

Opinions

The Banner

Editorial

Funky beats

The lucky contestants

The countdown has begun. The list has been narrowed down to 12 candidates, and who the chosen one will be to lead UNCA into the new millennium is anybody's guess right now. We wait with baited breath to see who will be picked as numero uno, the big enchilada, the new chancellor.

Whoever the new chancellor may turn out to be, they will not have the luxury of starting their administration with nothing to hold them back. The new chancellor must know that they are going to have to pick up where Chancellor Patsy Reed has left off, but it is doubtful that they understand just how much they stand to inherit.

First, there is the fundraising campaign that Reed initiated in a little over a year ago. This campaign was originally set to raise \$13 million for the university. A study by a New York-based consulting firm, however, concluded that \$13 million was too high an amount for a university of UNCA's size. The study suggested \$8 million as a more feasible amount for UNCA's first major fundraising campaign ("Firm suggests smaller fund campaign," Jan. 29, 1998).

Only eight months after deciding to go ahead with the fundraising campaign, putting the goal at \$10 million, Reed announced her plan to retire at the end of the spring 1999 semester. This unexpected turn of events left many wondering what would happen to the fledgling fundraising campaign.

Next, the university is getting ready to increase its student body, as evidenced by the construction of the new West Ridge Residence Hall. This expansion demands that someone who really knows UNCA be at the helm to guide it through whatever obstacles may lie ahead. Yet the person for that job has decided to leave UNCA at this crucial point.

A new chancellor may be able to breathe new life into programs that have already been implemented at UNCA. The search for a new chancellor, though, will eventually only stall those programs. We can only hope this new chancellor has experience in making sense out of chaos.

Illogical

Even though UNCA is consistently rated among the safest schools in the state, it now seems students have another reason to fear the athletics department, besides the price tag it carries.

Maybe UNCA doesn't have a set standard or rule book to help it proceed with actions against Nick Perkins, but it shouldn't need them either. When someone confesses to a crime, especially one that involves the exploitation of a minor, there should be no second-guessing or needless deliberation over the next course of action.

Last semester, students defecating on book bags and making crass jokes was enough to warrant the attention of both the administration and students. Though it's hard to quantify or measure crimes side by side, sodomy is indeed an offense that no UNCA student should have in ink on their records.

Allowing crimes such as Perkins' to go without proper and swift punishment sets a dangerous precedent for the university in the future.

We applaud head men's basketball coach Eddie Biedenbach for benching Perkins when questions arose about his innocence. It was the best thing to do for Perkins and the school until the controversy and his trial were over.

Now we hope the administration have the same fortitude and judgment to no longer keep such a student as an ambassador of this university. All students are representatives of UNCA wherever they go, whether they be the president of an on-campus organization or just an average Joe.

Perkins may not be a danger to UNCA in the future, but allowing students guilty of serious crimes to keep attending alongside the innocent is.

Can it

In the UNCA recycling program, we see another case of good intentions, progress, and a slew of the same problems. UNCA recycled 73 tons of junk in the last two years, and how much more could have been recycled if only people weren't so slack? Don't we live in a day and age where there is a general awareness regarding the importance of recycling?

It is nice to see that the recycling program at UNCA is progressing. However, all the necessary efforts are not being made by both the staff and the students.

It defeats the purpose to initiate recycling efforts if the university does not purchase products for campus consumption that cannot be recycled within the system. Also, students who throw recyclable materials in the trash instead of into a nearby recycling bin exemplify apathy at its worst (or maybe at its greatest potential).

Even if you are the type who refuses to join in and be active in the campus community, recycling is at the most basic level of understanding. Perhaps it should become a general requirement at UNCA in order for everyone to get the hint.

Expressing creativity essential



Liam Bryan
columnist

A day or two ago, I was speaking to a friend of mine. We were discussing the various problems we had with our Inhumanities classes, when we saw the university walk by.

I am not speaking of anything like Lipinsky hefting up its skirts and wandering off. I am speaking of the very embodiment of this campus. UNC-Asheville is an artistic school.

How many of you love the fine arts? How many of you are performers? Well, my friend and I saw someone who was both the pinnacle of performers and the simplest of people.

For those of you who spend all your time in the basement of Robinson, allow me to enlighten you as to what happens on the quad. For about a week now, Mr. Sing has been wandering the quad.

I really do not know who Mr. Sing is. This name that I have given him is not his real name. I have not even bothered to ask him what his name is. To understand who this man is, all you have to do is watch.

As most of you know, Mr. Sing

has been wandering the campus for the last week or so. He shuffles about, climbing trees once in a while and occasionally doing a cartwheel. But what anyone remembers of him is the singing. It is not quite discernable, at least not to my ears, but it is distinctive. Imagine Arabian chant, African tribal, and Native American ritual singing all rolled into one.

Before you go off calling public safety about some crazy singer climbing trees, know that this man completely embodies our university. Where else but here could someone express his or her creativity so boldly?

Like it or not, this school is full of performers - Actors, artists, singers, musicians. Pick out a person on campus, and I'll give you two to one odds that they express themselves artistically.

So, what will become of Mr. Sing? Will public safety write him a ticket? Or will they be so bold as to call the police? If they take any kind of action against him for what he does now, know now that I shall

stand with him. Now, far be it from me to criticize any administrative group, but this man is more important than that. This man is our university. If we had to wear school uniforms from now on, would you embrace them? If all of our schedules now had to fit from eight to noon, would you allow it? If our lives and our creativity were restricted to what we were told to do, would you even consider attending this school?

Please do not think of me as a liberal from this view. I am a conservative, and likely to remain so. But more important than my political standing is the welfare of people, and no one benefits from conformity.

Expression is more than a privilege, more than a right, it is a divinely-inspired necessity that no human can live without. Mr. Sing is pure expression.

Have you seen Mr. Sing? Have you talked with him, maybe watched him dance or sing for a while? Now that you have heard my little spiel, go out and watch him. Just think about what he represents to you, and the campus in general. Do not be surprised if you find yourself singing or dancing with him.

Now, I cannot fully endorse Mr. Sing. While he may be expressive and artistic, I do not find him entertaining at all. His voice carries quite far, which can be annoying, to say the least. I was once exiting the theater when I heard his vocalizations, and thought that the weedwacker had finally gotten its revenge on its user. It turned out not to be that case, instead Mr. Sing, dressed in his khaki pants and sporting dreadlocks, was just singing to a

tree on the other side of the library.

Not to mention the fact that I cannot understand a word he is singing about. For all I know he could be rhythmically reciting his grocery list. While it may sound really keen, it is still fairly senseless.

I must admit that I do not even know if he is a student here or not. While he does wander in and out of the buildings occasionally, I have never seen him enter a building for the length of time it takes to have a class. What is he doing on campus, anyway?

Now I have completely confused you. I have gone from endorsing this man to everyone and his uncle to railing him as untalented. Know now that I have not once contradicted myself. I support his expression, I cheer him for it, but I do not care for it. A person can respect a religious figure for being devout, even if the people are not of the same faith. The same holds true here. I respect him for being an artist, I cheer him for his expression, but he sounds like a long-tailed cat trapped in a room full of rocking chairs to me.

So, I herald this man and his bravery. He embodies our campus, and he has a vibrance for life not easily found.

When is the last time you expressed yourself, reader? When is the last time you felt an inspiration so strong that you had to sing, right then and right there? Go watch Mr. Sing for a time, maybe you will also be inspired, as have some.

Go express yourself somewhere, let it all out. But, please, if you do sing, make sure that you have something more interesting than grocery list to sing about.

The ad campaign for individuality



Teresa Calloway
columnist

As far as I can tell, the only phenomenon that can suppress the nagging suspicion that human life is totally insignificant is collective identity, usually but not always involving a higher power.

In other words, to gain an enhanced sense of importance, most people will have to compromise individuality to a degree. For the most part, what we are surrendering is potential to deviate, and this goes largely unnoticed; because the quantity and quality of what we relinquish will never be something we face.

Our behavior is shaped by what collective identity, or society, has deemed acceptable. For example, most of us don't feel we're being deprived of the "freedom" to molest children. In a moral vacuum, who knows?

Of course, more than one collective identity is made available to us. There are collective religious, cultural, economic, and political identities, to name a few.

I am a registered Democrat, but I don't support all Democratic programs or bills. I have given up a part of my individuality in the interest of maintaining political power. Different groups, then, compete for allegiance, compete for the pieces of individuals that those individuals were willing to give up. As a reasonable person, I want to give

away the least valuable parts of my individuality to get the most political representation I can. Thus, I am willing to give up my freedom to molest in exchange for protection of reproductive rights. I have exchanged a less valuable "freedom" for protection of a more

valuable one. In looking for a collective identity, I scour for legitimacy. For me, tradition is a very important source of legitimacy.

For example, imagine religions A and B. Religion A is a better "fit" for me, that is, I will have to sacrifice less of my individuality in exchange for religious identity. Affiliation with religion B will require me to sacrifice more individuality, but its rites and rituals are hundreds of years old. I would be willing to exchange larger quantities of individuality for the legitimacy of establishment.

The only method I can see for altering this situation is to create a different criteria for "legitimacy." If I considered harmony with pre-existing beliefs a source of legitimacy, then clearly the outcome would change.

However, these "pre-existing be-

liefs" which serve as my new criterion for legitimacy are largely the result of lifelong contact with other forms of collective identity, so how valid are they as expressions of individuality?

Based on this theory of relinquishing individuality, or potential individuality, in exchange for collective identity, the relationship between society and the individual is filled with tension.

It is only fair to stop here and note that I have been disagreed with on this point. I have spoken with people, whose criteria for religious/political legitimacy are different than my own, who testify that they have suffered no loss in individuality in exchange for said legitimacy.

An easy solution would be to say that all the individuality they gave up was potential individuality (preferences that would have been dis-

covered at some point in the future), and so they didn't notice it waving goodbye. However, I have to say that this is not the case. These are some of the most individual people I know. I leave that for another time.

I return to my hypothesis: the relationship between individual and collective identities is characterized by tension. The collective seeks existence in the form of membership, and furthers its interests by convincing the individual to sacrifice as much as possible, while the individual seeks existence through non-conformism.

Think of individuality as a currency, and collective power as a product: consumers of legitimacy, be it religious, cultural, or political, seek the best deal in exchanging their hard-earned individuality for power,

while those who produce political, cultural and religious power want to get as much individuality for their service as possible. What do they do? What does Nike (TM) do? They advertise!

Why are most of us convinced that brand name products are better tasting, fitting, smelling, looking, and feeling than generic?

Because they have spent money to make us believe in their products, i.e., to gain legitimacy. Institutions which produce collective identity will also use every means available to them to alter our individual criteria for legitimacy. If you were to pick shoes in a vacuum, you would look for the ones that best fit your feet. If you were to pick collective identities in a vacuum, you would pick the ones that best fit your individuality.

Nike, however, has most of us convinced a swoop (I guess that needs a trademark now, too) is a rational criteria for the conferral of status, and the Republican party has us convinced that economic Darwinism is a good criteria.

In short, through the process of socialization (a.k.a. advertising) collective institutions are able to control the means by which individuals determine the criteria by which collective identities are chosen. Corporations command the resources to change minds, and I for one have no proof that it is used with wisdom and kindness.

The conclusion to which this leads us is this: there is no such thing as an individual in the original sense of the word. Wherever there is society (two or more), there will soon be a power gradient which will cause some to relinquish individuality in exchange for power. As soon as sufficient resources are available, these resources will be employed to alter the criteria by which the powerful are judged, and this will occur at the expense of individuality. Yours. Mine. Never mind.

The relationship between individual and collective identities is characterized by tension.