

OPINION

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

Free tax aid should be an example

This tax season, many of Winston-Salem's disabled, elderly, low-income and non-English speaking citizens will be assisted with their taxes by university graduate students through a program called Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program. Taylor Campbell, a graduate student with a background in analytical finance and Spanish initiated the project at the university to assist community members who are unable to file tax forms themselves. Yvonne Hinson, an assistant professor in the Calloway School of Business and Accountancy and a Pricewaterhouse Coopers Faculty Fellow, will oversee the project.

VITA is an excellent example of how university students and faculty can take active, charitable roles in the Winston-Salem community and work to significantly improve the lives of those who are less fortunate. Much has been written and said about the barrier that separates the university from the rest of Winston-Salem and North Carolina, and the campus community rarely works to bridge the gap. VITA and other programs designed to provide a way for students to become directly involved in community service projects are the first steps towards penetrating the social barrier between our two communities.

Other professors and departments should follow Hinson's footsteps to make community service an integral part of their curriculums. If the purpose

of higher education is to inform and enlighten young minds, there may not be a better way than to open students' eyes to the harsh social realities that lie but a mile from the Reynolda Campus. An institutionalized means of community service will open the doors to students who are too timid or indifferent to go out of their way to help others in need.

Many students may believe that they have nothing to offer to the larger community, but in some cases university students have a higher level of education than most low-income adults in Winston-Salem. The university's high standards of excellence give students an education that can be put to use in programs or services such as after-school tutoring.

The VITA program should be studied as a model for university faculty and academic departments. The enthusiasm and creativity of the students at this university are invaluable resources that offer unlimited potential for bettering the community at large. Students themselves can also take the initiative by discussing prospective with their professors and fellow students. By tapping the potential of students and directing their energies towards community service, the university has an opportunity to bridge the gap between the campus and the city of Winston-Salem while providing a real-world education for its students.

Film a reminder of difficult times

Union in Wait, a documentary about the same sex union between Susan Parker and Wendy Scott held in Wait Chapel in 2000, debuted in Pugh Auditorium Feb. 15. North Carolina School of the Arts student filmmaker Ryan Butler spent two years creating the film as a reminder of the conflict that erupted after the board of trustees discouraged the use of university facilities for the performance of a same-sex union between Parker and Scott.

The film was a potent reminder of the fact that the university community, idyllic in its secluded campus, is not immune to controversy and political activism. Undoubtedly, the administration would rather the events of a year ago be forgotten; however, it is imperative that the university community strive to keep fresh in their minds the controversy, the deeds of campus organizations and the outcome.

The same-sex union should remind university students and faculty that

coordinated action against a perceived injustice can be a powerful force of change. Activism, in all of its forms, exists in symbiosis with the objectives of higher education. A compelling vision of social justice is by its very nature activist and, as the university witnessed in the fall of 1999, has the power to transform conservative solipsism into indignity, altruism and constructive liberalism.

The lesson learned from the dispute has less to do with the politics of same-sex unions than with the transformative power lying latent in collective community action. Given the rapid rate of social change confronting today's culture, it stands to reason that similar controversies will always arise in the world, although the exact nature of future controversies on campus is impossible to determine. *Union in Wait* will preserve the ideal that while some social injustice may occur, the will of those who are strong can lead them to ultimately prevail.

OLD GOLD AND BLACK

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY SINCE 1916

Brian Schiller
Editor in Chief

Maribeth Wechsler
Business Manager

Jay Cridlin
Managing Editor

News: Phil Glynn and Lisa Hoppenjans, editors; Kathryn Spangler, assistant editor.
Editorials: Brandon Walters, editor; Shariq Torres, assistant editor.
Sports: Jordan Webster, editor; Daniel Ogle, assistant editor; Mike Scott, production assistant.
Arts & Entertainment: Susannah Rosenblatt, editor; Katie Venit, assistant editor.
Perspectives: Tamara Dunn, editor.
Online Edition: Zachary Klein, editor; Austin Harris, assistant editor.
Graphics: Will Wingfield, editor.
Business Staff: Nick Dahm and Will Giraud, production manager.
Circulation Manager: Sean Blue.
Photography: Kirsten Nantz, editor; Chris Carlstrom, Amanda Jones, Elizabeth Schneider and Billie Zito, photographers.
Advertiser: Wayne King.

The *Old Gold and Black* is published each Thursday during the school year, except during examinations, summer and holiday periods, by Web Works Inc. of High Point, 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. © 2000 WFU Publications Board. All rights reserved.

The views expressed in all editorials and advertisements contained within this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the *Old Gold and Black*.

If you wish to submit a guest editorial, call the editorials editor at Ext. 5280 at least two weeks in advance of the issue in which you would like it to appear.

Responsibility falls to consumers

As consumers we should know the conditions in which goods are made.

When you put on your shirt this morning, did you look at the label? Did you wonder what that Gap or J. Crew or Old Navy emblem meant? Even if you flipped the label over to see the words, "Made in Mexico" or "Made in China," you probably still put the

Sarah Rackley
STUDENT COLUMNIST

shirt on without too much thought and went along your way.

So what's the harm in this? Should we as consumers be concerned with where the products we buy are manufactured and under what conditions are they produced? I bet when your valentine handed you that cute teddy bear stuffed inside a shiny gift bag from Hallmark you weren't thinking about how many fingers the man or woman who made the bag might have lost while working in Hallmark's factories in Mexico or about the chemicals that worker is exposed to daily without a face mask or protective gear.

In reality, if most of us knew where our products were coming from, we would be outraged. Nobody prefers that the clothes they wear be produced by slave labor. No one looks for a little bloodstain on their Hallmark gift bag to show their valentine the depth of their love. That would be absurd. But by the very act of our consumption, we are complicit in reprehensible production processes and at the same time empowered to demand that this no longer occur in our name.

With the opening of borders for

Should we as consumers be concerned with where the products we buy are manufactured and under what conditions are they produced?

international free trade, manufacture is heading south. Industries are moving to developing nations where labor costs are a fraction of those in the United States or in other advanced industrialized countries. Big name firms such as Liz Claiborne, Inc., Delphi Automotive Systems and General Electric have set up shop just south of the Mexican border in a special free trade zone which allows foreign-owned manufacturing plants (or maquiladoras) to operate on a tax-free basis. In these factories, wages of \$4 a day are paid to workers. According to a Feb. 11 *New York Times* article, though this amount is nearly triple the Mexican minimum wage, it is still less than what American workers make per hour.

One could go on endlessly with stories of El Salvadoran workers in the Free Trade Zone of San Salvador working 16 hours a day, seven days a week, earning just 74 cents for every \$198 Liz Claiborne jacket that they sew as reported by the National Labor Committee in Support of Human and Worker Rights. One could point out that this income makes up only half of what an El Salvadoran family needs for survival. One could expose conditions of forced labor and sexual abuse that occurs in factories in El Salvador, Mexico, Indonesia, Thailand and many more countries. Or one could point to the fact that the average CEO in the apparel industry earns \$1.5 million annually according to a report in *The American Prospect*.

But you're probably still thinking that though this situation is unfortunate, there is nothing an individual can do about it, and that it's

better to have some foreign investment in underdeveloped countries than to have them remain unindustrialized.

Maybe participating in the, "I'd rather wear nothing than wear Gap" protests in which consumer activists parade naked in front of Gap stores isn't your cup of tea. And it might not really be practical to ponder the global consequences of free trade every time you put on a Gap T-shirt and a pair of J. Crew jeans. But being aware of the most flagrant human rights abuses occurring in foreign manufacture can make a difference.

Consumer boycotts have forced multi-national corporations to raise wages, enforce labor standards, and respect environmental regulations. These firms are gaining a bad name for their corporate misconduct and are making a change. Students on more than 150 university campuses participate in anti-sweatshop movements, asking for living wages and decent working conditions for workers abroad. As consumers we should be supportive of such movements, particularly when they only require a minimal amount of action.

However, it is essential that the struggles won by those working for decent living and working conditions worldwide not be undermined by free trade policies. The goal of the struggle is not to prevent foreign investment in developing countries nor is it simply to expose horrid working conditions and force the offender out of the market. The objective, instead, is to force multinational corporations to take responsibility for their actions, whether in the United States, Mexico, Honduras or India. Foreign investment can certainly be beneficial to developing economies, but not foreign investment at any cost. Development that denies basic human rights to economic actors is not sustainable economic development. Development must be pursued in an atmosphere of international standards and regulations that promote basic human and environmental rights.



Earnhardt will be missed

Death will be a defining moment for NASCAR and southern tradition.

They are the moments you will never forget. Those times in a person's life where time stands still and everything around a person ceases to matter. For our parents' generation it was the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., and for those slightly older than us it was the Miracle on Ice.

Daniel Ogle
ASSISTANT SPORTS EDITOR

Our generation has not had many of those moments. There was the O.J. Simpson saga, and the death of Princess Diana. But for many of us from below the Mason-Dixon Line, another defining moment occurred on Sunday - stock car legend Dale Earnhardt died.

As you watched his black Chevrolet Monte Carlo slam into the outside retaining wall at Daytona International Speedway Feb. 18, it appeared to be a wreck like any other. Earnhardt's car was tapped by Sterling Marlin's car and he hit the wall head on in excess of 150 miles per hour. But Earnhardt had survived worse crashes. He was the Intimidator. He would be fine.

But as time went on, and long after Michael Waltrip's victory over Dale Earnhardt Jr. had faded to the background, it was apparent that all

For those who say that this is not a big deal and that this is going too far, talk to grizzled reporters who had tears in their eyes Sunday afternoon. Tell Earnhardt's wife and children, who have lost a husband and father.

was not fine. And at 7:00 p.m., NASCAR President Mike Helton made it official.

"This is one of the toughest announcements I've ever had to make," he said. "But we've lost Dale Earnhardt."

Earnhardt was not just NASCAR's top driver, he was NASCAR. More than anyone else, Dale Earnhardt was responsible for transforming NASCAR from a two-bit country sport to a multi-billion dollar industry.

His seven Winston Cup Championships were tied with Richard Petty for the most ever, and his \$40 million dollars in career earnings was tops in Winston Cup racing. He was also well known for his brash style of racing. Earnhardt completed maneuvers on the track that lesser competitors wouldn't dream about making. He didn't budge when he ran into someone and he expected the same from others.

But even more eye-popping than his success on the track was his success off of it.

Earnhardt was an innovator. He copyrighted his signature early on in his career, and his merchandise was the most popular among NASCAR fans by far, long outdistancing more marketed stars like Rusty Wallace and

Jeff Gordon.

And that is why NASCAR has such a void to fill. For NASCAR, Earnhardt being killed on the last lap of the Daytona 500, the sport's most prestigious race, is like Michael Jordan dying in the last minute of game seven of the NBA Finals. It will be almost impossible to fill.

NASCAR has long been mocked by those who didn't understand it, as simply a redneck sport. Earnhardt didn't care what you said as long as you watched. He flew in the face of NASCAR's marketing attempts which appealed to those outside of the traditional audience.

Earnhardt never shied away from the fact that he had little more than a middle school education. Born and raised in Kannapolis, he wasn't afraid to concede that he was a good ol' boy, more educated and elite critics be damned. But Dale Earnhardt did more with an eighth grade education than most people with doctorates ever could.

He not only won races, but he affected people. He made people who society dismissed believe that they could succeed. He was a hero to all those who the rest of the world didn't care about, and that is why a dry eye was hard to find on Sunday in much of the state.

For those who say that this is not a big deal and that this is going too far, talk to grizzled reporters who had tears in their eyes Sunday afternoon. Tell Earnhardt's wife and children, who have lost a husband and father. Tell it to the throngs of mourners and well-wishers who have recounted the good and the bad at the office of Richard Childress Racing. Finally tell it to every little boy with a black Earnhardt T-shirt with tears running down his face.

Tell him this isn't a moment he will never forget.