

Opinions

The Blue Banner

The student newspaper of the University of North Carolina at Asheville

Editorial

ABC's *Prime Time* anchor Diane Sawyer described Shannon Faulkner as a woman who wanted to be a pioneer and ended up a casualty. However, one might say Faulkner really committed suicide.

Faulkner had ample opportunity over a two-year period to prepare herself for the rigors of military-style training, but it seems she wasted a valuable opportunity. In all that time, it looks like she could have spent her time getting physically fit and mentally prepared for life as the first female cadet at The Citadel. During the long court battle, Faulkner should have been arming herself for a career as a cadet.

Faulkner said she had been running each morning and evening, and working out with Nautilus equipment every other day, yet she admitted to being over the military weight standards. Media film from two years ago reveals a much slimmer Faulkner. So, what happened?

Faulkner has been on The Citadel campus taking classes. She had to have some idea of what she was facing during "hell week", and she had to know the whole country was watching to see how a woman would fare if accepted to the cadet program.

Obviously, Faulkner wasn't ready physically, and she claims the stress was simply too much. If Faulkner had been better prepared, maybe more people would be sympathetic to her situation. Many who once supported Faulkner now see her as a quitter. Those who were against her have even more reason to gloat. Many feel that Faulkner particularly let down women who have struggled for equal opportunities.

Faulkner finally got her opportunity and only proved that she wasn't woman enough to meet the challenge.

But those cheering cadets in South Carolina had better enjoy the celebration now, for soon there will be women who are up to the challenge and will survive "hell week" with the best of them.

Editorial Board

Teri Smith	Editor-in-Chief
Andrea Lawson	News Editor
Kristi Hamby	Features Editor
Greg Deal	Sports Editor
Lat Ray	Photo Editor

Staff

Paul Buttles, Amy Cannon, William Davis, Jennifer Dinsmore, James Hertsch, Anne Kuester, Debbie Larson, Michael Morgan, Marti Parson, Tracy Singleton, Renee Slaydon, Kevin Watson, Wendi Wolfe

Karen Brinson	Advertising
Alice Hui	Business Manager
Greg Deal	Circulation

Mark West, faculty advisor

Weather report provided by UNCA Department of Atmospheric Sciences

The Blue Banner is the student newspaper of the University of North Carolina at Asheville.

We publish each Thursday except during summer sessions, final exam weeks and holiday breaks. Our offices are located in Carmichael Hall, room 208-A. Our telephone number is (704) 251-6586. Our campus e-mail address is UNCAVX::BANNER.

Nothing in our editorial or opinions sections necessarily reflects the opinion of the entire Blue Banner editorial board, the faculty advisor, or the university faculty, administration or staff.

Unsigned editorials reflect the opinion of a majority of the Blue Banner editorial board.

Letters, columns, cartoons and reviews represent only the opinions of their respective authors.

The Blue Banner welcomes submissions of letters and articles for publication.

All submissions are subject to editing and are considered on the basis of interest, space, taste and timeliness.

Letters must be typed, double spaced, and must not exceed 300 words. Letters for publication must also contain the author's signature, classification, major or other relationship with UNCA.

What happened to summer?

Greg Calvert

Columnist

Didn't you just hate those essays you had to write as a kid about "What I Did On My Summer Vacation?" They served no purpose other than to occupy your time during those first few torturous hours, reminding you that your time was no longer your own. It was like rubbing salt in those scraped knees that you had come by in some great adventure or daring feat. The summer had held so much promise of freedom and seemed to have lasted forever, but there you were back in that labor camp that was a classroom, yearning for just one more day of no shoes and warm sunshine.

These were my thoughts last week as I lamented my summer over a few beers with a couple of friends. "Who stole my summer?" I whined mournfully. For every year I grow older, I seem to lose a little more of the summer freedom I looked forward to and cherished like a broken-in baseball mitt. Responsibilities seem to increase exponentially, while playtime dwindles like the amount of sun left in the day.

Who in the hell dictated that I couldn't go out and play anymore? I told them how it used to be, how Tom and I would go down to the platform by the creek and pretend it was a big steamboat sailing down the Ohio River. Or how we would be knights, with curtain rods for swords, rescuing damsels in distress (which were really Tom's little sisters we had previously tied up in the barn). Now those were glorious summers that seemed to go on for years.

But, alas, my moaning fell on

understanding, yet unsympathetic ears. One friend told me to grow up and stop being such a baby. When we were younger, he said, we would give anything to be grown up (whatever that means) and this is the expected outcome from our pact with the devil to be "big." Life, to him meant not having fun anymore, getting our satisfaction from work and a peaceful existence.

Well, I just couldn't stand for this roll-over-and-play-dead train of thought, so I turned to my other friend for some kind of moral support. He didn't want to have anything to do with my return to childhood either, but his reasoning was that it was our acceptance of technology that was to blame. His thinking was that because technology has allowed us to be more easily productive in less time, we can therefore do more with far less sweat. In this way we get caught in a Catch-22, spending more of our time being productive, allowing "management" to expect more from us, and keeping us more productive.

My response was that I didn't need anymore psycho-babble from a bunch of drunks. To keep the insults and punches to a minimum we moved on to other more mundane subjects, but my questions still haunted me.

Then while driving my car a few days later, I had one of those great revelations you sometimes get while listening to a song (I can't be the only one this happens to). I heard "Ants Marching" by The Dave Matthews Band, and although I'm sure the writer didn't intend some deep prophetic message, it had this

lightning-bolt effect on me. It reminded me of this Beatle's song, "A Day In The Life" I think it called,--describing a boring existence of getting up to another day of drudgery. Doing all of the same things every morning, doing all of the same things every day, ending the evening in the same routine like clockwork. Living your life by someone else's timeline without a sense of kicking your shoes off, letting down your hair, and having a little fun. And it reminded me of myself and how I spent my summer (you knew I had to come to the point somewhere, huh?)

Like most people, summer is this magical period where time is supposed to stop. We all make big plans to go on vacation, to finish those projects we excused ourselves from during the winter, or to read all those books we want to read and just don't have to read for some class. And I was no different in May; boy did I ever have plans. This was Greg's summer and nothing or nobody was going to get in my way of doing what I wanted to do, whatever it may be.

But lo and behold, the best laid plans of mice and men often go awry. I work as a pilot and really love what I do and although some people would call this job more like fun, it is still a job. My responsibilities increased with a promotion and the addition of another aircraft with which to bore holes in the sky. Then a few natural disasters and Generals with someplace to go had Uncle Sam knocking at my door to pay him back for all the money he (i.e. us) spent on my training.

Before long, June led to July, July flew into August and my 31st birthday, and the next thing I know I'm buying way overpriced books and sitting in way-too-hot classrooms. Going back in a whirlwind to the question of where did my summer go and who the hell took it away from me! Which leads us back to the drunks, the car (not at the same time of course), the songs, and my lightning bolt of a revelation.

It isn't some childhood curse of wanting to be a big boy, and it isn't Bill Gates and Silicon Valley's fault I didn't have the freedom and fun I wished for, however nice it would be to blame some really rich guy. The answer to my woes was glaring back at me in the mirror. This is a new one in this day of shrugged responsibilities, but it was my fault I didn't have the kind of fun I wanted. In my life, and the lives of many acquaintances, we have tried to have it all. We would all like to say "been there, done that, got the t-shirt," but in doing that we pay an awfully high price. For reaching for the almighty dollar, climbing the ladder, or spending a bit too much time glued to the Internet, we lose all the adventure, romance, and fun of being that kid who knew no other time clock than the one that brought your grimy little self back to the dinner table at night. Now I'm not saying go and forsake all of your studies and jobs for the sandbox, even I'm a realist to that point. But go out and play, have fun, before you forget how and start droning on, day to day, clock to clock. It happens all too easily.

Florida drivers aren't the only ones with bad habits

Michael Gelman

Columnist

So you think you're a good driver? Answer this easy question: What color is a yield sign? Just in case you don't know the answer, it is at the end of this column.

I'm not the best driver in the world, but I am safe. I get where I'm going quickly, and I'm usually courteous. Asheville roads are swarming with under-informed motorists. I don't know where they all come from — only about half of them have Florida license plates.

North Carolina's driving handbook only tells you *some* of the dos-and-don'ts about driving, and based on what I see every day, many drivers don't obey even these. Here are a few mistakes that even good drivers sometimes make.

Take the right-of-way, if it is yours. Giving away the right-of-way is NOT courteous. It causes confusion, puts everyone at risk, and cynics like me will accuse you of trying to assume control over the other motorists.

When you're the first to stop at a red light, pull up to the line. The road has a sensor under it that tells the switch that you're there. The government doesn't

tell you about it, but if you drive a motorcycle, you soon learn to position your bike in just the right spot on the road.

Parking lots with angled spaces are directional (one way). When you drive through a full parking lot of this type, cars are parked so that you can see their back ends when looking forward. These lots are designed so that you can pull straight in and park. When you're ready to leave, you back out about 1-1/2 car lengths, turning your car slightly, and drive forward again, in the correct direction. If you go the wrong way, you have to do some tricky maneuvering to park your car. Yes, I am aware that Sears has "STOP" printed at both ends of their directional parking lots. That's to protect us from the under-informed motorists that drive the wrong way.

Those center lanes on 5-lane roads, such as Tunnel Road, are there so you can get out of the way of traffic while you wait for a chance to turn. Don't drive in this lane. It's not a bi-directional fifth traffic lane. One under-informed motorist driving in the center lane makes it unavailable for motorists moving in both directions.

When someone ahead of you is trying to enter the interstate, move to the left if you can. You know, the "Golden Rule?"

If you need to get on or off a ramp, do it as soon as possible. This is just common sense. If you wait, you may lose your chance to do it safely.

Keep to your side of the road if the road is wide enough for someone to pass you, going the other way. I absolutely HATE IT when motorists play "chicken" with me. I won't write how I teach these people a lesson, but if I've ever done it to you, you know. Don't play chicken when you're driving — don't play at all.

Instead of braking on the interstate, stay a safe distance from the car in front of you. Instead of braking while going down a hill, use a lower gear. This is one of those rare times when you need to shift an automatic transmission: use one of the "L" or "LOW" gears. I've seen someone wear out a new set of break pads in a few weeks from breaking while going down mountain roads.

When you turn on to another road, turn in to the lane that is closest to you. Don't swing into

the next lane to avoid making a sharp turn, then honk at the other car that is also turning onto the same road, and is in the lane that you want to swerve into.

Don't feed wild bears, and don't give money to the "Will work for food" people. You'll only be doing them an injustice by supporting their substance abuse habits. If no one gave them money they wouldn't be sitting at intersections. Give money at church, but DRIVE when you're on the road.

Finally, each car must stop at a 4-way stop intersection. You can't just drive on through with the car in front of you, if there is at least one other car already stopped at a stop sign. Wait your turn.

Answer: Yield signs are red and white. If you answered "yellow" you are most likely over 25 years old. Yield signs have not been yellow since 1973.

Michael Gelman is a management senior, wedding photographer, and weekend manager of the ABCCM Homeless Shelter. He was formerly a photographer at the Asheville Citizen-Times, and a guest columnist at the Blue Banner.