

OPINION

Events Underscore Campus Life Problems

Jessica D. Jones
Decree Opinion Editor

What's to blame when active students are put in a stagnated environment—for some, North Carolina Wesleyan College would be considered an example of this type of environment—and end up making “their own” brand of fun? Does the blame fall on administration? Does the blame fall on Residential Life? Or does the blame simply fall on the students, who aren't productive with their time? I decided to ponder this question, because the recent vandalism that led to a campus lock-down on Tuesday, January 17th leads one to wonder, what the hell is to blame?

On January 18th, I discussed the recent events with 15 black men in the lobby of an NC Wesleyan hall. All involved asked to remain anonymous. In no particular order, the debaters concluded that the lack of campus activities, the over-recruiting of male athletes, the lack of females on campus, and general student immaturity were the leading reasons for the campus-wide “lockdown”. Before you read on, consider that the people “allegedly” involved in the events were males, freshmen, mostly athletes; and there were no major activities on campus when this event oc-

curred, unless you want to consider that following off-day as an event.

Let's consider each point:

1) The lack of campus activities. Random programs are put on by the staff of Residential Life. Other activities include basketball games, plays staged by the Theatre Department as well as events at the Hartness Center such as “Open Mic Night.” But the number of activities is limited and those that are offered are sparsely attended. Some students fill their time with a little Facebook.com at the Library. But no matter what, the fun always ends and it takes time (in some cases) for the “next wave of events” to occur. So what is left for those over-achievers who have completed their work? Hell, what is left for those under-achievers, who are wasting away good money, time, and space by not doing any work? According to one student, “When you have a whole bunch of young men sitting around, they start thinking about dumb s#@t to do.” Another young man suggested, “[If the] Hartness Center and the library would stay open longer, then at least the school would be able to monitor the group of boys in one setting instead of numerous groups of boys hanging around the campus.”

2) The over-recruiting of male athletes. This is a test. Walk up to any male on NCWC's campus and ask him why he chose to attend this college? If he is not embarrassed, he might admit to believing that he would be one of NC Wesleyan's star athletes. Next, ask him if he's still playing for the team. All too often, he will say no, he was either booted off, or decided against the idea, because the “dream” was false—he's not even a starter. So what becomes of these students, you might ask? Well, some might “step up their game” and focus on their books, while others are the “lost souls” that walk the campus wasting money, time, and space. One student blames the coaches for recruiting too many people: “There's no need to recruit over 200 players [for football] when only

11 people get on the field at a time.” After such a quote, I guess I have nothing to say.

3) The “lack of” females on campus. Many male students feel that there are not enough females on campus. One male stated, “If there were more girls, there would be less stupidity. Boys would be too busy trying to “holla” at the girls” (Side note: “Holla” is slang for hooking up with a female). Not saying that I agree or disagree, but just to play devil's advocate for a minute, that would cut down on the time that's spent “sitting around thinking about dumb s#@t.” But would we then end up with more students wasting money, time, and space in search of sexual excitement? Just for general knowledge, at the time of publication, there were 56 percent males over all and 64 percent 1st year males on the NCWC campus.

4) The lack of maturity. While many think the high male-female ratio is a problem, one male

student made an excellent point, saying, “Where the situation occurred, you were right next to Edgcombe, next to a dorm full of girls, so the problem isn't with the ratio, it's with immaturity.” During my freshman year, an act of vandalism occurred on two occasions. First, the male's third floor bathroom in Petteway Hall was not only trashed (toilet shattered to pieces, etc), it was flooded. Second, students were damaging each other's cars (with eggs, ketchup, key scratches, etc). I'm not saying that these events were right, but they occurred. Coincidentally, the events that led to the campus “lockdown” happened in the same building, which was and is a freshman dorm. Not saying all freshmen are immature, but a majority of the freshmen are immature. If the cause of the vandalism does in fact fall on the lack of maturity, then how do you make someone mature?

Here's What's Real: 'Just Shut Up'

By Ron Fitzwater
Decree Editor-at-Large

There are a couple of guys who host a morning ESPN radio show called Mike & Mike.* Who they are is not really important, but they have a segment on their show that I believe should be a show in itself. The segment is called “Just Shut Up!” and if there was ever a phrase that needs more use, it is that one. To be honest, I'm sure that frequent readers of my column here find themselves screaming that phrase from time to time, if not continuously.

Well, after some recent comments from people in all walks of life who find themselves in the spotlight, I find myself unable to not tell them to “Just Shut Up!”

Senator Hillary – Bill, get my carpet bag - Clinton:

As plentiful as Sen. Clinton's comments are, most recently it was not necessarily what she said but the time and place where she chose to say it. The comment was, of course, that the US House of Representatives is run like a plantation. Now, she had said this before, and other politicians such as former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich have used the exact comment. However, Mrs. Clinton chose to throw out that nugget of wisdom to a group of African-American citizens at a Martin Luther King Jr. remembrance. Then she added the wonderful little phrase “and you know what I'm talking about.” To paraphrase Reverend Al Sharpton, no, I don't know what she's talking about. You have to ask, is Clinton saying that African-Americans in 2006 know what it's like on a plantation? Let me answer that for you, NO! Twenty-first Century African-Americans know as much about plantation life as I do. Fact: Plantations were bad places if you were a slave and good places if you were the white guys. We get it, but what exactly does that have to do with the House of Representatives? I'll answer that one too—NOTHING! If we're going to use analogies like that, then let's say that William Jefferson Clinton was a slave master just like Thomas Jefferson, and you know what I'm talking about (In case you don't, they were both white presidents with Jefferson in their names). Yeah, you're right, that makes no sense, and that's the point. So please, Hillary: Just Shut Up!

Mayor Ray – What, I had buses to evacuate my citizens? – Nagin:

Putting aside the fact that this guy is without a doubt one of the most inept city leaders in America, he has managed to astonish us once again with insight that can only be found while observing a view of your own colon. The Mayor stunned African-American city leaders when he said in a speech on MLK Day that “This city will be a majority African-American city. It's the way God wants it to be. This city will be chocolate at the end of the day.” WHAT? I've visited New Orleans, pre-Katrina, and it is by far the greatest place I have ever been. But I don't recall leaving town thinking, “Hey, what a great chocolate city.” No, I remember loving how diverse and eclectic New Orleans was, because you could just be yourself and nobody cared. Of course Ray-Ray didn't stop there, and unfortunately nobody else

stopped him either. He went on to point out in his colonoscopy-driven observations that the Gulf States were attacked by “a wrathful God.” Expanding on his Pat Robertson-inspired ranting, he said, “Surely God is mad at America. Surely he's not approving of us being in Iraq under false pretense. But surely he's upset at black America also. We're not taking care of ourselves.” I guess the only person not responsible for the hurricanes hitting New Orleans was, well, Ray Nagin. Thanks for clearing that up for us, Ray; I was really struggling with the whole meteorological aspect of revolving cycles of weather patterns. Nice to know that it's that easy to fix. Hey, Ray: Just Shut Up!

Finally, Pat – Trust me, I'm a preacher – Robertson:

Much to both of their discomfort, Pat Robertson and Ray Nagin are coming from the same basic position in their comments. Robertson, the founding father of the ultra right-wing Christian Coalition and a failed presidential candidate, is famous for such points of view as the 9/11 attacks were God's wrath on America for turning away from him. Okay, let me get this straight: The God of the Christians aided Islamic fundamentalists in attacking a country founded on Christian principles. Yeah, that makes a lot of sense; it sounds like Pat misplaced his Crusades playbook. He also distinguished himself as the voice of non-mainstream Christianity when he publicly called for the assassination of Venezuela's president Hugo Chavez. Okay, I'll have to check with Professor Grissom on this, but isn't there something in Christianity like “Thou shalt not kill”? Maybe Pat misplaced his copy of the 10 Commandments as well. Of course most recently, Pat inadvertently teamed up with that Middle Eastern ray of sunshine Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (say that three times fast, I dare you), when he proclaimed that Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon fell victim to a massive life-threatening stroke through divine retribution because “He was dividing God's land.” Continuing, Robertson warned “Woe unto any prime minister of Israel who takes similar course to appease the European Union, the United Nations or the United States of America.” Oooooohhh. Now I'm not a doctor, but it seems to me that anyone who, like Sharon, is more than 100 pounds over weight and refuses to change his eating habits and refuses to exercise following a minor stroke doesn't need divine retribution to blow a brain gasket. Maybe I'm wrong. Of course Robertson also blames the assassination of Israeli Yitzhak Rabin on God because he signed the Oslo Peace Accords that gave the Palestinians limited self-rule.

Robertson did apologize for his comments about Sharon after learning that Israel was considering denying the 700 Club the land they wanted to use to build a Christian-based theme park. Guess the thought of all that lost revenue coming from Six Flags over Jesus (thank you, Don Henley) was more than he could take. Hey, Pat: Just Shut Up! And that's what's real.

*Mike Greenberg and Mike Golic are the co-hosts of ESPN's “Mike and Mike in the Morning.”

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Reader Takes Issue with Column On Cindy Sheehan, Iraq War

(Editor's note: you may find Ron Fitzwater's original column on page 2 of issue 3 at www.ncwc.edu/news/Decree)

To the editor:

Ron Fitzwater's column on Cindy Sheehan (10 Nov 2005) is confusing for several reasons.

First, he professes “nothing but sympathy” for those, such as Sheehan, who have lost a loved one in Iraq. “My heart breaks for the woman”, he assures us. This may be so, but he incessantly contradicts this sentiment by spewing crude invective at her. Telling such people to “shut the hell up”, and referring to their activity as “pissing and moaning” and “whining, moaning, and bellyaching” does not, to put it mildly, convey sympathy. What does he really believe?

Second, it is difficult to see the logic of celebrating freedom of expression (which “her son died defending”, he believes) and telling people like Ms. Sheehan to shut up, which he does three times.

Finally, I am confused about what Mr. Fitzwater thinks he and I should do if we believe the war to be a catastrophe. He says he “does not agree with the war” but will keep quiet about it. Protests against the war may harm the morale of some soldiers. But I am convinced that their being in Iraq, where they never should have been in the first place, harms them far more.

He thinks that he and I should “speak our disagreement” at the ballot box. Fair enough. But he surely knows that elections involve campaigns, and campaigns involve speech and debate. I am grateful to Ms. Sheehan and others for creating a debate where nearly none, to the shame of all politicians, existed. I cannot understand why he is not grateful also.

—R. L. Watson

(Dr. Watson is a history professor at NC Wesleyan)

Decree Applauded for Dec. 2 Issue

To the editor:

Congratulations to all contributors to the December 2 edition of The Decree. The mixture of news, opinion, fiction and poetry was splendid. In fact, in my opinion this is the best Decree in several years. The editors, staff writers and contributors have done an outstanding job, and in doing so have strengthened our community. Keep up this high standard, and thank you for a job well done!

—Ian Newbould

(Dr. Newbould is the NC Wesleyan President)