



Sounding Board

Thorne And Young Draw Fire From Readers

Wendell Thorne and "Magic"

There's a big pot been stirring lately inside Wendell's head. We can tell, Wendell, and though I know you as a person, I got to tell you, my friend, there's something eating at your soul that has nothing to do with "Magic" Johnson's pay checks or with the Kamikaze Code of Honor. I know you're trying to wake up some of the deader heads around here to the world's woe through some sort of shock treatment, and I admire you for trying, but there's something sick about trying to cure a head cold with a guillotine. Gullibility comes from a lack of information, so who's fault is it that we're gullible (besides the government, I mean, and besides ourselves)? You guessed it: the media's.

Recently, I think, it's coming to everyone's attention how important it is for all of us to pay attention, to care, to work at saving this fast-sinking ship we live on. Wendell Thorne, you're doing his part, but the negativity isn't helping. Cynicism has no place in a society that wants to save the world from annihilation. Sure, our sports stars got lots of cash, and they probably aren't doing anything useful with it other than buying cars and trains and yachts and horses and all the stuff they ever wanted, but you, Wendell, want to be a lawyer. Hmmm....

AIDS is one problem among the chaos of myriad other ones. The list is growing every second, also. As a columnist, your job is to inform and to stir up controversy. I see no problem with ridicule and witticisms about the fallacies and blunders of our faculty and student body. It keeps us honest. I also don't see any problem with valid arguments about how silly our Supreme Court and Congress can get, or how stupid our Presidents sometimes seem.

But slandering, downgrading, and using shoddy analogies like "brain-washed Japanese warriors" and vague assassination plots in order to talk bad about a guy who millions of people actually love, who want to cry when they think how life is no longer so "magic," well, I think you're crossing a line — one that no longer dwells on journalism, and certainly rests comfortably with egotistical soapbox-standings. It isn't even a recognizable soapbox. Sure, Magic Johnson has a lot of money. Does that bother you because you don't think he deserves it, or because you don't have it yourself?

My point? Yes, I know I'm known for my lack of them, but this time, I got one. Nothing constructive ever arose out of simple, utter bitching and moaning about how bad everything is. Talking is not the same as doing, Wendell. I think you like to talk too much. Talking is fine, but it's not all there is to do.

Perhaps I should have told you all this eye-to-eye, and I'm sure you would have preferred that, but I think when you start talking about other people via the media, it damn-sure makes you fair game. Use your talent, open your shutters, look inside the window from

the outside, and remember that "Magic" is able to deal with his HIV being on millions of American minds after all these years we've known him. After all, he told us about it. There is something to be admired in that.

Nick Morgan
Junior, Literature

More On Thorne

To Wendell Thorne:

If the world is such an awful bad place, why don't you leave it, or at least this little chunk we call Asheville? Boston seems like a good idea (I hear they are looking for a few good ballplayers).

All you did was tell us the negative aspects of Magic Johnson's decision. What do you think he should have done?

Considering the circumstances, I think his choice was admirable.

Mark Burdette
Senior, History

What's So Funny?

"Young's Guide to Political Terminology" in the November 21 issue was sophomoric and vacuous. In addition, Rob Young's attempts to poke fun at environmental and social issues is inappropriate at this point in history, in my opinion, because of the profound ignorance and apathy of society -- and many of our "leaders" -- regarding these important concerns. Statements can be humorous when both speaker and listener/reader are cognizant of the discrepancy between statement and reality; but they are stupid, and can be dangerous, when that discrepancy is not perceived.

According to Young, "Social Justice: A term used by... feminists, minorities and homosexuals... usually means the extension of privilege to the... groups." Two of the "privileged" groups wish to obtain protection from discrimination in employment and housing. Many people do not realize that federal law does not extend these "privileges" to gay men and lesbians. Young's definition of "Homophobia" -- "All persons who are not homosexual" -- attempts to drive a wedge between gays and non-gays. I also know of some homosexual homophobes, and I personally know a growing number of non-gay people who are not homophobic.

The term "homophobe" is correctly used to denote people who hate gay men and lesbians, including those who would deny us the rights enjoyed by all other Americans, for example, to peacefully pursue our own business, or even just to live. People who verbally abuse gays and lesbians, who attack them, and, in some cases, murder them, are "homophobes."

The Justice Department found that more hate crimes may be committed against gays and lesbians than against any other minority in the U.S., and for the past four years North Carolina has led the U.S. in the number of hate crimes reported.

Gay teens' perception of society's homophobia is certainly one factor which drives them disproportionate numbers to suicide. Gay and lesbian teens account for up to 30% of youth suicides annually.

Is anyone still laughing?

Charlotte L. Goedsche
Assistant Professor, German

More On Young

I would like to make a few points in response to Rob Young's article concerning political terminology in the last issue of *The Blue Banner*. I don't know what unfortunate world you might inhabit, Mr. Young, but the one I live in has some serious problems -- issues, if you will -- that need to be dealt with. Webster's defines "issue" as, "a matter the decision of which is of special or public importance." I pray to my gender-neutral God that you never become an important issue. Several issues did, however, come to mind after I read your article.

Social justice is only a dream for huge portions of the American population, whereas sexism, racism, and homophobia are all too real. When I speak about social justice, I am not talking about extending special privileges, I am talking about allowing minorities their basic human rights. You are a member of the most powerful minority in America: white, straight males. I doubt very seriously whether you have come face to face with any real discrimination or hate-induced violence. I hope you never do, although it might serve to help you get your foot in the door of reality. Don't get me wrong, though. Not all men are sexist. Not all white people are racist, not perceived.

Send Mail To:
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From Wendell's Window



Wendell W. Thorne
Columnist

This Ain't Mayberry...

Twenty-five years ago, if you mentioned the name "Sheriff Taylor," anywhere in the Carolina's, folks conjured to mind the mild-mannered marshal of Mayberry. Andy had that television way with everybody he came into contact with. He was honest and fair, with an analytical and intuitive mind -- just what anybody would want in a lawman.

You never saw Andy, for instance, order Barney undercover so that he could coerce Otis into buying that pint of corn liquor from those sisters. And, sure, sometimes a stranger would find a comfortable patch of earth upon which to squat for a day or so, and Andy would go out there to ask the vagrant to move along. But he didn't ever automatically assume that the visitor had beneath-board intentions.

Now there is a new Sheriff Taylor, and he rules the roost in Anderson, South Carolina, home of the Gamecock Swastika Manufacturing Plant, and David Duke's second favorite place on earth. This new Sheriff Taylor doesn't walk easily down main street, nodding his head to the ladies or chatting for a minute with the local barber. He doesn't seem to believe in that archaic stuff like fairness, honesty, and the U.S. Constitution. No, he says, as long as the criminals don't play by the rules, neither will he. This may come as a surprise to some, but I know of few criminals who, number one, "play," and number two, observe any rules.

It seems to me that one of the first things they should teach you in the police academy is that the law enforcers exist because criminals disobey the law. But I'm getting off the subject.

I've complained before about the treatment that the Bill Of Rights has been subject to by our neighbors to the South. Illegal roadblocks and random search and seizure of automobiles is the normal procedure in Anderson County. In fact, any lawman or woman in the county can stop any citizen walking along the streets for any reason (or for no reason) and request to see identification. Use your best Gestapo accent and say, "Your papers, please?" and you've got the right idea.

The latest crime committed by the Anderson County Sheriff's department is the double sting. This is accomplished by first making a fake narcotics purchase from a known dealer. After he is arrested and you have the kilo of cocaine, you then pass yourself off as a dealer to some other unsuspecting citizen, one who, under other circumstances, may not have been in the market, so to speak. When he tries to cement the deal, seventeen officers, some undercover, others wearing the required windbreaker bearing the letters "ACSD" on the back, burst onto the scene and the perpetrator, the victim of entrapment all the way, is taken into custody.

Some say that it is necessary to break some laws in order to enforce others. Is it okay, for instance, for an officer to use excessive speed in order to chase down a suspect? It's a good question, especially at times when there is no clear and present danger to either the officer, by the suspect, or any member of the public.

I'm not sure if I agree with breaking laws to enforce others, because it requires an officer in the field to make certain judgments that he or she may or may not be capable of making. Hypothetically speaking, if a person was seen in a, oh I don't know, say an electrical contractor's yard after hours, and let's say that an off-duty police officer was patrolling as security guard for the business's owner and saw the suspect, but couldn't get to him because of the, the, oh, how about a high fence? Yeah, and so this cop pulls out his .38 rev., no, no, his .357 Magnum and blows a donut sized hole in the suspect's thigh in order to stop him, is that okay, hypothetically speaking?

And I know we keep bringing it up, but certainly four officers beating the snot out of Rodney King doesn't seem a fitting way to issue a speeding ticket. But in Anderson, it's the Constitution that is broken in an effort to enforce, in particular, drug laws. That's not right. But until some South Carolinian stands up and says something about it, Sheriff Taylor, this time without Goober, Gomer, and Aunt Bea's apple pie, will get away with what can only be seen as spitting on the fourth amendment and perverting justice.

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Your Goldbricking Boss Is On The Lam? Ask Mr. Smartguy...

Dear Mr. Smartguy,
We hope you will settle an argument here. My co-worker says you can gain more weight than you actually eat. In other words, if I eat a pound of food today, I could actually gain a pound and a half. Please settle this, so we can get back to work.

W.L., Skokie, IL

Dear W.L.:
Well, somehow, they forgot to add Mr. Smartguy to the guest list at the recent Arab-Israeli summit. That's a loss for world peace, but a boon for you, W.L. Mr. Smartguy will instead have to settle for bringing some peace to your workplace.

You can't gain more weight than you take in, period. Remember the old edict from Physics 101: "Matter can neither be created or destroyed" (well, actually, Mr. Smartguy can create matter, but he only does that on special

occasions, like the office Christmas party).

By the way, Mr. Smartguy is including fluids here as part of your overall intake, and thus, your overall poundage.

Besides, W.L., you really have no good business eating a pound of anything while you're on your employer's time.

Dear Mr. Smartguy,

Could a person get drunk by eating food cooked in wine, if he ate enough? This is a dumb question, but I am in a bet. I love Mr. Smartguy.

T.T., Columbus, GA

Dear T.T.:

Hey, ease up yourself, T.T. Remember, the only "dumb" question is the one you just asked. Uh, well, maybe that's not the way the saying goes, but you get the point...

Truth is, cooking food causes the

alcohol in wine to evaporate, leaving behind only the flavor of that particular vintage. So eat that casserole until you gag, T.T., secure in the knowledge that you'll stay sober down to the very last burp.

Dear Mr. Smartguy,

I work as a secretary in a department at a small university. My problem is about what I know about one of the teachers in the department. She teaches class three days a week. On one of the other days, she has gotten in the habit of coming to school at 9 a.m., opening the door of her office, then disappearing until 4 p.m. I accidentally saw her get in her car and leave the campus on one of these mornings when she had told me she was just going to the next building. I think she is doing this to make it appear she is on campus working, when in fact she is somewhere else doing I don't know what.

My problem is what to tell the department chairman when he calls to talk to her on those days. I don't want to lie, but I don't want to get involved in the middle of department politics, either. Since this is a fairly small campus, it is hard enough to avoid politics as it is.

What would you do if you were me?

Identity withheld by request
Dear Anonymous:

If Mr. Smartguy were you, he'd wear more pastels, and he'd probably do something new with his hair -- maybe crop it a little closer on the sides to accentuate his high cheekbones. But that's not why you wrote, is it? Well, you don't have to lie. When the department head calls for that instructor, tell the truth -- that you don't know where she is. Ensure that isn't a lie by not looking to see where she goes on those days.

You could help ease the situation a little by letting that teacher know the department head was looking for her. Document every phone call and visit on one of those pink message pads, and leave the stack of messages where she's sure to find them. That should alert her to the fact she's screwing up and about to get caught goldbricking. Beyond that, you've done your job.

By the way, sometimes things appear one way, then turn out to be another. You're really assuming a lot on very little information. Let it drop, and get back to work.

Dear Mr. Smartguy,

Tell me if I got this right. President Reagan slashed a ton of social programs with the complaint they were too expensive. He consistently favored the interests of big business over the middle-class, resulting in a wider gap between the very rich and the very poor.

Then along comes George Bush, who wants to get us out of a recession and instill consumer confidence by doing nothing for the millions of unemployed Americans, all while favoring a break on the capital gains tax for the very wealthy.

Is that about accurate?
T.L., Queens, NY

Dear T.L.:

Yup.

Send your questions about sex, health, and general well-being to:

Mr. Smartguy
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