

Amendment should be repealed

The founding fathers would not want the 16th Amendment.

The 16th Amendment should be repealed. America was founded as a republic of liberty. No one could exploit the government's

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power to control the lives of their fellow man, because the government had very little power to exploit. Government power was checked by a constitution. It was to be a country where the minority were protected from the majority, whether that minority be 49 percent of the population, 20 percent, or a minority of one. Even if 99 percent of the population wanted to infringe upon the rights of the remaining 1 percent, they could not do so because the Constitution protected them.

This was because America was not a democracy (rule by the majority); it was a republic (rule by central principles). It is easy to see why a republic is more desirable than a democracy. In an absolute democracy, the majority has absolute power over every aspect of everyone's lives. While this might be fine while your group is in the majority, if the majority sways to the other side you are at the mercy of someone else's whim. The only way to keep everyone secure from the abuse of power is to limit the amount of power that exists in the first place, through the establishment of a republic. Our founders knew this, and not once does the word "democracy" appear in the Constitution.

The 16th Amendment was a

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symbol of the gradual change from a republic to an absolute democracy that America would make in the 20th century. The 16th Amendment, passed in 1913, allows the government to place income taxes on its citizens. There is a reason the founding fathers left this out of the Constitution. It gives the majority absolute rule over the rightful property of anyone not included in their group.

With the passage of the 16th amendment, government started to grow. This gradual growth in the size of the government and the role of government in individual's lives would have appalled the early American revolutionaries. They had gotten rid of the tyranny of King George to see it replaced 150 years later by the tyranny of the majority.

Today, the government has grown to a massive size, with over a trillion dollar a year budget. Sixty-four percent of this budget is paid for by the top 5 percent of income earners. It is not surprising that a heavily progressive income tax would arise in a democracy moving toward totalitarianism. The majority middle and lower class Americans have used the 16th Amendment as an instrument to infringe upon the property rights of the upper class.

This new government attitude has not just been felt by the upper class. Now that the precedent had been set, the government has made more and more inroads into property rights. My father had to get a \$100 permit from the local

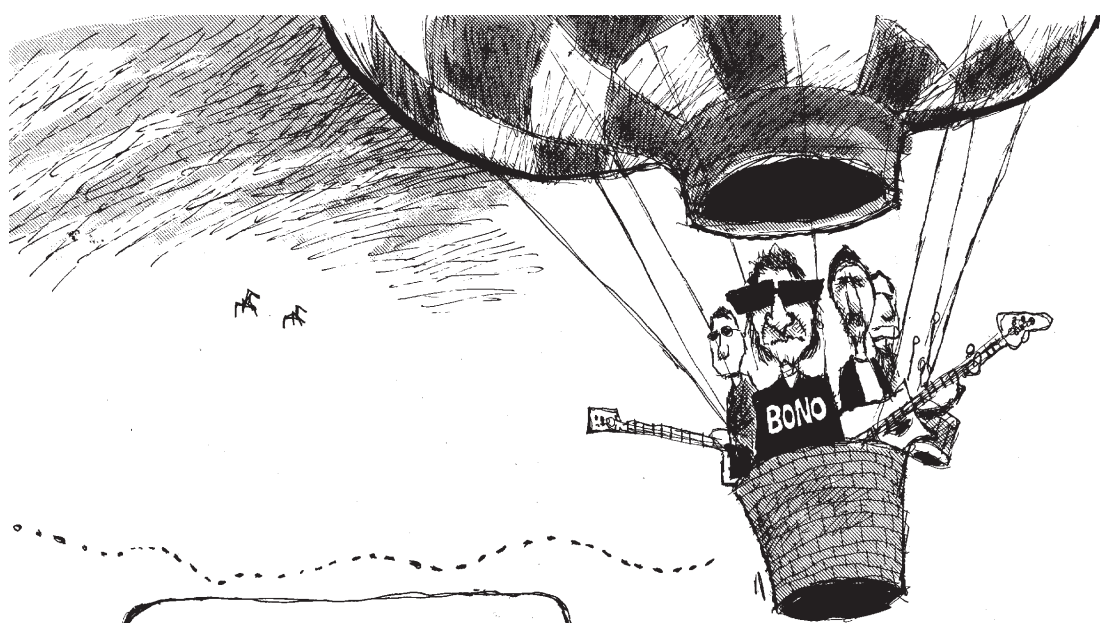
government before he could build a porch in our house's backyard. Every week, workers are forced to pay absurd amounts of their paychecks into income tax, social security and Medicare, for their own "good." Everywhere you look, gross offenses against the founding principles of the United States are being committed.

It is not surprising that with the disappearance of property rights, other rights began to be infringed upon as well. I do not doubt that the U.S. government today could do anything as long as it had enough popular support. In some cases, such as the war on Iraq, violating a constitutional law is done even without popular consent.

The Constitution requires congressional approval to declare war. Federal regulation of the television airwaves restricts freedom of speech. Politicians shocked by the use of foul language on CDs have attempted to use the government to outlaw it. Anti-drug legislation, abortion restrictions and legislation regulating sex between consenting adults have stripped away our right to the ownership of our own bodies. Proposed anti-flag burning bills and anti-pornography laws continue to infringe upon freedom of speech by forcing the tastes of the majority on all Americans.

If we wish to see a free society exist once again upon the face of this earth, this trend towards totalitarian democracy needs to be restrained and reversed. Repealing the 16th Amendment is a good and necessary first step. Government needs to be restricted to the limited role of keeping the rights of its citizens secure, as it was in the original Constitution. It should not be a tool for the majority of people to infringe upon those rights. I yearn to see just one country dedicated to individual freedom upon this earth in my lifetime.

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Are you deep or drowning?

Philosophical attitude no substitute for true enlightenment.

Have you ever wondered after that silent, disinterested guy in your English class who you see walking the grounds of campus with a thoughtful, far away look about him? He talks about authors he's read by their last names, as if intimate friends, and sulks around, sullen,

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willing everyone he passes to take note of his seemingly insightful thinking.

Or what about that girl in Intro to Blah with you who speaks passionately every five minutes of your 90 minute class, forcing her opinions on uninterested ears and drawing out one lecture over an entire week? You and the rest of the class make eyes at each other, recognizing that these would-be debates are consistently the voice of only one person.

Or the girl who start/ends every sentence with, "I feel like ..." as if her intuition can substitute for what others would deem "facts."

Or the guy in every one of the classes for your major who constantly outshines you with his "deep" and "profound" ideas, which everyone else recognizes as a mere attempt to appear both "deep" and "profound" so that you might go tell your friends he is "deep" and "profound," thus giving him a reputation for being a "deep, profound" intellectual.

Okay, granted, I do my share of silly away message quotes far from dripping in profundity, and make comments beginning with "I feel like ..." on occasion, but I've noticed, and you may have to, that some tend to take this to another - aforementioned - level.

There is nothing wrong with being a genuinely deep-thinking, insightful person. In fact, such a person is incredibly lucky for having a natural affinity towards seeing the multiple layers and underlying messages of everything while the rest of us have to acquire this skill. But actually wearing one's insightfully merely for the appearance of

At Wake Forest, the student population boils down to three types of people: those who "get it," those who don't and the faux deep. The ones who "get it" are innately insightful; the ones who don't are too laid-back or comfortable with themselves to be concerned; and, of course, the would-be's who simply end up looking foolish by trying too hard.

it is less than admirable, and only magnifies a certain insecurity, no?

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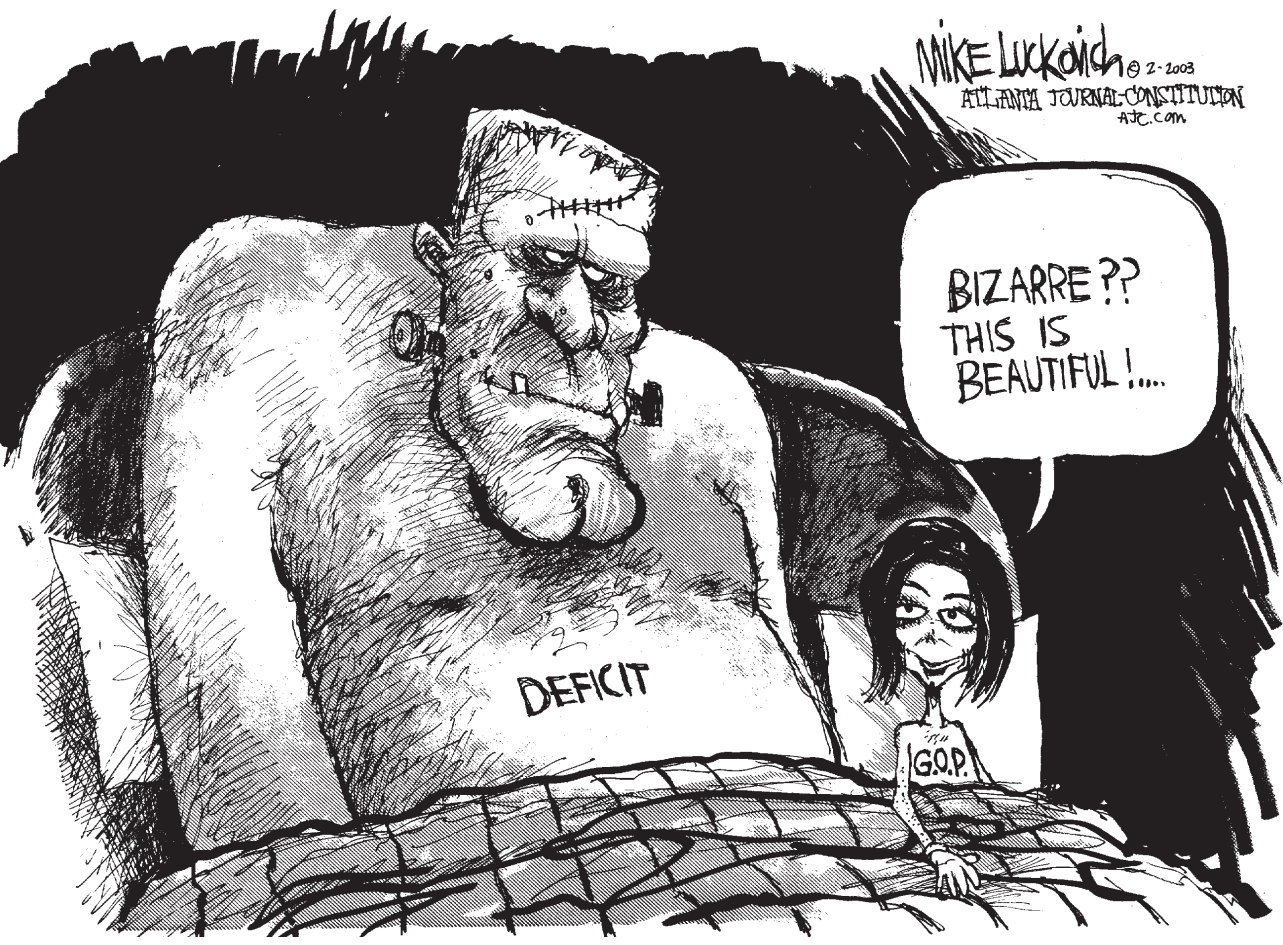
I am reminded of a Comedy Central skit I once watched on television that I think offers a perfect solution to this problem. A female psychiatrist sits in her swivel chair, nodding thoughtfully and releasing little murmurs of contemplation as her patient wails about his wife leaving, his chronic depression, his problems at work and his gambling addiction, to name a few. When he finishes and looks at her hopefully for motivational, inspirational advice to save his life, she spends a few minutes in apparently deep consideration. After a good amount of time, she looks back at him, says, "Stop it!" and leaves the room.

Okay, this obviously wouldn't work in practice; as much as I want to shout "Stop it!" - yes, sometimes even to myself - and have that be that, recognizing that silliness is the first step towards recovery.

Here's a visual that might work better: ever seen a small child flailing around in the deep end? Thought he could handle it but ended up embarrassing himself by frantically waving his arms around for all to see, unable to pull off the calm, controlled swimmer image? This could be you! Work your way to the deep end, but don't just jump in, even with floaties! Everyone can see your floaties!

Truth: Yes, we all have sporadic desires to appear fabulously philosophical. But the point is, let's not take it too far, okay?

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In the hustle and bustle of the day, it is important to be still

With the always active life of a college student, it's easy to forget who you really are.

What does it mean to be a college student? What does this strange life we all lead, of going to class instead of working, of depending on a faceless company to provide us with all the food that we eat and basing our satisfaction and self-esteem on a system

Republicans and College Democrats, as well as other student activist groups like the Coalition Against War in Iraq. Being involved in something that is larger than the campus and larger than ourselves is essential to a satisfying experience at college, at least in my opinion. However, there is more to this involvement than just being active.

On a related note, I was speaking to Chaplain Ed Christman the other day and promised him that I would consider this question in a column. The question that he asked me was, "Can college students be still?" I thought about that for a few days that turned into two weeks, and now I realize more what the chaplain was suggesting and what it involves. Being still is more involved than being asleep, though the answer to his question in regards to motion is fairly easy to answer.

Think about your typical day. If you're like most people I know, you get up in the morning. After this common action, the diversity of specific activities in which you can involve yourself is almost boundless. However, the common thread running through all of them is action. You have to leave your room to go to class, then sit in class and hopefully think and ask questions. After class, you might go to Benson or the Pit with some friends and talk about what you did for the weekend immediately prior to this one or what you will do for the weekend immediately following. After you finish with the fun for the day, you might go to the

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library or your room to read, do some homework or any of the innumerable things that people do in the comfort of their rooms.

During or after this period, you might IM the same friends you saw in Benson, talk with your roommate, go to a meeting for a sorority, fraternity, or other club and then study some more. I can't, offhand, think of anything that I do on a standard day that does not involve either thinking about some topic specifically or talking with friends about something or someone. At no point during this hypothetical day, which is a woefully inadequate summary of the complex day of a typical student, was there any time for introspection.

The two paragraphs appearing above are not related on the surface, but I would argue that they can and should be related at a deeper level. Activities are fine and good, and they do provide

an opportunity to be involved in the greater world community. However, by definition, activities involve dynamic action, and value that far above introspection. And while it may seem that you don't have the luxury of being still and not doing anything for a time, consider that some of the greatest minds in history did their work alone.

Do you think that Thoreau could have written *Walden* if he'd had Instant Messenger on his laptop? Could Edison have harnessed electricity while talking on his cell phone? Did Shakespeare learn to write in class? Give yourself a chance and you may discover that the most valuable time for learning is not the time you spend in lab or class, and the most valuable contribution you make to the outside world isn't that banner you hang in the Pit, but that cogent argument for your position that you think of and refine in solitary self-examination.

This column took a little heavier note than I intended. Keep in mind that I don't necessarily support a society of misanthropes, but I do want to remind people that, particularly in the environment of violence and dramatic change that is overtaking our world, it is extremely important to not get caught up in doing things so much that you lose touch with who you are.

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of five letters that we are assigned as part of some inscrutable system administered by those mysterious animals we call professors mean in the larger scheme of life? How do we fit ourselves and our concerns into the rest of the world? One way is to be involved in off-campus activities. This is exemplified by groups like the College