

# the Seahawk

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## Chris Register

"Salt and Limes"

I just wanted to take this opportunity to clear up some confusion that seems to prevail in the public eye. Many of you may have heard prominent and educated business men or women discussing their environmental views. They usually go something like this "I would love to protect the environment, but it simply is not economically feasible. Progress must prevail here." You may occasionally see in the paper an article about various debates between developers or "wise use" advocates and environmental groups, the latter usually backed by UNCW professors. I don't think I've ever heard the word green come out of a Republican's mouth (unless it was referring to big business money). Here is what is wrong with all of this: THERE IS NO DEBATE! There is no dichotomy. There is no "trade-off." There is no moral obligation to protect the environment because it smells nice. It is not evil to fill in a wetland to build a ritzy housing development. Not evil, but STUPID!! Now for those of us that actually go outdoors from time to time, we know that there is nothing like a pristine wilderness, a beautiful sunset without a building in sight, and a night spent with a serenade of frogs and crickets. Give this to a businessperson as a reason to protect the environment and they laugh. Tell them about the intrinsic value of nature, and they snicker. Ask them how much their kids are worth and they are appalled; yet they can quickly put a price tag on 10,000 acres of old growth forest. No...these things won't

work. So maybe money will. See, what the majority of businesspeople and politicians don't understand is that we are irreversibly, irrefutably, and oh so necessarily linked to our Earth. Every single thing we do affects our planet, and in turn us as well. We rely on the services nature provides us for free, such as wastewater treatment, oxygen production, air cleaning, food production, recreation, and a whole slew of others. Now, a smart businessperson can put a price tag on these services when they are provided by man, so why isn't it done when Mother Earth provides them? Have you ever heard a businessperson say "Those X acres of estuary provide \$15,000/yr of clean water, a habitat for birds which eat insects and provide the equivalent of \$5,000/yr of pesticides, a spawning area for \$7,000/yr for commercial fish, along with \$3,000/yr for crabs and oysters, upwards of \$10,000/yr from tourism, and plus it just looks pretty too?" I have not. But as you can see, there is an enormous financial gain from just leaving it the hell alone! Maybe one day an intelligent politician will see this and provide more funds to protect such areas. Here is another thing which industry doesn't seem to grasp. I learned in my EVS 195 class that for every one pound of product produced in the US, 33 pounds of waste is generated. Uhm... I'm no businessman, but this seems pretty STUPID to me! Anytime you have something coming out the rear end, you're losing money (and I may add harming the

## Editorial Viewpoint...

### SGA changes are good, but the process was flawed

With the passage of major structural, elections and judiciary reforms in the Student Government Association (SGA) last week, the organization has made a commitment to its future success as well as improved service to the UNCW student body. They are doing the right thing at the right time, for the benefit of all.

It's unfortunate that they had to violate their own constitutional rules to make it happen. Last Monday, an amendment to drop the requirement that one week of formal 'notice' is given to each body (House and Senate) before a vote can be taken was introduced to the Senate (after passing the House the previous week). According to the rules, the amendment still had to wait that week before the Senate could vote on it. The SGA Executive Board and the Senate, however, decided to nix the requirement - after all, it was that requirement which was to be removed.

The argument has been made that since the members of the Senate knew of the amendment, although it had not been formally introduced in the Senate, it qualified as sufficient 'notice'. It was further argued that the initial change had to be made for the sake of the reform package - it had to be passed by this week at the latest, for the sake of election planning. The one-week 'notice' would not allow that to happen.

Basically, the Senate operated under the assumption that the amendment would pass, with utter disregard for the rules in effect at the time.

The SGA then applied the new amendment to the debate and vote on the major reforms the next night - even though the dropping of the one-week clause had not been signed by President Patrick Gunn or approved by the Dean of Students. The SGA constitution states this must occur before any amendment becomes the rule.

Imagine, for example, the U.S. Senate was voting to bring back Prohibition. Before the vote was even taken in the Senate, all alcohol production in the United States was ordered halted - even though it was still legal under the current rules (not to mention the fact the amendment has to be approved by the President and ratified by the states before it became law). Of course, that would be deemed unconstitutional on the spot. A legislative body can not assume that something will become law until the process is complete.

The SGA operated last week with the best of intentions: to create a consolidated, more efficient organization with higher standards of conduct and academic excellence. In the long run, the whole student body will benefit from the changes.

It's not the changes themselves, but the process by which they were brought about that is questionable.

Skipping the rules in the name of expediency is not the way to get things done. If the rules can't be followed, why have them in the first place?

environment). It would seem to me that if industry could figure out a way to convert what it throws away into something it can sell, someone would be a damn billionaire. Does anyone really see the logic in using something once then throwing it away and buying another one? Americans are one of the only cultures which do such a thing; in fact we are the most wasteful society on the planet today. Whatever happened to the bottle deposit? Does business realize how much money it could save if it ran its offices on solar energy (good) instead of coal burning (bad). And if it had energy efficient buildings (UNCW does NOT) then it would have an EXCESS of energy! Something to sell, imagine that! Oh yeah...it would produce less pollution, too. I don't care if you absolutely despise a pristine wilderness area. The fact is, if businesspeople had any sense they would see that it is simply economically beneficial for the future to act environmentally conscious right now.

I could give example after example, but I think my point has been made clear. In the long run it is almost always to the economic advantage of people to protect and not exploit the environment. It is an under-educated and short-term mentality that fills the heads of most developers and businesspersons with ideas to the contrary. A simple re-thinking of how our country's economy really works, of what it is dependent on (the environment's capital), and what it is most vulnerable to (environmental deg-

radation), would go a long way in alleviating many of the economic problems faced by the US today. Let us educate ourselves a little better when it comes to the real world, and cast off this frontier-mentality that so plagues our society and will eventually lead to its demise if not soon changed. The ECO club meets Tuesdays at 6pm in University Union room 207 to tackle these and other issues related to the environment

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opinion, so  
let us know  
it!**

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