

Opinions

The Banner

Editorial

A farewell to arms

Back to basics

The Washington D.C. police deliberately denied protestors their civil rights at the IMF and World Bank meetings on April 15, according to participants in the protest.

Around 600 protestors were arrested, yet their Miranda rights were never read to them, they were denied access to lawyers, water and bathroom privileges.

The fact that these violations still take place is appalling. The fact that it happened in America instead of some third world country makes it even more frightening.

America stands for freedom and justice, and when our police force takes away those ideals, Americans need to raise their voices in protest.

Our forefathers created the right to peacefully assemble so citizens could publicly object and demonstrate against an aspect of the government that they do not agree with. When this right is infringed upon, other rights could easily be taken away.

Even though they supposedly committed the crime of parading without a permit, their punishment was extreme for such a small misdemeanor. They were voicing their objections, which is everyone's right.

Obviously, the police's objective was to keep as many protestors off the street as possible, but in doing so, they took the first step toward abolishing civil rights.

Law officials have the momentous task of keeping peace and ensuring safety, yet sometimes they cross the line, and we need to be aware of those instances by bringing them to national attention.

Instead of calling one protest, the police created another. A class-action lawsuit is being filed against the D.C. force because of their mistreatment of the demonstrators. We can only hope that this warrants future law-enforcement officials to abide by the laws when massive protests are held.

Ensuring the safety and rights of every individual is our responsibility. We can not become content in our affluent society and fail to recognize the plight of fellow Americans.

The big picture

The Supreme Court came to a head April 26 over the issue of whether the Boy Scouts of America can actively exclude homosexuals because it violates their code of "cleanliness and moral straightness."

In 1990, then-19-year-old James Dale was removed from his position as an assistant scoutmaster after the troop discovered that he was co-president of a gay and lesbian organization at Rutgers University.

Among the arguments for and against allowing the exclusion was the argument that if the organization was not allowed to exclude homosexuals, its members might become more vocally adamant on their opinions of gays.

Is the vocalizations of one group more important than the preservation of every American's legal right to not be discriminated against? Granted, the legal supports for non-discrimination do not always hold up against individual prejudices, but setting a legal precedent for would-be discriminators to reference would be a phenomenal mistake.

Regardless of the ramifications within the Boy Scouts, allowing an organization of that size and influence to openly reject individuals because of sexual preference would open the floodgates for other private and public organizations to seek legal protection for excluding other groups from their organizations — and then, they would have a Supreme Court decision to back them up.

Are we, as a people used to living with a minimum of concern about being rejected because of sex, race, creed or sexual preference, willing to begin the tide of regression that will inevitably lead to more and more discrimination against all types of people?

"Giving public accommodations broad freedom to exclude people the organization believes do not match its message could 'swallow the civil rights laws,'" said Evan Wolfson, the plaintiff's lawyer, in an April 26 *Raleigh News and Observer* article.

The United States has worked hard, and is still working, to ensure the rights of all our citizens. To make this decision in favor of the Boy Scouts would deal a heavy blow to the many people still struggling to be an equal part of our society.

Let us hope that the Supreme Court has the presence of mind to consider the bigger picture, and understand that there are larger freedoms at stake than one organization's wish to be "morally straight."

Til then

As we publish our last newspaper of the semester, *The Banner* editorial board hopes that UNCA has been motivated to act on some of the issues brought forth in this semester's papers. We are here to stimulate thought and forward public discussion among the UNCA community. We look forward to receiving your comments next fall when we resume publication.

A commentary on whiny people



Andrew Thomasson
columnist

In a discussion I had with one of my professors some weeks ago, he complimented me on my column writing, and told me how much he liked the fact that I do not spend my columns bitching about this thing or that thing. He said that I talk about interesting issues concerning us all in a fashion that is logical, not just whiny.

I appreciated his compliment for many reasons (ego trip included), but mostly for the simple reason that I strongly dislike whiny people, and I'm glad that I haven't been grouped with them.

And since I strongly dislike them, I hereby dedicate this column to why I hate bitchy people.

They are, as a general rule, self-centered snobs that care about themselves and themselves only. It makes little or no difference how what they do or say affects the world around them. The people they surround themselves with are viewed

as either pawns to do the bitcher's bidding, or as ears to absorb their theses on everything under the sun.

They are also usually painfully under educated regarding the topic about which they bitch, making the listener cringe, not only at the bitcher's faux intellectualism, but at their ignorance as well. It is an opinion of mine that people should educate themselves on a particular topic and know the pros and cons of the issue before they decide the world needs to be enlightened with their brilliance.

Also, these people tend to perpetuate stereotypes. Another of my pet peeves is when someone draws an assumption about all people in a group because of the actions of a single individual towards them. Just because one teenager stole something from your store does not mean every kid under the age of eighteen is going to stick something in their

pockets or down their pants and walk out with it. As Mark Twain once said, "We should be careful to get out of an experience only the wisdom that is in it — and stop there, lest we be like the cat that sits down on a hot stove lid. She will never sit down on a hot stove lid again — and that is well; but also she will never sit on a cold one anymore."

Bitchers say "I hate them hippie tree-hugging elitists who commit left-wing brainless bitches because of...blah blah blah..." It bothers me that bitchers, or anyone for that matter, hate a group for the actions of an individual.

Inactive bitchers are the worst. You know the ones of which I speak. They're the ones that go along to rallies and protests to pick up girls, or because they don't want to be left out. They very rarely have any convictions of their own, and are hopelessly naive in the opinions they do carry. They are the ones who do not vote on Election Day, then spend the next two, four, or six years whining about how crappy a job the elected officials are doing.

A good smaller scale example is the Student Government Association here at UNCA. The people who are elected each an inordinate

amount of flack from the student body for being elitist, and only responding to the needs of a select few. They cater to the so-called elite because, quite simply, the elite were the ones that voted them into office to start with. If you don't bother to vote, don't whine about who gets elected. If you don't like who is running, run yourself, if you think you can do a better job.

Finally, I come to my least favorite part about bitchy people. They tend to be hypocrites of epic proportions, who cannot or will not see the irony of their own actions. They will praise someone for being a good person, but then they will find a way to pick on that person. They will praise someone for being a good person, but then they will find a way to pick on that person. They will praise someone for being a good person, but then they will find a way to pick on that person.

Remember, judge not, lest ye be judged.

A collection of random anecdotes for the end of the spring semester



Jennifer Ross
columnist

Okay, the good news is that there is only two weeks left of school. The bad news is that, for most of us, these last three weeks are the most stressful.

There are many methods to handle the stress of evaluations, research papers and final exams. These methods include time management, meditation, and the ever-popular mental breakdown. But I believe the best method for stress management is humor.

So in my quest to take some of the stress out of the last few weeks of school for everybody reading, I scoured my friends, underneath large rocks, the Internet, and that gray matter I call my brain, all in the search of humorous jokes. This is what I found.

If grades were determined by subject...

Department of history — All students get the same grade they got last year.

Department of music — Each student must figure out the grade by listening to the instructor play the corresponding note (+ and - would be sharp and flat respectively).

Department of philosophy — What is a grade?

Department of psychology — Students are asked to put into their exam books, close them and turn

them in. The professor opens the books and assigns the first grade that comes to mind.

Department of religion- Grade is determined by God.

Real responses to class and teacher evaluations...

1. "Recitation was great. It was so confusing that I forgot who I was, where I was and what I was doing. It's a great stress reliever."

2. "I would sit in class and stare out the window at squirrels. They've got a cool nest in the tree."

3. "(The professor) teaches like Speedy Gonzalez on a caffeine high."

4. "TA steadily improved throughout the course... I think he started drinking and it really loosened him up."

5. "The textbook would be more enjoyable if served in an Alfredo sauce."

Ten ways to bomb an exam creatively...

1. Get a copy of the exam and then run out screaming "Andre, Andre, I've got the secret documents!"

2. Talk the entire way through the exam. Read questions aloud, debate your answers with yourself out loud. If asked to stop, yell out, "I'm SOOO sure you can hear me think."

3. Then start talking about what

a jerk the instructor is.

4. Walk into the room looking about frantically. Go to the instructor, say "They've found me. I have to leave the country," and run off.

5. Fifteen minutes into the exam, stand up, rip up all the papers into very small pieces, throw them into the air and yell out "Merry Christmas!"

6. If you're really dating, ask for another copy of the exam. Say you lost the first one. Repeat this process every fifteen minutes.

7. As soon as the instructor hands you the exam, eat it.

8. Every five minutes, stand up, collect your things, move to another seat, and continue with the exam.

9. Comment on how sexy the instructor is looking that day.

10. Go to an exam for a class you have no clue about, where you know the class is very small, and the instructor would recognize you if you belonged. Claim that you have been to every lecture. Fight for your right to take the exam.

11. Bring some large, cumbersome, ugly idol. Put it right next to you. Pray to it often. Consider a small sacrifice.

12. Bring things to throw at the instructor when she/he's not looking. Blame it on the person nearest to you.

13. Fifteen ways to freak your roommate out on your first...

1. Spend all your money on Transformers. Play with them at night. If your roommate says anything, tell him/her with a straight face, "They're more than meets the eye."

2. Kill roaches with a monkey wrench while humming Wagnerian arias on a kazoo. If your roommate complains, explain that it is for your performance art class (or hit him/her with the wrench).

3. Ask your roommate if your family can move in "just for a couple of weeks."

4. Steal a fishbait. Fill it with beer

and dump sardines in it. Talk to them every time bearing in others.

5. Smile. All the time.

6. Hide a bunch of potato chips and Ho Hos in the bottom of a trash can. When you get hungry, root around in the trash. Find the food and eat it. If your roommate empties the trash before you, demand that she/he reimburse you.

7. Shave one eyebrow off.

8. Put your mattress underneath your bed. Sleep down under and pile your dirty clothes on the empty bedframe. If your roommate complains, matter, "Gotta save space," twenty times while twitching violently.

9. Clip your fingernails and toenails and keep them in a baggie. Leave the baggie near your computer and snack from it while studying. If she/he walks by, grab the bag close and eye him/her suspiciously.

10. Whenever his/her parents call and ask for your roommate, breathe into the phone for five seconds then hang up.

11. Stare at your roommate for five minutes out of every hour. Don't say anything, just stare.

12. Take all of your roommate's furniture and build a fort. Guard the fort for an entire weekend.

13. Whenever you're on the phone and she/he walks in, hang up immediately without saying anything and crawl under your desk. Sit there for two minutes, then call whoever it was back.

14. Eat moths.

15. If you know that she/he is in the room, come barging in out of breath. Ask if they saw a fat bird naked Tibetan man run through carrying a hundred dollar bill. Run back out swearing.

In summary, I would like to leave you with a deep thought. What is brown and sticky?

Answer: A stick!

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