

# SAY WHAT?

## Well, here it is ... half of something clever

**G**rasping for air, sweat pouring from my pores in veritable waterfalls, I arrive home at 1:00 in the morning. The evening wrestling matches with my homework have not been kind; I was thrown out of the ring and jumped on several times by a research paper roughly the size of Andre the Giant. I simply *must* consider a career change.

Before the door has finished swinging open, I collapse, semiconscious, on the floor, right between the sociology coursepak and the stack of Domino's boxes. Bits of carpet fuzz are accumulating on my stomach; I do not care, for I am fast asleep ...

The bloody phone rings.  
 "Whadjawant!" I growl.  
 "Chip, it's Alisa." (My editor! Dear

### CHIP SUDDERTH The Last Stand

God protect me!) "What are you doing this week?"

No! No! She wants me to *write something!*

"It d-d-depends on what you need," I answer. Will she detect the nervous tremolo in my voice and take pity on me?

"I need you to write a column for us every other week."

I don't wait to open the suite door; I crash *through* it, and flee into the night, screaming all the way.

Hello, and welcome to *The Last*

*Stand*, which is a damned odd title for a page three column.

You see, the layout goddesses, Lisa and Laura, wouldn't let me keep the original column title that I used in last summer's Weekly Daily Tar Heel (would *someone* explain that one to me?): *Some Assembly Required*. That was appropriate; if you took a pair of scissors, cut my columns up into itty bitty bits and glued the pieces together randomly, they invariably made more sense.

Nope. *Some Assembly Required* was Too Damn Big for those nifty-keen logo boxes nestled above. I mean, there isn't even room for something silly like *Tastes Great, I Just Sleep Here* or *Strictly Business*. So it's *The Last Stand*, and as soon as I figure out what that means, I'll let you know.

Quick observation: No More Mikeman. No More Mikeman.

On an only slightly related note: A psychopathic hatred for Duke University forms 54 percent of the fibre of my being, and I see no reason why it should diminish between games. Just because the first basketball game between UNC and Duke is *weeks* away, should I refrain from making the observation that Bobby Hurley looks like a small rodent that met an unfortunate end beneath the wheels of a Jeep Cherokee?

I think not. But, in the midst of all the "Beat Dook" hysteria, I didn't hear one good Duke joke. Oh, a lot of funny comments about how Duke's campus is made of prefab pseudo-

Gothic materials, and such, but no real jokes.

Let me take steps to rectify that problem. If anyone, *anyone* out there has a favorite Duke joke or one-liner, send it to me, care of the good ol' Omni. I'll try to print one every other week. The shorter, the better. Jokes depending solely on biological functions probably won't see the light of day, but if we can run Joe Bob every week, you *know* that tastelessness is a virtue.

C-ya in two.

*Chip Sudderth is a junior Speech Communication/RTVMP major from Kernersville who has some dirt on his editors, and if they don't pay up now, everyone will know about their fetishes for brick walls.*

## Beware of those greeting card novels: they lie!

**H**ave you seen these Tolstoy novels they're selling as greeting cards now? The ones that take three hours to read, because they're all about how someone "finally found the words to tell you how I feel about you?" The ones that say what a "great person" you are "with so much to offer the world?"

They have watercolor backgrounds, and they always start off with some headline like "Our Love, Endless Love."

Somebody sent me one of these babies the other day — the one that starts out "I'm Concerned About You."

Uh-oh.

Beware of any greeting card that begins with something your sixth-grade teacher would say.

"There's no easy way to say this," it begins.

And I'm thinking, "No easy way to say it? Where'd you get the printing press to print it?"

"There's no easy way to say this, but I wouldn't be your friend if I didn't let you know. I'm worried about you. You're changing ... Our friendship is changing. And I can't just stand by and let that happen. I believe in you ... And it hurts me deeply to see you hurting yourself this way."

And then, four hours later, after listing all the ways this person wants me to "find some help," it says "I care about you ... I'm concerned about you ... and now, more than ever, I want to be your friend."

And it has a name after the last line: "Molly Wigand."

I don't know any Molly Wigand.

And then it hit me: Molly Wigand is the *author* of the greeting card. It's her byline.

Somebody who's concerned about me, but didn't have the guts to tell me, or didn't have the verbal skills to manipulate me with a letter, hired Molly Wigand, a *professional* manipulator.

Do you understand the implications of this? They have hundreds of

### JOE BOB BRIGGS Joe Bob's America

these cards now. They have the one that starts out "I love your sense of humor" and goes on to list 367 things that "I" like about "you" and reasons that we'll always be in love — a great one to send if you're not sure whether the other person is in love or not. They have one called "To My Child," that goes on and on about all the things the parent used to do "when you were hurting or afraid," but now it's time "to let you grow from your mistakes and heartaches" — in other words, don't come whining to me. There's one for Dad, about how he never says anything "but you never fooled me — I always knew how much you cared" — perfect for the son who has no idea whether he cared or not.

And then there's one *especially* sly

one that starts out "I feel so good about us. It seems not a day goes by that I don't hear about another divorce or breakup, or someone who's miserable but stays in a relationship because 'someone' is better than 'no one.' And when I hear these things, I can't help but be thankful for you ..." You get the idea. We *must* be happy, because there are a lot of people more pitiful than we are.

Now we have a whole new reason to buy greeting cards. They're not just something you buy to get past somebody's birthday or anniversary. They're not just something you buy to make yourself feel good about doing all the family obligations that you don't really wanna do but you'll feel guilty if you don't. They're now entire letters you can send to people in order to *lie to them in just the right way*.

This is great! People like Molly Wigand could eventually become best-selling authors, as they discover people who love to manipulate other

people in the same way that they do.

"Are you Molly Wigand?" they'll say in airports. "I can't believe it! I've been an admirer of yours for so long. I used your 'To a Super Mom' message to get the old bat off my back. But my favorite was 'Remember when we played goofy games together and I couldn't stand for the day to end?' That was your best one. When I gave that to my husband, he almost believed there was a time when we *did* play goofy games together."

My personal favorite is "I never meant to hurt you and I'm really sorry that I did," which goes on for a couple pages and ends in "Please believe me — I never meant to hurt you."

I'm sending in my own composi-

tion to Hallmark Cards this week. It goes like this:

"I meant to hurt you. When two people are as close as we are, they get on each other's nerves. My tongue can be a cattle prod, and I know it frightens you and makes you feel alone and separated. This was my intention. I'm tired. I want a divorce. We could save a lot of money on lawyers if you would just see that, after all we've been through together, we have a lot of valuable furniture. I would like some of that furniture. You would like some of that furniture. Let's make it a clean break, because, remember — I meant to hurt you."

I think my card has a bigger potential market, don't you?

A look at things to come.  
**OMNIBUS. Thursday.**

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