

# Opinions

## The Blue Banner

### Editorials

#### Stalemate

Several students and faculty said they would be in favor of amending the Electoral College out of the Constitution, a feat that would take two-thirds of the majority of Congress and three-fourths of the states to approve.

In the past 40 years, polls have shown that over half of the American public are in favor of eliminating the archaic Electoral College. In fact, over 700 proposals to reform or eliminate the procedure have been submitted to Congress, more than any other proposed Constitutional reform, according to the National Archives and Records Administration Web site.

The ongoing presidential stalemate and potentially dismal conclusion could prompt a successful proposal to change or abolish the Electoral College. If and when that happens, careful consideration must occur. Right now, voters in each state choose electors to serve in the Electoral College Nov. 7. Then, when the election results are final, the electors meet to select the President and Vice President of the United States.

In the coming weeks or months, a proposal to fix or get rid of the Electoral College might make it through Congress and the states. The unprecedented closeness of votes between Rep. candidate George W. Bush and Dem. candidate Al Gore have already caused many Americans to be leery of the presidential outcome.

More than likely, this will be the catalyst for change. Americans will need to decide what is the most fair and democratic replacement for the Electoral College.

The question is, what do we put in place of the Electoral College? Some individuals advocate relying on the popular vote to decide our next president. However, this would require candidates to only carry the more populous states, thereby neglecting less significant states like N.C. States like New York, Florida and California would receive all the attention from the candidates. Millions of votes would lack importance.

As America waits with baited breath to find out who, in fact, will lead the free country for the next four years, we are left to wonder whether the seemingly petty legal actions of both parties will produce a national uproar about the present election system that will cripple our democratic system and weaken our leaders for decades.

The world is already laughing at the absurdity of this year's presidential election. Need we make it any worse by dredging up an argument that's only bound to hurt us in the long run?

#### Bite the bullet

After the ongoing, never-ending, incessant controversy over distributing free music over the telephone (or cable) wires, one would think Internet freaks would get over the fact that free music will soon be no more.

Remember the old phrase, "nothing in this world is free?" Just deal with the fact that in a few months, big corporations will be controlling what you download off the good ol' reliable PC.

With the recent uproar over Internet users downloading entire songs, often unlicensed by the musician, many Web sites who distribute music are being shut down (thank you, Metallica).

MP3.com was recently shut down for copyright infringement. Its Chief Executive Michael Robertson is about to start building his own business, My.MP3.com, according to yahoo.com.

My.MP3.com is going the direction Napster-lovers fear most, which is (brace yourself), paying actual American dollars for music. My.MP3.com will have licenses with five labels, including Universal Records, making it legal for users to download full-length songs for a minimal fee, which will probably cost more than it would to drive to the local music store and buy the CD. The site will set up ways to track what songs each individual downloads, giving the artist royalties for each piece of music.

The corporations have opted for the "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" motto. Eventually, almost all web-based music sites will suffer the same fate as MP3.com, and instead of trying to fight the Supreme Court, the public should just suck it up, go out and buy the CD.

## Age doesn't change alcohol responsibility



Kevin Rollins

Columnist

The age limits on alcohol consumption pre-judge every 18 to 20 year old to be a criminal. The law presumes that if an 18 year old were to have a drink, he would most certainly be raucous, rowdy and reckless.

Never has there been a 19 year old that didn't immediately forgo the shot glass and chug the bottle instead, until the point of alcohol poisoning and death. Twenty-one years of age is needed, or else the co-ed would drive her Ford Fiesta into a minivan, causing it to explode, burning the little children inside.

No one is responsible until they have lived at least 7,665 days. Anyone who drinks before such time has passed is a menace to society. All people who have made it past this point are always responsible. They never drink and drive. They never drink too much. Alcohol has no effect on them. Its biology.

Actually, if an 18 year old were to

kill an old man and his dog while tearing down Merrimon Avenue under the influence, he or she would be held accountable for the death. You see, people of this age aren't responsible enough to be allowed to buy the booze in the first place, but they are considered competent to stand trial and go to prison for everything they did while under the influence of the illicit booze that they weren't supposed to have in the first place.

Either we are responsible or we are not. Either we are adults or we are children. Those of us who reside in this twilight zone of graduated adulthood are asked to take charge of our lives in every way save one. I can work and pay taxes. I can serve in the armed forces, to kill and be killed. I can make babies and care for them. I can commit crimes and die for them. But I can't have a beer.

Apparently, this is because drunk driving is the biggest killer of people

under 25 years old. Does this say that there is an epidemic of drunk driving deaths? No, it's just that the under-25 crowd hasn't had its chance to get old and fat and cancerous, so nothing else is killing us. We rely on being wild and out of control.

Thanks to those who go about and do stupid things when they are drunk, I get penalized. How similar is this to the elementary school classroom where everyone misses playtime because one member of the class talked out of turn? All should not be punished for the mistakes of the few.

Innocent until proven guilty is the way it's supposed to work. Now, its guilty until 21. This sort of age profiling may work well for the car insurance company, but it should not be government policy. Racial profiling is not acceptable because more people of one race have been caught stealing cars or because more people of a certain ethnicity have had carry-on bags full of explosives they used to blow up airliners. Racial profiling is unacceptable, and so is age profil-

ing. And it isn't as though people over 21 years of age don't ever drink and drive. Twenty-one year olds drink and drive. So do people in their 30s, 40s and 50s. It doesn't get better with age.

America tried Prohibition. It didn't work. Sometimes our freedom hurts, but that's how we know

we have it. Being free means that we have to be responsible for ourselves. You do not become more responsible by having fewer responsibilities. You do not become a responsible drinker by having alcohol prohibited. Arresting people and throwing them out of school for making their own decisions about

what they should and should not do makes no sense.

Public safety should cease all investigations and arrests, and cancel all reports relating to underage drinking at UNCA. The legislature should repeal the laws and institute an 18-year-old drinking age. For those under 18, it should be left to the parents' discretion. Give us our booze and be gone.

"Either we are adults or we are children. Those of us who reside in this twilight zone of graduated adulthood are asked to take charge of our lives in every way save one."

## Web sites to entertain and educate



Liam Bryan

Columnist

To take everyone's mind off of the pending electoral vote and other overwhelming topics, I give you the list of keen Web sites.

The best daily comic strip in the entire world is on [www.sluggy.com](http://www.sluggy.com). The strip involves two dense males, one hapless college co-ed, one demon-possessed witch, a distractable ferret, an alien secretary who eats a lot and a mean mini-lop with a switchblade called Bun-bun, mixed in with Santa Claus, the Dimension of Pain (may cause severe tire damage), an Easter bunny that destroys Tokyo, kittens, time machines and a carnivorous Smurf.

This comic follows the exploits of Riff and Torg, two stereotypical cartoon heroes that have many random, wacky adventures. Start reading this comic from the first strip (all of them are kept online) and see if you don't get addicted to it, too. You never have to buy a paper to read this cartoon, as it is kept entirely on the Internet.

The home of the greatest board games is [www.wunderland.com](http://www.wunderland.com) (even MENSA says so). These are the people who bring you Fluxx, Set, Quiddler, Apples to Apples and Equate. These people run a small business that distributes games directly to consumers.

Most college students have played the card game Fluxx at some point (never the same rules twice). This is where you can get it.

This is also a highly recommended site for mathematicians. A great deal of this site is devoted to a group of games called "Icehouse games." These games are often the pinnacle of mathematical modeling.

Not to scare off the general public, however, the majority of these games are made by a bunch of Nader-voting hippies. So, you can explore these people's home pages, which host many interesting pieces of artwork (often done with Rubik's Cubes), political essays and fun games to play on your friends.

"What do you really think of your professors at UNCA?" asks [www.collegesucks.net](http://www.collegesucks.net). Trying to figure out whom to take for Humanities 324? Check out this place. This is a service run by college students to give other college students a forum to rate their professors.

UNCA already has a large number of its professors listed and rated (on a scale of one to five). If your professor is not listed, you can add them with just the click of a mouse.

All posting to this site may be done completely anonymously. You can rank a professor that you have had without fear of them discovering whom you are. Posting is completely free.

Remember that this is a service for people who are considering the professor for a class. Don't abuse the power that it presents by ragging on a professor who gave you a poor grade because you deserved it.

After you use [www.google.com](http://www.google.com), you will never need another search engine. This is the most accurate and expansive search engine on the entire Web.

Google searches across more Web sites than any other search engine, and also does it with far better accuracy than any other search engine I know of. It is also fast and easy to use.

When you want to see how sick and twisted humanity can be, or want a good laugh at another person's expense, go to [www.rotten.com](http://www.rotten.com). Every vice that you could want is found here, in pictures.

This site has everything from a

graphic version of "News of the Weird" to a detailed version of the evil things that happened in history on any particular day.

Mind you, this site is visually graphic, and can be quite unnerving. If you are under age, have a weak stomach or any sort of religious restrictions, you probably should not visit here. But if you do visit, it is quite entertaining.

My personal hero's homepage is [www.microsoft.com/billgates](http://www.microsoft.com/billgates). I admire anyone who can amass that much of a fortune without building anything. Maybe one day I shall be lucky enough to work for him.

Here you can read Gates' various speeches, an excerpt from his book and get some nice background information on the man who revolutionized the computer software industry.

Try and learn about this man before you bash him for being a better businessman than you.

A good place for some simple, free software is [www.freewarehome.com](http://www.freewarehome.com). It's great for specialized text editors, physics programs and the like. I have found this to be a great site when I need a quick and dirty program to do something for a class, like some scientific conversions or something like that.

This is not a very exclusive site, either. There are programs of all sorts available here. My personal favorite is a telnet program called Console Telnet. I recommend it to anyone who uses telnet sessions.

Tune in next time for more of that lack of political coverage you love.

### The Blue Banner welcomes your comments, letters and other submissions

The Blue Banner welcomes letters and comments regarding the content or quality of this publication. Letters should not exceed 300 words. Letters for publication must also include the author's signature, class standing and major or other relationship to UNCA.

All submissions are subject to editing for length and content. The deadline for Letters to the Editor is noon on Tuesday. Please send letters to: *The Blue Banner*, Karpén Hall 244, One University Heights, Asheville, N.C. 28804, submit a letter via the *Blue Banner Online*, or e-mail [banner@unca.edu](mailto:banner@unca.edu).