

Perspectives

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Often the most concentrated efforts are made with little fanfare. Such was the case in the extraordinary activities that were necessary to prepare the campus for the 1995-96 academic year. This letter is to express the appreciation of the campus to the leaders and members of the library staff and the physical plant for their dedication and hard work this summer. Opening the library, complete with the necessary moving, cleaning and re-

landscaping, was a herculean task. We are indeed grateful for the extra effort you invested. The magnificent new library spaces and the newly replanted grounds provide tangible evidence of the value that UNCA places on students and their education. Thank you to all who made this transition possible.

Patsy B. Reed
Chancellor of UNCA

Vice chancellor search

The Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs (VCAA) Search Committee is holding a series of open forums to get input from the campus community, the Board of Trustees, the Foundation Board, and the greater Asheville area community on various aspects of the search for the VCAA. The schedule for the following groups is as follows:

Sept. 1—Social Science Faculty—3 p.m.—KH 234; Sept. 5—Humanities Faculty—4 p.m.—KH 244; Sept. 7—Trustees and Foundation Boards; Community Members—5 p.m.—KH 234; Sept. 8—Administration and staff—8:30 p.m.—KH 234; Sept. 11—Students—3:30 p.m.—KH 234.

Those who are unable to attend their scheduled time are encouraged to join other sessions. Written comments regarding the search should be addressed as follows: Professor Shirley Browning, Chair VCAA Search Committee, One University Heights, Asheville, N.C. 28804.

If you would like to contact a member of the search committee, you are requested to do so through the following channels: Shirley Browning, Chair—phone 6550—e-mail SBrowning@unca.edu
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Let's be responsible

John Edwards

Columnist

It's universal knowledge that college students sometimes indulge in stress-release activities. These activities might range from simple stretch exercises to hugging-the-toilet drinking episodes. Once, during one of those horrid humanities courses a number of years ago, Professor Edwinn had the lecture hall roaring with laughter telling stories of medieval college students drinking ale and seducing older, married women.

As I progressed in my college experience — developing relationships with fellow students and professors — drinking as a means of dealing with stress was attractive and convenient. I was forced to wonder if maybe I wasn't taking it a bit too far when, rushing into class late again, red eyed and unkempt, the professor slammed his notes down in mid-lecture and assigned another poem to the class reading list: "The Lotus Eaters." It was about islanders who ate intoxicating leaves and lay around all day blitzed out of their gourds. I never understood why this poem was just suddenly assigned like that...

Being 18, in college and perhaps for the first time in one's young life, truly free, is sort of like Columbus setting sail enroute to India... There's nothing but the wide open horizon of tomorrow in view... Being a freshman in college means you don't have to eat all your vegetables and you can stay out past 11 p.m. on school nights. It means when the pressure gets great, you can unwind and chill with a few cold ones...

Last spring, in the midst of excitement fueled by senior proms and high school graduation, some area students tried to come to terms with the death of a classmate by placing flowers, ribbons and mementos by the 60-foot oak tree where tragedy struck.

Jason Armstrong, 17, was killed in the early morning hours of May 22 when the car in which he was a passenger crashed into the huge oak. His best friend, the driver, was charged with reckless driving, driving while impaired and felony death by vehicle.

Incoming UNCA freshman Karen Bisol had been friends with Armstrong "since eighth grade." Bisol, 18, is a pre-pharmacy major. She said her late friend "was one of those people who put his friends first... He had a caring attitude toward people."

She said she had only known Armstrong to drink "maybe four or five times in the five years I knew him." Bisol estimated that 15-20 percent of her high school classmates drank regularly. "You could tell who they were," she said. "There were these isolated groups."

According to Vicki Brunnick, substance abuse consultant at UNCA, alcohol and drug use at UNCA "is comparable to other four year schools."

Citing statistics from a survey compiled by Archer Gravely director of the Office of Institutional Research, 30 percent of the 200-500 students surveyed from nine schools got drunk at least once during the 1994 school year. Nine percent drank daily. Males averaged 4.8 drinks per week whereas females averaged 2.3. Nine percent of the females who got drunk said they were taken advantage of sexually. Brunnick emphasized a need to consider such data "from a mature standpoint. We need awareness, not moralistic preaching...the facts, that sort of thing." The fact is, 45 percent of those surveyed didn't drink at all.

In her welcoming speech to incoming freshmen, Chancellor Patsy Reed said, "We want you to feel the joy of discovery. And we want you to have fun. In all of these things we will guide you and work with you. In all of them, you must assume a major responsibility for yourself."

There's great joy in the college life. There's great fun. In academic discovery, there's great stress and challenge. Often, too, in relating to others — a multitude of people with a diversity of backgrounds — there's joy, fun, discovery, and stress.

Escaping the rigor of university demands is necessary in order to remain healthy and continue on to graduation. What varies are the hows and whys. Partying in college is an age-old activity.

When his classmates graduated, Jason Armstrong was represented by an empty chair. Said Bisol, "It was only a little way down from mine. There was this sadness...this feeling ... You could tell everyone was feeling it." Though he'd been awarded a scholarship to college, Armstrong wouldn't be going.

In considering how to unwind from the cramming for 67 exams in a week or absorbing the 94 rejections for a date in a weekend, be sensible. If the keg runs dry and someone needs to go on a beer run, remember: 45 percent of your classmates aren't drinking.

The college experience can be great. There's a ton of fun and the joy of discovery never ends.

Here's to the best years of your life. But the bottom line is, be responsible.



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