

the Seahawk

"Excellence Through Truth and Dedication" ... Since 1948

THOMAS M. RUYLE - Editor-In-Chief
 LYNDSEY M. BLAND - Managing Editor
 MARTIN J. SMILEY - Advertising Director
 HEIDI BING - News Editor
 MEGAN O'BRIEN - A & E Editor
 HUGH FISHER - Sports Editor
 JAMES FLINT - Photo Editor
 MAI HAMRICK - Copy Editor
 HANK McCAULEY - Webmaster

KEVIN KNIGHT - Adviser BILL DiNOME - Student Media Coordinator

News Staff Writers: Allison Biggar, Somer Stahl, Rachel Healy, Anna C. Broome, Melissa Farquhar **A & E Staff Writers:** Jeff Grissett, Tori Boone, Kristi Singer (The Scene), Rachel Cruz **Sports Staff Writers:** Kevin Farmer, Wes Melville, Amanda Breedlove, Rosa Tysor, Lakesha Hatcher, Laura Southerland **Photographers:** Kathryn Schley, Corey Accardo, Laura Lett **Layout/Production:** Lisa Williams, Lindsay LaClair **Advertising Staff:** Kim Byrd, Adam Wright, Jigna Patel **Distribution:** Angela Bjork, Lex Fennell

The Seahawk is published by the students of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, as a source of news for the University and surrounding community. As a forum for free expression, The Seahawk and its staff operate with editorial freedom; the views contained within The Seahawk are those of its staff and do not represent those of the University. Material in the paper is produced, selected, and edited by the editorial staff and writers of The Seahawk. **Unsigned editorials represent the opinions of the editorial board.** Signed editorials are the opinion of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of The Seahawk staff. Advertising content does not constitute an endorsement of the service by members of The Seahawk staff. The Seahawk is a member of the Associated Collegiate Press. Some individual staff members are affiliated with the Society of Professional Journalists and the National Federation of Press Women. The Seahawk utilizes the Associated Press Newsfinder Service and Tribune Media Services for portions of content.

Thomas M. Ruyle

"View From the Dodo's Nest"

"No comment" : SGA slogan of the week

As we get into the final month of the spring semester, it's apparent that not much has changed around here from years previous. The birds are singing, the bees are buzzing, and the SGA presidential candidates are bickering.

Folks around here often complain that UNCW doesn't have much tradition. They just haven't been looking in the right place.

Every year about this time, room 200 of the University Union becomes a hotbed of rumor, petty politics and immaturity - a sure sign that SGA elections are underway. Two or three students campaign for the top spot, the SGA presidency, a seat that carries huge responsibility, prestige and publicity; the race to win that seat almost invariably devolves into a mess just short of having "Monday Nitro" in the SGA office.

Instead of the candidates concentrating on running a clean, fair, and tactful campaign, they seem to want to focus on their opponents' campaigns, looking for the most minute violations of SGA election rules. Rather than actively addressing the issues of student concern, candidates are busy filling out violation forms they hope will get their opponent disqualified.

Now we have a situation where not just one but two candidates have been disqualified, both have appealed their disqualification, and the SGA Elections Board has suspended the presidential election until "further notice." To complicate matters even more, almost no one in the SGA will say a word as to what the truth behind this mess really is.

"No comment" has become the SGA buzzword of the week. Why the wall of se-

crecy? What is really going on in room 200?

We can all take a lesson from that great sage George Carlin, who once said, "No comment is a comment."

Even though only 417 students cared enough to cast their vote, those 417 deserve to know why the election is such a mess. Those who voted, while they may have voted for a variety of reasons, have earned the right to an explanation. All students deserve it for that matter: the students fund the SGA - it's their money.

There's been some frustration lately to the effect that SGA has no real power or influence with the administration. Situations like this, a simple election gone awry (which is becoming a ritual here), aren't helping the student voice. Furthermore, it alienates the students from their own SGA...if this keeps up, will there even be a point in having the organization?

The SGA can take the first steps to restoring their credibility this week. First, the Elections Committee needs to be decisive about candidates' appeals and hold another presidential election - rapidly. Additionally, suspend all inaugurations until the presidential matter is resolved. If the matter does go to the SGA Senate for a final decision (like it did last year), they need to have the legislature that was in effect at the time of the elections decide the outcome of it.

It's too bad - for everyone at UNCW - that the elections had to come to this. The SGA has too much potential as a solid student voice to waste time on petty politics.

Editorial Viewpoint...

We agree: The "Mike debate" was good for campus

Ever since last August, *The Seahawk's* op-ed page has played variations on the theme that students at UNC - Wilmington need to take a bigger stand for things they believe in, that students should express their opinions in larger and more diverse numbers, and come out in crowds for discussions even when the words "FREE FOOD" are not present.

A week ago, the amphitheatre in the commons saw its largest spontaneous student crowd in months as several hundred students turned out at an event staged by UNCW's Christian student groups.

It was promoted the same way that other universities' religious clubs have promoted their events: by posting ambiguous signs alluding to a mysterious "Mike," they avoided the shrug-off response that usually accompanies announcements of lectures and such. And once it was "leaked" that the subject of Wednesday's rally was religion, a debate was sparked that was a topic of conversation for days.

You have to admit that they accomplished their stated purpose. They drew a crowd to hear their message - and that crowd wasn't afraid to debate other sides

of the issue which disagreed with Christian doctrine.

Although there were tense moments caused by overemotional members of both camps, and although a week later the subjects of religion and faith are no less divisive than they were before the event, two things deserve to be said about the rally before it fades into the collective memory of the campus as exam week nears:

#1: Tart comments, chalkings, and fliers aside, the "Do you agree with Mike?" phenomenon started a mature intellectual debate among many students at UNCW; and

#2: The student body proved that, when motivated by emotion or even plain old curiosity, it can appear in public in sufficient numbers to represent diverse points of view on a topic which is arguably the most important question of our existence: "What higher power is out there, and what does all of *this* really mean, anyway?"

Agree with Mike or not, we should agree that the effort's result - a more socially conscious campus - was a step in the direction UNCW needs to go.

Letter to the Editor

Why we dropped the filming fee

Dear Editor:

I would like to respond to the editorial titled, "Administration Chooses Cameras over Classes."

In the first place, I take some umbrage to the opening line, "Once again the administrators at UNCW have taken a step which could negatively impact the very student body they are employed to nourish and promote." That seems to me a bit of a cheap shot without providing some specific reference to other instances where the university has made decisions that negatively impacted students. I would hope that it would go without saying that this administration is, in fact, dedicated to do everything it possibly can to nourish and promote the student body. We may not always be successful, or we may sometimes make decisions students don't agree with, but if there are other instances where we have failed, please be specific so we might address them.

Second, regarding the general issue of the issue of filming "Dawson's Creek" on campus, from everything we have been able to determine from Student Affairs, faculty organizations, etc. there has been a division of opinion about whether "Dawson's Creek" is a distraction or an appreciated curiosity. In other words, while everyone realizes that there is some disruption when filming goes on on-campus, many students as well as others have enjoyed the notoriety of telling people that UNCW was the location for "Dawson's Creek." In short, there has been no groundswell of complaints about the disruption of the academic process.

Third, regarding the suspension of the \$1,000 fee for filming, we were officially requested by the state government, as were all other state agencies, to do what we could to reduce the cost of production for the film industry. As you may be aware, the number of productions filmed in the Wilmington area has dropped dramatically over the last two years, largely because of competition from Canada. (In 1997 production totals equaled \$154 million, while 1999 totals were \$89 million.) Since the movie industry provides a major economic infusion for Wilmington, we were encouraged to assist them in every way possible so that the industry could continue to operate in this area. Whereas I would like the \$10,000 we would garner from "Dawson's Creek," I would much prefer to continue having the film industry in Wilmington to provide jobs, internships and direct support for our film studies program. In short, I believe the film industry is a great addition to our community, they have always been a good friend to the university and we would like to help them as much as we reasonably can.

Finally, we have no intention of raising student fees in order to make up the \$10,000 we might lose for charging the film industry. The connection between the \$120 tuition increase, which will net \$2.3 million, and the \$10,000 we will lose in this way is tenuous, indeed.

James R. Leutze
 UNCW Chancellor