

Perspectives

Letters to the Editor

Bad weather safety more important than class schedules

Dear Editor,

I have been meaning to write since last winter, but with the announcement of the "Alternate Class Schedule for Bad Weather," and subsequent letters in *The Blue Banner*, I couldn't resist putting my two cents worth into the fray.

First, the late start schedule isn't really a bad idea based on the notion that each class would have the opportunity to meet, review, have some discussion/lecture, and get assignments for the next class so as to not be out of step with other classes.

Where the breakdown seems obvious is that these late start classes are scheduled for the full hour!

By this schedule, the classes that would normally end at 3:30 p.m. will not end until about

5:40 p.m. That's what most students seem to be most concerned with, particularly those who have jobs.

According to the facts presented in the UNCA commuter student newsletter dated for spring of 1996 "64 percent of UNCA's degree-seeking students are working a mean of 23 hours a week."

If the delayed classes were just shortened to half of that time so that students would end their classes at the normal time, while having been able to attend each one, wouldn't that work out better for everyone?

Second, the memory of last winter still haunts many of us. The announcement was made over the airways that UNCA would be open for classes.

Many of us that were able arrived on campus to find the streets, parking lots, walkways, and steps still covered in snow and ice.

Many of us had taken great risks on the interstate and Weaver Boulevard to get to our classes, and were angered by the disrespect for our safety and well being shown by the university.

Many of us wondered who in their right mind would have ignored the 70 percent of UNCA students that are commuters (again, a statistic from the commuter student newsletter).

This is where good sense and judgement must play a vital part in the lives of the students and faculty of UNCA.

If the roads are bad, and the campus is not safe for students, cancel all the classes.

Our mountains don't offer heated roads that will automatically melt snow and ice, particularly Weaver Boulevard and parts of our campus that are in the tree-shaded areas.

If the regular or the alternate class schedule is announced, make sure the commute is safe for students, and that the campus is prepared to safely bring in those students.

Lastly, schedule the alternate classes so the classes are shortened.

Thanks for the opportunity to have my say.
Anne Harwood
Senior
Psychology Major

As long as Virginia wins, goalposts will come down

Dear Editor,

After reading the article "Tearing Down the Goalpost Without a Cause," I realized that someone, namely Brian Castle, is a sore loser.

You are right, Brian, North Carolina was not number one and they never will be as long as they have to visit Charlottesville. As an avid Virginia fan and a season ticket holder, I was one of the thousands of fans who stormed the field at the end of the game.

The UNC fans that followed their team to C'ville were cocky and very deserving of the fourth-quarter results.

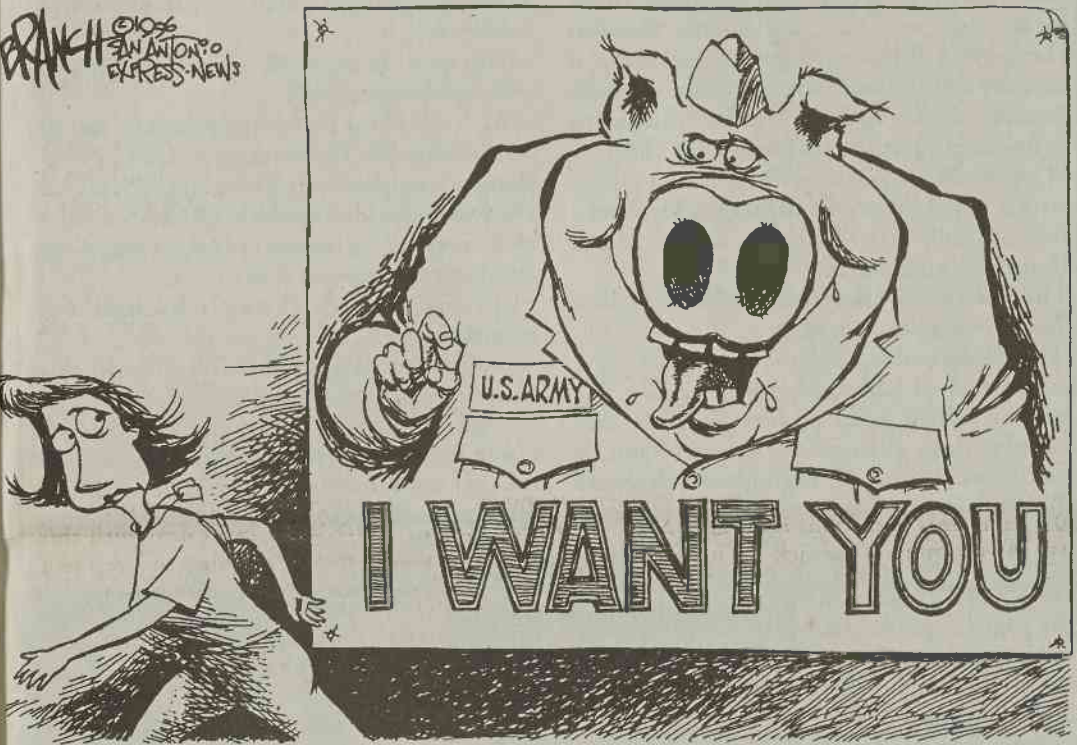
And the UNC players were worse than their fans. I have not seen dancing and flaunting by players after making good plays like I saw from UNC players since the Miami

Hurricane teams from the mid to late 1980s.

It looked as though UNC's players had attended the Michael Irvin/Deion Sanders School of Dance. Those players and fans deserved everything they got, especially losing their \$8.5 million game.

Even if both teams come into this game at 0-10, the goalposts will always come down if UVA wins because the only thing greater to a Virginia fan than beating UNC in football (which has happened nine times in the last 11 years) is beating Virginia Tech!

So get a life, Brian. Any time a team loses a game worth that much money, it is a BIG game! Go Cavs!
Jeremy Fisher



MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

by Mike Peters



Carpoons and Tire Assault Vehicles: Bad drivers will never be the same

Dave Barry
Columnist

Here's the problem: If you stop 100 people at random and ask them to evaluate their driving ability, every single one will say "above average."

It is a scientific fact that all drivers, including those who are going the wrong way on interstate highways, believe they are above average.

Obviously, this is impossible: SOME drivers have to be below average. Not me, of course. I am currently ranked fourth among the top drivers in world history, between Mario Andretti and Spartacus.

But there are many incompetent people out there on the roads, changing speed and direction without warning, or drifting along in the left, or "passing," lane at 23 miles per hour, blinking their turn signals, which they never turn off, even in the garage.

These people make me crazy, which is why I am so excited about the car harpoon.

I found out about the car harpoon from an Associated Press item, sent to me by many alert readers, concerning the police in the town of Oulu, Finland. Finland (also known as "Norway") is a northern European nation that also contains a city named "Espoo" (suggested civic motto: "The City That Sounds Like A Person Spitting").

You might think that the biggest traffic menace in Finland would be unlicensed reindeer, but the Oulu police have a problem with speeders and drunk drivers who refuse to stop. That's why police Sgt. Markku Limingojja invented the car harpoon.

This is a missile-shaped object, equipped with hydraulically activated barbs, that sticks several feet out from the front bumper of the police car. The

idea is that if the police are chasing somebody, they ram the harpoon into the fleeing car's trunk, activate the barbs to keep the two cars stuck together, then use their brakes to stop both vehicles.

We definitely need the car harpoon over here. Of course we'd have to modify the concept slightly, as follows:

1. It would not be limited to police cars. It would also be available as an option on cars operated by qualified civilian drivers such as (needless to say) yourself.
2. The civilian model car harpoon—which I assume would be marketed under the name "Carpoon"—would contain additional features, including a powerful public-address system.

The Carpoon would greatly enhance the driving experience. Envision this scenario: You're behind a bad driver stopped at

a traffic light. The light turns green, but the bad driver does not move.

He was completely unprepared for the fact that—How the heck would anybody know this?—red would be followed by green.

He's sitting there, baffled, like a person watching a drive-in movie with a very complicated plot. You honk your horn, but this has no effect on the bad driver; people are ALWAYS honking at him, and he never knows why.

Suddenly—WHAM!—the bad driver feels a jolt. Then he hears a very loud voice—your voice—coming from inside his car, saying: "EXCUSE ME! THE LIGHT IS GREEN! YOU CAN GO NOW!"

This announcement would be followed, after a courtesy interval of one-tenth of a second, by tear gas.

As a motorist, I want a

Carpoon NOW. And I'll tell you what else I want: A Tire Assault Vehicle.

This is a real device that was featured in a publication called NASA Tech Briefs, sent in by alert reader Robert Stolpe. The Tire Assault Vehicle, or TAV, is designed to protect humans from high-pressure aircraft tires that might explode.

Basically, the TAV is a remote-controlled model tank that has been modified to incorporate a video camera on top and an electric drill sticking out the front. The operator, from a safe distance, drives the TAV up to an aircraft tire and drills a hole in it, safely letting out the air.

You know how sometimes you're trying to find a space in a crowded parking lot, and you come to a car that some jerk has deliberately parked diagonally across two spaces?

Can you imagine the satisfac-

tion you'd experience if, without even having to leave the comfort and safety of your car, you could drill holes in the jerk's tires?

But that would be wrong. Property destruction is not the solution.

No, it would be better to take a deep breath, calm down, wait patiently until the jerk returns to his car, and then drill holes in his shins.

Wouldn't that be great? That's why you need to tell your federal government to stop nattering about air bags and start providing you, the above-average driver, with the Tire Assault Vehicle, the Carpoon and other technology (I am not ruling out nuclear weapons) that you can REALLY use.

So don't wait! Write to your congressman NOW! Also, press the accelerator, OK? The light is green.