

# OPINION

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

## Election offers chance to make an impact

In this key election year, the 18-to-35-year-old voting block will make all the difference not only through their votes, but also through their activism and influence in bringing important issues to the forefront of the election. Even though the university has been the site of two presidential debates, activism on campus is subpar. The current presidential debates are a unique opportunity to see the candidates interact with each other and answer accusations one on one. The town hall format allows the entire nation to see how well the candidates interact with the general public. Although the debates are largely scripted, there is still a competitive element that enables viewers to see candidates in a different setting. Even if you already know how you will be voting on Nov. 2, the debates will provide you the arsenal to defend your candidate of choice. It also gives you the chance to see your candidate's platform in action. The entire point of debate is to actually hear the candidates speak and not the Political Action Committees, 527s or other interest groups. The phrase "every vote counts" has been used since the 2000 election. This year is no different – as

young people, we have the opportunity to sway this election for any candidate. We can overcome the stereotype of being a generation of apathy and really make a difference. While we are the generation that volunteers the most, we vote the least. We are lucky because we live on a small campus and can have conversations about politics in our classes, Benson University Center and our residence halls. Each of these conversations will have an impact on someone who did not know where a candidate stood on an issue, did not know who a candidate was or even how to obtain their absentee ballot. Watching the debates and being critical of both the candidates will not only make students more educated voters, but it will also provide the students with the ability to influence other people. There are two presidential debates left: at 9 p.m. on Oct. 9 and at 9 p.m. on Oct. 13. You will also have the unique opportunity to see your own peers debate the issues in a mock presidential debate at 7 p.m. on Oct. 27 in Wait Chapel. If you are not registered to vote yet, the deadline is tomorrow, Oct. 8. Download the form at <http://www.sbob.state.nc.us/> Get educated, talk about the election and remember to vote on Nov. 2.

## Foresight is questioned in field construction

To add to the dust storms from campus construction of late is the creation of a new track throwing field behind the Museum of Anthropology. While the construction of the new throwing field came out of a necessity when additional parking was required to accommodate the freshman class, we sympathize with the biology department in the loss of a portion of their field study sites. More research on the part of the university and the athletic department could have been done to investigate the implications of the new throwing field on both departments that were utilizing the area and students who had been using the running trails. At the very least, the biology department

should have been involved in the discussion as to the placement of the new field. Furthermore, Peter Weigl, a professor of biology, makes a valid point in highlighting the expense of such an endeavor. With the university's tight budget, it seems somewhat suspect that funds were readily available to clear an area of forest and to cover the construction costs of the throwing field itself. Perhaps the university's priorities when such conflicts arise – in this case between athletics and academics – should be re-examined so that miscommunication and potentially detrimental actions that could harm an academic department's ability to carry out classroom activities can be prevented.

# Defining marriage is constitutional

### Biblical definition of marriage is consistent with the Constitution.

Let me begin by saying that my position on the sanctity of marriage, based textually in the Bible, equally condemns both homosexual activity and heterosexual

Accordingly, I challenge his stance in a spirit of scholarship but without malice or ill-will toward those of alternative lifestyles. I would like to dispute a common misconception about marriage and to begin by asserting that the framers never intended to abolish religious conviction from the legislative process of government. As Martin said, the Constitution "forbade the legal establishment of a state religion."

Those who still believe in a historical interpretation of the Constitution should consider the following point. Martin implies that gay marriage and similar issues are basic freedoms and civil liberties. To respond, I say "marriage is a restricted, not universal, right," quoting Gerald McDermott of Roanoke College.

persons do not have the right to marriage – children, close relatives and those already married." To this list, we might constitutionally add those of the same sex. The right of equal protection applies to individual citizens as a function of their relationship to the Constitution. I argue that the institution of homosexual marriage goes beyond equal protection by removing a qualification for legal wedlock. It is akin to abolishing any of the aforementioned restrictions on the institution of marriage. In plain language, one might as well permit incest as homosexual matrimony if equal protection allows for such activism. After all, the prohibition on incest and the pre-Lawrence ban on sodomy originate from the very same source. Martin suggests that the "anonymous evangelists," cautiously consider their employment of a constitutionally-based approach to maintaining the traditional definition of marriage. Rather, let us laud them for seeking to understand and apply the Constitution in its proper historical context.



Michael Savitz

PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

activity outside the bounds of marriage (see Rom. 1:26-7, Matt. 5:28). Likewise, those scriptures demand a humble and loving acceptance of others, regardless of sexual orientation, ethnicity, and race, etc. However, I believe that John Martin has misinterpreted our Constitution in his Sept. 30 Letter to the Editor by claiming that it prevents Americans from maintaining the traditional definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

However, it freely permits the enactment of legislation based upon common moral convictions. I refer to the framers' ubiquitous writings on the absolute necessity that moral and religious principles remain integrated into the decision-making process of the government. Our modern ideas about the origins of law allow the courts to overturn centuries of morally-based laws, founded in the Judeo-Christian tradition, by appealing to popular opinion (legal positivism). Using this method, some say that the changing needs of society and the evolving moral character of our nation require a new perspective on homosexuality. In response, I can only offer

the significant research available demonstrating the socially undesirable nature of gay marriage. However, those who still believe in a historical interpretation of the Constitution should consider the following point. Martin implies that gay marriage and similar issues are basic freedoms and civil liberties. To respond, I say "marriage is a restricted, not universal, right," quoting Gerald McDermott of Roanoke College. Restricted rights, such as serving in the military, are not guaranteed to all citizens by the Constitution but carry some limitation based on characteristics extraneous to basic humanity. McDermott notes that "certain

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*Faint, illegible text from a speech or document, possibly related to the Iraq war.*

**A FREE IRAQ IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE SECURITY OF THIS COUNTRY**



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# New executive brings hope for Iraq war

### A change in administration can only serve to benefit the United States on Iraq issue.

One of the strongest points of contention between President Bush and Senator Kerry in the Sept. 30 presidential debate was the issue of diplomatic and military alliances: Kerry accused Bush of failing to build a legitimate

I don't think that we can or should expect Kerry to offer a fool-proof plan to fix Iraq; he only needs to show that his plan will improve the situation in Iraq.

American occupation poses a significant threat to everyone. These nations won't be excited about entering Iraq, but they may feel an obligation to protect their own citizens from the new terrorist threat in Iraq.



Kevin Jones

OLD GOLD & BLACK COLUMNIST

international coalition before invading Iraq and promised to do so if he is elected president. Bush seemed extremely skeptical about Kerry's promises, and it is not very difficult to see why. If the United States was unable to convince the international community to join a global coalition before the invasion and occupation, at a time when Bush expected to rapidly defeat Saddam Hussein, how can we possibly convince these reluctant nations to willingly join an

occupation that is facing a guerilla war? Even the CIA admits that the best-case scenario for Iraq is "tenuous" stability. I think, however, that we have several reasons for assessing Kerry's plan in less harsh terms.

First of all, I hold Bush and his administration primarily responsible for the current mess in Iraq. Given the CIA's assessment, I don't think that we can or should expect Kerry to offer a fool-proof plan to fix Iraq; he only needs to show that his plan will improve the situation in Iraq.

Second, I do not think that it is fair to assume that a nation's unwillingness to join our international coalition before the invasion means that they will be even less willing to enter a bleaker situation. In light of our failure to produce weapons of mass destruction, I think that it is reasonable to assume that many nations simply judged that Iraq was not a threat. I think that it should now be clear to the international community that the influx of terrorists and the corresponding chaos in Iraq under

Third, a change of leadership may be enough to bring new allies into our coalition. Bush deliberately insulted and alienated many of our traditional allies, and many of these nations may be reluctant to join us in stabilizing Iraq simply to protect their pride. A Kerry victory would go a long way toward bringing these nations back into our good graces.

Finally, non-military aid offered by several countries, which has been largely ignored by the Bush administration, would go a long way toward improving the situation. The most urgent need in Iraq is the presence of properly trained and equipped Iraqi security forces. The Arab League has offered to help train these forces, but Bush has not accepted their offer, primarily because he is still smarting from the League's frequent criticism of his policies. It is time to put aside our pride and adopt any means necessary to stabilize Iraq.

Kevin Jones is a senior history and philosophy major.