

OPINION

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

Renovations needed for people with disabilities

Have you ever seen the abundance of handicapped parking spaces around campus and stopped to wonder why virtually no one parks in them? It might have something to do with the fact that the campus is in no way equipped to accommodate a person with a physical disability.

Yes, the university has these parking spaces, and they even give out \$50 parking tickets to violators (as opposed to the standard \$20 ones that are given out for other parking violations). But what's the point of giving people with disabilities a place to park if they can't get around campus once they've gotten out of the car?

You cannot go anywhere on the Reynolda campus without encountering stairs. There are stairs to get to the Quad (there is a ramp on one side of the Quad between Kitchin and Poteat Houses, but what does the person do when he gets to the other side and encounters no ramp — just more stairs?). Most of the residence halls are not equipped with elevators and there are even stairs to get to the first floor of most dorms, thanks to the creative-but-discriminating architecture and landscaping of the campus. Even in buildings where there are elevators, the elevators are often too small to accommodate a wheelchair.

Take the elevator in the Reynolds wing of the library — the dimensions are too small for a person in a wheelchair to be able to comfortably fit inside, be able to operate the buttons and get out again before the doors close. (Trust us — we measured).

Not only do stairs hinder a person with a physical disability from getting around, but cumbersome doors and narrow pathways do as well. Have you ever

come to one of those big, heavy doors in Reynolda Hall and suffered that brief but common door-anxiety attack because you had a hard time getting it open? Think how difficult it is for a person with a physical disability. One building — the Benson University Center — has an electronic door opener, but it is currently broken.

And the concrete pathways, though not physical obstacles, are a psychological one. The sidewalks are not wide enough for a person who uses a wheelchair to wheel himself down the sidewalk alongside a fellow student.

This school is very image-conscious and external beauty is very important here. So God forbid that we compromise the aesthetics of the campus in order to make it more accessible to people with disabilities. But depriving people with physical disabilities from coming to the university (by making it difficult for them to get around campus) is a travesty. It is tantamount to discrimination.

It is fundamentally more important to accommodate all people at the university, especially those who want an education here, than to maintain the beauty of the campus. But there are also ways of preserving the aesthetics of the campus while making the campus accessible to all. We don't have to tear down all the walls and stairs and replace them with ramps in order to accommodate people with disabilities. There are other ways. But they will cost money.

Is the administration willing to pay to stop barring access to the campus to all but able-bodied individuals? Perhaps some members of the administration should try to get around campus in a wheelchair or with crutches for a day. Then maybe the necessary renovations would be underway.

Atmosphere must change for homosexual students

The Student Life Committee recently issued a report on the status of homosexuals at the university. The report concluded that "at best, students described the environment as unsupportive. At worst the environment was labeled as hostile."

It is no secret that homosexuality is taboo on this campus; that graffiti mysteriously appears on GALBA posters; that the idea of homosexuality is simply not accepted by a large portion of the student body, a student body dominated by white, conservative, upper-middle class people.

The SLC should be commended for recognizing that the student body is unsupportive-verging-on-hostile towards gays and lesbians. And this recognition suggests that the university does want to change the environment on campus that currently ostracizes homosexuals.

But the suggestions that the report gave

to produce this change — the emphasis on the anti-discrimination statement, the community building program during freshman orientation and the Web page to include information as well as faculty names of support — are essentially empty and meaningless.

The administration ought to recognize that these are small and superficial steps in changing the less-than-friendly environment for human beings who happen to be gay and are suffering for it.

The administration should show its support and educate students by bringing speakers to campus to talk about gay rights and issues. SG should support GALBA. A good start would be having the Student Budget Advisory Committee give the group enough money to implement much-needed programs to help educate and produce change at the university.

MIKE LUCKOVICH
ATLANTA CONSTITUTION 1997



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Victims do not have the power to avert rape

When I opened the Oct. 9 issue of the *Old Gold and Black* to senior Amy Eckert's courageous account of her sexual assault ("A personal reality check"), I read it with the horror of recognition. It forced me back into the darkness, the night — that night — as the mention of rape always does.

Accompanying the memories conjured by the article were the incessant feelings of culpability and trepidation that attack my psyche: rape is a never-ending assault. It is a revolting crime which ultimately entangles issues of power, sexuality and safety. The entanglement seems to leave little room for any true resolution for those who have encountered this brand of demonry.

Eckert, in explaining her reasons for sharing her experience, says, "I want people to learn from what happened to me." I understand and support her intentions, but there are grave implications associated with the idea of an individual's ability to prevent rape.

Could I have fought off my attacker? The police officer who questioned me afterward thought so: "You're a pretty athletic girl; you look like you could've taken care of yourself."

That officer's comment is symptomatic of the delusion that if one fights hard enough, rape will not occur. Inherent in such a belief is an underlying sentence of guilt and fault for all rape survivors: *I inexplicably failed to deter my attacker. I could have prevented my rape if I had just taken that self-defense course.*

This is a sinister belief precisely

because it is couched in an idea that attempts to empower women, make them feel safe and obliterate the label of victim (one who is powerless). But to say that I am not a victim is tantamount to saying that I had power in the situation.

I did not.

The societal bind, however, is that such a universal surrendering of basic ideas of safety is more frightening for the whole than rape is for the individual: Realizing that personal safety is a myth only leads to the questioning of fundamental ideas about human-kind, which eventually results in panic and chaos. Therefore, rather than acknowledge that there is no such thing as safety, it is easier for society to believe that, with the right training, I could have defended myself.

The evil can be stopped, but not through misplacing blame by focusing attention on training those who may be targets. The only ones who can truly prevent rape are the attackers themselves. Society must redirect its gaze. Make the attackers stop instead of trying to teach us how we might stop them.

Amy K. Huser
Graduate Student

If you want a seat, get to Brendle early

The first event on the Secret Artists Series on Saturday, Oct. 25, is titled "Marcel Proust's Paris," a presentation featuring Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Richard Howard, the Muir String

Quartet, tenor John Aler, violinist Peter Winograd and pianist Sarah Rothenburg. This program has been described by the *New York Times* as an evocation of the perfumed Parisian salon world of Proust at the turn of the century.

This program will be presented in Brendle Recital Hall. Because of its intimate nature (readings, chamber music, French art songs), this concert is not suitable for the large space of Wait Chapel.

We have had problems in the past, however, accommodating everyone who wanted to attend some of our attractions in Brendle.

By order of the fire marshal, we must close our doors when our seating capacity has been reached. However, we open at 7:30 and anyone on hand at that time is sure to get a good seat.

Let me suggest an early arrival to those who are particularly anxious to experience "Marcel Proust's Paris," especially those students required by classes in the Romance language and English departments.

George Trautwein

Director of the Secret Artists Series

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 Benson 518. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity. All letters must be signed.

Great sport of bowling deserves cheers

Bowling is fun and should be fully acknowledged.

Over fall break, I came to the realization that I love to bowl. It's not something that I am particularly proud of, but at least I can now hold my head up and say it without fear of retribution: I love to bowl.

Andy Ferguson

STUDENT COLUMNIST

I finally accepted this fate at Zigler's Bowling Alley in Charlottesville, Va. I was with a friend of mine, whose anonymity I will protect as I am unsure of the security of his bowling convictions, and we made the decision, on a Thursday night at the University of Virginia, to pay for unlimited bowling between 10:30 p.m. and 2 a.m.

I cannot be sure when this bowling craze started. When I was younger, my parents used to take us bowling on New Year's Eve. Maybe I associate major parties with major bowling. I grew up in Toledo, Ohio, the bowling capital of the world. Maybe I never had a chance. Whenever it was, it developed into a love that is now beyond my control. I can't turn it off now, and quite frankly, I don't want to.

What I like best about bowling is that

it is not a sport that I can take that seriously. It's hard to understand how people can. Honestly, even if you are a great bowler, what does that, in itself, really say?

One time I was bowling next to a father and his son. The child was having a good time, fidgeting in his seat and horsing around a bit. This was unacceptable for Señor Strike, who reprimanded his child with, "Stop that right now! We are in a bowling alley. If you want to screw around, you can go somewhere else!" I heard this and thought, "Like where?" If you can't screw around at a bowling alley, "screwing around" seems to be pretty much off limits in your life.

My friend, "Scott," and I were bowling next to these two grandmasters who were so into the game that they didn't speak unless it was to discuss strategy. I know that bowling doesn't exactly foster intellectual debate, but this was awful. After the second non-communicative game, one of the guys, who incidentally had a "Life in the fast lane" key-chain (interpret that as you will), finally broke the silence. He turned to his partner and thoughtfully assessed the situation, remarking, "We gotta bowl better."

That's the best thing about bowling, though. You don't have to bowl better. You like to do well and you hope to have a big game, but not bowling well is fine too. Maybe you are upset for a

little bit, but by the time you return the shoes, it's over. I have never known anyone to head for a bar and dejectedly knock off a few pints in hopes of forgetting some disappointing frames.

Another thing that I like about bowling is that there is no formula that will make for a good bowler. We all have friends who are great athletes and just liabilities on the lanes. In fact, most professional bowlers conjure up memories of *King Pin*.

In conjunction with this, anyone can have a fluke game and bowl great. You can come completely over-dressed and unprepared to bowl and have a career day. Where else does that happen?

Think back. Did that kid on your soccer team who always wore jeans and a collared shirt under his game shirt ever score the winning goal ... for your team?

What about the right fielder on your tee-ball team? A good day for him was to strike out without hitting the tee. However, any random soul can walk into a bowling alley and roll with divine inspiration.

Bowling is the kind of activity you can sink your teeth into. It's a cheap, enjoyable evening and is not given the credit it deserves. I will no longer perpetuate its underrated reputation by remaining silent.

You can scoff if you want, but I know there are others out there who share my view, and eventually, we will be heard.

OLD GOLD AND BLACK

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY SINCE 1916

Danielle Deaver
Editor in Chief

Charles Starks
Managing Editor

Brad Gilmore
Business Manager

News: Zach Everson, editor; Theresa Felder and Heather Seely, assistant editors; Katherine Bradley, Anne Bramley and Jared Perry, copy editors; Shannon Bothwell, Reagan Humber, Carolyn Lay and Stacey Triplett, production assistants; Brendon Browne, WorldWide editor.

Editorials: Jennifer Gough, editor; Melissa Shields, copy editor; Poppy Durant, production assistant.

Arts and Entertainment: Jenny Blackford, editor; Katie Venit, copy editor; Elizabeth Hoyle, production assistant.

Sports: Scott Payne, editor; Paul Gaeta, assistant editor; Greg Wilson, copy editor; Taylor Brown, production assistant.

Perspectives: Kate Cosgrove, editor; Sarah Kutner, assistant editor.

Electronic Edition: Julie Davis and David Marshburn, editors; Brent Blum, production assistant.

Chief Proofreader: Sam Newlands.

Graphics: Jamie Womack and Brian Schiller, editors.

Assistant Business Manager: Scott Bayzle.

Advertising: Victoria Pham and Kristin Hemric, advertising production.

Photography: Noel Fox, Carlton Ward, J. Reed Clay, Dave Frisvold, Kim Robinson.

Adviser: Wayne King.

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. Questions or comments should be sent via e-mail to comments@ogb.wfu.edu or via mail to P.O. Box 7569, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27109. © 1997 WFU Publications Board. All rights reserved. If you wish to submit a guest editorial, contact the editorials editor at Ext. 5280 at least two weeks in advance of the issue in which you would like it to appear.