

Opinions

The Banner

Editorial

Warm breath

Following the Force

"A scholarly background, experience in higher education administration, deep commitment to the liberal arts and the ability to articulate the liberal arts mission."

The requirements our new chancellor must meet are daunting, indeed, not to mention all the problems he or she will inherit from Chancellor Patsy Reed's administration - teachers working without contracts, lack of parking, unfinished construction, the Division I Athletics sinkhole ... yadda, yadda, yadda.

Issues such as these shaped the 1998 fall semester, and it's understandable if our readers have tired of hearing about them week after week. However, close your ears for a second, and you'll notice that the strangest things go on behind closed doors.

The UNCA Chancellor Search Committee has determined that the A.T. Kearney executive search firm is best qualified to select our school's next leader. The firm has 28 offices in over 16 countries worldwide, but not one in Asheville, where the root of our school's problems is.

Ask SGA President Alphonso Donaldson, supposedly the strongest student voice at UNCA, why this school's pockets have just gotten thinner once again, and he'll tell you his "class conflicts" kept your voice from being heard. Gee, thanks, Al. We appreciate your dedication to scholarly pursuits, but while you were jotting down notes, an empty chair voiced our concerns. Now, we're about to shell out \$50,000 plus expenses for the opinion of a nationally-based executive firm who knows less about UNCA's student needs than the representatives we elect and the administration who governs our short stay at this institution of higher learning.

Here's a suggestion: form a committee with more than one student who will actually be affected day-to-day by the selection of the new chancellor. After all, each day they suffer the blunders of an outgoing administration that didn't stick around to complete the "liberal arts mission."

Crash diet

Dear Santa,

Just writing to let you know that we, the campus organizations at UNCA, have been very good this semester. We've tried to serve the students at UNCA the best we can, and it is only fair that we be compensated for our endeavors. So, here is our "wish list." We hope you will remember how good we've been and make our wishes come true. By the way, has anyone ever told you that you look a lot like Patsy Reed with a beard?

Wouldn't it be great if we could just wish for anything and it would happen? Wish for there to be enough professors and adjuncts available to teach enough classes so UNCA can keep them small, wish for construction projects to be finished on time, wish for enough parking spaces for all the cars, and it is magically so. We could start our own Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Alas, there is always something or someone lurking in the shadows to make sure that someone will always pay for someone else's gain. In order for campus organizations to receive the increased funding they desire, students must pay an additional \$50 in fees in the fall of 1999.

While campus organizations do need more money as more students are brought in, so that they can continue to serve them effectively, some areas, such as a \$15 increase in parking fees, seem unnecessary. There is, of course, a great need for more parking at UNCA, but just how many students are going to be willing to pay for parking decks they will only use if they ever join the Center for Creative Retirement? If UNCA wants to do major construction where parking is concerned, then it should focus some of its fundraising monies on achieving that goal.

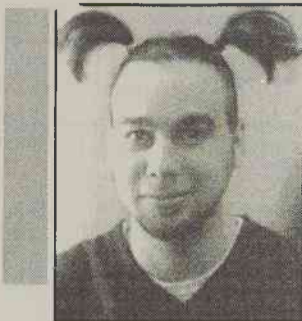
Plans for a personal security pager system for students is also a frivolous idea, mainly because the cost for such a system is just not practical for UNCA. Even if the cost were less, UNCA is ranked consistently as one of the safest campuses in the state, and a security pager system is not going to make that much difference in keeping students safe.

For UNCA, having to pay student fees that are actually reasonable is as much a fantasy as Santa Claus. We want to keep our campus organizations well-funded, but when we continually pay the highest student fees in the UNC system, it's hard to keep that perspective. The best gift the administration could give UNCA students is a determined effort to try and at least keep student fees at their present rate. Instead, we will have to put up with another lump of coal with a UNCA logo on it.

Banner Christmas picks

Albums to give that special someone to let them know you care: Erin King: "Mark West Posits the Blues," Mark West, composer
Amelia Morrison: "Dancing Outlaw," soundtrack
Andrew Pearson: "Radiance," Athenaeum
Chris Garner: "Busted On the Way to L.A.," Nikki Rose
Travis Barker: "Fight for Your Mind," Ben Harper
Nicole Miller: "Hits of the Eighties: Vol I-infinity"
Ben Weigand: "Backstreet Boys," Backstreet Boys
Matt Hunt: "N'Sync," N'Sync
Susan Johnson: "Follow the Leader," Korn

Ralph Biggs, R.I.P.; a Memoir



Justin Stein

columnist
With David Rothman

Justin Stein and David Rothman sit down on Justin's front porch and press 'record' on the tape deck.

Justin: So, what should our parting shot, our last will and testament be about?

David: Well, I think we should at least attempt to be amusing.

J: Have you ever attempted to be amusing? It seems like it always just happens.

D: No kidding? Why is that?

J: You're Jewish. The Judaism thing gets 'em every time.

D: You think people just find Jews funny?

J: Hilarious.

D: Really?

J: Yeah. Because they hate them. People hate Jews and so they wanna' just laugh and fool themselves into thinking they don't actually hate Jews.

D: Really?

J: Don't you think so?

D: No...I mean, I hadn't realized...

J: You should try it sometime.

D: You do realize that your dry sarcasm doesn't translate clearly to print, right? We need to buckle down. This is our last chance to say something to the UNCA community.

J: Or, more accurately, to the ten people who read *The Banner*.

D: Or even more accurately, to the four people who read our columns.

J: I think this is actually more for ourselves.

D: Yeah?

J: I envision this more as a piece to

which I can look back on in 10 years while thinking about my relationship with you.

D: Awww. That's sweet, Justin.

J: More a testament to the friendship than anything really for other people.

D: So what defines our relationship? A mutual admiration of the Professors Mullen? Humanistic concerns? Grooming problems?

J: Nah. We share those with a lot of people.

D: So how do we go about scribing a memoir of our friendship?

J: It's totally egotistical any way we look at it, so we may as well embrace that egotism. What is it that you and I offer the UNCA community that others don't? What is unique about the contributions of Justin Stein and David Rothman?

D: Unrepentant leftist rhetoric?

J: Well, Belk Professor Mark P. Gibney does refer to us as 'the socialist corner.'

D: Yeah, but you're only a socialist because the Baha'i faith is socialism plus monotheism.

J: But in a command economy...

D: Can we avoid economics? Your knowledge far exceeds mine in that field.

J: Yeah. We don't wanna' talk about economics anyway.

-Pause-

J: We could talk about Toby.

D: Prosky? What could you say about Toby Prosky?

J: I could tell the story of how I met him a few years ago when he was waiting tables at Ike's International.

He was the most animated waiter I'd ever seen.

D: You never saw me wait tables.

J: True, but Toby was beaming.

D: "Beaming?"

J: BEAMING. He was the happiest waiter. He was so happy to be serving us our sandwiches.

D: Well, as Toby's only available proxy and roommate, I feel compelled to assure you that not only was he probably just pushing for a fat tip, but also that the light that may once have emanated like sefirot from Toby has been severely altered by his intense academic and intellectual pursuits. He's a bad-ass philosophy guy now. It would be improper to go around constantly beaming at everyone.

J: We could talk about Amy.

D: Desatell? Your girlfriend? The brilliant and superhumanly kind artiste?

J: Yeah.

D: I don't know, Justin. It seems out of character for either of us to pull this kind of switch on folks. Social commentary, content, social commentary, my girlfriend.

J: Well, what do we want to leave *The Banner* with?

D: Columnists who can write? A copy of Strunk and White's "Elements of Style?"

J: I don't know what that is.

D: It's a book about writing well.

J: I don't like books about writing. They're pretentious.

-Pause-

D: What advice can we give to UNCA students?

J: Take classes from Dwight Mullen, Ed Katz, and Dee James.

D: As well as from Keith Bramlett, Mike Ruiz, and Mark P. Gibney.

J: So, what is it that sets them apart as instructors?

D: They demand more from their students than regurgitation. They want their students to actually think and question and speak.

J: Wait...are we going to offend any of our teachers by not mentioning them? Some might be driven to tears.

D: Like who?

J: Bill Sabo. I think Bill Sabo would

be the first compelled to weep.

D: Nonsense. Sabo tough. Sabo strong. Sabo not give rat's ass what pissants Stein and Rothman write.

J: He's more delicate than you think.

-Pause-

J: Maybe we should write a eulogy for Ralph Biggs, undeclared freshman.

D: Oh, we should. That kid, in his brilliant letters, leveled his enemies with an unequaled sharpness of tongue and wit.

J: And he stood up for what he believed in.

D: God bless Ralph Biggs...I'd be afraid of him had he ever actually existed.

-Pause-

D: What would you change about UNCA?

J: We have no books! We should have a library!

D: We do have a library.

J: We do not have a library. We have those little bookshelves over at the end of the quad. We blow a fortune on athletics, but every time I do a research paper I have to use interlibrary loan to get the books I need from some other school. Who's deciding the allocation of funds? They're out of touch!

D: Out of touch with what?

J: Priorities!

D: Nonsense. They're very in touch with their priorities. To them, athletics are the first priority.

J: No, out of touch with the right priorities. My priorities. We could spend athletics money on books, the art department, or new desks instead of those crappy lil' kindergarten plastic things.

D: What else would you change?

J: My ideal change, were I omnipotent, would be to change the hearts and attitudes of people at UNCA. I'd want to try and engender a more loving and familial attitude in people towards each other.

D: But you want that for the whole world.

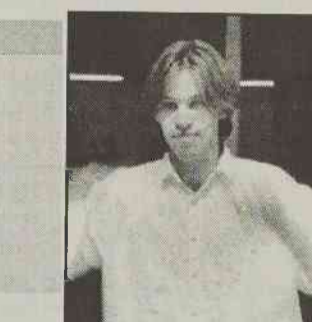
J: Sure, but why not start at UNCA?

D: Because that would leave no role for obnoxious, caustic bastards like me.

J: Point. Say goodbye, David.

D: Goodbye, David!

College's enlightening aspects



Paul Schuler

columnist

Colleges are the consistent jet streams of thought, but of late it seems as though they may be mere weathervanes. What new ideas may blow in the ever-changing winds of time? In search of knowledge, I set out upon the universities of our nation, the fountainheads of thought. Let us see what gems of knowledge this here spring has to offer.

Some students and I were sitting outside on the brick patio of an area college, observing one young kid who was enjoying the view from the awning above the dorm doorway. He was hoppin' around up there, shoutin' and enjoying his lot in life as the campus loon, until one of my patio mates yelled up to him. "Hey man, that roof is mung."

Mung? I did not know that this word existed.

My friend was sitting next to me so I whispered into his ear, "Mung?"

"Yeah, dude," said the long-

haired, bloodshot bohemian. "It's just nasty, you know, gross."

"Interesting," I thought to myself.

"I don't need pretentious language. Simply stating an object as 'mung' suffices to relegate any object into a temporal state of disfavor, which it can be lifted out of by 'kicking ass,' or inspiring someone to cry 'hell yes.'"

Then these other kids and I got to talking about some of the teachers at the school. The loon didn't seem to think much of teachers.

He said, "Yeah, most of my high school teachers sucked. They didn't know anything. I remember this one time this teacher gave me an 'F' on my paper 'cause I used the word 'ass' in it. Well, what of that man?"

"What indeed," I said, as it was the only reply I could conjure at that moment.

"Yeah, but anyway," he arduously continued in his garbled manner of speech, "my teachers here are pretty

cool, especially this one guy. He's fat. He's gay, too."

"What's so good about that?" I said.

"Naw man, that ain't it. He's got the nuggets, man." As if that was supposed to clarify my confusion.

"The nuggets, huh?" I responded indisiduously.

"Who's that, man?" asked one of the other bloodshot fellows in the room. Apparently, the word "nuggets" had piqued his interest.

"He's that big fat guy, sometimes he hangs around the drama department."

"Really, dude. Yeah, I think I know the guy. He's got nuggets, man? No joke?"

"Yeah, we smoked up the other day. It was cool, man, smoking up with a teacher."

Oh. I got it. Nuggets were obviously another in a already crowded group of synonyms for pot.

They, of course, used that word for the next hour or so, describing each and every member of the school's relationship to the word.

There is a royally large amount of money being wasted to send people somewhere they aren't even sure they want to be. Or perhaps there is a great amount of money being spent sending people somewhere they want to be, under the grand illusion that something entirely different than I have described is going on.

I can't help but note the T-shirt I've seen around the campus proudly brandishing the top 10

things about being in college. I think five was something to the effect of, "It's a subsidized party."

I'm not sure whether it was followed up by "dude" or not. Anyhow, I have no problem with the parties - wish there were more in fact - but I fear that colleges are becoming too saturated with people who don't really need to be there.

Which isn't to say they don't need to be somewhere, but let's just say Greek literature is not a necessity in their lives.

I fear that, rather than elevating the average, such a system more effectively diffuses the movements that historically have become so necessary in moving our country along. College campuses are usually the catalysts for essential reform and fresh insight. Without that catalyst, who's going to stop the world from becoming a nuclear garbage can? Who's going to stop the world from becoming a global billboard for an American culture that doesn't exist? Who's going to fill that cultural vacuum currently occupied by MTV and the Playstation generation?

College today no longer seems to be the hotbed capable of reforming such social ills. Rather, it is the bedfellow of a society with one eye on the dollar, and the other on a choice piece of booty.

I must confess, I do play the odd video game (Madden '95 for the Sega Genesis). In fact, it is part of my daily routine. To think I once reckoned myself an intellectual.