

# Chalking shows narrowness

Quad chalking participants failed to consider other views.

Due to a gross deficiency of religious backgrounds represented at this school, our campus has been unmasked as malleable to the injustice, and danger, formed by notions of religious superiority. Walking around the Quad the

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On the night of April 14, I felt more unwelcome than ever before in the home I chose for four years of undergraduate education ... or, rather, "miseducation," had I left it up to my peers.

Religious tolerance is a pervasive issue - right alongside racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism and a sad array of other chauvinistic hierarchies. A person who actively promotes his or her race above all others is "racist." A person who disregards the notions of people in a lower class is "classist" or "class-prejudiced" because he or she distinguishes his or her own worthiness from people who do not have enough money to partake in a specific lifestyle. A person who exhibits a superior attitude toward the opposite gender is "sexist."

A bigot can be characterized as the above, with the addition of being "strongly partial to one's own group, religion, race or politics and is intolerant of those who differ." Call me

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extreme, but I would put forth that comments like "Jesus is the only way" fall cleanly under this definition.

One Sunday night, with a slew of witty quips beseeching repentance among sinners like myself, student Christians chalked the entire way around our main Quad ... our main Quad. Wake Forest is a private university, but for the students attending here, the campus property is very much public and very much communal.

What I saw inscribed on the sidewalk is, at best, irreverent. While I do not think that the intent of the chalking was necessarily menacing, I nevertheless know that such an exhibition denies inclusiveness, promotes intolerance and breeds unease among students from differing perspectives who should be trying to get to know each other.

The chalking was a mockery of every student who comes to Wake Forest bringing diversity - religious or otherwise. As if our campus was not already struggling enough with issues of diversity, statements like this one solidify an oft-feared

portrayal of our students as a suffocating mass of closed-minded evangelists. What is worse, this happened the night before our campus was to officially welcome incoming freshman to the university.

Officially, as in, "Speaking for the student body, this is a Christian campus, Jesus is here, moral trespassers beware, and oh, by the way, welcome." Was the message to ward off prospective students who might not be Christian? Because I sure as HELL would not have come here if I had been academically proselytized with such a gross sign of religious zealotry.

Let me clarify: I am not suggesting that people who choose to use their voices (praise Allah we're allowed the freedom to make use of them) to advance their own cause is necessarily a bigot. Nevertheless, the issue is highly implied, transforming mild intentions into aggravating displays that smack of, in this case, religious intolerance. The point: our hope within any community is that mutual respect precedes displays like these.

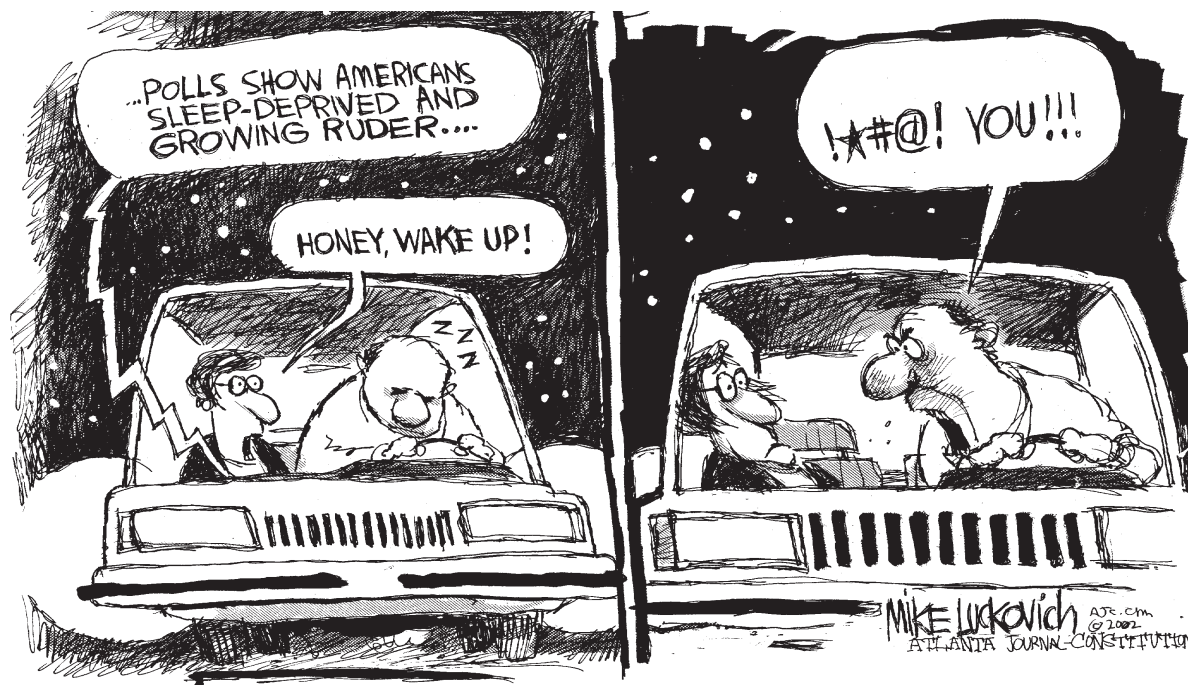
"Red, yellow, black, white, all are precious in His sight." Except the Hindus, right?

"Don't worry - God still loves you" - unless you're Muslim. Sorry.

"Where were you the last time you saw Jesus?" As a friend of mine replied, "Not on a sidewalk."

If I don't feel welcome here after seeing a display like this, how should an incoming, non-Christian freshman?

I don't need your chalk to be saved.



# A word to Residence Life and Housing on room selection

RLH receives a half-hearted thanks about housing policies from an impassioned student.

Thank you, Office of Residence Life and Housing. Thank you. Why, do you ask, am I so appreciative? Well, it's really quite simple. A week or two ago, the very thought that I was going to be able to choose where I was going to be living from August 2002 until May of the following year horrified me beyond belief.

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Decisions and I just don't go well together, particularly ones that involve my living environment and overall happiness. Now, I can wipe the sweat off my brow and sit back until July 16 in the reassuring knowledge that I don't have to deal with all that silly "free will" business. I'm sure as I sit in my assigned room in the fall, I'll feel a sense of redemption in the fact that I had little or no say in its selection.

Before I came to Wake, I heard that there were some problems with the housing system here, with the policies and what not. Luckily, these rumors proved to be anything but true. In fact, just to prove their effectiveness, I will enumerate the policies of the Office of Residence Life and Housing and explain why they're so perfect:

**1. Greeks go first.** This one's so obvious, I really don't even have to mention it. As everyone knows, people in fraternities and sororities are just better. I know that they're better than I am, and thus, should always have say over us lowly independents. I mean, think about it. When a CEO of a major aeronautics corporation, for instance, faced with hiring a member of a fraternity who has a bachelor's degree in physical training or a former NASA employee with a doctorate mechanical engineering, but was an independent, he really has no choice. More specifically, if Stephen Hawking and a member of, say, Sigma Chi were falling into two separate

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pits simultaneously, well ... sorry, Steve, but you've got to go.

**2. Give students a false sense of hope.** Look, it just follows that, unless you're a senior or a really lucky junior, you're just not getting a six-person suite. And it's unlikely for a four-person either. I mean, there just aren't enough. Even though lots and lots of people want to live in blocks, several people don't, and because those several people don't, only about twelve blocks can be made available. It just makes sense. But here's the key: You can't go telling people that. You have to let everyone think that they can get into a suite. Otherwise, you couldn't make anyone wait for two and a half hours on a weekday (when they obviously have work to do) just to find out that they've been there for no reason. And what would be the fun in that?

**3. Call them priority numbers.** Of course they're completely random and only specify according to seniority, but the numbers you assign for housing selection have to give a certain sense of inferiority to those who get low ones. I mean, the phrases, "Well, you're not my priority!" or "On my list of priorities, you're anything but high," are just so good for that. However, I do have a suggestion. Next year, let's call the low ones "We just plain don't like you" numbers.

**4. You have to assign something.** Yes, there's enough housing for everyone. It's guaranteed. And if all the rooms on campus were open, everyone who lives here currently would be able to at least get to select some form of housing. But that would just be stupid. Because assigning things is always necessary. Always. So, you have to call some of the rooms on campus "Yet to be assigned" and just, well, basically force the people who were unlucky into them, not telling exactly where they're going to be until several months later. Ingenious!

So, once again, Office of Residence Life and Housing, you've done me a great favor. Where would I be without you? And better yet, where am I with you?



# Israel enters dangerous ground with censorship of press

World media should be granted full access to conflict areas in West Bank.

Full-time journalists are perhaps some of the least popular professionals in the world, but are, without a doubt, among the most important. While the majority of

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reporters never break a "Watergate" or "Pentagon Papers," they spend their lives gathering information and delivering it in a digestible medium. Whether the choice du jour is TV, radio, newspaper or Internet, reporters are responsible for the news we receive. Politicians, corporate executives and public officials are responsible to the public, but without the means to know what they are doing, there is no way to hold them accountable.

The most important tenant of the U.S. Constitution is the First Amendment, guaranteeing freedom of speech, a right all too many citizens around the world are denied. In any dictatorial regime, the journalists and other intellectuals are among the first to "disappear"

and be silenced. The power of words, images, voice is no secret. With every censorship comes a worldwide outcry amid the question, "What are they hiding?"

Israel is now responsible for the most recent incident of abhorrent censorship as it has denied access to the world's press to some of the most pertinent locations in the world's news. The siege in Ramallah, the shooting in Bethlehem, the missiles fired at a Jenin refugee camp. These are not isolated, domestic events; they impact world politics, and the world's citizens have a right to first-hand news from independent, reliable sources. The Israeli government and its military leaders are not these sources.

Journalists frequently place themselves in the line of fire, searching for the perfect photo or most accurate story, but rarely do they find themselves the direct objects of open attacks. Media organizations covering the siege in Ramallah April 5, however, were specifically targeted by Israeli soldiers.

According to the *Washington Post*, "Without warning, one of the military vehicles rammed a CNN car twice, and soldiers threw several stun grenades at the journalists."

And when the media convoy tried to leave the area, the soldiers fired three shots at CNN's armored car, the *Washington Post* said. Though the bullets may have been plastic, this is

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impermissible behavior and cannot be tolerated.

As if this wasn't reprehensible enough, the *Washington Post* reported "an Israeli spokeswoman said soldiers threw stun grenades at the journalists because they did not 'cease and desist. This is a closed military zone and they should not have been there in the first place.'" The problem is that increasingly over the past 20 years, journalists have been denied access to crucial sites for similar reasons. But whatever the reason, it is unacceptable.

The reporter's safety is up to the reporter and the media organization. A government has no place deciding which sites are "safe" and which ones are "off limits." Safe suddenly takes on the connotation that media presence is allowed only when it offers no threat to the government. Incidents such as the one above where journalists were directly attacked by military certainly

do not imply that the media's safety is a major concern of Israeli officials.

This leaves the world asking, "Just what are they hiding?"

Images of Israeli soldiers manhandling journalists and scenes of reporters coming under fire have appeared on television channels throughout the world, a BBC article said.

According to the BBC, the most recent incidents include the death of an Italian freelance photographer, the shooting of a Washington-based reporter and a Palestinian cameraman working for the Egyptian Nile-TV company, the detaining of four Turkish journalists and three separate incidents in which a BBC television crew, a French public television team and two Swedish public television journalists also came under Israeli gunfire.

This silencing and repression has become a great concern of local citizens as well. According to BBC, the six Italian TV journalists trapped in the Church of the Nativity were asked not to leave. "It would have been useful if they had stayed with us, for our voice to reach the whole world," Father Ibrahim, the priest in charge of the Church of the Nativity, told Italian TV.

The Israeli government and military are trying to silence the voices of its citizens, but journalists, in their quest for information and truth, are shouting out loud.

A media which has been consistently

sympathetic to the Israeli cause is finding itself literally attacked for its efforts. A journalist's duty is not to choose sides, but rather to report the news as fairly as possible. This, however, is impossible when free access is denied.

"Barring journalists from conflict areas is censorship," Ann Cooper, the director of the Committee to Protect Journalists said in a recent BBC article.

Censorship is not to be tolerated in today's world.

"Information is light," Tom Stoppard writes in his play *Night and Day*. Journalists, Stoppard says, are "a privileged group, inside society and yet outside it, with a license to scourge it and duty to defend it, night and day, the street of adventure, the fourth estate."

Whenever this group is denied its license, the entire world suffers from the dark silence that ensues. Without accurate reports, governments are able to commit atrocities of any kind without fear of detection. Is this what the Israeli government is hoping will happen?

Regardless of Israel's convoluted philosophy, the world will not tolerate such actions. Journalists have proven themselves both clever and courageous enough to defeat this senseless censorship. Temporary darkness may reign over isolated areas, but it only takes a spark ... and the world's media is aglow.