

An independent view of the Pledge Night madness

Amist the boozing and smooching, one man speaks out for independents everywhere.

It has now been slightly more than a week since Pledge Night, and although I have not contacted Health Services to receive the "official" statistics, my assumption is that the yearly plagues of mononucleosis, flu, herpes, botulism, facial tics and schizophrenia – all, of course, transmitted orally through kissing exclusively – have begun.

Ryan Eanes

STUDENT COLUMNIST

I personally managed to avoid all of these diseases, and there's a good reason why. I am an independent, so gasp and murmur amongst yourselves now because I'm giving you permission to. Because I have never been in a fraternity (nor do I ever plan to be in one) and because I am sadly ineligible to join a sorority (can somebody say "lawsuit?"), I mainly operate on the basis of assumption and second-hand stories told to me by friends who are actually in Greek organizations.

Because it is a major part of the Greek life, I have heard plenty of stories about Pledge Night. I say that I have heard them because I do not actually go to Pledge Night. For me, Pledge Night is not about all of the "fun" that comes neatly packaged along with drunken debauchery and fornication.

Rather, for me it is all about hiding under my bed and cowering in terror, hoping that the horror will quickly go away, and also that the overly loud party outside in the hall featuring lots of cheap beer and extremely loud Tenacious D will not come crashing through my door. (Note to self: Seek professional counseling immediately.)

My reasons for not going to any of the Pledge Night parties extend well beyond my ill-placed, irrational phobias; in fact, I work most Saturdays off campus, and have to be at work by 9 a.m. Therefore it's pretty important that I get to bed and get plenty of sleep so that I actually wake up in the morning and go to work, because I do need to keep my job.

Also, intoxication and its lovely after-effects are usually frowned upon in the workplace, unless you work in certain professions in the Deep South that most people now associate with the "hunter-gatherer" way of life.

So heavy drinkers, take note! Your already-poorly-functioning livers aren't the only things at risk once you get out of college and enter the "work force!"

I may seem somewhat bitter about it, but it should be apparent by now that I do not drink. This is a personal decision that I made quite a while ago, after carefully considering all sides of the issue.

On the one hand, alcohol provides a brief yet pleasant sensation that could best be labeled as "stupidity." Beyond this, drinking (believe it or not!) has a number of negative effects (again, future business leaders, take note!).

These include such things as vomiting all over individuals who could potentially be friends, blacking out while on the dance floor and waking up with breasts drawn in permanent

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ink on your face, and sometimes even injuries whose cause you cannot necessarily pinpoint, although you feel like clowns played some sort of role. Given all of these lovely results of drinking, I decided early on that it is not something that I care to do.

But back to Pledge Night. This year I decided that drunken people are probably not anything worth being afraid of, and so a friend and I ventured out across campus mainly just to observe what was happening.

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By the point that my friend and I ventured out, it was pretty late and most of the parties on campus had begun to dissipate. This meant that there were a lot of pairs of people clinging

to each other for dear life, wobbling and teetering precariously step by step all the way back to wherever they thought that they lived. There's not much else that I can say to add to the humor that was present in that scene.

Although I am sure that Pledge Night is fun and exciting to plenty of people, I have to point out that many other people would find getting an oil change to be fun and exciting.

This campus is not composed entirely of drunken dolts whose primary objective in any given week is to get smashed and then compete in fraternity XYZ's "vomiting for distance" competition, although many times it sadly seems that way.

Is it really so hard to resist overindulging yourself at every single fraternity event or sorority... thing? It's sort of sad when it's believed that all non-drinkers are relegated to either Johnson or the horror that is SHIFT. This is probably Wake Forest's biggest urban legend, and I'm here to tell you that it isn't true. Unless I move.

Seriously, though, don't misconstrue this column as an attempt to belittle anyone, as there are plenty of perfectly wonderful people out there who drink and enjoy Pledge Night; however, there are also more than enough people out there who can't seem to say "No, I don't believe I will have that 34th beer."

If you are, however, one of those people who can't remember their own name or who feels like clowns played a major role in the acquisition of some kind of injury, then think of this as a little challenge. At the next event you go to – Pledge Night or otherwise – why not cut back (if not avoid entirely) on alcohol for the night? You honestly might be surprised how much more amusing it is to see how stupid everyone acts while intoxicated.

So give it a try. Your liver will thank me.

A melting pot of column topics

A wild mix of column topics for your reading pleasure.

The second semester finally hit me today. I woke up to the blaring of my roommate's alarm, fell back asleep, woke up to my alarm, fell asleep again and then finally hit the showers just before class. Talking about the GATT treaties and international trade organizations seems

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STUDENT COLUMNIST

to have little merit when your stomach churns and your eyelids blink wildly to stay awake.

I started wondering when Spring Break was. With each answer of four weeks, I rolled my eyes and prayed that time would miraculously move faster toward March 8. Eight weeks of school with no break is certifiably insane; a student's work ethic drops into a tailspin and professors finally bring their inherent liberalism into the classroom. Fun times, I can assure you.

The mid-semester doldrums hit again when I was reduced to leaving an away message practically begging for column topics. Surprisingly, I got more responses from that than one of my normally cynical postings. Originality was failing left and right – suggestions included "the mean Benson food workers" and "something cute for Valentine's Day."

First, we all know the Benson workers are mean. They should take tips from Carolyn at Parmagiano's – meat or marinara with a smile.

Secondly, I'm not one for writing 'cute' columns, even for Valentine's Day. Any and all cuteness is reserved for my girlfriend, roses and dinner included.

I enjoy being argumentative, as evidenced by many of my previous columns. The semester hit me so hard that I couldn't even create an entire column's response to Nathan Gunter's revolting twisting of Christianity in last week's edition ("In search of a perfect world," Feb. 7). Not only was I frightened that homosexuality and Jesus appeared within the same column, I was disgusted that the column wasn't relegated to the worthless "Sex and the Campus" feature.

I do agree with Gunter's comment that Jesus favored the downtrodden; however, there are Biblical passages which severely undermine the credibility of a statement that Jesus

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condoned homosexuality.

Furthermore, our society has yet to accept homosexuality as mainstream, making it hard for many of us to understand the world of gays.

This nation can guarantee the rights of homosexuals, but free will also allows individuals to exercise personal and moral judgments against homosexuality as well.

Semester deuce further smacked me upon distribution of our tests in Italian class. My grade had fallen one whole level from week two to week three. That prompted me to realize that studying might actually be involved in learning the intricacies of Italian. That really isn't a tantalizing prospect to anyone, especially with four weeks until spring break.

I could have written an entire column on the outrageous freedom of choice (read in abortion) ads I've witnessed on television in the past few days. Though the Supreme Court said that abortion is allowed, in no way is it an essential 'freedom.' Nine guys thought women could have the right to kill a fetus, and the commercial touts the 'right' to abortion as inherent as free speech or free press. This makes total sense, doesn't it?

I thought not. Before making any commercials sanctioning infanticide, we should advertise safe sex or maybe even responsibility.

As you can tell, the mid-semester mark has hit hard and fast, zapping me of any ability to write more than a paragraph on any issue. I'm more interested in playing basketball than hitting the books, more likely to set aside time for a nap than studying. But then I realize that I have another Italian test on Friday. And the Friday after that. So much for being lazy.

Enjoy the week of laziness, my friends, for next week the fury returns.



MORE LETTERS

A letter to Wake fans from a Cincinnati fan

My compliments to the Wake Forest students for the sportmanship

they displayed for the nation on ABC-TV Feb. 9.

They appeared to be cheering for Cincinnati player Steve Logan at the end of his spectacular performance against Wake. "Logan is Phat!" Yes he

is. And it took a big-hearted group of fans to recognize that. They truly know how to lose!

Thomas Hagedorn