

OPINION

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

Students are force behind theme year

In the wake of last week's terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, this academic year will soon be retroactively declared "The Year of Unity and Hope: Pro Humanitate at Work." In years past, the preparation for theme years has typically taken years of planning, but because of the impressive efforts of dedicated students and Student Government officers, the Year of Unity and Hope has quickly come together. This theme year will be unique in that it is completely organized and executed by students. It is also monumental because in many ways, Student Government has never before taken on a project of this magnitude and succeeded to such an immediate and impactful degree. Students will receive support for the Year of Unity and Hope from the university in the form of facilities and some funding, a remarkable achievement that has been secured in under a week.

As its title indicates, this theme year should be intended to reach out to all students, not just those from the United States, and therefore should place

more of an emphasis on intellectual debate and discussion than ceaseless advocacy of patriotism. The phrase "Pro Humanitate at Work" should be embodied in the types of forums, panel discussions, events and fundraisers this year now holds in store. The university made a wise decision in backing this endeavor, and now we encourage any and all student organizations to become involved as well. Students have adopted the theme year project and truly made it their own. This sets an excellent precedent for the theme years to come – perhaps with greater student involvement, they can become better oriented towards students and less focused on individual academic departments.

Originally, when the theme year was suspended for this year, university officials emphasized that students would have to take an initiative if they wanted the theme years to continue as they had in the past. Now a handful of students have truly made the theme year their own, and it is up to the rest of the student body to make the Year of Unity and Hope a success.

Network users need to act responsibly

On Sept. 18 the university blocked campus access to the Internet file-sharing program Morpheus in order to respond to the Nimda virus, which crippled, among others, the server at the *Old Gold and Black*. The university would not have taken any action, but file-sharing programs such as Morpheus, took up all available network resources to combat the virus. The variety of file-sharing programs utilized by network users to download music, movies and software used up over 80 percent of Internet data, often resulting in slow Internet service or delayed e-mail.

Receiving late e-mail can be an inconvenience – hampering communication between students and professors, for example – or it can be much more serious, as was the case when an e-mail discussing the tragic events of Sept. 11 failed to reach the student body for several hours. Broadcast e-mails have not been delayed by mere minutes, but by several hours in some cases. It has been suggested that the university limit traffic to the point where decent Internet service can be guaranteed. However, these problems will continue unless network users, on their own accord, limit the amount of information they download. Network users

effectively brought this problem upon themselves, and now that most are aware of the magnitude of the situation, they should take responsibility.

Most students would not be willing to sacrifice the activities most of us have incorporated into our daily lives – primary communication through e-mail and Instant Messenger, using the Internet for everything from research to classes, to entertainment, and so on – just so they could download *American Pie 2*. Our status as one of the most wired campuses in the nation is clear when we stop to think how dependent we are upon our ThinkPads and the Internet, so our priorities should be clear. Reliable Internet service and efficient e-mail are obviously more important than being able to download feature-length movies and other large files onto our laptops.

We should appreciate the university for allowing network users access to programs like Morpheus – the university doesn't want to prohibit anyone from downloading files, but they obviously did not have any other options. Just as students must take responsibility for shouldering the Year of Unity and Hope, they must hold themselves accountable for their actions that may hamper the university's network.

Civil rights must be maintained

President Bush is leading America in a long-awaited attack on terrorism.

In the wake of the terrible terrorist attacks that our country suffered only one week ago last Tuesday, I am heartened, as I think all Americans are, by the stance taken by our government that this sort of action will no longer be tolerated. The fact that now, finally, the world is taking

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a proactive stance toward terrorism in the United States and abroad is both a way to show that we have not been cowed by this attack, and also that we will root out the people responsible for this attack and make them take responsibility for it.

As some of you may know and others may not have heard (though if you've turned on the TV in the past week you can't avoid it), the United States has done everything but declare war on Afghanistan as well as declaring war on terrorism. The end result of this seems to be that Afghanistan will suffer invasion by the United States if they do not turn over Osama bin Laden to the world at large for trial, and furthermore that any country that harbors terrorists will suffer the same fate. This does not even worry me. After all, countries that knowingly harbor terrorists rarely suffer terrorist attacks on their homes, and up until recently they have not even been liable to the rest of the world because everybody was on this "tolerance" kick. America and the rest of the world believed that if diplomatic efforts failed to get someone like bin Laden out of a country like Afghanistan, then we had no more options.

I'm tremendously heartened to see the Bush administration taking stronger action, I'm just horrified that it took an action like this to convince the country to come together in this time of crisis.

However exciting the previous actions may be to me, I still can't help but be frightened by the rhetoric of some people who are resurrecting

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old mistakes made by America and America's allies and trying to turn them into a reason for war.

I think the favorite one is the old line by Neville Chamberlain, the British prime minister of the '30s, who said after a trip to appease Adolf Hitler said that he thought he had secured "... peace in our time." Now everyone agrees that this was a tragic mistake and it undoubtedly secured a place in history for Chamberlain even if he didn't want one. However, I don't see the parallel.

Some say that to have peace, we must have war to secure it. I suppose that some would say that we have given peace a chance, and now it is time to do whatever is necessary, such as war, to secure the liberty of the American people in our own country. I must confess that I don't see it that way, but I suppose that is a legitimate viewpoint.

Polls show overwhelming support from almost all demographic segments for changes and limits on personal liberty during this time to secure peace and security. People support more invasive searches for public events, such as sporting events, they support less freedom when it comes to air travel in our country, and they generally feel that as long as something can be done to keep people safe, then it needs to be done.

This attitude worries me probably more than the willingness of the American people to scrap peace and go to war, and I'll say that it even worries me more than the prospect of another terrorist attack on America's shores. Now don't get me wrong, I think that terrorists should not have it any easier, either in performing their terrible deeds or escaping punishment when they do them.

However, I do not want the American people to have to give up their liberty and live like Europeans are forced to. Because Europe

experiences terrorism on their shores with regularity, public places in Europe are without things that we take for granted, like trashcans. Because bombs can be placed there anonymously and left there for a relatively long period of time, it is rare indeed to see a public trash can in Europe.

Furthermore, some European countries make it much easier for the police to search people suspected of being terrorists, sometimes detaining them without much more to go on than suspicion. Other rights that we enjoy in America are infringed in Europe quite a bit as well.

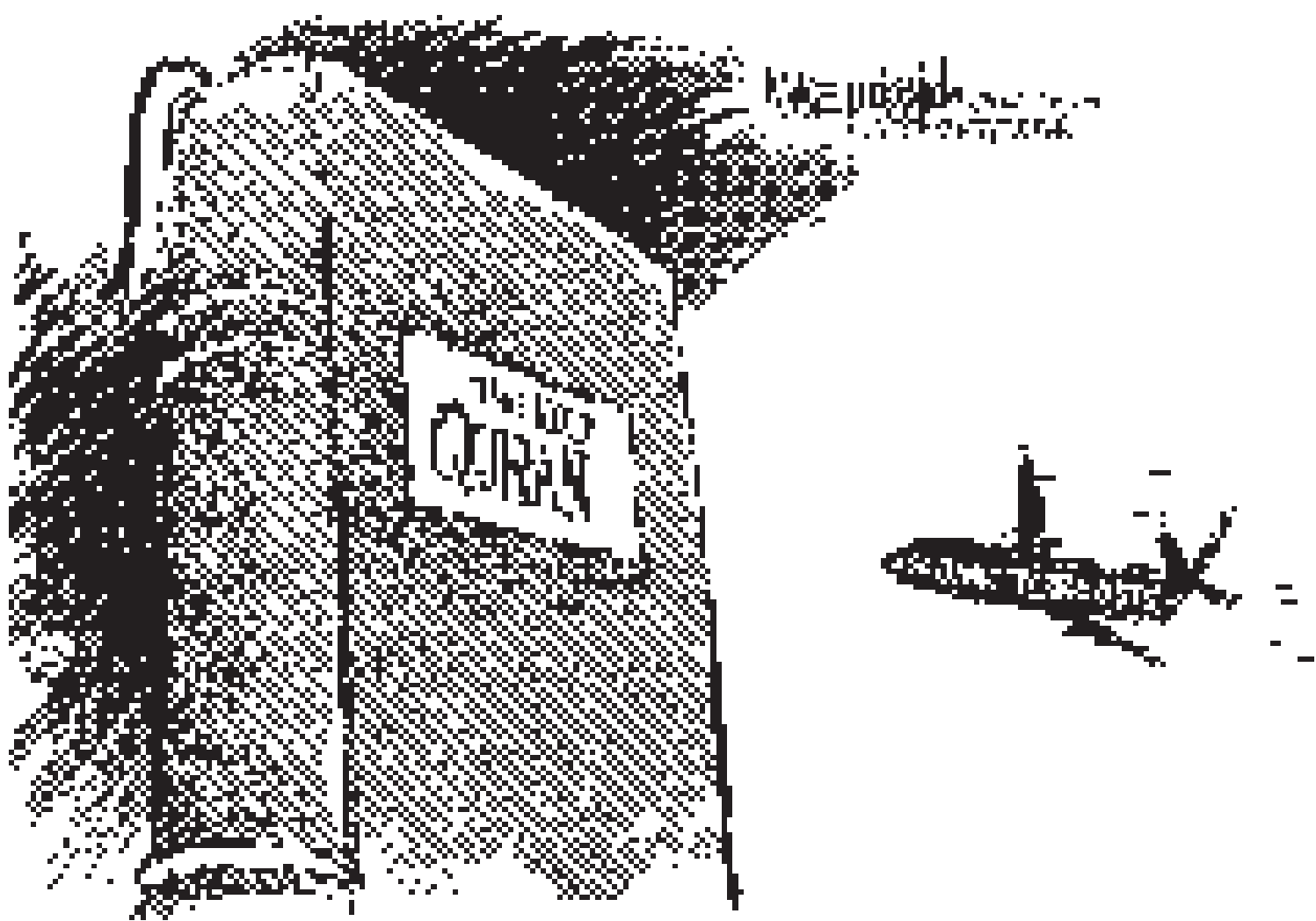
Now, I'm sure that people who have traveled in Europe before know that this is true at least in parts, if not in the whole of Europe. To contrast with this picture of Europe, let's consider the Middle East. Freedoms there are curtailed even more stringently than they are in Europe.

Do you think that people in Damascus are protected from unreasonable searches and seizures? Do you think that the people there have the freedom to assemble peaceably if their interests run contrary to those of the ruling party? I seriously doubt it, and while I'm not afraid of having those rights revoked in the wake of this terrorist attack, I am afraid that the rights of Americans will be curtailed and our way of life will be changed in some small way because of this terrorist attack.

Already the airlines are talking about putting the Sky Marshals program back into place, which would place armed Federal Marshals onboard all domestic flights in an attempt to curtail hijackings. We also have armed guards in our schools, from elementary schools on up.

Will the desire of the American people to be safe supersede the limits placed on the federal government by the Constitution and will the lifestyle of America be changed by this attack? I certainly hope the answer to both questions is no.

I believe that the aim of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon was not primarily to kill Americans, but to terrorize America, and I'm afraid that if America lets terrorism change our lifestyle and attitude, then Osama bin Laden and his cohorts have won at least a partial victory.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Don't misconstrue Bush's Christian faith as weakness

Being a member of the Wake Forest family, I am very proud of my school. I am constantly referring some of the bright young minds I come in contact with to look into what the university has to offer. Like true Wake Forest Deacons, I rejoice when we are nationally recognized, and am saddened when things don't go our way.

Today I am saddened by Dave Walker's column ("We need a president, not a preacher," Sept. 13). During his column, he voiced his opinion doubting the leadership of President Bush. I don't know what

Walker was looking at. NBC polls indicate that over 80 percent of the United States approves of the way "W" has handled the situation to date. Eighty percent – that means the majority of Democrats are approving.

Mr. Walker, don't mistake Christian proclamation as a sign of weakness. That would be a mistake. This president and his staff, with full support of both sides of the Senate isle and the House, is moving down the correct path: make changes in operating procedures to increase domestic security, gather as much information as quickly as possible, use diplomacy wherever possible and, if necessary, use military force.

The world has seen and will see American resolve.

I for one am very glad that we have

a president with Christianity as a true part of his makeup, or a "pastor" as you referred to him, to lead us during this trying period versus a president with his pants around his ankles.

Marty Haynes
MBA Class of 1995

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