

Opinions

The Blue Banner

Editorials

Those lucky few

As we head into a long-awaited fall break, the *Blue Banner* staff anticipates a few short days of respite. If we had our choice, these are the lucky people we'd spend those days with and where we'd take them.

Emma Jones: Downtown thong man to a Republican rally
Cate Bergman: Her father mushroom hunting in Slovakia
Sarah Wilkins: Her dogs to a national barking competition
Kathryn Krouse: Buddy Holly to Duff Brewery
Lena Burns: Rob Flynn of Machine Head to Tahiti
Sarah Lacy: George Clinton to New Orleans
Justin Meckes: Tammy Faye Baker to Atlantic City
Lauren Deal: A friend to a Broadway theater spree
Matt Hunt: Ben to a cottage in Hilton Head
Ben Weigand: Matt to a chalet in Gatlinburg
Mark West: Vince McMahon to a wrestling symposium

Letters to the Editor

Apology

Dear Editor,

First of all, I would like to apologize to everyone I offended by the statements I made in last week's *Blue Banner*. I need to think before I speak about what I feel.

There is no excuse for my actions, and I am truly sorry about what I have said.

I am asking for the students and faculty to dig deep into their hearts and forgive me for what I've done.

I want to be a part of the solution for diversity on this campus for all students, not a problem.

Allan Lovett
Freshman, undecided

In defense

Dear Editor,

To my dismay, I was in a room where narrow-minded and ignorant remarks were made about the incompetence of *Blue Banner* reporters. I feel that it is part of my duty as a member of SGA, active student leader and *Blue Banner* reporter to bring light to the truth.

I was told by a fellow student that if *Blue Banner* reporters would just get their acts together, quit being lazy and quote only what people said, then there would never be any problems with the way we do our stories. My rebuttals to this argument are as follows.

First, I refute any person who accuses *Blue Banner* reporters of falsifying quotes. The first thing mass communication majors learn about newspaper reporting is that you never make up or change quotes. This is something that all reputable journalistic publications adhere to.

Many times people are dissatisfied with how the reporter uses the information obtained in an interview. It is for this specific reason that each *Blue Banner* reporter is required to tape-record every single word of every interview. Even if someone admits to murder, a *Blue Banner* reporter cannot publish that quote unless it is on tape. Libel is a serious and costly accusation, and is one we try to prevent by docu-

menting all interviews.

I recently experienced this myself. The WLOS News 13 reporter John Le and a cameraman came to one of my classes to discuss political advertising. At one point, I made an eloquent speech about the subject, but I prefaced it by saying that a particular ad was "goofy." I overheard John Le and the cameraman say that they were going to run what I had just said.

I was so excited, and eagerly tuned in to the 6 p.m. news to see my moment on television. Contrary to my expectations, I was on air for about five seconds, and all they had me saying was "yeah, that ad was goofy."

I looked stupid, but they didn't change or make up what I said, so I didn't have a leg to stand on. My point is that you often don't know how you look until you see a snapshot of yourself. What you say may cast you in a light you don't like, but we don't distort facts or misquote people.

Second, the *Blue Banner* operates on a tight schedule. We get our story assignments on Monday, and have to complete the story by the following Monday. Granted, our stories are not as long as a term paper, but when writing a news article, the reporter is required to interview the people involved with the issue.

It is extremely difficult to track down faculty members and students who are either in class or do not answer their phone. By the time a faculty member is contacted and an interview is scheduled, it could be as late as Friday. That only leaves a minimal amount of time to compile all of the information into an accurate and presentable article, but we meet our deadlines with the information we have.

It is a daunting task to be a *Blue Banner* reporter. Now that I am part of this highly qualified staff, I must defend my reputation as well as that of the *Blue Banner*. We work diligently to produce a top quality newspaper for our UNCA campus community. If you don't like the way we do our job, then join the staff and try your hand at it, or send a letter to the editor.

Bridgette Odum
Senior, mass communication

Considerations when deciding to vote



Kevin Rollins
Columnist

Please don't vote this Nov. 7. That is, please don't vote if you don't know what you are voting for. The only good voter is an informed voter.

Reading the League of Women Voters guide does not make you an informed voter. Reading *Time* and *Newsweek* doesn't help much more.

Do not rely on television news. And never, ever take for granted that a politician knows what he is talking about, or believes what he is saying.

Instead, pick a single politician and a single promise he is making. Then, ask the following questions:

What is he saying? Is he saying anything at all? Beware of answers like, "I am for health care, one hundred and one percent. The environment must be protected. Family values are the core of America."

While they all have obvious merit, they don't really say much about the laws the politician will craft or the programs he will fund. If you can glean an actual policy proposal from the mess of rhetoric, promises and evasions, write it down. Better yet, get it on tape. Such an event may never come again.

But do you believe it? Have you been given any indication that the program or law will actually be fought for once the politician is in

office? If they have been in office before, you might check their voting record.

By this, I mean for you to read every bill they have ever voted for in its entirety. Read every page, every line. Do not read just the ones which mention the issue in its title, but every bill that doesn't, too. Often, a legislator will fight passionately for a program, get it put into law, and then undermine it by voting for another program which works against it.

He may knowingly do this. Or it may have slipped past him in the legislature's great rush to pass scores of pork-barrel bills. If you can confirm the nature of the politician and his spine (if existent), you should proceed to then fully investigate the policies he is proposing.

Who will take how much money from whom? To whom will it be given? What are they to do with it? Are there any other who's or whom's involved, and what are their roles? Get it all worked out on a giant blackboard. Use varying colors of chalk if necessary.

What is the problem? Is there a problem? Politicians have the tendency to create hysteria over an overblown issue and use it as an excuse to get themselves elected.

They imagined the dragon, so only they can imagine the sword that will kill the dragon. But, it is still only a fantasy, however heroic it might be.

Maybe there is a problem. But is it so huge that it requires the government's meddling hand? The government should be the last resort for any problem-solver.

Do-gooders should discover what actions they can take to solve the problems themselves first. Then, they should build larger and larger voluntary organizations of people, peacefully persuading along the way. Only if nothing else can be done should the full force of the government intervene.

Who and what caused the problem? Does the solution make those responsible for the problem responsible for the solution, or does it make people who had nothing to do with the problem responsible for its solution?

Does the solution directly relate to the causes of the problem? What quantifiable effect will it have?

Whom does the program report to? Does the law lend itself to misinterpretation? Any program that is not carefully monitored can become a money drain with poor results due to waste, fraud and abuse. A law that is not cautiously written can lead to the prosecution of acts that were never intended to be prosecuted under "spirit of the law."

Who is paying for it? Nothing is ever free. If someone gets "free" housing, schooling or health care, there is someone who worked eight hours a day for a year to pay for it. If the federal government is giving money to the state, the money originally came from the taxpayer. Somebody had to create it. Money isn't magical. Every program costs some-

thing. What is the cost? It is not simply the monetary amount needed to enforce the law or fund a program. The cost is every negative consequence that it engenders. Any intrusion upon the Bill of Rights, even in the smallest way, must be added in.

Every life that is harmed, destroyed or ended as the result of police making mistakes while enforcing the law is also part of the cost. All of the people who are made permanently dependent on the program and their children who are taught the culture of dependency from their parents must be considered as losses on this balance sheet.

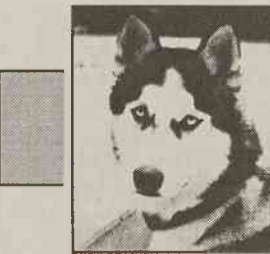
Even worse are the Pandora's boxes that will be opened by setting legal precedents. Every future abuse of this new power must be blamed in part on those who made it acceptable to interfere in the first place.

What programs are already in effect? What laws are already on the books? Whatever law the politician is proposing, there is undoubtedly already a bounty of "legalese" addressing the subject. Get that part of the federal, state and local code and read it over carefully. You might find that there is another program causing the problem the politician is promising to solve.

You might find that there are hundreds of laws already attempting to regulate an activity that aren't working. You might find programs that cancel each other out. Will one more program really help?

Each November thousands and thousands of politicians are elected, and together they will vote on millions and millions of items. The question is whether they have really accomplished anything. Still going to vote?

A meal in the life of a college student



Sean Clancy
Columnist

A while back, I decided to check out the cafeteria, which I had managed to stay away from since freshman year. It was five dollars to get through the line at the door.

Because it was Friday, options were limited, leaving only pizza, salad and two entrees. The cafeteria has even fewer options than usual on the weekend because lots of people go out of town, so the ones who stay are stuck with a finite amount of leftovers.

I passed over the dried-out, overcooked rice and beans and opted for the corn and peas. I moved on to the potatoes and the burritos. Next was a large tray of unidentified meat.

Upon close inspection, I discovered a small portion that looked as if it might be edible. With relief, I then turned to the pita bar. I grabbed an ice-cold pita that apparently had just been taken from the freezer, and piled on the tomatoes and Greek salad dressing stuff that had what I guessed was chicken in it.

I began with the peas, corn and potatoes because they posed the smallest threat to my sensitive stomach. I then got up the courage to try the burrito. It was about as thick as my thumb and had some kind of

bean-sauce-meat stuff inside.

I had a bite of the rock-hard substance, and discovered it was stale and desiccated on this chilly Friday evening. I made one more attempt, but my fork was not sturdy enough to break through the hardened Tex-Mex rod that lay before me.

Moving on to the pita, I encountered weird chewy stuff in the chicken mixture that could have been part of a chicken. As to what part, I wasn't sure. I began to complain to my table mates who accepted their sub-food meals with melancholy satisfaction.

I then proceeded to the unidentified meat that had been in the tray with other pieces of unidentified meat. I thought I had picked a winner, but when I sliced through the outer layers I discovered that my piece of meat was really just chewy blubber. I looked down at my loaded plate and thought about my five-dollar bill that I had given away. Disheartened, I decided to get some answers.

I ventured back into the serving area and asked the girl behind the meat tray to identify the substance she was doling out. She didn't know, and neither did the person next to

her. Finally, someone down the line yelled "ham."

I asked the girl what she thought about the large tray of meat that lay before her. She raised her eyebrows and her shoulders and gave me a slightly embarrassed smile. I asked for a manager or some other person that might be able to explain the joke that was being played on the students. An man with an air of authority came to attend to me.

"What's up, man?" he said. With his eyes drilling into me, I mustered, "I was wondering about that."

I pointed to the tray and assumed that my argument was self-explanatory.

"What? It's pork," he said. "OK, but it really doesn't look appetizing, does it?" I said.

"That was a mistake. It's pork, man! What's the problem? I got 700 other people to serve besides you. If you don't like it, don't eat it," he said.

"Hey, I'm not trying to give you a hard time. I just want to know who I should talk to about this," I said.

Once again, "It's pork! What do you want, man? If you don't want it, go to McDonalds down the street," he said.

"I already gave you guys five dollars, so I'm not gonna spend another five dollars at McDonalds. And if this is pork, it looks like you threw a whole pig in a wood chipper," I said.

"Listen, everybody else is eating it," he shouted.

No one else was eating it. However, I was disturbed that no one else was complaining. At least the students hadn't been so institutionalized that they accepted the "pork" as food.

"Hey, I don't want to argue with you, just tell me who I should talk to about this," I asked again.

"Ask Clinton, ask the chancellor — I don't care, just get out of my line," the helpful man said.

I wondered how a liberal arts college full of hippies, gays, lesbians, vegetarians and/or art majors was being subjected to this substandard food service. We have groups on campus that will fight for anything, whether it be the legalization of marijuana and mushrooms or the right to walk around naked anywhere at any time, and not one person in that cafeteria said anything about the stuff being served.

I've been in there before when the carrots in the salad bar have been brown or green, depending on the night. It's not as if the carrots were fine when they were put in the salad bar and they just turned brown when no one was watching. Somebody got them from the fridge or wherever, put them up at the bar, took the cling wrap off the top and the carrots were some funky color, and not a word was said.

Oh, yeah. I almost forgot about the suggestion box. The only suggestions ever posted on the board say things like "The casserole on Tuesday was great. Why can't we have it more than once a week?"

Or "I like lima beans. Can you serve some soon?"

I know for a fact that the cafeteria receives quite a few suggestions that are not so pleasant. Once again, it is insulting that the cafeteria tries this cheap propaganda on us. In our country, we waste good food by the tons. You would think with all this food we have, we could at least manage to get some in the cafeteria.

The Asheville Contemporary Dance Theatre will have their grand opening on Nov. 5 from 7-9 p.m. in honor of their new space guest artist Itto Morita, visiting from Japan. Morita will be in residence with ACDT from Nov. 5 to Nov. 8