

Words, apathy are devastating

Homophobic vandalism victimizes students, yet the student body sits idly by.

For those of you who don't know, on Pledge Night a few weeks ago, someone went into the Huffman Residence Hall lounge and wrote the words "F--- FAGS" in black marker on the wall and on some of the furniture. The event marks yet another example of anti-gay hate speech that occurs regularly on this campus. I

James Morrill

GUEST COLUMNIST

had just come in from Pledge Night activities, when I happened upon the vandalism and, until someone asked me to write an editorial on the subject, I hadn't given it much thought. To me, it was just another manifestation of the bigoted behavior of select members of the student body.

To be honest, if I got upset every time I saw those words, I wouldn't be able to go to class on account that they seem to be scrawled onto every desktop. For that matter, I couldn't even go to the restroom, because I have yet to see a stall that doesn't have "so and so is a fag" or "God Hates Fags" or some other work of literary genius written on it. My initial reaction was not outrage per se, but a sort of sadness and acceptance of the inevitable. It was not until I began to question my own apathy to these words and actions that daily deny others and me the dignity that all human beings should enjoy, that I began to truly examine what had happened.

According to the *American Heritage Dictionary* the word faggot means "A bundle of twigs, sticks, or branches bound together." It is also listed as "a disparaging term for a homosexual man." Many people don't quite understand the connection between a bundle of twigs and a gay man. As many linguists believe the word faggot evolved out of the practice of burning homosexuals alive in the Middle Ages, as well as witches and other unwanted peoples. The faggot was used to fuel the fire for the execution. F--- is defined by the same dictionary as, "to take advantage of, betray, or cheat; victimize."

When I really began to pause and think about what the words really meant, I was horrified at my apathy, and I was devastated by the willingness of some individuals on this campus engage in such violence. Now I don't have the cleanest of mouths, but I will say that when someone uses those words, it is an act of violence. It tells sexual minorities that they are worthy of nothing but victimization. The words

When I really began to pause and think about what the words really meant, I was horrified at my apathy, and I was devastated by the willingness of some individuals on this campus engage in such violence. Now I don't have the cleanest of mouths, but I will say that when someone uses those words, it is an act of violence. It tells sexual minorities, that they are worthy of nothing but victimization.

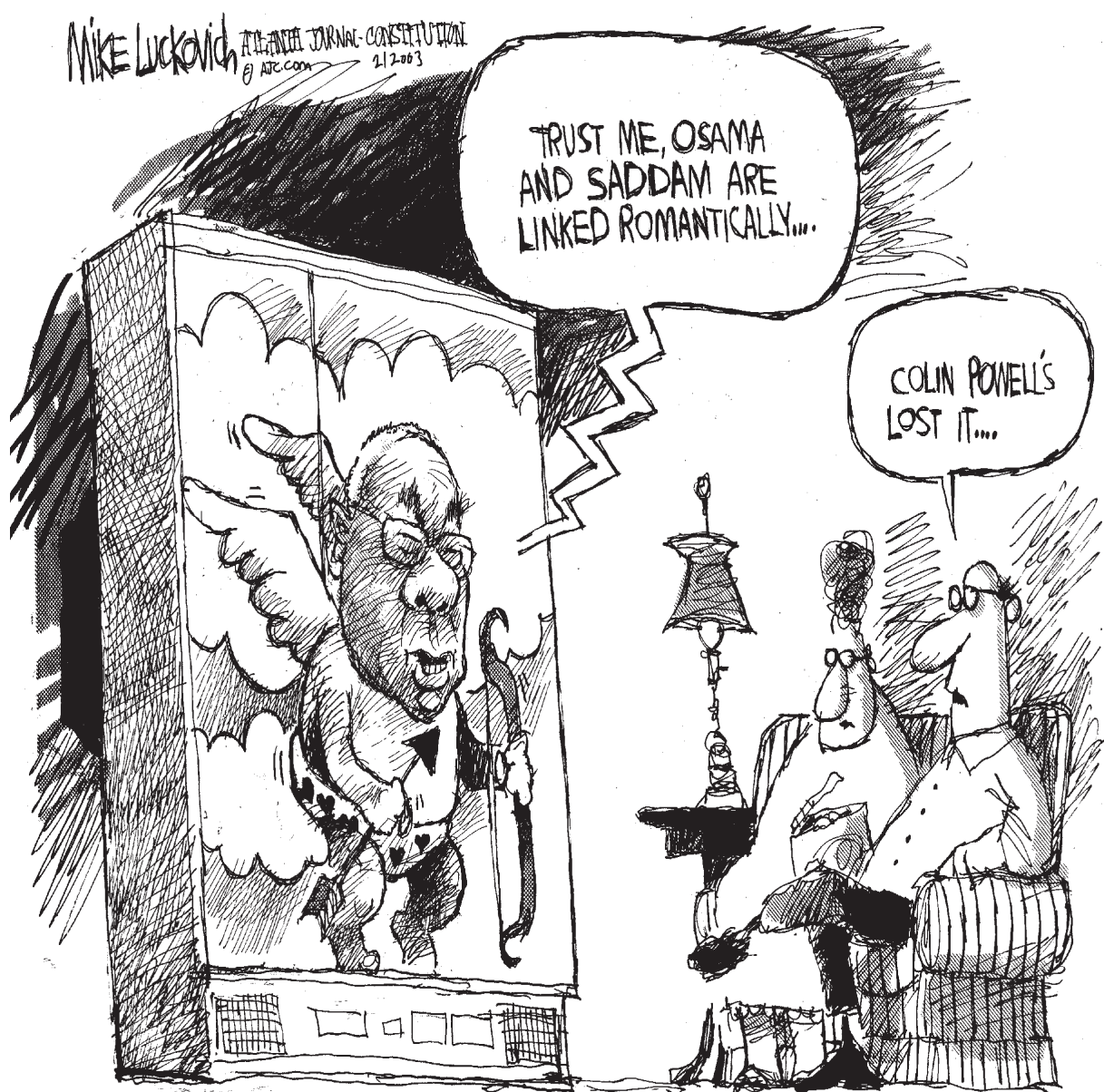
themselves victimize by making our identity something dirty, something to be despised, something to be burned out of the world.

You may be thinking to yourself, "Well that's horrible, but let's not overreact," or you may dismiss this article because you yourself never say such words. I have a feeling if someone had written "F--- N-GGERS" (a word I absolutely, completely abhor) this campus would be in an uproar. Racists now know, that is quite unpopular to be racist, so instead they keep such verbal displays of violence to themselves. I would even go so far to say, that most of us would speak up if they heard someone say such a thing. Why then do people sit idly by, while similarly violent insults are hurled out of people's mouths and written on walls all over this campus? Do you think there are no gay people here? Do you think that as long as you aren't in Huffman it's okay? Well you are wrong, flat wrong. Statistically, we are all over the place. Your frat brothers and sorority sisters. Your teammates and coaches. Your professors. There are sexual minorities everywhere at Wake Forest. Perhaps they would be more visible, if the environment wouldn't make it seem such an impossible task to be open about their sexuality.

In reality, we all have a responsibility to stand up and be counted as one who will not tolerate such acts of hate. The more I think about it, the more I think how ridiculous it is that people, including myself, have sat idly by as this conduct has continued. I am outraged that for all of the administration's talk of "zero tolerance" this behavior is met with little more than an acknowledgment.

We all have a responsibility to be outraged. It is not a matter of conflicting viewpoints. After all I don't go writing "F--- Republicans" on walls and desks. I may disagree with them, but they have a right to basic dignity and respect. Everybody has that right, including us faggots and dykes. So next time you hear or see those words, or heaven forbid, think about saying them, ask yourself whether you really know what you are saying.

James Morrill is a sophomore.



Criticism on authors misdirected

Critical focus should fall on topics instead of columnists.

Browsing editorials, news columns and the like, one can't help but ponder over the common theme of many. True, one or two of the many stand out from others, some are down-right hateful and a couple

I believe our biggest problem when it comes to these never-ceasing debates is not the ideas and rebuttals thereof, but rather the attacks made directly at the author instead of the issue.

Democrat versus Republican, liberal versus conservative, anti-war versus pro-war.

The two-sided debate method is quite popular. There's nothing wrong with that either. People everywhere thrive off of whatever drama they can get their hands on. Our own little paper would be nothing without it. However, I believe our biggest problem when it comes to these never-ceasing debates is not the ideas and rebuttals thereof, but rather the attacks made directly at the author instead of the issue. Yes, as any type of writer, one should be able to accept and reflect upon criticisms; but there's also a very valuable tool known as tact that many of us seem to forget when expressing dissenting opinions.

Rightly stated by Sarah Ware ("Are You Deep or Drowning," Feb. 13), many of us walk around trying to portray ourselves as the intellectual - somebody who pretends to have thoughts so revolutionary that everyone around them stops in their tracks and can't help but ponder the words just spoken. I'd also like to note that many like to be perceived as "badass know-it-alls" who

think they have the right to rip others apart and not even flinch because they are so "intellectual." Maybe that's the route taken by those who want to pull the intellectual number, and just don't know how. I don't know.

What I do know, however, is that if you are going to critique others work or would like to express a difference of opinion, you look much more intelligent and "badass" if you do it in regards to the issue, not the person who wrote about it. Honestly, has the human race lost all sense of courtesy and respect? Call me naive, but I thought that most of us, by the time we reached early adulthood, had moved beyond elementary school days of name calling and whatnot. Are we incapable these days of challenging each others opinions without trying to step on the opponent as well? If this is the case, please do pull me out of my utopia so that I too may throw away my dignity as a person.

Everyone wants to complain about the "cruel and harsh world" we live in these days. However, in my readings the past few weeks, and even in mere observation sometimes, I can't help but chuckle to myself knowing that it's the people themselves who are creating it. Maybe rather than striving to be so above the average intellect, people should go back to the basics, like striving to be a good person.

Miranda Mills is a freshman.

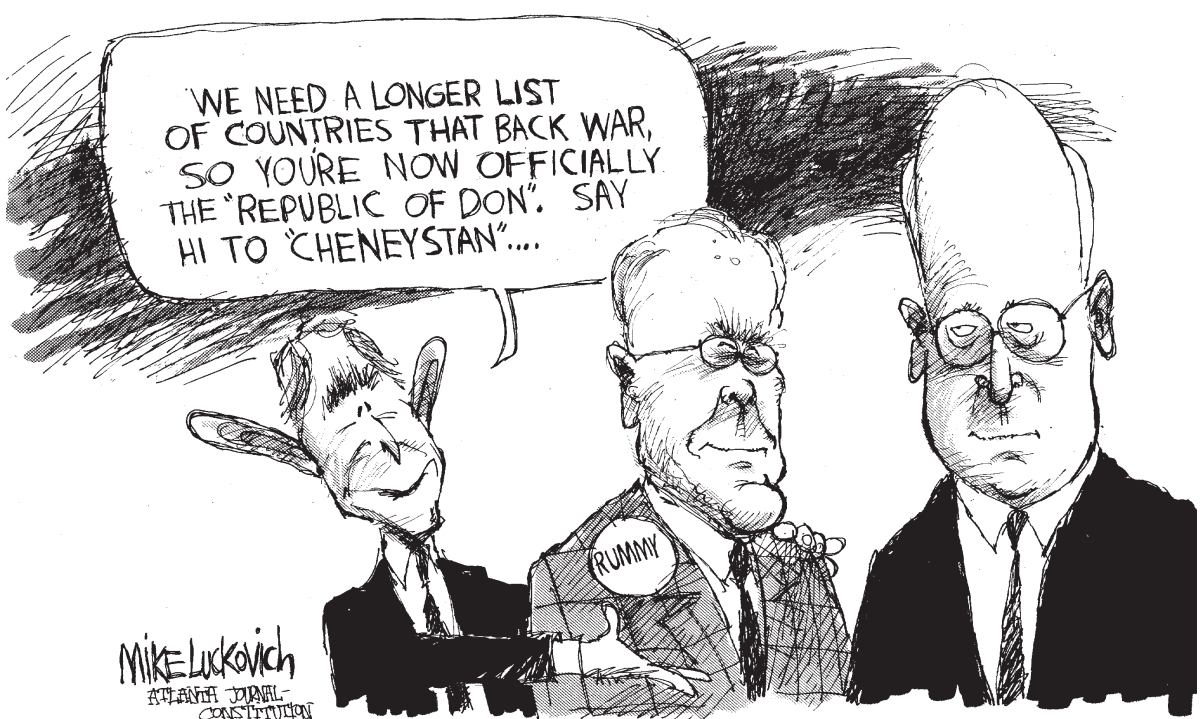


Miranda Mills

OLD GOLD AND BLACK COLUMNIST

are full of so many four and five syllable words that us simple-minded people from the sticks have to look up every other word to dissect the meaning. Upon that, a reader is brought right back to the initial point ... a common theme.

Plaguing the pages of the *Old Gold and Black* editorials section would be the rash of recent columns debating, dissecting and placing in verbatim Webster's meaning of the term diversity and how to "fix the problem." Opposite our weekly dose of the diversity issue sits the Greek debate and the regular articles bashing anyone who dares to oppose the system. And, alas, those not interested in the "social climate" of our grand university may read of the political rustle and tussle of



Large U.S. government hurts those that it is meant to help

Between taxes, free market skews and inflation, Uncle Sam takes what we earn.

In previous columns, I made some extreme suggestions that seem impractical. I feel I need to defend the practicality of my advice. First, I would like to show how badly our current big government system is in

Jacob Lyles

GUEST COLUMNIST

need of change. You imagine that you live in a land of prosperity. However, this is but a pale shadow of what could be. Consider three ways that the government makes everyone poorer: taxes, distorting the free market and inflationary banking policies.

First, let's look at taxes. Imagine that you wanted to buy a new \$23,000 Ford Taurus. In a land without taxes, according to an Americans for Tax Reform report, that same Taurus would then cost you \$12,650, including

manufacturers' profits. The reason for the difference in price is that the vehicle is taxed at every step in production. The government levies at least 20 taxes on Ford when it makes a Taurus. These include federal, state and local income taxes, workmen's comp and unemployment taxes, state and local property tax, energy taxes and gas, tire, truck and highway taxes for transportation. Add sales tax and the government's take is \$10,350.

These taxes do more than just hurt car manufacturers, laborers and consumers. Taxes contribute 26 to 75 percent to the price of every consumer product you buy. An average worker ends up paying 50 percent of his income to taxes. This means that he must work from January to June just to pay taxes. Without these taxes, poor people, and the rest of us, would be able to buy twice as many goods as we do now and the economy would grow faster. Private, free market alternatives to government services could be found that would be cheaper, of higher quality and more varied. This would result in a lesser amount of workers' paychecks being spent on these services, and more on other things like housing, food and transportation.

An average worker ends up paying 50 percent of his income to taxes. This means that he must work from January to June just to pay taxes. Without these taxes, poor people, and the rest of us, would be able to buy twice as many goods as we do now and the economy would grow faster.

The second way big government hurts everyone is by distorting the market. Take healthcare as an example. Starting in the 1960's with Medicare, the government started to subsidize healthcare for the poor and the elderly, in theory to help the less fortunate. This lowered the cost of health care for these consumers, driving up demand. At the same time, abundant government rules and regulations as well as underpayment of Medicare claims increased the cost of providing health care. This restricted the supply of health care. When you increase the demand and restrict the supply, it results in much higher prices and lower market efficiency. Studies show that the price of

medicine has increased far faster than the rate of inflation over the last 40 years. Medical spending is now close to 14 percent of our GDP, an absurdly high amount. The result of government interference in medicine is that it is no longer affordable. Before, people could afford not to have health insurance. Now, there is no way to pay for medical care without it. The government's solution to this is to expand public health coverage and regulations, further exacerbating the problem. What most politicians don't realize is that we need less government interference, not more.

The third way the government is robbing us blind is by inflation. When the government inflates the money supply it acts like a tax on all owners of money - our buying power goes down, the government has more money. Before 1933, the dollar was based on the gold standard; it was an IOU for a small amount of gold. One of the great things about using gold as money is that it is rather hard to get, since gold doesn't grow on trees. If the total amount of money remains constant, and productivity increases, prices for all goods should go down. However, starting in 1933, our

money did grow on trees. Instead of being redeemable for its weight in gold, it was redeemable for more pieces of paper whose worth was tied to the value of gold. Instead of nature directly controlling the money supply with the supply of gold, our government does with the supply of little green pieces of paper. Of course, if the government just started printing money at will, there would be a huge uproar. Instead the government prints more money through obscure banking policies and floating bonds, thus increasing the money supply - for a complete description, see Rothbard's *For a New Liberty*. We now have a yearly inflation rate thanks to Uncle Sam.

A smaller government and a gold standard would benefit everyone through lower prices for consumers, higher profits for producers and price deflation. Critics say a smaller government would hurt the poor. However, the best way to help the poor is by unchaining the free-market and contribution to private charity. Government intervention tends to hurt those it is designed to help.

Jacob Lyles is a sophomore who plans to major in economics and mathematics.