

# OPINION

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

## Open forums about racial issues have value

Three recent open forums have helped bring communication about racial issues to the forefront of campus life. An open forum about the Confederate flag Feb. 26, one about diversity March 3 and one today about racism and anti-semitism all help to remind students that dialogue about such racial issues is essential, especially on our homogeneous and sometimes intolerant campus. But do these open forums accomplish anything? It sometimes seems that any forum involving controversial issues, especially those surrounding race, only serves to stir up hostility between those of opposing viewpoints. Participants often come to the forums simply to get their points across, with no intention of listening to other perspectives, let alone of opening their minds to changed, more progressive views.

But these kinds of forums are not supposed to create a consensus among debaters. On a practical level, they probably aren't going to change the world or provide monumental solutions, either.

But their value lies in a more academic sense, providing chances to discuss pertinent campus issues. Realistically, most participants in these forums

are not going to change their minds about deeply-seeded emotional issues such as race-centered ones, either. But through their nature these forums allow students to strengthen their own views by being forced to defend them.

Ideally, the open forums would cause some people to change their minds. But even though the natural defensiveness that arises in people when they are challenged often prevents this from happening, these open forums provide a very important chance for students to communicate with a more diverse group of people than they would otherwise come into contact with.

In striving for the goal of greater diversity on campus, chances for students to interact with other students of various races and cultures are important. So if nothing else, open forums are invaluable in the creation of this opportunity.

But of course students must attend the forums to benefit from them. The forums have often been criticized for poor attendance. Perhaps if groups were more creative in their advertising, following in the footsteps of other schools who do things like hang up spray-painted bedsheets to inform students, attendance would improve.

## Playboy magazine targets student body

The university is often preoccupied with its image, worried about whether its name will make it in to the media, striving for coverage in magazines like *U.S. News and World Report*, excited about last year's hour of fame on ABC's *Nightline*. But soon the university, or certain parts of it anyway, may be getting a little more exposure than it bargained for.

If the Baptists thought Shorty's was sinful, wait till they hear about *Playboy*. Recruiters will be coming here April 20-21 to find models from our university for its October issue that features "Women of the ACC." Though the *Playboy* representatives will be "interviewing" potential models at an off-campus location, the organization has already started advertising on campus.

The last time *Playboy* came here to recruit was almost nine years ago. The issue stirred up so much controversy and anger that protests broke out requiring police intervention in front of the photographer's hotel.

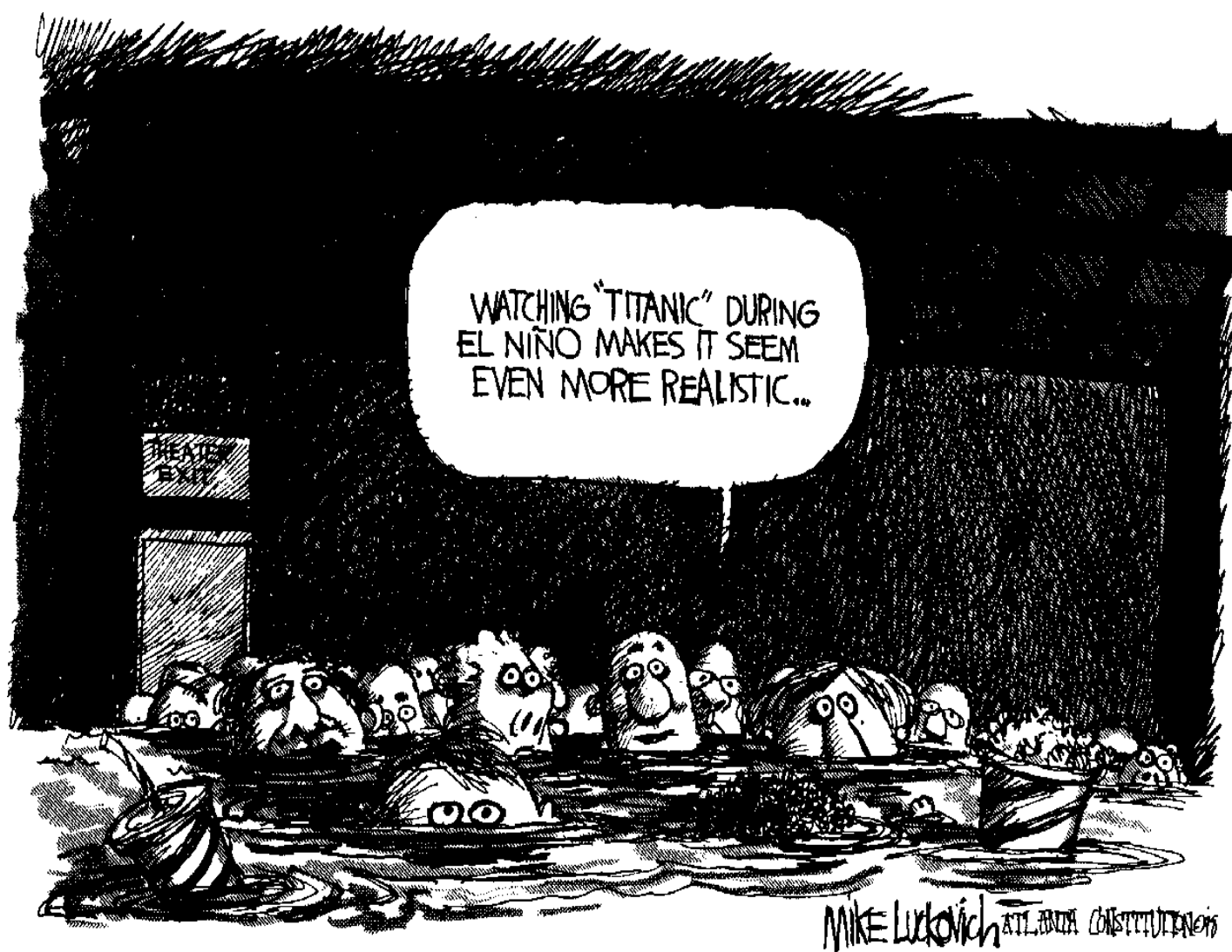
Whether 1989's chaos will be repeated this year remains to be seen, but students and administrators must keep in mind that they cannot stop or censor the recruiting or publishing done by *Playboy*. *Playboy*'s coming to the university is really a commercial issue, not a moral

one. Administrators especially must realize that, in a sense, they brought *Playboy*'s advertising on themselves. Especially lately, it seems that the administration is preoccupied with commercialism and business enterprise. So it seems only a natural consequence that corporations, from IBM to *Playboy*, would feel welcome in this business-conducive environment.

Indeed, the university should be happy about *Playboy*'s visit. Especially Career Services — no longer can students complain that there are no job opportunities, no campus recruitment for nonbusiness majors.

Potential models should be reminded, however, of the implications of posing in *Playboy*. Many people see the featuring of women's bodies more than their minds as a slap in the face to the social progress women have made over the years. Also, because eating disorders and distorted body image are major problems among women on our campus, having a fellow female student pose in *Playboy* could serve to exacerbate them.

Let's hope that all students will become educated enough during their tenure here to realize that *Playboy* should not be taken seriously, that people's morals, values and appropriate images of women do not have to depend on portrayals in lurid magazines.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Speak Out music choice should be reconsidered

Something happened last year that outraged me. I was so mad I could hardly see straight. I was all set to write a letter to the *Old Gold and Black*. I composed it in my head and was all set to see it published.

Well, I never got around to writing it, and the rage slowly wore off. That is, until I discovered the same thing happened this year. So, I am writing a letter which should have been written last year, and by doing so I hope that this mistake can be prevented next year.

What I am referring to is the choice of music at the Speak Out, the rape awareness event sponsored by the Policy Group for Rape Education, Prevention and Respose. I could not attend the Speak Out this year because of a prior commitment, but I heard from a friend that it began the same way it did last year — with Chi Rho singing about Jesus. Last year the music was about how Jesus would be there for you, and no matter what happened, you could count on Jesus.

I don't want to send anyone into cardiac arrest or anything, and this may come as a shock to some people on this campus, but *not everyone believes in Jesus*. In fact, I'm sure that there are people on this campus who don't believe in God.

My point here is not whether these religious beliefs are right or wrong. My point is that the Speak Out is not a religious event. The Speak Out is

supposed to provide support for women who have been raped as well as inform people how devastating a rape can be.

What if there were someone sitting in the audience who had been raped who was atheist, Hindu, Jewish or of some other faith which did not believe in Jesus? What would that be saying to her?

I am not criticizing Chi Rho by any means. I think that they are a very talented group, and in other settings I enjoy listening to them. I just feel that the songs for the Speak Out were poorly chosen.

Perhaps next year they could choose songs dealing with friendship or family. The idea of a rape victim's having support is important; but Jesus does not provide support for everyone.

Someone very close to me was raped and I know for a fact that she does not believe in Jesus. She was not at the Speak Out, but how would she have felt if she were?

And then there was the friend of mine who had her letter read at the Speak Out last year. I sat next to her and held her hand and we cried.

She's not particularly religious — to be perfectly honest, I don't know if she believes in Jesus or not, but I don't think the song spoke to her. And the Speak Out should do just that — it should speak to everyone, not only to Christians.

I implore whoever is in charge of the Speak Out next year to arrange for a different music selection.

Melissa Kellogg  
Senior

### Tri Delta has not scaled back philanthropy

An article appearing in the Feb. 26 edition of the *Old Gold and Black* titled "Students raise over \$30,000 for cancer research" stated that Delta Delta Delta sorority is scaling back its involvement in the Brain Piccolo Cancer Fund.

Tri Delta has not scaled back our involvement or our commitment to the Brian Piccolo Fund in any way.

Triple Play, our annual fundraising event, was unfortunately less profitable in 1997 than in 1996; therefore, our financial contribution this year was less generous than last year.

However, we continue to prioritize philanthropic donation to both the Brian Piccolo Cancer Fund and to Children's Cancer Charities, our national philanthropy.

Sarah Speeg  
Junior

Tri Delta Philanthropy Chairwoman

### 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 Benson 518. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity.

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