

# OPINION

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

## Campus Grounds warrants attention

While many students may not know about the ensuing controversy over the Campus Grounds coffeehouse in Taylor Residence Hall, we believe this issue needs to be brought to the attention of the student body. You may remember the conflicts from two years ago when the proposal for a student-run coffeehouse was usurped by ARAMARK. Two years ago, Student Government froze organization funds to pay for the coffeehouse, but then ARAMARK took over. Today, the coffeehouse is in severe debt.

For a coffeehouse that was only open for about seven months of last year, a \$14,000 operating cost deficit should make you take a second look. Operating costs can be defined as rent, staffing expenses, lighting, sound, etc. ARAMARK argues that the issue was not low coffee sales – in fact, they believe the coffeehouse has been thriving in that department. Instead, they argue that operating costs were too high. Administrators have crunched the numbers and they just do not add up. From a basic math perspective, a \$14,000 deficit does not make sense: the coffeehouse is always full, they are always running out of various products and the students who work there do not get paid very much. In fact, as long as the coffeehouse sells about four drinks per hour, each of the staffers will earn their salary. Where is the explanation for this deficit?

Back to the controversy – now ARAMARK does not want to suffer the costs of this mysterious debt, and instead the responsibility has fallen on the student body, specifically Student Life. Why are students and the department of Student Life being held responsible? As we recall, it was ARAMARK who wanted total control of the coffeehouse when it was first proposed, and we gave them that control. Today they want total control but do not want to bear the brunt of an inexplicable cost. If the university and ARAMARK want to have complete control, they should also be held responsible for this debt. The other important question here is where is Student Government? The students who were part of the

administration two years ago had the vision of a coffeehouse that would promote a more active student social life on campus and give students the opportunity to have a place to study at night. Today, SG has washed its hands of the situation. Can SG take back control and form a committee to investigate this situation? The students who regularly go to the coffeehouse to study and drink coffee have a vested interest in keeping it open and would be happy to be part of an effort to look at the numbers and the institutional bureaucracy that threatens the existence of the coffeehouse.

This is a fundamental issue of transparency. The University needs to be open about this – it was a student initiative and students should be kept informed. The university and ARAMARK need to start explaining the numbers before rumors fly. People care enough to actually do something, but it is hard to take action when the student body is left uninformed. Furthermore, the coffeehouse issue is part of a larger problem with ARAMARK's lack of responsibility. Our new "late-night dining" option that was set to be open before fall break has no end in sight, and no one really knows why. Why did the construction of this Subway start so late? And why is our late-night dining option Subway?

While we commend the university and ARAMARK for asking for student input, a complicated survey that takes forever to fill out is not the best way to ask for our help. Dining on campus is an important issue that requires careful examination: focus groups, online surveys, interviews and honesty about what our options are. The lack of clarity over the entire situation with the coffeehouse and Subway represent the greater problem of the institutional structure of ARAMARK. To whom do they answer? Students really care about dining on campus, and we sincerely ask the administration, ARAMARK or someone to help us resolve this situation by telling us where you are getting your numbers, how we can communicate our concerns more productively and why the process is so slow moving. All we ask for is a little accountability.

# Spread of freedom is undermined

Kerry would not actively pursue fight against global terror.

Does John Kerry want to win the war on terror? Does he believe that democracy and freedom are the best antidotes to terrorism and violence? Does he even believe



Doug Hutton

OLD GOLD & BLACK COLUMNIST

the United States should act as a beacon of liberty for the entire world? The answer to all three questions is an emphatic no.

I have come to realize the greatest discrepancy between the candidates: President George W. Bush believes that the best way to defend this country is by proactively defeating our enemy on our terms. He believes that once the enemy is defeated, the formerly oppressed people should be given the tools to

form a democratic society. He believes that the human race is born free, given liberty by God to exercise with respect and dignity for life.

Kerry does not believe in these principles. He believes the best way to protect this country is United Nations multilateralism, a body which Saddam Hussein extorted for billions of dollars in defiance of sanctions and Security Council resolutions. He believes France and Germany should be consulted as partners though both have pledged never to send troops or aid to Iraq. He believes that Hussein's Iraq was more "stable" and thus less dangerous than the fledgling democracy the United States is trying to promote. Kerry believes, just as he did after returning from Vietnam, that denigrating the hard work of our soldiers will increase the chances for a pullout, making the world a more dangerous place.

While Bush reaches out to visionaries like Hamid Karzai and Ayad Allawi, leaders willing to steadily guide their nations to democracy, Kerry disparages their contribution to freedom. While Bush praises the terror-

While Bush praises the terror-free elections and millions of voters in Afghanistan, Kerry belittles this important step simply because it shows that we are winning the minds of others. While Bush will stay in Iraq to ensure the roots of democracy and the exorcising of terrorism, Kerry would rather pull out and destabilize the region.

free elections and millions of voters in Afghanistan, Kerry belittles this important step simply because it shows that we are winning the minds of others. While Bush will stay in Iraq to ensure the roots of democracy and the exorcising of terrorism, Kerry would rather pull out and destabilize the region. While Bush hears the people of Iran clamoring for democracy in the face of a nuclear regime, Kerry is deaf to their cries.

I wish Kerry presented a plan that used the words freedom and democracy. I wish his campaign was centered on how he would extend freedom

further than President Bush, rather than undermine the president's extensive current efforts. I wish he was as devoted to world freedom as he was to socialized medicine. I wish he was willing to listen to the American people before the president of France. I wish his passion for educating our children was echoed in a passion to educate the world about what it truly means to have freedom and liberty.

Unfortunately for this country Kerry needs America to lose the war on terror to validate his candidacy. Kerry needs Osama bin Laden to keep hiding in the caves of Tora Bora, or so his debate answers keep telling us. Kerry needs our troops in Iraq to keep launching failed offensives, so he can continue stressing how we have borne 90 percent of the casualties and costs. Ironically, Kerry needs the United Nations to fail in stopping the genocide in Sudan, so he can say that Bush did nothing about it. Come on, John. We want to win. Why don't you?

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Facebook seems to be overwhelming

I found the Sept. 23 *Old Gold & Black* editorial about *The Facebook* phenomenon extremely entertaining. I am continually amused and frightened as my roommates show me the scatter plots of their friends – strange. I am equally horrified by the idea of poking someone, and the way *Facebook* has integrated itself into everyday conversation. I myself have been intrigued by the novelty of *Facebook*, but I find its power too overwhelming as the people in front of me in class turn on their computers to "take notes" and periodically check and update their *Facebook* profiles. While I enjoyed Scott Thompson's column, it was all

too tainted by the underlying and shameless, might I add, attempt to get even more people to be his friend on *Facebook*. There is no better way to announce your membership in the *Facebook* cult, than to write a witty and deceptively sarcastic criticism of the institution that is *Facebook*.

Lauren Lockard  
Senior

### Ideals are not mutually exclusive values

I generally avoid getting involved in the student-led debates that grace the pages of the *Old Gold & Black*, but the Sept. 30 column "Differing political opinions should be fostered" is in need of a

response. Alex Lindheimer characterizes as an attack, "when faculty plaster rainbow stickers all over campus, yet almost nowhere can you find a single American flag." I assume Lindheimer is referring to the "Safe Places at WFU" rainbow stickers that I do indeed have plastered around my office. My understanding of these rainbow stickers is that they mark a place where anyone – of any race, ethnicity, religion (or lack thereof), gender, sexual preference or political philosophy – is welcomed. The stickers guarantee a place where each person is treated as a valued member of the university community, a place where views can be aired without judgment.

Yet Lindheimer sets these stickers in opposition to flying an American flag, as if tolerance

is anti-American. I want to assure Lindheimer that on a number of occasions, I have offered a safe place for conservative Republicans in my office. I've had some very entertaining and enlightening discussions with these individuals, particularly when they avoid false dichotomies that stifle the bipartisanship, diversity and civility Lindheimer claims to seek.

Brian W. Tague  
Professor of Biology

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