Opinions

The Banner Editorial

Let's dance!

You've come a long way, baby

When the seniors on the men's basketball team took the floor for their first game against Montreat College in Nov. 1994, the team was ranked 299 out of the 302 Division I basketball teams in the national Sagarin rankings. Today, the team is the number one seed in the Big South Conference Tournament, and is only two wins away from the "Big Dance."

Former coach Randy Weil and current coach Eddie Biedenbach have built a program that the entire UNCA community can be proud of. At times this year, UNCA has actually been rated higher in the Sagarins than perennial powerhouse programs Wake Forest and Louisville.

These accomplishments, along with the two regular season Big South championships, have not gone unnoticed. Next year Bulldog fans will surely miss seeing the thunderous dunks of Robert Stevenson, clutch shooting of Josh Pittman, aggressive play of Dirk Lommerse, and leadership of Vincent Krieger in the Justice Center.

Seniors, it has been a great ride, and we at *The Banner* wish you the best of luck as you try to accomplish your ultimate goal of reaching the NCAA Tournament.

Carolina(im)Perfect 1.0

The computer's importance in student life, both as an instrument in educational and social dealings, cannot be denied, especially since universities like UNC-Chapel Hill are now considering making them mandatory for incoming freshmen in the year 2000. This plan to have college students experience technology through a more hands-on approach is all fine and good in theory, but if UNC-CH is demonstrating anything to UNCA, its that not all sound theories stay that way in practice.

UNC-CH Chancellor Michael Hooker reasons that mandatory laptop computers will be an asset in the classroom because "students will be able to engage in online discussions in class, get responses from in-class poll taking, and take notes with the laptop computer." While online interaction with other schools will benefit everyone, even though it is a rather non-confrontational way to learning, is it really worth the cost? Demanding that students put down $1,000-$5,000 for a computer just so they can have easy access to online services is an expensive alternative to the computer labs that provide the same services at no price to students at UNCA and other universities, as is the probability that the laptop the student bought his or her freshman year will be outdated and almost worthless when they graduate.

While UNC-CH believes that requiring laptops will put students on the same level as far as computer experience is concerned, they fail to fully recognize that all students are not equal to each other financially. UNC-CH shows no signs of reducing tuition, fees, or room and board, or providing laptops at a reduced cost. Instead, the school will provide financial aid for students who cannot afford the added expense of a laptop, mainly in the form of low-interest loans. With the price of education increasing steadily year after year, the last thing any student needs to worry about is how he or she will pay off the loan he or she took out for their mandatory laptop. Students can still get a quality education using pen, paper, and a desktop computer, which accesses online services just as easily as a laptop.

UNC-CH should either offer students laptops at a discounted price or offer to rent them out to students who cannot afford to buy one. The fact that the school has failed to offer these options to potential students proves UNCA's Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Thomas Cochran's comment that UNC-CH appears to want students to bring computers for the purpose of "public relations than necessity." Laptop computers should not be a required purchase until UNC-CH can provide students with better funding options and realize the financial burden it places on them.

MMMMMMBop!

It's time to lay the Grammys to rest. This year's ceremony, like always, was a sad joke. Bob Dylan for Album of theYear? We learn to have respect for the dead at an early age, but giving Dylan the Grammy for Album of the Year for *Time Out of Mind* over Radiohead's *OK Computer* is the biggest travesty in Grammy history (except maybe the year that Metallica lost the Best Heavy Metal category to Jethro Tull.

Our editorial board picks for album of the year:
Brian Castle: *OK Computer*, Radiohead
Erin King: *Sisters of Avalon*, Cyndi Lauper
Chris Brooker: *Bruther Monk*, Bruther Monk
Renee Slaydon: *Surfacing*, Sarah McLachlan
Chris Garner: *Hang-ups*, Goldfinger
Amanda Thorn: *Out of Nowhere*, Hanson
Preston Gannaway: *Time Out of Mind*, Bob Dylan
Nate Conroy: *One Day It'll All Make Sense*, Common
Note: At least they didn't give it to Paula Cole. Where have all the cowboys gone—they're running away from you. You're scarrrrrry.

You control your own destiny

Teresa Calloway
columnist

Being a columnist isn't easy. Basically you have one stone—ONE—to throw at over 3,000 people and the institutions they comprise. You throw it on a Wednesday, it lands on a Thursday, and then you have three seconds to run for cover before an astonishing variety of pebbles and boulders come crashing down on you from all directions.

You had one stone. So does everyone else.

Today, I join the hallowed ranks of *Banner* columnists, and as I look around in awe at the animal rights activists, religious philosophers, comedians, and social commentators, I wonder what it is I have to say. Race relations? Not touching it. Religion? Don't have it in me. Hell, I *politely* took an invitation to join the Church of God for Sunday worship. I just didn't have the heart to tell the guy I was already religiously committed to a different faith, so I nodded whilst he gave me directions.

"You'll pass a church on the corner that says Church of God," he told me earnestly, "but that's not ours." He leaned a little closer, as if sharing a secret: "Every church that calls itself the Church of God is not the Church of God." And while I found some humor in his conspiratory tone, I was mostly glad he thought I was worth it.

As I was sitting in biology lab, considering all of these things, I noticed that the rest of the class was sitting in biology lab considering their fingernails, hair, the person sitting across from them, whatever. This was because we weren't doing biology lab. Instead, our teacher was hurrying around with another scrounging for lab equipment, consulting with the assistant and anyone else who looked as if they might have recently stuffed anything electrophoretic under their clothing. This went on for maybe five minutes; not long, but long enough to realize that just this semester, my mother wrote out a check to UNCA that may as well have read "Pay to the Order of Division I Athletics" while I was sitting in an under-equipped lab with a marvelous professor who was recently reduced to adjunct because of decreased funding.

Ah, a point, you say. Wrong. I'm not going to criticize Division I status. I am going to criticize the fact that, as far as I know, I'm the only one who made this connection between UNCA's decision to be Division I and my own life. Here at UNCA, here in America, and probably here on Earth, human beings seem to be experiencing a profound reluctance to examine the age-old and much heralded scheme of cause and effect. We like our lives so much the way they are, with cheap stuff at Wal-Mart and a coffee break in the middle of lab, that we are unwilling to acknowledge that this isn't just "the way things are." This is the way we've made them.

That's right. The world isn't deteriorating because "that's the way things are," it's deteriorating because millions of people would rather watch Seinfeld than spend half an hour thinking about where their trash goes when the garbage man picks it up. When you pass a chicken farm and speed up to 80 miles per hour, it's not because "chickens just stink," it's because we like paying a mere $2.50 for whole chicken breasts, even if they were crammed into cages that make six people in a Geo look comfortable.

Lastly, we don't spend idle time in labs because "that's the way things are." We do it because a lack of funding has resulted in a scramble for proper equipment ("Wear sunglasses to class next week, everyone. We're doing a lab that requires eye protection and we don't have any."???).

The ability to make connections is what keeps humans intelligent. The ability to make connections between an apple falling down and the rotation of the planets. The ability to make connections between matter and energy. The ability to make connections between feeling sick and getting drunk, between knowing how subatomic particles are arranged and how molecules bond, between the clear-cutting of old growth forests and the ensuing impact on wildlife. After all, there's not much new on the face of this rock.

What makes it new is the human ability to make new connections between existing information. If we are willing to lose this ability for the sake of maintaining a comfortable lifestyle, then let's at least be clear about what we're doing: we're sacrificing the history of human progress, and whatever future it may have.

I'm not saying you have to go out and become vegan. I'm not telling you to recycle. I'm not condemning the fact that my mother has six children and shells out good money so UNCA can play basketball while I sit in lab wondering why I'm not doing anything. But this week I would issue a challenge to UNCA faculty, staff and students to consider the less immediate effects of living the way we do live, and if something should begin to rankle, try something different. This week, instead of getting offended when you read something you disagree with, try understanding that taking offense is easy, and taking action is noble.

Instead of getting offended by Krystal Black's proposal to go vegan, try it one meal a day and see how it feels to look at your plate and think, "Nothing on this tray came from an animal."

Instead of getting offended when a Baptist fundamentalist tells you you're headed to the fiery depths, talk to him a bit and find out what he does believe.

If what you believe can be uprooted by controversy like so much grass, don't waste your time protecting it with an impenetrable wall: plant a tree instead.

And before you write *The Banner* about what a hypocrite I must be, put down your stone, however large it is, and pick up the telephone. I'm in the directory, and you might need your rock for other things.

Bombs: pro-life hypocrisy

Heather Garren
columnist

On the morning of Jan. 27, 1998, a reportedly sophisticated bomb exploded in front of the New Woman, All Women Health Clinic in Birmingham, Ala. The explosion killed off-duty police officer, Robert "Sandy" Sanderson and injured clinic nurse Emily Lyons. Eric Robert Rudolph, originally sought only as a witness, is now wanted as a suspect, with a $100,000 reward.

I am not really sure about my views on abortion, though I guess I would probably lean more towards the pro-life side. But circumstances can be complicated - too complicated, I think, to judge such a complex issue on such a black and white scale.

Anyway, my opinion on abortion itself has little to do with the matter at hand. Except, of course, for the fact that by claiming even a shaky pro-life stand I am inadvertently associating myself with a rather nasty group of extremist who seem to think that the killing of adult humans is justified in stopping the "murder" of an unborn baby. Excuse the cliché, but two wrongs just do not make a right.

A common argument in the abortion debate is "Where do you draw the line on where life begins, and when is it too late to end even a potential life?" Now, the answers to these questions have not been scientifically proven. There are many different opinions even in the medical field. This leaves the decision on a personal level, a line you have to draw in your own mind to satisfy any beliefs; religious, moral, or otherwise. Let me stress the words "personal decision" in this column.

I am not one to say that abortion is murder, even though I cannot see how it would not be. I am not a doctor or God. And the fact is that no one really knows, and that is OK! But I think I can also safely make the assumption that the lives of Sandy and Lyons had unarguably began quite awhile go.

Sanderson's life was definitely that of a real live human being - therefore his death was a murder. Whether or not abortion is wrong is questionable, but the killing of this man was not the way to show us this.

Are we living in a society so sick that we can call ourselves pro-life, and enforce our statement by shedding the blood of innocent people? Pro-life means just that, and the use of violence to back up a declaration of peace and life is simply foolish, for lack of a better word to use.

Those who base their beliefs on a religious stand - correct me if I am wrong. But I believe the Bible says something along the lines of, "Judge not or you shall be judged." Who are we to decide the fate of a person whose behavior we do not approve of? And does the Bible not also state clearly that God is to be the judge of things and that "sinners" will get theirs in the end (in so many words)?

By claiming a religious belief as a reason for murder, these people are giving their religion and those who share their claimed beliefs a very silly and hypocritical appearance. Is the Christian religion not supposed to reflect love and forgiveness, and an unrelenting desire to spread the "joy" of the religion to the rest of the world? Kind of like burning a cross in someone's yard to show them the "love of God," huh guys?

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Despite my views, I can honestly say that I do not know one pro-choice advocate that can not sincerely state their belief that abortion is in fact, not murder. These people are not murderers. And they definitely do not deserve to die.

Abortion clinic bombers are not pro-lifers. It does not matter what they claim to be. That is like saying that Hitler was a devout Christian. They are ruining the name of a movement that is meant to stand for peace and life.

Anyone that would consider killing to try and enforce an idea promoting life, would have to be insane.

Unfortunately it is hard not to judge the whole group on the most radical of it is members, in any circumstance, and it helps their cause even less that pro-choicers do not seem to be causing much of a problem.

I was reading an article on the Internet the other day, and I came across a segment from a quote from the National Right to Life Committee, where they argue the abortion clinic bomber's right to call themselves pro-choice. It read:

"It is false and offensive to suggest, as some pro-abortion groups have done, that speaking in favor of the right to life somehow causes violence. Such as suggestion is like blaming the civil rights movement—and all those who courageously spoke in favor of the rights of African Americans—for the riots or deaths that were part of that era."

This was the act of an individual who just, to me, does not appear to be quite there... if you know what I mean. His actions, along with those of other clinic bombers do not reflect the beliefs of pro-life advocates.

This was not a statement in favor of life, but a mockery of everything both groups stand for.