other female students' having been drugged and possibly sexually assaulted, has not been proven by any means.

The woman whose case is being investigated, according to the News Bureau, had been drinking "a moderate amount of alcohol" and says she does not remember several hours of the night in question.

Students should remember that, in light of the lack of evidence, panic is unnecessary. Students should also keep in mind that the woman who may have been drugged reported having been to parties both on and off campus.

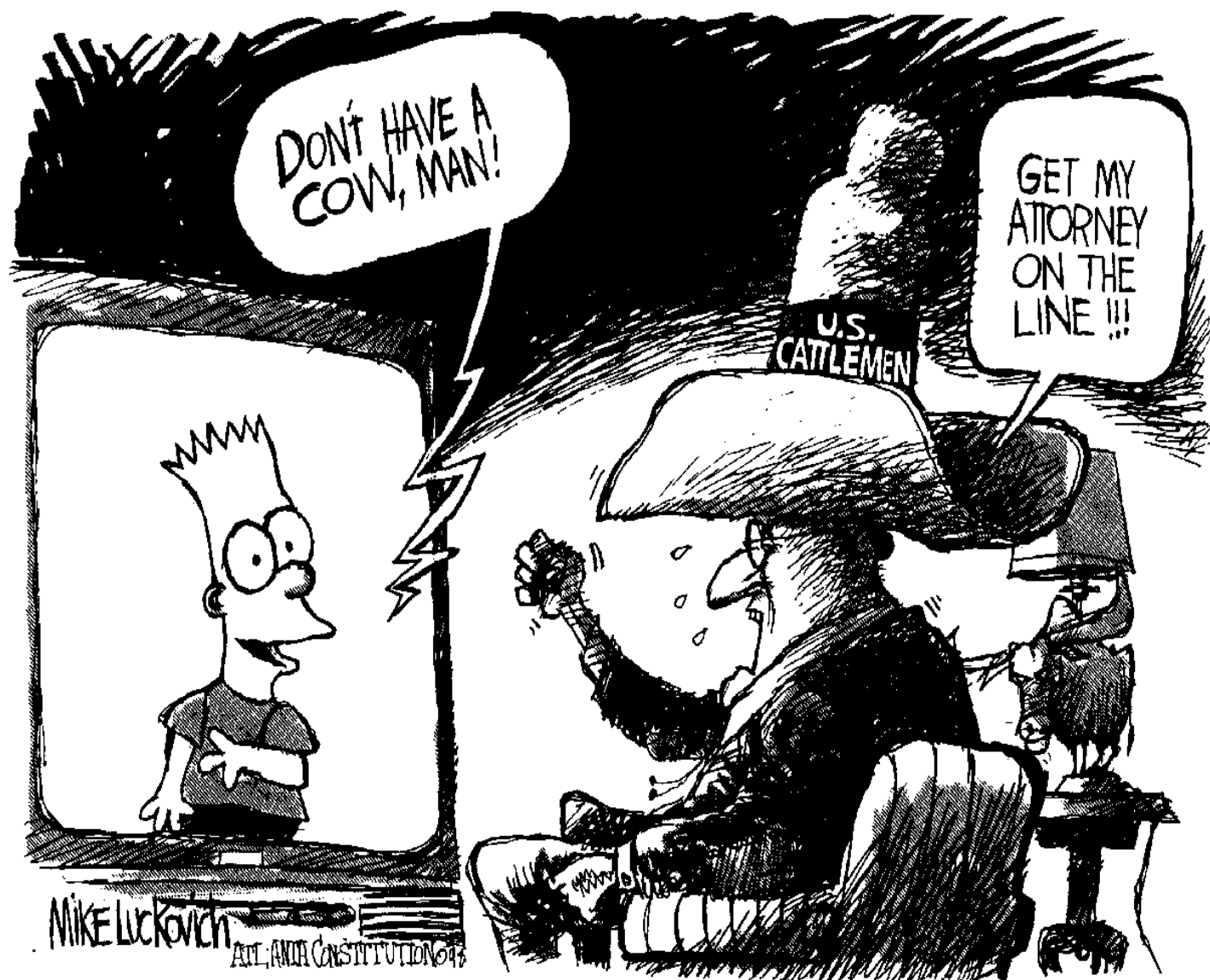
The cause of the amnesia could be something other than Roofies, GHB or other drugs. Likewise, even if drugs

were involved, the students may have received them either on or off campus. Just as it is unnecessary to panic at this point, it is equally important not to lay blame or accusation. The Panhellenic Council issued a letter Feb. 23 to all fraternity presidents about the alleged incidents of drugging, a letter that was harsh in tone and presumptive in direction. Not only does the letter prematurely assume that the allegations of drugging are fact, but worse, it accuses members of fraternities of being the perpetrators. The letter, signed by Panhellenic president junior Kate Hershey as well as every sorority president, says that "particular members within the fraternities ... are choosing to act in this manner." It then goes on to berate the fraternity presidents, telling them in an accusatory and acrimonious manner that using drugs to "gain sexual control of a woman is the basest form of disrespect," that fraternity members should have the "dignity" to "respect" women in a number of contexts and that drugging a woman for sex is "an aggressive criminal act and can be prosecuted as felony sexual assault."

While it is certainly important to be careful, aware and cautious, no member of or group from the campus community should be blamed or accused of drugging women on campus because no evidence of the exact nature of the incident exists.

Though the use of "rape drugs" is unquestionably reprehensible, this incident may or may not have been drug-related, and it may or may not have happened off campus, on campus, at a fraternity party, or elsewhere. Further investigation is needed and is being done.

A better solution to the possible problem would be for organizations such as Panhellenic to cooperate with other organizations like fraternities to constructively educate all members of the university community about drugs such as Roofies and GHB. Blame and reprimand does nothing but anger those accused. When put on the defensive, students will probably be unresponsive to attempts at finding solutions.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Open Curriculum will get more publicity

The Feb. 19 issue of the *Old Gold and Black* carried an article about the Open Curriculum. "Students opt for own curriculum" by sophomore Suzanne DuBose, as well as a staff editorial calling for greater publicity for the program. The members of the Open Curriculum committee met earlier this semester to discuss revising the application form, and at the same time we addressed the need to increase student awareness of the Open Curriculum program.

In the future, the application form will be available on-line as well as at the Dean's office, and advisers for incoming students will be asked to mention Open Curriculum. Also, the deadlines for applications (in mid-October and mid-March) will be posted in the *OG&B* each semester.

The Open Curriculum program is indeed designed for highly motivated and capable students, as noted in the recent issue of the *Old Gold and Black*, although the application process is not "long and involved" as indicated in the editorial. Instead, the application consists of an essay, supporting materials (primarily a transcript), and three letters of recommendation.

While all interested students are encouraged to apply to the Open Curriculum program, it should be restated that the program is not equivalent to independent study, and it is not intended to serve as a way of avoiding basic and divisional requirements. In fact, most of those accepted to the Open Curriculum program will find them-

selves doing more rather than less work (as students often substitute upper division courses for the lower division requirements).

Thanks again to the *Old Gold and Black* for drawing attention to this matter.

Susan Z. Rupp  
Assistant Professor of History

### Facilities Management director is doing his job

I would like to say that I feel you owe the Facilities Management Director Bill Sides an apology. I believe you have made statements about him that have no merit. Sides has shown to me, and everyone who works under him, that he wants what is right for everyone.

To say in the Feb. 5 issue that Sides expects his personnel to buy "big four-wheel drive sport utility vehicles," is ludicrous. Whoever wrote the articles are obviously biased and did not want to hear what Sides told them.

To say that Facilities Management and/or Bill Sides does not care about his employees could not be further from the truth. I will not give you examples; you don't deserve any the way you have twisted the facts.

To be fair, the policies you are condemning are university policies. Sides simply implements these university policies in the most fair manner possible — everyone in his department is "essential." To make it any other way would not be fair or equitable. I do not like this policy either, but I have to abide by it because it is a university policy, my department's policy, and I

am an essential employee.

The facts are: These are university policies and university employees have to abide by the university's policies.

What possible gratification could your newspaper or your readers get out of condemning a director and department for doing their jobs to the best of their abilities? It may be a hard statement to say to an employee that you must abide by university policies or look elsewhere for employment, but those are the facts, and the department and its director are being honest and direct with its employees.

I have always been told that "If you live in a glass house, be careful of the stones you throw at someone else." Don't we all live in a glass house?

Keith Wise  
Flooring/Waterproofing Supervisor

*Editor's note: The above quoted passage came from the Feb 5. staff editorial titled "Employee attendance policy needs revision." The editorial represents the opinion of the OG&B editorial board. The other article referred to in the letter was a news article titled "Employees find weather policies too severe."*

For more letters, see next page.

### Our letters policy

We welcome letters. Send yours via e-mail to letters@ogb.wfu.edu, by campus mail to P.O. Box 7569, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27109, or deliver it to Balen 518. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.

## Student Government accomplishes much

Student Government Speaker of the House junior Tina Carlucci admonished the legislature Feb. 24 to bring more issues to the floor for the next meeting.

It is important to note, however, how much SG has accomplished this year. Last semester, SG passed more than 20 bills and was instrumental in making sure students' voices would be heard in the judicial reform issue. This semester they have followed through on major

issues while also looking into the smaller student life concerns.

The direction SG has chosen to take this year is encouraging. After an unproductive year in which SG's obsession with Shorty's led it to ignore nearly every other campus issue, this year SG has been a much stronger advocate of student interests. The biggest improvement it could make is to encourage the representatives to be more active in contacting their constituents.

## OLD GOLD AND BLACK

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## Mardi Gras is just a drunken orgy

The annual festival has lost its roots and has slowly degenerated.

Feb. 24 was Mardi Gras, a festivity in New Orleans characterized by jovial colorfulness, universal celebration and wholesome fun. Not so, according to some residents. Arthur Hardy, the traveler and publisher of *The Mardi Gras Guide*, claims Mardi Gras is living up to its image as a "drunken orgy."

Christen Balady  
STUDENT COLUMNIST

First and foremost, Mardi Gras has lost all tradition. Did you go to Mardi Gras to celebrate the beginning of Lent and your last days of gluttony, or were you more concerned with unlimited beer and partying?

Recently, many of the "krewes," or old-time aristocratic carnival participants, were too proud and racist to sign papers claiming they did not discriminate in their membership and, instead,

gave up their rights to parades. As a result, the parades have declined and the focus of the festivities has re-centered to post-parade celebrations, mainly heavy-drinking and being a part of the crowds. Past Mardi Gras crowds have been estimated at more than a million, not quite a safe atmosphere for small children.

I spoke with freshman Lisa Bear, a New Orleans native and practically a Mardi Gras expert, on how she sees the decline of the holiday. "Alcohol is definitely a problem," Bear says. "At most bars, you have to be 18 or 19 to get in. From there, there's not a mark on your hand and no bracelet or wristband. There is nothing that says that you're underage, and it's so easy to get served. I also know some people that go to houses with kegs and get drunk there, then take their cups out on the street with them."

The Mardi Gras atmosphere seems to be overtaken with beer and drunkenness, and less emphasis is put on family or even a friendly atmosphere. Lisa claims the drunken masses can be pretty threatening. "I didn't go downtown alone until I was a sophomore," she says. "It's not smart to go alone until you're about 16 — a drunk crowd isn't the place for kids to be."

Another issue growing wildly out of control is the lewd nudity visitors display in order to collect beads. There are at least four companies marketing nude Mardi Gras videos nationally, and television shows featuring "bared tits" and other unsightly dares tourists will perform for the coveted Gras beads.

"No matter what, there is always nudity. There is always that girl that bares it all," Bear says, as it seems to be something that residents expect. "The saddest part about the whole "show your tits" obsession is more than once my friends and I will be on the shoulders of our guy friends trying to see the parade. We would try to get beads and the people on the floats would motion for us to lift our shirts up." Obviously, we wouldn't take our little brothers or sisters or even our parents to an event like this if we knew what to expect.

The festival is over, but there are still some unresolved issues about the taste this celebration demonstrates. Is it the tourists that give Mardi Gras its unruly appeal? Or is it the New Orleans folk that deny or ignore the decay of their once dazzling holiday? For one, won't be spending money to participate in deadly crowds, drunken stupors and cheap nudity. I can get that for free at a frat party.