

# Senior survives Pledge Night, freshmen, lives to tell

You may outgrow frat parties but not your attachment to Wake.

Sarah Crosland  
GUEST COLUMNIST

When the words "Pledge Night" are mentioned at Wake, the response is either a grimace in remembrance of exchanging slobber with people you'd rather not even exchange smiles with or the far off dreamy look considering the night you finally got a kiss from your crush. Granted, he/she was barely sober enough to stand up and promptly passed out after it happened, never to even remember your name again, but clearly that is all inconsequential.

However, there are actually two Pledge Nights here, and while the fall one doesn't have the extensive reputation of that infamous spring night, it should not be ignored.

As a senior in college, I am told that I need to go out at every possible experience. I'm not sure if my friends are planning on killing me at the end of this year or if they know something I don't and after May 17, all parties for college graduates will suddenly cease, but they're pretty insistent on this whole "going out" thing. So I went, venturing out of my

cozy room into the madness that was the first night of on-campus fraternity parties last Friday.

9:30 pm: Several friends and I wander an unnamed fraternity's halls. I find that if I squeeze myself hard enough up against the concrete block walls, then I will not be pushed over by freshman girls who are repeating one guy's name over and over again as they head for his room, in the hope that if they know someone there then they can stumble drunkenly down the hall without anyone noticing.

I manage to push my way into a room containing excitement in the form of college students who have already had enough to drink convincing themselves that it is extremely cool and funny to slur their words, take one more shot together and then laugh because the shot glass actually missed their mouths.

10:05 pm: We are herded off of the halls because the party has now officially started downstairs. Pushing in the direction of the pulsating bass down in their lounge, along the way I am introduced to a really friendly guy, who has an amazing ability to simultaneously rub my hand while shaking it and say to me, "Oh yes, Sarah, I've seen you around before, haven't I?" while doing something with his eyes that makes me suspicious he has a twitch.

"Wow! A senior! You look so young." Now one would think that at 21 years of age, a comment like this would make me indignant, as I would like to feel that I look as mature as my age certainly must sound.

However, after having been surrounded for the last 30 minutes by 18 year-olds with torsos the size of my arm, I succumbed to the flattery of this comment. My new friend's lacking math skills were quickly forgotten.

10:45 pm: Does anyone ever consider the fact that frat parties basically consist of turning off lights and turning on music?

Not to be excessively thoughtful here, but does it not strike anyone else as strange that at parties it is dark enough that you can barely see the other people and loud enough that you certainly can't hear them, and then we all congregate there as if that is the ideal place for conversation?

Plus, most people are so intoxicated that even if you do manage to have a halfway decent conversation with them,

chances are they won't remember it the next day.

So on Friday's frat foray, I managed to make it into the area where people are "hanging out." Here, the music is quiet enough that if you yell, you can make out what the other person is saying - barely. I decide that probably I'm not going to meet any life-long friends in a place where I am avoiding Busch Light showers at every bump. Toward the "dance floor" I go.

This is a central part of these parties, and I will be the first to admit that it is one of my favorite parts of "going out."

However, on

Pledge Night, the floor is dominated by those infamous freshmen.

Even as I try my best to enjoy the latest enlightening tune by 50 Cent, I cannot ignore the lusty couple next to me who have discovered that a lot more can go on at frat parties than what they got away with at prom and have promptly put this newfound freedom to good use.

11:50 pm: I am sitting with another jaded senior out on the patio of the frat tower. We have already conversed at least once with every person we know at the party and, as sad as it is, most of our friends have retreated back home for rest.

However, as I sit and speak with him, I remember what I love about Wake Forest. While clearly the sauna-like congregating areas - where one is just as likely to step on a passed-out pledge as beer sludge - and the random dark, make-out friendly dance floors have lost much of their appeal, I still love this.

I love that I'm not one of those freshman who must hold desperately to their hallmates for fear of being lost in a sea of fraternity boys.

I love that, sitting on the wall, I can see at least a dozen people whom I call friends, but that there are still enough unknowns to make it fun.

I love that I'm lucky to be a college student who still enjoys rap music, will - in a state of crisis - drink cheap beer, and if I'm brave enough next weekend, may even pull out one of those old halter tops.

Sarah Crosland is a senior political science major.



## '04 Howler comments

Staff acknowledges mistakes made, changes follow.

This piece expresses the views of the entire 2004 Howler staff.

The Homecoming article on page 100 of the 2003 Howler has deeply affected the current staff of the Howler. While the responsibility for what is printed in any publication rests on the editor in chief, the staff still shares responsibility. The 2004 Howler staff wishes to sincerely apologize for the offensive nature of the article.

While it was not the original intent of the article to have a biased slant or be racist in any form, we recognize that it indeed came off this way and we are sorry. The Howler does not advocate any sort of exclusion based on race or ethnicity.

We understand that diversity in all of its forms is crucial to broadening one's worldview, which is what we sought to accomplish through the 2003 edition of the Howler. This article is in no way reflective of the goals we set forth for the book.

The printing of this article has raised several questions amongst

Had this article actually found its way into the hands of the copy editors, it never would have made it into the book. Also, the fact that the editor was cautioned about the article, yet it was still published, is troubling to us, as we're sure it is to all of you.

staff members: how did this article make it into the book? What can we do to prevent it from happening in the future?

The proper editing procedures of the Howler were not followed. Nancy Rinehart was told that, as a section editor, it was not necessary for any of her articles to be proof-read by the copy editors. Had this article actually found its way into the hands of the copy editors, it never would have made it into the book. Also, the fact that the editor was cautioned about the article, yet it was still published, is troubling to us, as we're sure it is to all of you.

This incident of editorializing is an isolated one. The Howler does not typically place opinion pieces between its pages; this has rarely

happened in the 101-year history of the book. However, in order to keep this event an anomaly, new procedures need to be set forth. This will be one of the early efforts made by the staff in our editorial board meetings.

The issue of trust also must be addressed. The administration, faculty and students place trust in the individual who is selected as editor in chief to be able to exercise good judgment when it comes to what is printed in the Howler. Staff members that work with the editor also place trust in that person.

In the case of the 2003 Howler, particularly the Homecoming article, this trust was subverted and betrayed.

In response to the controversy the article has caused, the staff is willing to work with those students affected by the article to rectify the situation and ensure that nothing like this occurs in the future. The 2004 Howler staff once again collectively apologizes for the offensive content contained within the Homecoming article. However, we remain hopeful that some positives can be gleaned from this situation; that dialogue about the much larger and more complex issues associated with this article will now be addressed and discussed.

## Mullets will save your soul!

The mud-flapping mullet is the new religion.

As I finished my weekly Thursday night All-Star breakfast at Waffle House complete with sausage patties, eggs, toast, hash browns and a waffle, horrible apparitions suddenly took over

John Toner  
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my recently satisfied being and reality was lost to me.

One moment I was drowning in a sea of Snapple Diet Air and the next Sharon Woodard, health and exercise guru of Wake Forest, cackled as she relentlessly pelted my swollen and chapped face with granola. I saw myself 20 years from now looking down from a La-Z-Boy to see my over-sized, hairy belly button while flipping to re-runs of Charles in Charge in-between handfuls of beer nut, Butterfinger and Gushers trail mix.

I awoke curled and shaking in the corner, hash browns and egg smeared all over my body, jukebox blaring "Material Girl."

Questions bombarded me that night as tears drowned my soul to sleep. What was the meaning of it all? What had provoked such thoughts to overcome me? Why did my subconscious send me into a hallucinogenic haze? Then it came to me.

Society's obsession with materialism had constructed a subliminal shield, which had conjured up those nightmares to reject my desire for indulgence! That shield

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wouldn't let me eat the grease-filled food. The experience changed my life and prompted a search for answers; the search to cure today's fixation with outer beauty. After seconds of grueling contemplation my hunt came to an end.

The cure-all for this terrible social disease can be summed up in two words: the mullet.

What, may I ask, could possibly compare to the humbling abilities of the mullet? Just imagine the anxiety as you utter to the campus barber those piercing words "business in the front, party in the back."

Some seek wholeness through religion, sponge-bathing the elderly or riverboat gambling. Yet these have done little to alleviate the plague of superficiality. The mud-flapping mullet can fill in the gaps of these futile methods.

A world dominated by mullets would even the beauty playing field entirely, despite those who look surprisingly good in mullets like Scott Baio.

People could still express themselves by exploring many avenues of life, but superiority complexes would no longer terrorize those who aren't quite up to par because of poor fashion decisions, excessive sweating, or headgear scarring.

Imagine a life free from all those times your "friends" exclaim "you're short and hairy and I hate you for it" or, "wow, you've got an oil mine on your forehead, you must be worth a fortune!" The mullet would remind the next person

scoffing at a 35 year-old man in a B.U.M. equipment sweat suit: you have a mullet so don't laugh, ass clown.

All the greats started out with mullets: Michael Jackson, Travis Tritt, Lionel Ritchie, A.C. Slater, John Quincy Adams, John Kruk, Gene Frenkle of Blue Oyster Cult, Uncle Jesse from Full House, or world champion figure skater Elvis Stojko. Don't worry; I know what you're thinking: the mullet can only pacify the problem for a short period before it becomes the norm again.

Skeptics hear this, if nothing else - don't ever underestimate the power of the mullet. It will tear down insecurities, remold psyches, and bring America into a new state of enlightenment! The psychological benefits of a mullet society would last for at least a generation.

Just as children learn early on never to ask mommy and daddy for a glass of water at 1 o'clock in the morning on the first and second Saturdays of the month, the mullet will sow the seeds of righteousness into those stricken by fashioncentrism. The golden rule will finally hold some clout over our hearts and minds.

In no way do I ridicule those with mullets; to the contrary I salute them. The mullet is beautiful. But they are misunderstood as dirty and grimy. Unfortunately they are the most widely assumed form of self-chastisement, which makes them the most effective method of battling vanity.

If the 21st century is to be one of peace, equality, and sweet lovin' we must do one thing.

We must rock the mullet.

John Toner is a sophomore.

## Author states intention

A desire to question turns into learning experience.

As author of the homecoming article, "Continuing the Tradition" published on page 100 of the 2003 Howler, I apologize for offending many members of the student

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write an article questioning the trends in the selection of the Homecoming queen over previous years. I was a freshman, eager to make my contribution to our yearbook, and I willingly took on this, and many other assignments.

I did not stop to think whether or not our yearbook should contain controversial or editorial material, but simply followed policies and procedures as I understood them. I researched the trends of the Homecoming queen selections, reading previous yearbooks and contacting our Student Union Homecoming chairperson. I found that the last 12 Homecoming queens happened to be African-Americans, and I questioned the selection process.

I did not question, nor do I now question, the qualifications

of these outstanding 12 individuals.

I congratulate both current and previous Homecoming kings and queens for their accomplishments. I meant only to question the selection process.

It just seemed mathematically unlikely that, with all of the talented students of all backgrounds here at Wake Forest, any one group would represent the university twelve years in a row, be they Caucasian, African-American, soccer players, sorority members, or any particular group.

I believe I am wiser now, having learned much from this experience. My article was insensitive. I have offended many good people and, regrettably and unintentionally, may have inflamed racial tensions. For this, I am deeply sorry.

I can only hope now that none of us will allow this incident to cause permanent harm to our personal relationships with one another, or permanent harm to the reputation of our university.

Nancy Rinehart is a sophomore.

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body, many alumni and the administration.

I never intended to be derogatory toward any person or group. Now, in retrospect, I find that my article was poorly written, poorly edited, and that it did not accurately reflect my ideas on this subject. I deeply regret the trauma this article has caused to our Wake Forest community.

The theme of the 2003 Howler was "Question Everything." The editor assigned me to

