

# OPINION

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

## Policy changes rock Greek community

With nearly 50 percent of the campus belonging to a fraternity or sorority, Greek organizations certainly have a strong presence on campus. With these groups providing the lion's share of public social events on campus, changes in Greek policy affect the social atmosphere for all students.

For starters, party hours have been extended from 1:30 a.m. to 2:30 a.m., with several ensuing benefits, including more time for fun and socializing. But the most important repercussion will be that this should help prevent students from driving to bars, which close at 2 a.m., after a long night of drinking.

A not so popular change, however, specifically affects Greek and freshman women. The Pan-Hellenic Council has ruled that no freshman woman may attend sorority-sponsored or co-sponsored parties off campus. Furthermore, those parties must have predetermined guest lists. These changes bring drastic consequences for the entire student body, and the problems with those rules are wide and varied.

Much of the social scene on campus revolves around Greek organizations and their weekend or midweek parties. Sorority-sponsored off-campus theme parties were a fun and unique alternative to the traditional lounge parties.

Limiting those who can attend will hamper the general social life of independents who do, after all, make up 50 percent of the student body. Without providing an alternative, it seems unfair to limit those who can attend what were once open gatherings for all groups of students.

The openness and interaction between Greek groups and independents has always been something unique to the university and has created a much more inclusive environment overall. These changes not only hurt independents, but they also dampen one of the most enticing qualities of our Greek community and put it in serious danger of becoming more cliquish.

Perhaps it's time for more functions from a wider variety of campus groups. For example, SEAC's Earth Day picnic is always well attended by a diverse range of students. We encourage non-Greek organizations to get involved and fill in the social gaps previously filled by the Greek system.

The fact that freshman men are not included in the ruling about off-campus parties is unbalanced. If invited, they can still attend. When did we revert to the unfair practice of singling out women? The rule is designed to reduce excessive influence over freshman women before the Spring recruitment process, but it will only hamper their opportunities of getting to know the organizations on a more personal level.

The women's recruitment process is

already strongly founded on superficial interaction, and this restriction will certainly not help. Freshman women feel overwhelmed enough when making their decision.

The innumerable rules about the ratios of Greek to freshmen women, visits to sorority halls and permitted interaction between potential new members and members of a particular sorority are already exaggerated and farcical enough. Who can keep them all straight, and to what end? The rules have become impossible to follow.

What happens when a freshman builds a house for Habitat for Humanity and finds herself working with more than two sorority members? These types of petty regulations will only make the recruitment process more chaotic, intimidating and stressful for all parties involved.

On a positive note, however, the formation of an All-Greek Council is an excellent stride in the effort to bring together traditionally white and historically black fraternities and sororities. We hope that this will bear fruit and bring about a lasting interaction between the organizations. Those involved, however, must not forget that while the council is a strong first step, it is not the only step.

Another organizational change affects the Interfraternity Council, which is now under the jurisdiction of Tricia Richerson, the newly appointed director of Greek Affairs & Conference Programs. This new arrangement has created a conflict of interest. RLH is responsible for sanctions against Greek Housing and is now supposed to counsel and encourage the groups as well.

The merge eliminated the nonbiased third party, a position that Mike Ford, the director of student development, once served. Fraternities can no longer seek administrative advice on issues of housing or party policy, without the fear of sanctions.

Another big change to the Greek and social system on campus will involve the attempted addition of two new sororities. While this will reduce the size of the existing organizations, whose ranks number as high as 150, those involved in this process will have to concentrate on positive public relations and a strong recruitment process for the new groups.

Several sororities have folded in the past few years, and the women will have to make an especially big splash on campus in order to succeed. With the new closed parties, however, that's going to be even harder to do. They, unlike the existing organizations, will not even have word of mouth and reputation to help with promotion.

So while the Pan-Hellenic Council is trying to add sororities and increase the options available to freshman women, they are also making the recruitment process considerably more difficult.

# Church, state must be separate

The wall Jefferson erected between our government, faith is always threatened.

Thomas Jefferson wrote, "Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his god, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government

The matter of privacy ... piques my curiosity – as far as I understand it, many consider their religious faith and relationship (or lack thereof) with a supreme being to be a personal matter that they would prefer not to be meddled with; *why* would anyone want to mix their faith in what they consider to be sacred with the least sacred realm of all, politics?



Kathryn Spangler

EDITORIALS  
EDITOR

reach actions only, and not opinions ... legislature should make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, thus building a wall of separation between church and state."

Separation of church and state: these immortal words have been ingrained in our popular vernacular, irrevocably intertwined with the ideals of liberty and equality America was founded upon.

So, why is the practical application of these ideals always met with such resistance?

The latest example of this resistance is the firestorm of controversy that was ignited when atheist Michael Newdow, a Sacramento, Calif., physician with a law degree, filed a lawsuit saying the inclusion of "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance amounted to a government endorsement of religion when recited by his second-grade daughter and her classmates. On June 26 the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco ruled in favor of Newdow.

"A profession that we are a nation 'under God' is identical ... to a profession that we are a nation 'under Jesus,' a nation 'under Vishnu,' a nation 'under Zeus' or a nation 'under no god,' because none of these professions can be neutral with respect to religion," wrote Judge Alfred T. Goodwin in the majority opinion.

The Justice Department wasted no time before filing an appeal asking for an "en banc" rehearing before the court, where an 11-judge panel would consider the appeal.

The Senate, not to be outdone, passed a resolution 99-0 expressing full support for the Pledge (the only senator not voting was Sen. Jesse Helms, R-NC, who was recovering from heart surgery). Over 100 members of Congress also took to the steps of the Capitol, hands over hearts, to recite the Pledge en masse.

For clarity's sake, here is a brief history of the Pledge: in 1892, socialist editor and clergyman Francis Bellamy wrote the Pledge to reflect socialist utopian ideals. The Pledge, reading "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation indivisible, with liberty and

Justice for all," was later published in the juvenile periodical *The Youth's Companion*.

In 1924 "the flag of the United States of America" replaced "my Flag," ostensibly so no other nation could usurp the Pledge for its own use. In 1942 the government officially recognized the Pledge, and in 1954, after lobbying by religious leaders concerned that the Pledge bore a strong resemblance to orations used by "godless communists," Congress revised the Pledge to include the crucial phrase "under God."

Where does our concern for the separation of church and state come from, anyway? Contrary to popular belief, those words do not appear in the Constitution – they were first coined by Jefferson in his letter to the Danbury Baptist Association in 1802, and became part of one of two clauses in the First Amendment that guarantees freedom of religion, the Establishment Clause, which prohibits the government from passing legislation to establish an official religion or preferring one religion over another.

It's pretty clear that atheism and other minority faiths are *not* preferred by some of the men and women in power. "The decision is so much out of the mainstream of thinking of Americans and the culture and values that we hold in America, that any Congressman that voted to take it out would be putting his tenure in Congress in jeopardy at the next election," Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) said.

Grassley, however, misses the point of the celebrated ideals of liberty and equality: No one should ever try to define which morals or beliefs are "American" because our nation should be that which has no one culture or set of values beyond a universal understanding that each one of us should expect our opinions to be tolerated and respected as long as we tolerate and respect the opinions of others. To call a value "American" negates America's promise that no minority will ever be marginalized.

Indeed, the court concurred with this philosophy, saying the Pledge sends a message to unbelievers "that they are outsiders, not full members of the political community, and an accompanying message to adherents that they are insiders, favored members of the political community."

"Those who do believe in God ... may feel strongly that this belief is a matter between themselves and God, and not something that should have

anything at all to do with the U.S. government," wrote Scott Rosenberg on Salon.com.

The matter of privacy cited by Rosenberg piques my curiosity – as far as I understand it, many consider their religious faith and relationship (or lack thereof) with a supreme being to be a personal matter that they would prefer not to be meddled with; *why* would anyone want to mix their faith in what they consider to be sacred with the least sacred realm of all, politics? For politicians the answer is clear – as Grassley stated, any politician with any concept at all of American popular opinion recognizes that when it comes down to God, apple pie and wholesome little children saying the Pledge with their wholesome little hands over their wholesome little hearts versus the decidedly less-than-wholesome godless liberal intellectuals, that God, apple pie and wholesomeness will always win.

"I see my role as correcting the record and making sure that the American people know that my daughter is being raised in a Christian home," Sandra Banning, the mother of Newdow's daughter, said on CNN's *Wolf Blitzer Reports*. "She attends Sunday school and I teach Sunday school."

Ms. Banning, no one *cares* whether or not your daughter goes to Sunday school, whether or not your household is indeed a Christian one or if you hold ritual blood-letting ceremonies every Thursday evening while your church minister prances around your living room in a sequined tube top and high heels.

The point Newdow has been trying to make all along is that one's religious beliefs and practices should be kept out of the public realm, and that the government should show absolutely no bias, explicitly or implicitly so, for any faith. Whether or not Banning feels her home life is under fire is irrelevant; indeed Newdow has been trying to keep control of a child's religious upbringing strictly in the hands of the *parents* without any undue interference by the government.

"What's next?" asked Sen. Kit Bond (R-Missouri). "Will the courts now strip 'so help me God' from the pledge taken by new presidents?"

In an ideal world, "so help me God" *wouldn't* be recited by any new presidents taking office, "In God we trust" *wouldn't* appear on any currency and witnesses in courtroom trials *wouldn't* place their hands on a Bible before giving testimony.

Our schizophrenic system of government that claims to believe in a separate church and state, yet cries foul when someone actually demands compliance, will always realize my suspicion that while all of its citizens are "equal," some are more "equal" than others (apologies to George Orwell).

Either we as American citizens believe in the *unflinching* separation of church and state, or we don't – which is it?

Editorials Editor Kathryn Spangler is a junior who plans to major in history.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Sig Ep 'scandal' a mere case of collegiate hijinks

Like many others who read the story that was plastered all over Internet news sites of the pig that was discovered drunk, sunburned and confused in the woods after the university's chapter of Sigma Phi Epsilon bought it and took it to a party, I found it hilarious.

I've known plenty of people who reeked of alcohol, were sunburned and didn't know their whereabouts in the morning.

What happened to the pig was no different than what many students bring on themselves and was certainly better than what would have happened had the hog not been bought by the Sig Eps.

Hogs are typically packed in houses veal-style with about 1,000 of their brethren. Every hog lets loose 10 pounds of urine and feces a day (so, yes, it does smell worse than a women's bathroom at Tanglewood Park).

When it is time for slaughter, hogs are run into a restraining chute, given an electrical shock that hopefully renders them unconscious, shackled, hoisted in the air and then bled to death by having a knife inserted into

their sternum and pushed towards the tail.

Okay, enough with that hippie nonsense – I like a good ham sandwich as much the next guy and don't want to ruin it.

But you get the point: I was never a big fan of the Sig Eps when I was at the university – I chose ignored over loved or hated – but surely partying with them was better than the alternative for the pig.

Is it also ludicrous to contend that the pig shouldn't have been at the party in the first place? Why have a pig? It's college, and, in the words of *Animal House's* Bluto Blutarsky, "Why not?"

What happened is amusing and actually makes the university sound like a fun place – that's all.

Anyone who thinks this story is bad for the university's reputation hasn't paid attention to some of the distinguished speakers the university hosted this semester: socialist Cornel West, who quit his professorship at Harvard University after being criticized by its president for spending too much time rapping and not enough teaching, and admitted plagiarist Doris Kearns Goodwin who "failed to provide quotations marks" in some of her books.

The only thing for which the Sig Eps should be punished was their failure

to take care of the pig after the party. That was irresponsible.

It is a ridiculous notion to assume that all of the publicity surrounding this incident will negatively impact the university.

Those without ties to the university likely will forget the incident within a week or so.

If people do remember it, they will probably forget all the details, save that some fraternity somewhere brought a pig to a party.

Except for leaving the pig, none of the actions that have been reported violated any of the beliefs on which the university was founded.

The university's motto is *Pro Humanitate* – not *Pro Suis*.

Zach Everson  
Class of 1998

### Our letters policy

We welcome letters. Send yours via e-mail to letters@ogb.wfu.edu, by campus mail to P.O. Box 7569, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27109, or deliver it to Benson 518. We reserve the right to edit all letters for length and clarity. No anonymous letters will be printed.

## OLD GOLD AND BLACK

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY SINCE 1916

Will Wingfield  
Editor in Chief

Kim Stewart  
Business Manager

Lisa Hoppenjans  
Managing Editor

**News:** Elizabeth Bland and Tom Clark editors; Scott Hurff, production assistant.

**Editorials:** Kathryn Spangler and Elizabeth Turnbull, editors.

**Sports:** Matt Gallagher, editor; Jim Gleitman, assistant editor; Tripp Mickle and Alex Myers, production assistants.

**Arts & Entertainment:** Taylor Kenamer and Susannah Rosenblatt, editors; Ethan Dougherty, Kezia McKeague and Dayton Vielguth, production assistants.

**Perspectives:** Phil Glynn, editor.

**Online Edition:** Brad Abrahams, Webmaster.

**Graphics:** Tiffany Needham and Robyn Washington, editors.

**Business Staff:** Austin Harris and Ashley Pruitt, assistant business managers; Jenny Gow, sales representative; Lisa Dong and Sean Golden, production managers.

**Circulation Manager:** Karl Sondermann.

**Photography:** Zach Klein, editor; Chris Bodenner and Sarah Leer, assistant editors.

**Adviser:** Wayne King.

The *Old Gold and Black* is published each Thursday during the school year, except during examinations, summer and holiday periods, by W.W. Printing & Graphics Inc. of High Point, N.C. Questions or comments should be sent via e-mail to comments@ogb.wfu.edu or via mail to P.O. Box 7569, Winston-Salem, N.C., 27109. © 2002 WFU Publications Board. All rights reserved.

The views expressed in all editorials and advertisements contained within this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the *Old Gold and Black*.

If you wish to submit a guest editorial, call the editorials editor at Ext. 5280 at least one week in advance of the issue in which you would like it to appear.