

# Opinions

The Banner

## Editorial

### Paper cuts

#### The damage done

On March 27, a California Supreme Court jury awarded Leslie Whiteley, a smoker for more than 25 years, \$20 million from R.J. Reynolds and Philip Morris after she was diagnosed with lung cancer. Whiteley is not expected to live more than a year, according to CNN.

The new aspect of this case revolves around the fact that Whiteley began smoking cigarettes *after* the Surgeon General's warning appeared on packages in 1969 — damages had only been awarded previously to plaintiffs who smoked prior to the standardization of package warning labels.

The jury decided that the companies acted in malice, knew that their cigarettes were harmful and deliberately misled the public, according to CNN.

This opens the floodgates to any person that is dying of tobacco-related cancer. The tobacco companies could potentially be sued repeatedly for massive amounts of money.

In fact, Whiteley's husband was also awarded \$250,000 for loss of companionship. If this verdict stands through the appeal process, any family member could also sue for damages.

Who is to blame in these situations?

Individuals dying of tobacco-related cancer are well aware of the fact that smoking is directly linked with the disease, just as Whiteley was aware of the dangers of smoking tobacco because of the package. So, should the companies be placed at fault for smokers' illnesses?

On the other hand, the companies deliberately let Americans become ill, and even die, from their product.

This moral dilemma makes it difficult to decide who is guilty. Americans should ask themselves if a person is responsible for the damage they inflict upon themselves, or if it is producer of the product that is at fault.

As a nation, citizens need to decide on a path to prevent thousands of similar cases from appearing, bogging down our already insufficient court systems.

### Wireless confidence

In the world of papers, parties, studying and everything else involved with being a college student, it is easy to get caught up in our daily lives and forget some of the more serious sides of campus and student life, such as domestic violence.

But violence is here, on campus, just as it is everywhere else. One in five college students has reported at least one incident of abuse while dating, ranging from slaps to even more serious forms of violence, according to the Corporate Alliance to End Partner Violence, an advocacy group based in Bloomington, Ill.

One in five students — those statistics may be higher or lower for different schools, but even at quiet, unassuming UNCA, domestic, or "partner," violence occurs.

Everything that can be done to help protect students should be done, and some people have recently made an effort. Bell Atlantic Mobile (BAM) and the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence donated 10 cellular phones to UNCA to help protect students against domestic violence.

Although the question could be raised of how effective a cellular phone can really be to someone facing a violent citation, the donation is generous, and the thought behind it appreciable.

"We feel the program is successful if it can help just one victim of domestic violence," said BAM representative Allen Tasker.

If a cellular phone can do that, the program is very successful indeed, and it certainly can't hurt to try.

### Democracy at its best

While the media has a field day with corrupt politicians and sociologists bemoan the staggeringly low voter interest rate as we approach this year's presidential election, the *Banner* staff feels the need to offer our choices for this year's write-ins. Mickey Mouse is looking better and better.

Emma Jones: Oscar the Grouch  
Sarah Wilkins: Gary Busey  
Meghan Cummings: John Travolta  
Krystal Lucas: "The Rock"  
Jason Graham: Dirk Diggler  
Rebecca Cook: Mr. Rogers  
Lauren Deal: Mr. T  
Matt Hunt and Zach Dill: Jim and Tammy Faye  
Eric Porter: Shaft  
Mark West: Richard Simmons

## Redefining UNCA's student government with wrestling



Jason  
Allen  
columnist

I know I told you to stand up for what you believe in, but scalping the ugly baby statue on the quad was not what I had in mind. I know many of you would like to believe that it was the angry ghost of Dr. Seuss come for revenge, but it wasn't. As much as I hate the dang thing, this kind of behavior just is not acceptable.

What's next? Is someone going to neuter the silver bulldog? Just because something is really tacky and distasteful is not a reason to destroy it. If it were, someone would have planted plastic explosives under "Bubba Bulldog" long ago. But enough on that, let's get down to business.

I feel that we as a student body have begun to take ourselves way too seriously. So I have come up with an idea to help liven up the atmosphere. What is the idea, you ask? It concerns our governing body, our elected representatives.

Let's talk about SGA, it being election week and all. Now, many of us just don't give a rat's rear end about SGA, and find the whole thing to be nothing more than people who have not given up their high school years. You all know what I mean. They don't really

want to help us, and they just want to feel popular and have something to stick on a resume. Sometimes they are right on cue with getting things done, and other times, they go in circles for ages. But any way you look at it, it's still very dull politics.

You want a SGA that is fun and exciting? Then how about UNCASGWF (The UNC-Asheville Student Government Wrestling Federation)? No more dull voting or long drawn out meetings that, quite frankly, we could care less about.

Imagine going to Justice Gym and sitting in the stands as the announcer welcomes you to the show.

"Tonight's main event will be the SGA President and Heavy Weight Champion [insert name here] versus the number one contender for the belt, The SGA Vice-President [insert name here] in a never-before-seen, gavel-on-a-pole match. This match has long been anticipated, and has been put off until tonight during our first ever Pay-Per-View event: Bulldog Blitzkrieg."

"Our two combatants are from the same fraternity (Wait, aren't almost all SGA guys from the same

frat?) and have been good friends until the title shot began to drive a wedge between them. Now it comes down to this — one will walk away as the president and the other will be carted out on a stretcher."

Later, one representative from each of the sororities will battle in a Battle Royal-Elimination-Evening Gown Match for the coveted Women's Championship Belt. Last to lose her clothes wins. Now isn't that more exciting?

Nor only could SGA have a new way to settle debates and arguments but we'd also get some use out of Justice Gym that would be worth seeing. I know, "violence never solves anything," and you're right. Otherwise, we'd run out of story lines way too fast. Plus, anyone can get in on the action. After all, most all matches have outside interference.

With the president's title always up for grabs and only three hand falls away from losing it, the action would always build. Students from the multi-media and music departments could team up with the mass communication and computer students and create all the entrance themes, movies, and other animation as well as film, edit and produce the shows live for the UNC Public Television System. (No more stupid telethons for them, when one well advertised Pay-Per-View could fund them for a year.)

Drama students could help create the personas of the fighters, coach the SGA members on how to sound real angry and be understood when they yell into microphones at each other.

Management types could, well, manage the fighters, and the art department could make a bundle off of merchandising.

Literature and creative writing

people can help write the story lines and the dialogue of the wrestlers. Women's studies can get upset and yell at the degrading treatment of women in the UNCASGWF.

And let's not leave out our little pyromaniac friends in the sciences, because we all know that part of the show is the elaborate explosive special effects. We don't even have to limit it to just SGA — what about a lightweight division made up of housing staff?

Remember: "UNCASGWF — Betrayal, Friendship, Blood, Explosions, Scarily-Clad Nubile Young Women, Big Metal Cages" and enough senseless violence to keep someone with ADHD occupied.

And coming this fall is a very special event as UNCASGWF goes up against the governing bodies of all your favorite North Carolina public universities in Summer School Slam.

Be sure to join us March 28 on "SGA is GAS" when the Masked Treasurer goes up against the Sophomore Senators in a Handicap Cage Match. The main event: "Stone Dead" Vice Pres. will battle in a Hardcore-Falls-Count-Anywhere match against "The Lethal Writer," putting both his Vice President Belt and his Hardcore Title on the line.

And the biggest thing of all — the SGA president makes an announcement about the upcoming Pay-Per-View event in April (Bulldog-Mania 2000) that will rock the foundations of the entire UNCASGWF.

Look, it worked for Ted Turner and Vince McMahon, why not for us? So, I say, for entertainment, for sports and for big bucks, vote for me as the CEO of UNCASGWF Enterprises. What? Can't I make a quick buck out of this?

## When the novelty wears off



Andrew  
Thomasson  
columnist

My friend had a birthday two weeks ago, and had flowers and a balloon sent to her for that happy, happy day. The longevity of said balloon and flowers quite impressed me, as I never have really known a helium balloon to stay afloat for two full weeks without drooping and dragging the floor.

I thought about how glorious the balloon must have looked, and how lovely the flower arrangement must have been when it first arrived. Then, I watched the weeks take their ugly toll in a few seconds. I realized how natural it is for things like that to age rapidly, and have their old luster wear off.

My mind then drew a connection to novelty wearing off of things that you once loved. I can remember several times in my life when I really desperately wanted something, say, a new guitar, and after saving up all my money (this was when I was about 12), buying it.

For the first couple weeks, I was in love with that guitar, but I didn't actually take the time to learn to play it. Subsequently, I quickly grew tired of my new toy. It was relegated to the corner to collect dust, and I was out a couple hundred bucks. The novelty wore off too

rapidly, and now, I really wish it had not, because I picked up the guitar again about a year and a half ago, and it makes me wonder how good I would be now if I had actually been playing since I was 12.

That anecdote was sort of a tangent, but it provides a nice segue into my next (or perhaps first) point. The idea that novelty wears off objects made me think about novelty wearing off of jobs.

We all know that there are millions of people in the world today who hate their jobs. They hate the sights, smells and sounds of it, and they especially hate waking up at the crack of dawn every morning to go to this place they hate.

I have found that, as a general rule regarding the people I have talked to who hate their occupations, they not only hate their occupations, but there is something else very specific that they would rather be doing. When I ask them why they started working in the bank or in the computer systems design office or took that internship at the dentist's to begin with, the answers I get astound me. The most common responses are, "So-and-so told me that I ought to do this, and then I got stuck."

"I did it for the money."  
"I don't know how to do anything else."

Now, I have covered in a previous column what I think about people doing things for someone else instead of themselves, and although that column was about love relationships, the same principle applies here as well. Make yourself

happy first. What does it matter that your friends can claim to know an important businessman, or that your parents can claim a doctor as a daughter, if you are utterly miserable doing it? It doesn't make sense to me. It doesn't make sense to anyone to whom I have brought it up, but I still see too many people living their lives for someone else.

The money issue is generally an offshoot of that. People want to provide for their families the best that they can. They want their kids to have the best clothes and go to the best college so they can impress their friends by saying, "My son is going to Duke, and is going to be a doctor," thus starting the cycle over again.

This brings to my mind the time Jesus said "What does it matter that you gain all of these things, even

gain the world, if you forfeit your soul?" I realize that is not a direct quote, but the idea holds. Your soul is in hell if you are doing something you hate.

And what does it matter that you can buy a big house and drive a Mercedes sport utility vehicle if you're miserable? There have been more people to commit suicide over

a high-pressure lifestyle that they feel they cannot deal with anymore than just about anything else.

As for not knowing how to do anything else, well, I have said before that almost everyone who hates their job has something they would rather be doing. But fear of change is a really powerful phenomenon, and the human mind has been trained to think, "What if?"

"What if this doesn't work?"  
"What if I screw up, and my son can't go to Duke and be a doctor?"

You see, the reasons are cyclical and vicious. However, it takes an individual that is willing to say not only, "I hate my job," but willing to say, "I'm going to fix it instead of yell" to actually make progress.

I also firmly believe that the world would be infinitely more productive if everyone was doing what they wanted, instead of worked in pigeonhole jobs. Just an opinion.

**Almost everyone who hates their job has something they would rather be doing. But fear of change is a really powerful phenomenon, and the human mind has been trained to think, "What if?"**