

Anniversary of Sept. 11th inspired patriotic feelings

Embracing American ideal of liberty, paying homage to forefathers important.

During the early morning hours of the one-year anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks, honored appropriately in remembrance and hope as Patriots' Day, I sat awake, reflecting on the events of the past year and was compelled to write

Fritz Vaughan

GUEST COLUMNIST

down the following thoughts on being an American. May they fittingly pay tribute to the legacy of all heroes who gave their lives so that we may sleep peacefully at night knowing we will wake up to the blessings of freedom and democracy.

Just over 225 years ago, brave men became patriots, uniting a nation under a single, basic premise that for us as a "people," our God-given rights would be preserved. To this day, we consider the eloquent words of the Declaration of Independence sacred, that indeed "All men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among

these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness."

After all, it was these words that spurred a nation towards independence, eventually creating what is recognized as the oldest written national constitution currently in effect.

A Constitution that still emphasizes the rights of its citizens before the rights of its government, a Constitution that precludes outlining the government's power by stating the government's purpose as one to "form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity," all of which ensure protection of the people governed, not those who govern.

Since these foundations, men and women have dedicated their hearts and given their lives to protecting the very liberties for which our forefathers fought.

As a nation, we have prevailed throughout history on the battlefield as well as domestically, and when people look at this great land, they envision symbols like the Stars and Stripes, the Statue of Liberty and the Liberty Bell – symbols that will forever shine brightly as beacons of freedom and hope! We should take pride in these symbols of American values.

We should take pride in the sacrifices prior generations, and now this

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generation, have endured to protect the freedoms we live with today. We should take pride in a federal system of government where sovereignty lies with the people.

We should take pride in living in a country dedicated to ensuring justice is served whenever evil acts are committed. We should take pride in the resurgence of patriotism that has spread throughout our nation. We should take pride in our president's compassion and dedication to serving the best interests of all Americans.

We should take pride in our ability to engage in scholarly debate over heated issues while upholding respect for our neighbor. We should take pride in being Americans.

Yes, I am proud to be an American! I could not imagine living in a country where the outcome of an "election" is decided by the regime that is in power; countries in which speaking out against

the government results in jail time, or even death.

I could not imagine living in a country where my primary source of fear comes not from foreign enemies, but from how my government may exercise force on its own citizens.

I could not imagine living in a country that discourages personal liberty and competition. I could not imagine living in a country that depreciates the value of diversity; a country in which freedom of expression, religion and press are not valued as God-given rights. Indeed, I could not imagine living anywhere else.

America has been through the fire on numerous occasions, emerging from each tribulation with renewed strength and resolve.

But a year ago, a group of men believed that their evil actions would inflict fatal wounds on the morale and resolve of this great nation by taking the lives of innocent civilians. They believed that while our national security has been threatened before, we had never faced nor could accept the horrors of such massive, heartless attacks on innocent lives.

The truth, however, is that while the physical landscape of the United States was wounded, American resolve was so strong that even a year after our homeland was attacked, there remains overwhelming support for ridding the world of such iniquity.

Our resolve is so strong that almost 140 years after they were first orated, Abraham Lincoln's famous words are applicable in today's search for justice: "That we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from this earth."

This generation will forever be defined by the Sept. 11 attacks, just as previous generations have been defined by battles for independence and World Wars.

The obvious result, in each case, was the valiant loss of lives in the name of freedom. But just as important as recognizing such valor, is the result we, as a society, live with. It is vital that we live each day in a manner appropriately honoring the sacrifices made to preserve the American way of life.

With each passing day, I try to honor the many fallen heroes by making every possible effort to uphold the values and blessings we hold dear in American culture. In doing so, I begin each day the same way, and ask each of you to join me: I look to the Stars and Stripes and thank God I'm an American!

Fritz Vaughan is a sophomore who plans to major in political science.

Windows lacking peer in tech world

Replacing Windows with Linux would undoubtedly do students a disservice.

Computing is as much a part of this university as being a basketball fan or getting plastered on the weekends, which is to say that if you choose to make that an important part of your life, you are free to do so, but otherwise, you can take it or leave



Chris Plumlee

OLD GOLD AND BLACK COLUMNIST

it. Most people on campus outside the department of computer science are satisfied with the computing system as it sits, but I recently had an experience there that made me reevaluate my complacency with the university's computing attitude. Linux is an open-source operating system that is available from the department of computer science or from Red Hat, a distributor of Linux. After a weekend spent tinkering with the operating system while doing nothing else productive, I'm prepared to make a definitive statement about the utility of Linux versus Windows.

Linux is at least as easy to use as Windows, and is superior in some areas while lagging behind in a couple of others. That wasn't as dramatic, no doubt, as some of you would hope, but I think that it's a fair assessment of the situation. Linux has Windows beat on stability and on pure utility if you understand how to use the operating system. Most applications that currently run under Windows will run under Linux, and things like e-mail work exactly the same, except that you use a different server. The most common applications that people run under Windows can be duplicated on Linux, such as file-sharing systems, Web browsing, Instant Messaging and word processing. In many cases, the Linux flavors of these programs are more flexible and customizable than their Windows counterparts.

At the same time, Linux lags behind in a couple of crucial areas. First, the network drivers that Red Hat includes as part of the default load for their version of Linux are perhaps the most worthless pieces of software that you could have on a computer. I think our network here is pretty bland and generic, but for some reason your connection will time out about every hour if you leave Linux running for a while. The second and probably most crucial area that Linux lags behind Windows is availability of software. Everybody on campus has one thing on their laptop that they installed, and that probably won't work with Linux. In my case, it's the driver for my digital

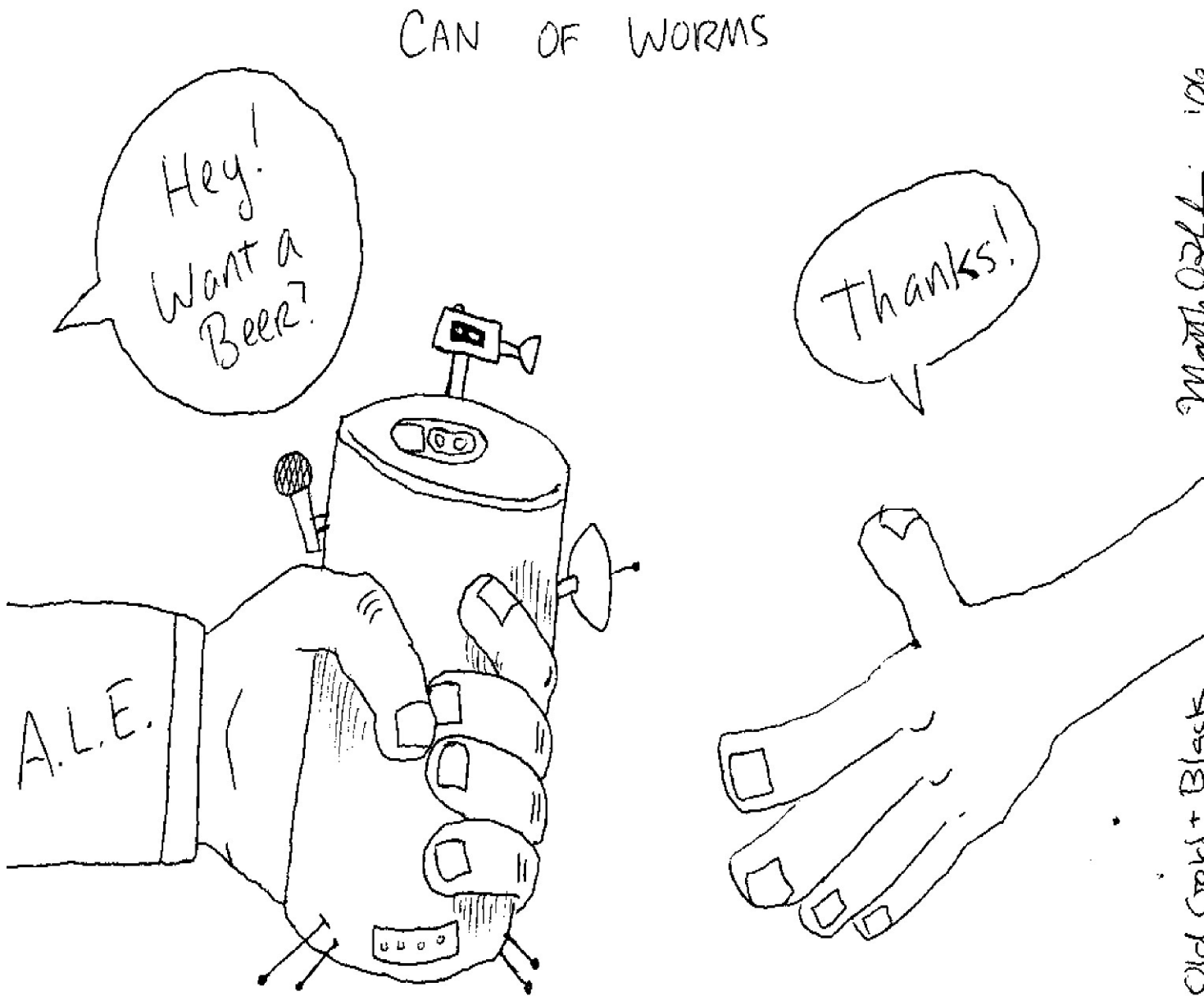
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camera. I can't make it work under Linux, and I don't have a copy of the driver with me anymore because I didn't think I'd need it, so it's totally useless to me.

I say that to reveal something to the student body which, six months ago, would have frankly horrified me. There have been proposals put forward by Linux zealots to change the computing policy either by going to a dual-boot system, where one can choose to boot into Linux or Windows, or by eliminating Windows entirely and going to Linux only. To me, this smacks of imprudence, because if the university trains students to use Linux and it is not widely used in the corporate world, then everyone who graduates will have to relearn Windows to get a job. The computer training that comes from using a computer every day is too valuable just to throw away on a whim, especially considering that it's a big advantage we have over universities that expect you to either use their computer labs or get over it. On the plus side, perhaps we could expect the increases in tuition to go down with the adoption of an open-source system. Once you have Linux on your computer, updates are available to keep your system running at peak efficiency, and the license fees to get Windows and Microsoft Office could be trimmed significantly.

Maybe this is all a pipe dream, and I must confess that I'm ambivalent on the issue. I just got my last new computer from the university, and it came standard with Windows XP, just like 89 percent of the computers sold in the United States last year. I have loaded Linux on my computer, but more as an experiment than anything else. I still find myself choosing Windows 75 percent of the time when I boot up, and I haven't found anything that I can make Linux do that Windows won't do at all. However, I do believe that the question deserves to be raised outside the department of computer science because in the world of corporate America, Linux is making a small dent. IBM recently announced a partnership with Red Hat to release more machines with Linux loaded and optimized, and already many servers for large corporate LANs use UNIX, which is a more esoteric predecessor to Linux. If the goal is to prepare students for their future jobs in all areas, then perhaps some introduction is in order. In either case, consider the fact that you have alternatives to Microsoft and Windows, and consider that eventually their dominance may end.

Chris Plumlee is a junior communications major.



Nevada's logic up in smoke?

Legalization of marijuana on the ballot in upcoming November state elections.

Calling all marijuana smokers! Nevada wants you – yes, you – in the prostituting, gambling center of the nation. Now, after recruiting adulterers, STD's and the scum bagging wealthy, they want more. They want the drug-addicted.

Miranda Mills

GUEST COLUMNIST

An initiative pending qualification for the November elections would amend the state's constitution, allowing for the possession of up to three ounces of marijuana by an adult. Before this happens, voters must give their approval this fall and again in 2004.

So, if you are looking for a brand-new place to settle down after your hard work at this university, and you would also like to kill those brain cells you didn't toast while getting drunk these past four years, come on down to Nevada where your mind can be as fried as the deserts outside Las Vegas. Just think. Get up every morning and pack your kids off to school. Go to work. Punch at your computer all morning long. When lunchtime rolls

around, forget that cigarette break. Mellow out and share a joint with your co-workers. Work hard the rest of the afternoon. Stop by the grocery store on the way home. On your grocery list are milk, eggs, something for supper and – oh, yeah – a bag of pot!

That's the way your life can be when you come settle down in the good old state of Nevada. Just think, wouldn't it make you proud to see your future teenage children holding a beer in one hand and a blunt in the other? Yep, they'd be on the fast track to success.

If you're a really good parent you can see your child on the local news 20 years from now as a politician campaigning for the legalization of crack cocaine. His faithful wife, a hooker struggling with her herpes infection, campaigns for him in the gambling bar beside your home on Bum Boulevard. This is the life you've been waiting for.

Right now, Nevada is just pushing for legal marijuana. But imagine what's next. One drug always does lead to another; so don't let your hopes down all you hard-core crack heads, LSD shooters and crystal meth

fans. Your day's coming just around the corner.

And guess what? There are benefits for other people too. While tobacco farmers are having such tough times with the anti-smoking campaigns, they can split their crops in half and start farming some marijuana as well. Agriculture industry, your day has come!

Also, think of the benefits for law enforcement agencies. They won't have to worry about silly things like illegal drugs anymore. They will be hard at work picking up all those murderers and thieves out there trying to support their drug habits.

So now we have a regular cycle. Government makes criminals, police officers arrest criminals, government makes more criminals and police officers arrest more criminals. It's the best plot the government has come up with since taxes.

So everyone out there in opposition of marijuana, just sit down, take a minute, roll a joint, and think this through.

Drug addicts won't be arrested, kids will know its okay to use drugs, tobacco farmers won't lose their jobs and the police force will finally have other things to focus on besides drug addicts (because right now that's just all they are worried about).

So what are you waiting for? Get your pot-smoking self over to Nevada, where marijuana is just another weed in the field.

Miranda Mills is a freshman.