

OPINION

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

University helped alleviate pain of loss

The recent death of freshman Alex Gedicks brought not only sadness to campus, but also fear and flurry. But the university as a whole, including Student Health Service, the administration and the News Bureau, handled the situation well. Because Gedicks died of an infection of the bloodstream caused by the bacterium *Neisseria meningitidis*, which is the same bacterium that causes meningitis, many students feared for their health and their lives when they learned of Gedicks' death. Student Health Service responded efficiently and worked hard to ensure that every student who felt endangered received a preventative antibiotic. Extra staff worked around the clock at Student Health Service to provide students with preventative care and a feeling of security. Doctors even distributed the antibiotics to any student who wanted the pill, even if the danger of his becoming ill was extremely minimal. That no one else came down with the infection may have been due to the work of Student Health. The News Bureau deserves credit for the way it handled the situation as well.

Though some students criticized the News Bureau for not reporting Gedicks' death the night that it happened, the bureau actually was right in waiting until it had the facts of his death and his medical tests. When the News Bureau did obtain all the information, it informed students efficiently and thoroughly through e-mail, voice mail and flyers. Students were not only informed about his death, but were also told which students should receive the antibiotic (roommates, suitemates, etc.). University Student Life staff, including Chaplain Ed Christman, also showed great care and consideration in meeting with students on the night of Gedicks' death on the floor in Johnson Residence Hall where he lived. The memorial service Nov. 16 for Gedicks was well done and well attended. Most importantly, it reminds us that, amongst all the curiosity and fear of illness that his death has created on campus, a person from our university community died last week. The death of Alex Gedicks should not be overshadowed by the circumstances surrounding it. Gedicks will be missed and remembered, as the university community mourns another lost member.

Kappa Sigma charges should be revealed

When the university announced the Kappa Sigma investigation results, students and the rest of the community finally found out what sanctions the Kappa Sigs face (unless the decision is overturned in the appeal to the Student Life Committee). But one vital piece of information is missing from the administration's announcement: the charges. We know that Harold Holmes, the associate vice president and dean of student services, decided that Kappa Sigma will be suspended until the fall of 2000 and that it has to give up its block housing and lounge. But we still don't know exactly why. The involved pledges' names should certainly be kept confidential to ensure their safety against retaliation. But there is neither legal nor logical reason why the university does not release the charges against the Kappa Sigs. We know that the charges involve "group responsibility violations, including hazing." The administration has admitted that. But that's all it's admitted. By keeping the exact charges a secret, the administration is just hurting its own position as well as the student body. Many students have criticized the administration for punishing the Kappa Sigs too harshly. But because no one

really knows of what charges the Kappa Sigs were found guilty, no one can judge how appropriate their punishment is. If the administration would just officially announce the charges, the decision they made regarding sanctions could be properly evaluated. The administration, like all systems of authority, should, after all, be subject to criticism in order to keep it in check and keep it from turning into a 1984-esque totalitarian regime. The harsh punishment that the Kappa Sigs received indicates that their violations were severe. And the administration's secrecy indicates that it has a reason, whether it be to protect the university's reputation or something else, to keep the whole issue under wraps. So the administration should be commended for taking action against the serious crime of hazing; after all, it could have saved face with even more secrecy by quietly sweeping the whole issue under the carpet. But because most people don't know the real charges, rumors are running wild, filling the large gaps in the facts students have. The actual charges have probably been vastly distorted as people just make up juicy gossip to make up for the lack of facts. The administration should stop these rumors by announcing the true charges against the Kappa Sigs.

Student remembered by friend

Alex Gedicks' fellow classmate remembers their close friendship.

Always Remember, Never Forget." Now, this may seem rather redundant for a title, but this is the title of a paper that is tacked to my wall. Here I keep alive the memories of those special to

Stew Ramsey

GUEST COLUMNIST

me who have passed away. Nov. 13, the name of freshman Alex Gedicks was added to this list. Alex Gedicks, who I met through Ultimate Frisbee, was my best friend. It was early in September and by mere chance that I was placed on Gedicks' team. The usual introductions occurred and a friendship was born. On that day, Gedicks, freshman Dwayne Hill, who

introduced Ultimate Frisbee to us, and I combined for many scores and had a great time. As many of us know, Gedicks was committed to many things, and Ultimate was not to be left off that list. Between the two of us, we missed at most one practice, and I was probably the one who missed it. After practice, we would usually eat dinner. We shared meals whenever it fit our schedules. The weekend of Homecoming, we had lunch in Shorty's after a stop at the post office. He had received two care packages, whereas I received nothing. In one of the packages, his girlfriend from Brigham Young University had sent him the beginnings of a scrapbook of her times there at school. I could see the love he had for her and with which he spoke of her. Upon telling him this, he told me that he intended to marry her if she was still waiting for him after his missionary trip for the Mormon Church in Hartford, Conn. When I told him that Hartford was only an hour and a half away from my home, he said that on "P-days" I could visit him. P-days, he said, are "preparing days" for missionaries, but they usually end up playing basketball. He

told me that he would give me a call when he had a P-day, and at that point I knew that he was my best friend. And I had a sneaky suspicion that I was his. Anyway, I also promised him that he would be rooming with me when he came back to campus, because I was going to get a roommate that year who would be going on a study-abroad trip in the spring. I had a pretty good feeling that he would pledge whatever fraternity I did because of our similar tastes. He was always pretty hooked on the idea of fraternities even though he didn't drink or smoke. We are all pretty shocked by the death of our mutual friend, but unfortunately that is God's way. Alex would have wanted us to rally around him, become deeper friends, slowly get over his death and be as happy as we were before this catastrophe. And for his strong spirit and will, I loved him as the brother that I didn't have, and I think he knew that. I'll miss him dearly. Alexander Philip Gedicks (September 19, 1978-November 13, 1997) You may be gone but, in our hearts, you live on.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Information Systems was unfairly criticized

Although I have been the loudest and most persistent voice for abandoning Lotus Notes Mail, I must defend the manner in which Information Systems selected this mail server. I am troubled by the critical tone of the Nov. 6 editorial "Lotus Notes causes e-mail headaches." Why did we leave Pine and (the old) Eudora for Lotus Notes? Lotus Notes provides: easier transfer of information from other applications; better handling of attachments, including audio, pictures, and video; easy encryption; and authentication of the identity of the sender. Why did Information Systems not foresee that Lotus Notes would collapse? Notes mail is used at institutions with far more e-mail than we generate, and Notes mail was extensively tested under heavy-simulated load by IS. What IS failed to anticipate was the

rich and varied nature of the mail we are generating at the university. We send lots of mail over the Internet; we send lots of mail with large attachments. IS encouraged us to think of mail as more than a medium for memos, and now they are victims of their own success in training us. We believed, we responded and we overwhelmed Notes. Was selecting Lotus Notes for our standard mail server a mistake? Clearly, in retrospect. The Notes server keeps crashing! Was it a stupid mistake? No. The problems we are having were very difficult to foresee. So, why did I begin my campaign in July for a change of mail server, before the Notes server began crashing? Because there are now alternatives that offer all the key advantages of Notes mail, but which are faster, more convenient and which are based on open standards. These alternatives were not available in the spring when the standard load was chosen. Why switch now? See my web page at <http://www.wfu.edu/~matthews/>

notes_mail.html. (I will take this page down at the end of the semester, since the issue has been resolved.) I thank Jay Dominick, the assistant vice president of the University Corporate Center, and the Information Systems staff for their efforts to provide us with the best possible mail system. They are competent, diligent and responsive. Rick Matthews Professor of Physics

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.

OLD GOLD AND BLACK

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY SINCE 1916

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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.

