

# Opinions

## The Banner

### Editorial

How often do good intentions, when acted upon, become disastrous turns?

Both *The New York Times* and National Public Radio covered such a situation Wednesday when reporting the results of a study examining the number of homosexuals discharged from the armed forces since 1993, when Bill Clinton attempted to end the military's discrimination of individuals on the basis of sexual orientation.

When the president wanted to end macro-level homophobia in the military, some members of Congress, many citizens, and a few military leaders were outraged. So he begins his habit of compromise, arguably with little choice to do otherwise. The result: "Don't ask, don't tell."

But it's 1997, and in the four years since this presidential blunder, many military personnel seem to be asking, and lots of people are telling, as a report from the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network indicates.

Now such discharges are higher than before the policy went into effect. The *Times* said discharges in the Air Force have risen 20 percent.

The issue here, however, has little to do with homosexuality. The real question this report raises is how does one attempt to further a cause she or he believes in without striking such a nerve in the opposition that the cause becomes lost?

How could Clinton have worked for the equality of homosexuals, a population whose civil rights, not counting marriage, he says he believes in, without stirring those who don't share his opinion to muster up a very powerful nation-wide counter campaign?

Perhaps we can all agree that Clinton's effort was, in an historically homophobic America, quite radical. Could a "conservative" approach have proven more successful? A step-by-step "Accommodationist approach," rather than leap-by-leap, would be better.

Today, we know that when a president tries to force the country to adopt an idea that a good majority of citizens obviously do not hold, the people who suffer the most are not the people he works against. It's the people whom he wants to help, as the Pentagon's report demonstrates.

By defying the differences in opinion of many Americans in his effort to further a less popular cause, Clinton accomplished little more than create hostility and backlash. To "win" his moral battle he might have been more successful had he questioned the motives of those who do not share his opinion on homosexuals in the military.

Members of both "sides" must acquire a capacity for honesty, and often painfully, acknowledging the reasons for their difference. Then they may claim their own truths. Then they can argue it out, if necessary. Serious consideration, somehow, legitimizes dissent.

By examining the whys beneath the actions of ourselves and others, we can prevent counter actions that destroy rather than improve. We can avoid creating astronomical problems when trying to soothe and heal wounds that some, however unfortunately, have found ways to endure.

#### Editorial Board

Michael Taylor  
Jennifer Thurston  
Renee Slaydon  
Brian Castle  
Kyle S. Phipps  
Del DeLorm  
Matthew Gibson

Editor-in-Chief  
Managing Editor  
News Editor  
Features Editor  
Sports Editor  
Photo Editor  
Copy Editor

#### Staff

Rafica Adams, Bonner Butler, Lara Barnett, Shelley Eller,  
Elise Fox, Gary Gray, Robert Hardin, Kristi Howard,  
Stephanie Hunter, Trish Johnson, Tracy Kelly,  
Erin King, Melinda Pierson Adrien Sanders, Kristin Scobie,  
Chanse Simpson, Catharine Sutherland

Wendy McKinney  
Thomas Estes  
Nate Conroy

Advertising Manager  
Circulation Manager  
Electronic Editor

#### Columnists

Nate Conroy, James Hertsch, Pam Williams, Tracy Wilson

Mark West, faculty advisor

*The Banner* is the student newspaper of the University of North Carolina at Asheville. We publish each Thursday except during summer sessions, final exam weeks and holiday breaks. Our offices are located in Carmichael Hall, Room 208-A. Our telephone number is (704) 251-6586. Our campus e-mail address is banner@unca.edu. An on-line version of *The Banner* is also available at <http://www.unca.edu/banner/>

Nothing in our editorial or opinions sections necessarily reflects the opinion of the entire *Banner* staff, the faculty advisor, or the university faculty, administration or staff.

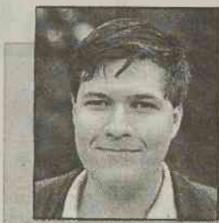
Unsigned editorials reflect the opinion of a majority of *The Banner* editorial board. Letters, columns, cartoons and reviews represent only the opinions of their respective authors.

*The Banner* welcomes submissions of letters and articles for publication. All submissions are subject to editing for clarity, content and length and are considered on the basis of interest, space, taste, and timeliness.

Letters should be typed, double-spaced, and should not exceed 300 words. Letters for publication should also contain the author's signature, classification, major or other relationship with UNCA. The deadline for letters is noon on Tuesday. If you have a submission, you can send it to *The Banner*, 208A Carmichael Hall, One University Heights, Asheville NC 28804.

The deadline for display ads and the FYI calendar is on Monday at noon. The deadline for classified ads is at noon on Tuesday.

## What UNCA needs is sculpture



James  
Hertsch  
columnist

Do you remember *Lightning Cloud Bass Note*?

No? This rather interesting sculpture sat at the top of Highsmith stairs a few years ago. Mounted on an aluminum base, this sculpture, starting at the bottom, encompassed a doughnut, a large diagonal line, and a squiggle, all of them made of (of course) aluminum.

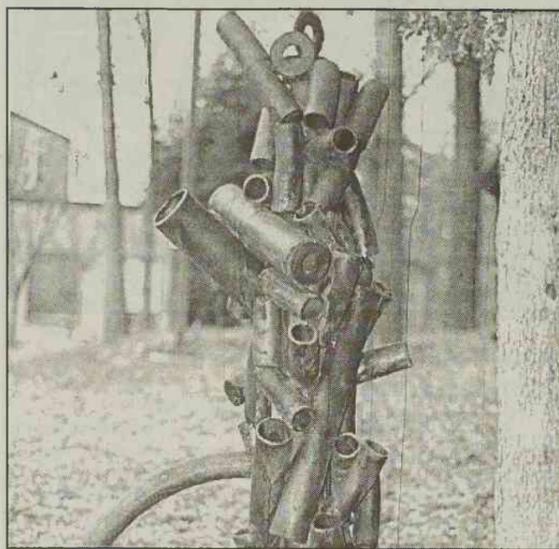
As near as I can tell, the general idea was for the line to be lightning, the squiggly thing to be a cloud, and the doughnut to be a whole note on the bass staff. ON the other hand, when you looked from the right angle, the entire assembly looked much like an eighth note. For all I know, the squiggly thing might have been the lightning, and something else the bass note.

Or, maybe the bass note was the loud \*BONG\* it made when you hit it on your way to class. The one that actually made sense to me came with the sudden realization that I really hadn't had enough sleep and had been drinking too much caffeine.

And then, there was the day that the sculptor came by, and took *Lightning Cloud Bass Note* back to his studio, and that beautiful, er, interesting sculpture would grace our campus no more.

The thing is, *Lightning Cloud Bass Note* had been an incomprehensible piece of modern abstract art, but it had been *our* incomprehensible piece of modern abstract art,

the target of witty remarks, mockery, invective, and the rhetorical slings and arrows of outraged col-



umnists. When I walk around the campus now, it's rather devoid of sculpture. No *Lightning Cloud Bass Note*. No *Peace Cannon* in front of Zageir hall. No *Icarus* (actually, it looked like the Batplane) in front of Phillips Hall.

I'd like to see more sculptures littering the campus—the more incomprehensible, the more mod-

ern, the more abstract, the better. We've got potential venues in front of the cafeteria, in the Highsmith plaza, and down in front of Southridge, but there are absolutely no sculptures in place.

I don't know if they would enhance the "liberal arts experience," or if they would bring students to a higher, clearer understanding of the arts, or anything like that. But, I do honestly believe that works of this nature add a certain character to a campus—a certain character that

the exception of the front of Carol Belk theater, but I liked *Temple* better when it was there).

Considering the fact that there's a new master plan up for approval soon, and that there are plans for a new greenway along W.T. Weaver Boulevard in the works, and that the Student Government Association is liable to start sowing pawprints all over University Heights, it really does seem like a good time to suggest we put up these sculptures.

What I'm worried about is that in the flurry to build a more solid infrastructure at the University, somebody's going to forget about what happens to the campus when we have these conversation pieces around.

University planning is a lot like a formal dinner: you have your plates, your forks, your tables, and your knives and spoons and such—the various implements you need to eat without looking like a caveman.

Then, there are the other touches: a nice tablecloth. A flower arrangement on each table. Lace doilies under the plates—little touches that add a certain amount of class when you have your friends over for a dinner party.

When freshmen arrive at UNCA, they need good plates, solid tables, and durable silverware. But, lace doilies and flower arrangements don't hurt at all.

On a different note: does anybody else have trouble pulling into the old service entrance behind the cafeteria at night? Although it used to be clearly marked, the lack of a sign there makes it hard for me to see it at night.

I've taken a liking to the cafeteria parking lot, but the nice lot does me no good if I can't see my way there when I drive up from Weaver in the middle of the night.

## The sordid tales of an alleged felon



Pam  
Williams  
columnist

Okay folks, before I get started on the story about my felony, I would like to take a brief moment to thank Dr. Eric Pyeritz, director of student health services. After my last article, Dr. Pyeritz called me at home to inquire about my last visit to the student health facility. Some things were cleared up during our phone call.

First and foremost, if you are injured on campus, you do not have to notify the safety officer before you see the doctor. You do need to notify the safety officer, however, within 24 hours of your injury. The staff of student health services has now been told this and so have you.

Thank you Dr. Pyeritz and thanks for clearing up this small matter with your staff. It's nice to know people are actually taking a personal interest in students and their well-being.

So, on with the felony. Many of you may find this story silly, baffling, or you might even get a bit outraged, not at the fact that I have been charged, but at the felony itself.

On February 6th, 1997 at approximately 11:00 am, myself and

a friend of mine were in my car, leaving UNCA campus. I was driving down Edgewood Road toward Merrimon Avenue, when I was stopped by a police officer handing out small bright yellow flyers. I explained to the officer that I had already received several of these flyers and understood them. I told the officer I did not need another one, that it was a waste of paper.

He sent me on my way, but before my window was rolled up completely, I heard him say, "Pull that car over." Another officer, about twenty feet away from the first pulled me. The second officer walked to the back of my car and then to my window and asked me to move my car out of the way of traffic. I did so.

Once in my new position, the officer asked me if my car was registered and I told him it was, but that it was expired by six days and that I was planning on renewing my registration later that afternoon. He smiled and said it was not six days late, but 12 months overdue. 12 months??? Impossible.

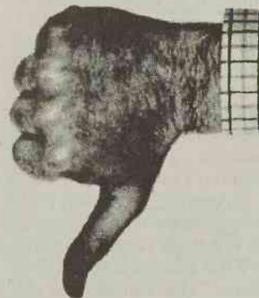
He told me to look for myself. I did. He was right, to an extent. The 1997 sticker I had placed on my tag

in January of last year was, in fact, no longer there.

He asked to see my registration. I began the search. My car was extremely messy and I was unable to produce my registration. The officer told me to wait. He went to his car and came back about ten minutes later. He then proceeded to write me a ticket. OK so far.

But, then, as he began to explain the ticket to me, he said it was a felony. A felony? Yes, a felony. You see, the officer told me he was unable to find me in the computer. What?!

He continued his explanation. Not having your up-to-date regis-



tration sticker displayed is a felony, if the year showing is six months past due.

Well, it was there. I put it there and a friend saw me do so, but that doesn't matter right now, because it's a felony and I am being forced to go to court to prove my innocence.

Innocence!!! I can only think of two ways that sticker could have

been removed from my tag: a) natural forces or b) criminal forces. Considering my car was vandalized two months ago, I'm leaning toward criminal actions being the reason for my sticker not being where I put it.

Shame on me for not checking my tag everyday before I drive my car. Okay, none of this sounds too terrible does it? But, if for some bizarre reason, I'm found guilty of this felony charge, the minimum sentence is 60 days in jail!

This is absurd! Well, by goodness, if I can be charged with a felony for being a victim, I think I should be allowed to buy a license plate cover and bill either the DMV or the police for the cost, because as of right now, anybody can take those stickers off tags in mere seconds causing you to be eligible for a felony. Well, Pshaw!

I have a lawyer who is looking into this for me and luckily, we've found a loophole, namely the ticket itself, which states that "the named defendant did unlawfully and willfully while displaying an expired registration plate in the vehicle knowing the same to be expired".

Yes, I knew it to be expired by six days, not 12 months. There is so much more to this and I just don't have the room for the rest of the story. So, I have a mandatory court date (March 10, 1997) while their are other "criminals" walking around without mandatory court dates. I also have the possibility of going to jail for up to 60 days for a crime I did not commit. Great country.