

Opinions

The Banner Editorial

When the levee breaks

See no evil

Are we, as UNCA students, a cohesive group? After a resident was attacked by a man hiding in her closet, public safety and housing are urging us to "be more protective of each other" and take our safety seriously. To further this cause, they are planning on ordering brass whistles for all the girls to carry around on their keychains.

Let us trace the path this endeavor will inevitably take. Key-chain whistles will be handed out to everyone who wants them. One night, someone will blow the whistle just for fun, just to see what happens—sound like high school, anyone? Public safety will come running, chastise the offender for not taking this safety measure seriously, and retreat.

It will happen again and again and again, until the whistle is as big of a joke as the fire alarms have become. When someone sounds a whistle in panic as someone attacks them in their room, will fellow students groan and roll over in their beds, hoping the racket will stop?

We hope that it will not take the kind of catastrophe like the one that happened Jan. 19 at Seron Hall University, where three students died because they didn't believe the fire alarm when it sounded. If safety warnings are ignored by students, can we expect dorm mates to come to our rescue when we scream or blow a whistle? Will it take serious injury of one of our peers for students to understand that safety is not a joke?

It is as much our job to be each other's watchdogs as it is public safety's job to respond to our calls. There may be a time when a student can help more quickly than public safety, and may be the deciding factor in the outcome of an attempted attack.

So, as students, we ask you to be conscious of your neighbors' safety, as well as your own. Do not make a joke of the Governor's Village incident, and hopefully as a student body we can prevent other attacks from happening.

Farewell: You're a good man, Charlie Brown

We pay tribute here to one of history's greatest cartoonists—Charles Schultz, creator of Peanuts. On Feb. 12, Schultz passed away from complications from colon cancer, hours before his last original Peanuts was to run on Sunday comics pages all over the world. He was 77.

The most popular comic in history, Peanuts ran for almost 50 years, giving us characters like Lucy, Linus, Peppermint Patty, Schroeder, Pigpen, Snoopy and, of course, Charlie Brown.

Schultz was often compared to Charlie Brown, the simple, insecure boy who captured the attention of newspaper readers for decades. And Charlie Brown was, indeed, modeled after his creator. The cartoon character suffered many of the insecurities Schultz himself faced all his life, such as depression, anxiety and shyness.

"It seems beyond the comprehension of people that someone can be born to draw comic strips, but I think I was," said Schultz once. Unable to continue his busy drawing schedule, Schultz retired in January 2000.

An one-frame obituary cartoon by Kevin Siers that ran in the *Charlotte Observer* the day after Schultz's death pictured Charlie Brown, his head bent onto his arms, leaning on a plain brick wall. Like Schultz's life, like his work, like his death—the end was quiet, simple, unassuming and utterly moving.

"Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Linus, Lucy... how could I ever forget them..." said Schultz in his farewell cartoon. We will not, as we will not forget the man that brought them to life.

Branching out

In all the spring break hubbub, we at *The Banner* have found a few places where you'll be assured low airline rates, cheap hotels and a... unique experience. Have a blast!

Emma Jones: Siberia
Meghan Cummings: Hershey Park, Pa.
Jason Graham: Death Valley
Sarah Wilkins: Ghost Town, Maggie Valley
Krystel Lucas: Old Fort, N.C.
Rebecca Cook: Dollywood
Lauren Deal: Islip Garbage Barge, N.Y.
Matt Hunt and Zach Dill: San Francisco, Calif.
Eric Porter: Durham, N.C.
Mark West: Chernobyl

How language shapes reality



Jaimie
Park
columnist

I have a warning for my fellow humans—do not make the mistake of accepting words for reality, for in doing so you will lose contact with the world. I'm serious. Do you ever think about how we Homo sapiens perceive reality and attempt to communicate our concept of it to others? Ever think about the effects that language, in particular the written word, have on how we understand our reality?

Surgeon, professor and author Leonard Shlain has put forth a neuroanatomical hypothesis that should wake most of you up from your comas of complacency in regards to the conflicting relationship of language and the perception of reality.

Shlain postulates in his book "The Alphabet and the Goddess," "When a critical mass of people within a society acquire literacy, especially alphabet literacy, left hemisphere modes of thought are reinforced at the expense of right hemisphere ones, which manifests as a decline in the status of images..."

First, the question of why and how we came to develop speech

must be asked. The answer: (to keep it simple) it freed our hands, and we could do it in the dark.

With the invention and utilization of speech came hemispheric lateralization, or the splitting of our brains' frontal lobes. "So what?" you ask. Well, the lateralization of the brain affects how we perceive, manipulate, symbolize and think about reality.

Before speech and the written word, we cognated and communicated on the level of images. Images are concrete—they approximate reality. The system of imagery promotes a holistic, global perspective; it emphasizes the awareness of what Gregory Bateson coined "the pattern that connects."

Images are cognated in the right cortical lobe, or right brain. Essentially, the right brain is responsible for our experience of being, feeling, states, images, holism and music. Without it, we wouldn't believe in our Gods, we would have no sense of humor, no aesthetic appreciation and no awareness of the synthesis of reality.

With speech came the dominance of our left brains over our right brains, which is pretty significant since the right lobe is, in Shlain's terms, the "elder sibling." What happened when we invented speech and the written word was this, according to Shlain: our sense of wholeness, brought about by our right brain, was cleaved by the left

brain, creating a duality that led humanity to invent a differentiation between "me-in-here" and "world-out-there."

From speech came the ascendancy of the left brain to power, which resulted in the birth of logic, which in turn gave rise to law codes, philosophy of a dualistic nature, and objective science.

Are you finally beginning to get the big picture? You see how the adoption of words severed our ability to comprehend the pattern that connects, and instead instituted a construct and method of differentiation, resulting in a fatal error of interpreting reality?

The basic scheme of classification that is built into our language causes us to see with our categories. Listen to our words. Do they really reveal anything about reality? We evaluate, not describe. Therefore, our words are only expressions of our

inner states—feelings, preconceptions, assumptions and delusions. "Wendell Johnson, in 'Your Most Enchanted Listener,' lamented, 'In the worlds of words inside our heads, we hold ourselves captive.' There's truth in his words, ironically enough. Within the context of the self, words are the implementation of thought; meaning that language

controls what we think about and how, which in turn goes further in affecting what we see and how we see it, going even deeper to what, how, and why we relate to things we see, do.

So what is it, bedone? Good question. I am dancing the dance that most resembles stumbling feet by about is the dark. An

I have taken into account an observation of the Talmud, "Teaching without a system makes learning difficult." But are we here to "learn" or to "live"?

We shouldn't despair, for the solution is inside our very own hard ended skulls. We may have switched lobes, so to speak, but it is not irreversible.

Language has provided us with a map of reality—a primitive, defective one, but a map nonetheless. By realizing the limitations of language and knowing that it is merely a map of reality, not reality itself, salvation will be achieved.

What can be learned during a seven-hour airport layover



Matthew
Rossi
columnist

For seven hours one day, I stared into boredom's maw while waiting in the abyss of the Raleigh airport. It was a return trip from a weekend at home to see my mother remarry, and I was happy, having been the maid of honor (a story unto itself). The flight was nothing special—Philadelphia to Raleigh, and then a connecting flight to Asheville. Peanuts had been served. All so simple, until I arrived to see my connecting flight pull away and the malicious smirk of the man at the information desk telling me I had to wait for the evening flight.

Airports always make me a little paranoid, and the more time I spend in them, the more frenetic my demeanor. I chalk this up to the fact that airports are nowhere places. They exist in this kind of interim netherworld all their own where

none of the regular rules apply.

There are bookstores, but nothing good to read, fast shops but no baths. In their restaurants, cheap beer is expensive, expensive beer cheap. The denizens of the terminal are inevitably stripped of all identity, reduced to numbers, walking around without ever looking you in the eye. (I am convinced the people who work in airports are part of some big sociological experiment. Otherwise, how do they keep sane?)

The worst part of all is that there are no clocks in airports. There is no method by which man can connect to the real world, to the normalized pace set in the hands of a chronometer, so the time passes without measure.

Sailors back in the day knew all about this sort of thing. Somewhere

in the middle of the Atlantic lies a place where no winds blow and boats would stop, mired in an eerie calm for months at a time. In these areas, known appropriately as the Doldrums, time would pass with nothing for the sailors to do, nothing in any direction but grey skies and a baking sun. They would go mad in the heat and boredom. Mutinies arose.

Men would start having hallucinations, say of monkeys clawing on their heads; oftentimes, the sailors would gnaw on each other's limbs, simply so they could pass the time. (Columbus is known to have been missing an arm for this very reason.) If the ship spent too much time within the Doldrums, it would eventually kill them through starvation or fright at seeing their own scurvy-ravaged faces.

And there I was, trapped in precisely the same place with the same time from the Doldrums. How to describe the torment of my nowhere condition? The thousands of seconds spent walking back and forth from gate to gate, places without names but designations like gridwork on a circuitry diagram. I stared endlessly upon the runway in the vain hopes that somewhere out there was a city I might see. I chewed apathetically on a pile of tortillas in congealed liquid cheese, the only thing my worthless meal ticket could buy me.

After three hours, I thought I could

pull my mind back into reality, but the man at the counter simply smiled congenially as he said they just sold the last one. I think a man in khaki pants smirked at this, enhancing my belief that they were all there to torment me, blockade me.

By hour five, my mind hurt. A baby began to wail like a muzzetta and I thought, "How nice that would be, to scream loudly and rid myself of that horror."

In the seventh hour, a man sat next to me. He told me his name was Mohammed, and proceeded to explain the difference between Alexandria and Cairo. Cairo, he told me, has 12 million people in it during the day, and by night its population is only six million.

As I thought about how odd that was, he went on to explain that Alexandria was a shining city on the coast, temperate and moist. I clung to Mohammed as my only protection from the condition I found myself in, until, in the end, he left on a plane for Chicago.

After the seventh hour, I boarded my plane. I laid my head back in the seat and closed my eyes, gripping to the man next to me that I had to spend seven hours in that nothing place.

"Seven hours?" he responded incredulously. "That's nothing. I just got back from Africa—12 hour layovers are standard. But you get used to it. Eventually the mind finds ways to adjust."