

editorials

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EDITORIAL

Maureen Catherine Bigelow

Does your mother know where you are?

Mine does, but since I got through my first year at UNC-A with relatively few battle scars she has ceased to worry about me and has convinced herself that I lead a peacefully academic existence surrounded by the gentle chorus of whispered good mornings to the professor and seminars under philosophic oaks and maples.

Well, reality is for those who can't handle drugs (or so I'm told) and I'm afraid that life here is not ethereal and flooded in white light. You, as freshmen, will be oriented into the university system and will listen to the cultured pearls that various members of the administration and orientation staff will pelt you with. The one thing that they will not tell you is that the only place to find solace on campus from the hassles of everyday living is the Ridgerunner office. As soon as you enter the room you will hear the soothing sound of the composer, feel the warmth of the waxer, smell the crisp new layout sheets as our fully trained staff gently lures you into the room with an X-acto knife at your throat. You try to turn back, but you are drawn to the sultry smile of the Editor - you try to speak but before you can open your mouth and set the vocal cords in motion he says, "We are not alone. Columbia Pictures presents *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*."

Oooooops.....wrong movie.....

Anyway, we of the Ridgerunner, campus newspaper, funded by the full time students of the University of North Carolina at Asheville, invite you to be a part of our family and join in the fight against the spread of Communism in the Free World. Sign up today and remember.....

ALL THE NEWS THAT FITS WE'LL PRINT

MAKE AMERICA SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY AND MOTHERHOOD
write your editor

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EDITORIAL

Marl Douglas

It seems traditional in these "editorials" to take some drastic stance, to alert the silent populace to the creeping dangers of this or that hidden menace and to finish off with a rousing plea invoking the twin dieties of democracy and decency. I spent quite a while trying to think of some incipient disaster which was going to need some voice in the wilderness to herald it. I failed. Basically things on campus are just about as they have always been. I was going to complain about the prowler in the dorm villiage - but the police can't be everywhere, and they really have done a fine job over the years. I was going to yell about registration, but it seems easier this year than ever before (or perhaps I'm just becoming acclimated). There is no student unrest to speak of. A diatribe on student apathy would be of no use, since the apathetic students probably don't read the RIDGERUNNER anyway. No tales of faculty crimes, no horrors of radioactive contaminants in the food. Just another beginning for new students, a new paper.

For that is, or at least is what we hope, the RIDGERUNNER will be. I think it is traditional for the RIDGERUNNER, as it has been for every publication I have ever worked for, to try to look like a little NEW YORK TIMES. Such an attempt is doomed to failure when a paper doesn't come out any more often than this paper has, or does, or will. There are hard news events, for sure. But these really do not comprise the majority of what a smaller campus paper should cover. The RIDGERUNNER will, during this year, try to cover not only hard news but events - feature coverage. The format of the RR is changing as well. In hopes for a more easily read paper, we are attempting to divide the paper into sections, each with an attractive (I hope), self-explanatory (I hope) header. An art page is going to be included as a more immediate forum than the traditional arts magazine, with Erwin Cook as its editor.

As far as policy goes, I think the purposes of a college paper have been expressed fairly succinctly in the 1964 Policy Statement which still governs the paper. It is as follows:

The editor is responsible for directing the RIDGERUNNER in accordance with the following principles.

Because of its monopolistic position, a student newspaper has a special obligation to aim at fairness, especially in its coverage of the affairs of the

University, about which other sources of information may be lacking. This statement shall not be construed as limiting the right of the Editor and staff to take editorial positions, providing the principles below are adhered to within reason.

The traditional distinction between straight news coverage and expressions of opinion is fundamental to sound journalism. While the distinction can never be absolutely clear, the Editor should strive to create and maintain such a distinction.

Every effort should be made to ensure that straight news coverage is unbiased and well-informed.

The RIDGERUNNER shall be open to expressions of intelligent and informed opinion in any subject area, and by any person, whether student, faculty, administrative officer, or member of the community.

Expressions of opinion (reviews, editorials, and letters to the editor) should be signed.

The Editor has the right to refuse publication, but this right does not extend to the supression of points of view or to refusing the right of reasoned and responsible reply.

The RIDGERUNNER is not expected to avoid controversy; however, since the function of free expression is to promote constructive change, pointless sensationalism should be avoided. In considering the publication of materials which are potentially damaging to persons or to the University, or which may be strongly offensive to the community, the Editor should ensure that a constructive purpose is served by the publication and that, when controversial or damaging allegations involve points of fact, the facts have been checked prior to publication.

These are the guidelines which we will use in determining our policy. They are simply a longer exposition of something Judy Edsall, my high school journalism teacher, said to the high school paper's staff. The exact words I have forgotten. But the admonition was simply to "play fair". If you can't prove it, don't print it. Your readers have the ability to make intelligent choice - so when there are differences of opinion, offer them that choice. Play fair and you'll be o.k.

That, then is in essence what we want to do this year. Wish us luck.