

# OPINIONS

## Blue Banner Editorials

### We Never Should Forget

We would like to commend those professors who realized the importance of remembering the events that occurred on Sept. 11. Many UNCA professors cancelled class or let their students out early, so we could deal with the feelings the terrorists have forced upon us.

Obviously, we were not simply happy about having a class cancelled because that seems a little trivial at this point. We were able to go to our homes and watch the memorial events that occurred at Ground Zero. The events were more educational than any lecture in Humanities, or any other class, ever could be.

Watching these events brought a true sense of patriotism to all of us. There were ceremonies all day, and while it was painful to watch the family members of the 2,801 people who died in the World Trade Center, it was hopeful to see how people, Americans, were standing together to support our country.

There was a quote hung on one building near Ground Zero that read, "The human spirit is not measured by the size of the act, but by the size of the heart." That is the way in which Americans should look at these events. We all grieve for those who died, but we also celebrate those who survived.

At the risk of sounding like President Bush, we need to stand by our nation now more than ever. We all need to take into account that we really are a lucky people. We have freedoms and rights many other nations around the world do not have the privilege of having. Although our government has its faults, and we all know it has a lot of faults, we need to support our government in whatever decisions it makes now and in the upcoming months.

Many Americans believe we should find Osama Bin Laden and kick his a\*\*, and others think we should initiate a less violent approach to solve the problem. Either way you look at the problem, America is going to prevail over terrorists. We may all have to sacrifice a bit in order for justice to be served. Some of us have loved ones in Afghanistan, and we may have to pay a little more for the price of gasoline. But, isn't it worth it to be able to support our country?

Perhaps we, the editorial board, are looking at this situation a little too optimistically, but perhaps optimism is what the people and government of our country need right now. So, during this time of reflection and remembrance, we should try to support our country as much as possible.

Please, never forget those who died on that dreadful day last year. Sept. 11 will be a part of our history we should remember and respect. And, thank you to those professors who allowed us to take the time to do this. Even the smallest of things can help heal a broken heart.

**OOPS!** We send a big apology to Whitney Setser, who works as copy editor for *The Blue Banner*. She was accidentally omitted from the staff list in last week's issue.

## Trains, planes and automobiles

Considering alternatives to airfare for air-scaared Americans

Morgan Kelly  
Columnist

It's here. The day seemed so far away a year ago, yet now, seems so soon. That's right—the one-year anniversary of 9/11. In the past year, many things have changed in America: the way we work, our security, foreign policy and, yes, the way we travel. Consider that air travel went from the most popular form of long-distance travel (rivaled only by driving) to being preferred only above balloon and travel freight.

Even a year later, many Americans are reluctant to fly, be it because of intense security at airports, outrageous airfares or the fact that 9/11 is much too recent. Whatever the reason, Americans have yet to re-equate safety and efficiency with air travel.

So, what options exist for the air-scaared American? More significantly for us, what options exist for the air-scaared college student? Many students live outside a reasonable driving distance from school, while many others don't have a car. So, now what?

This is a question I pondered deeply this past summer when I was planning to take a trip from Asheville to Boston. As many Americans are finding to be the case, the tickets were slightly more expensive than radical reconstructive surgery. From personal experience, I know that the 14-hour drive to Boston is slightly more painful. Desperate for alternatives, I turned to a long-forgotten form of travel—railroad.

For the student, the railroad is cheaper than flying (\$193 to Boston from Greensboro) and easier than driving. The railroad traveler is provided with an excellent selection of food from the dining car, an unlimited span of scenery and the freedom to enjoy both. Or, you could just sleep through it all, like I did.

But, all is not wonderful in a train world. For one thing, train travel is far from glamorous.

The cars are cramped cans of flesh overseen by conductors, who answer the question of what happened to high school bullies after graduation. These people believe that fear is the most effective tool for crowd control.

The majority of train stations I encountered were little more than

tool sheds haphazardly plopped in the poorest section of town. The station in Selma, NC is a singlewide trailer sitting at a gravity-defying acute angle, while Greensboro's pasty, cinderblock station has the equivalent charm of a Soviet-era House of Charm Enemas.

I also do not recommend train travel if time is an issue. In fact, I advise against wearing a watch. I wore mine, and nearly lost my mind because of how slowly the time passed. Besides, rarely going above .08 mph, trains are subject to all the ground obstacles of a car, but a train cannot drive on the sidewalk or median to avoid them.

Brush fire? Delay. Bridge out? Delay. British lady dumps hot water on herself? Delay. I arrived in Boston six hours late, and returned to Greensboro four hours later. See the progress. Who knows, maybe if you travel by train, you'll arrive early?

There are perks. Trains run through the heart of every city, village and hamlet, intimately acquainting the traveler with areas air and interstate travel are designed to avoid. Watching the landscape change from rural to urban, from north to south at 25 mph, provides a rare opportunity to witness and

appreciate American diversity from the perspective of a depressed sloth trapped in a jar of Thozaine. In one day, I saw the quaint wealth of Alexandria, VA, and Fredericksburg, MD, as well as the predominantly black poverty of Garysburg, NC.

You can also get good advice on trains. In the dining car, a heavy-set musician, who managed to get half of his lunch on my lap, told me, "If you can do something you enjoy for a living, you're fortunate." I'm not sure whether he was referring to music or eating, but that doesn't make his words any less profound. Try getting that kind of wisdom from someone hollering at you from a passing car on the interstate.

Okay, so perhaps, train travel is not the best alternative to air travel, but for me, like most Americans, it is still too soon to get back on a plane. The odds that anything similar to the 9/11 tragedy will happen soon are slim. That it will happen on my particular flight are even smaller.

Regardless, now that I know the possibility exists, that it can and has happened, I will continue searching for that safe alternative, even if I have to endure 24 hours of endless clacking to find it.

*The Blue Banner* welcomes submissions of letters and articles for publication. Letters should not exceed 300 words. Letters for publication should also contain the author's signature, classification, major or other relationship with UNCA. Sorry, we will not accept submissions of anonymous letters to the editor.

The deadline for letters is noon on Tuesday. If you have a submission, you may send it to *The Blue Banner*, Karpen 244, One University Heights, Asheville N.C. 28804 or to [banner@unca.edu](mailto:banner@unca.edu). Please include your name, contact information, classification and major/position.

#### THOMAS R. PICKERING FOREIGN AFFAIRS FELLOWSHIP (for college sophomores)

This program provides undergraduate and graduate funding to students interested in international studies and careers in the United States Department of State Foreign Service. The fellowship award includes tuition, room, board, and mandatory fees during the junior and senior years of college and during the first year of graduate study with reimbursement for books and one round-trip travel. The Fellow must commit to pursuing a graduate degree in international studies. For more information see their Web site. Applications are available online beginning in November. For more information, contact Doug Jones at 251-6607. Or, e-mail [djones@unca.edu](mailto:djones@unca.edu).

#### MITCHELL SCHOLARSHIP (for graduate study in Ireland)

George J. Mitchell Scholarships were established to broaden the knowledge of Irish culture and social values in students who will become leaders in the United States. Scholars are eligible to attend an institution of higher learning in the Republic of Ireland or in Northern Ireland. Prospective scholars must have a demonstrated record of intellectual distinction, leadership, and extra-curricular activity. There are no restrictions as to academic field of study, though the proposed course of study must be available at the university selected by the applicant. Scholars receive tuition and housing; in addition each scholar receives a stipend of \$11,000. Qualifications: must be a U.S. citizen and have received a Bachelor's degree by the time you take the scholarship.

Application Deadline: October 10  
Web Address: <http://www.us-irelandalliance.org/mitchell/index.html>  
For more information, contact Doug Jones at 251-6607 for more information. Or, e-mail [djones@unca.edu](mailto:djones@unca.edu).

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