

## Taking a break from stress of final exams

"Looking for a parking spot is harder than ever these days," said Katie Murray, junior art student.

She described the commuter lot as a battlefield, where drivers who don't use their turn signals to mark parking territory are "dead," or in more realistic terms, left driving around well past the start of class.

With the last few weeks of the semester upon us, most students on campus are feeling the pressure of final exams, papers and the consequences of trying to make it all work.

The idea of starting, working through and completing five papers and three presentations while keeping up with two student organizations all at the same time can be quite overwhelming.

Students must tackle this complex situation and remember to sign up for the right fall classes, work out the kinks of a summer internship and show up on time for whatever part or full-time job they may have. This takes maintaining a high level of concentration and conjure up a little motivation.

Each individual must deal with stress in a unique way, but the tactics of some students create more stress, which usually leads to the repercussions of unresolved, chronic stress.

While there are definitely worse places to be, wrapping up a semester at college can leave a student feeling hopeless, completely overwhelmed and in need of a little direction.

It really comes down to balancing time devoted to work and de-stressing. Some students take naps or watch movies to wind down from a long day. Others prefer drinking a beer and socializing with friends. In general, whatever approach a student takes to stay sane during final exams can be healthy if done in moderation and in a responsible way.

The first and, sometimes, best way to approach a stressful situation is with the right attitude. Changing the way you think, also known as cognitive restructuring, can help you manage stressors in your life, according to the University of Georgia's Health Center and Stress Planning Group. Thinking positively changes the way you feel about a situation, thus altering the way others react to you.

A tactic known as self-talk may sound crazy, but is proven to be effective in reducing stress levels. During times of extreme stress, our ability to handle intense situations often falters to that of a young child. Self-talk helps us deal with these feelings by requiring you to stop being your own worst critic, and start handling your thoughts as you would a child's, according to UGA.

Eating the right foods also improves our ability to work under stress more than we realize. The high levels of caffeine and sugar in junk food increase metabolism temporarily, but also increase sleeplessness and only satisfying hunger for a short while.

Instead of walking down the hall to the vending machine, grab some running shoes and use the treadmill to boost energy and increase the ability to concentrate and endorphin levels in the body, according to UGA.

Although going out to a bar for drinks may help you forget about work for the moment, it really does little to get you closer to the conclusion of that paper or the last page of a presentation. However, students should not forget to balance work and relaxation by incorporating social activities into their lives. Taking time off from work is not always a bad thing, and if going down to Scully's for a beer makes working on homework the next day easier, then go for it.

However, alcohol use should be regulated and done in moderation. Men encounter the risk of alcohol-related problems if they drink more than four alcoholic beverages a day or more than 14 in a week. Women see the same effects after three drinks a day or seven drinks in a week, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.

Take a break from work if it will benefit your overall academic success, but do not take one so long and excessive, as to only worsen the ability to handle stress and a large workload.

However you choose to handle stress, try to maintain a healthy lifestyle by balancing the crunch of final exams and papers with exercise, good eating habits and relaxation.

By Allie Haake

## Anti-drug plan stifles Asheville creativity

By Emily Pomeranz  
POLITICAL SCIENCE STUDENT

Recently Rat Dog, a band containing former Grateful Dead member Bob Weir, put on a show at the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium. Nine people were arrested for selling drugs outside the show. Now, Councilman Carl Mumpower, in all his infinite wisdom, is calling for a crackdown on police security.

He sent an e-mail to various publications around town expressing his concerns about drug problems at the show, focusing on the lack of security at the Thomas Wolfe Auditorium during certain concerts. He means the concerts that attract drugs.

The music scene in Asheville is absolutely spectacular. Bands and artists are attracted to this city because of its surroundings, people and all-around vibe. Asheville is unique because, while located in the South, it is more progressive and has an open-minded attitude.

All types of people come for various reasons, like music, art and the great outdoors. Music, in particular, is key to what makes this city so attractive to outsiders. Asheville is just a wonderful place to be, and still, some people want to see it change.

Turning Asheville into a police state will not stop the selling of drugs at concerts. What is will do is turn away concertgoers, which

in turn, will deter bands from coming here to perform. Not to say that we need to accept the sale of drugs on our city streets, but perhaps there is a better solution to the problem. We must think of a positive way to solve this.

Take a look at another city that has used a constructive solution to drug use. Denver is probably the most progressive, large city to decriminalize marijuana. If caught with one ounce or less, it would be a petty offense and involve no incarceration.

Also, the sale of one ounce or less without payment entails no incarceration and only a \$100 fine. It is difficult to see the effects of these laws in action because it has only been two years since the citizens voted on the

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issue. However, the benefits for this type of decriminalization outweigh the consequences of stifling the appeal of Asheville as a creative outlet.

For one, if having one ounce or less of marijuana were legal, the Asheville Police Department



Emily Pomeranz  
Political Science Student

more frequently occurring hard drug crimes involving substances such as cocaine and methamphetamine. According to Mumpower's Web site, an estimated 80 percent of crimes are related to hard drugs. That problem, which affects children and is economically discriminatory, is something that needs attention.

The music listeners inside the Civic Center smoking a joint are probably not harming anyone. In fact, I would be more worried about the amount of alcohol consumed at concerts and its link to drunk-driving accidents in Asheville.

Also, Western North Carolina has a huge methamphetamine problem, but you do not see Councilman Mumpower blowing steam in that direction. Mumpower will probably not take Denver's situation into consideration. However, the citizens of Asheville need to do what is necessary to keep Asheville the way

it is. More security and police downtown will detract from the culture of this city. Asheville is tolerant and socially liberal in nature due to the eclectic groups of people who inhabit the city. We should be a role model to the rest of the state and nation by breaking down ignorant barriers and demanding progress.

I enjoy seeing music downtown, especially when the Civic Center brings in good bands. Those artists could have gone to Charlotte or Raleigh to perform. However, they chose Asheville and for good reason. The fans here are approachable, tolerant and just looking for a good time. It would be a sad thing to see this town change because of one

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man's ignorant observations and his neglect to seek out the real issues and problems. Asheville needs to further its reputation as progressive and forward-thinking.

## Pushing racial problems to the forefront

By Lisa Gillespie  
MANAGING EDITOR

I did not, until recently, realize that I am white. What comes with this, at certain times, is not pretty.

Sometimes white people do not have to see black people. "I don't see race, I see a person," many people say. They do not see the difference, because they rarely see themselves as a race at all. In my experience, race is not pushed in my face every day. I became someone who felt my experience was equal to all.

Minorities often have unrecognized experiences. Seeing everyone in a fluffy world as "people" and "humanity" is based on ideas

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rather than reality and lived experience. Some whites see everyone as "people," invoking privilege and power. The idea that one can tell someone, "I don't see your race, I see you," is appalling. Sometimes race can be a contributing factor to the way someone perceives the world and is treated. To tell someone skin color does not matter is to ignore the past.

If you ignore the social injustices of history, the same infrastructure set in place will perpetuate.



Lisa Gillespie  
Managing Editor

We do not have support groups for people who have been suppressed, in which they have a chance to develop their entitlement and empowerment.

People in minority groups are more likely to be stopped and searched by authorities, much more likely to be victims of racially aggravated offenses and are disproportionately represented in the prison population, according to the Commission for Racial Equality.

When one sees humanity as "all one people" it erases the experience of one whose race does matter on a daily basis. Minorities are reminded of it, even forced to remember it. I, a white woman, am not reminded of it until I study it in a class at the age of 21.

Coming to terms with the unearned advantage of wealth passed down to me is hard to comprehend. Past generations of white people owned land during slavery and were given land during the time of the GI Bill of Rights, when the government divvied out property mostly to whites. Whites

had the right to vote for a white president when blacks could not vote, thus implementing laws that would give whites more opportunities.

This does not mean work was not hard. It simply means a white person starts a little farther into economic race than a minority person does. White people profit regardless of whether you are racist or "liberal."

Anonymity is, in a large way, UNC Asheville. There are few minorities, and sometimes white people think their experience is the norm. Being tied to a racial group is incomprehensible because we (whites) do not tie ourselves. Our experience speaks for all, which eliminates the experience of anyone that may be of a different racial background than the societal norm. We do not have to worry about being noticed for not going to the humanities lecture. If, in class, we choose not to

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talk for one day, it goes unnoticed. We live with the privilege of being silent if we choose.

A person's level of education and income influences crime risks more than their ethnicity. However, as ethnic minority groups are more likely to experi-

ence economic and educational disadvantage than their white counterparts, their risks are higher, according to the CRE.

I have crossed the street when a black man is walking toward me at night for "safety reasons." This

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is another painful thing to own up to. I give this up to "instinct," though it is probably a more learned reaction from television and newspaper portrayal of black men. The difference between a black person being scared of a white person and a white person being scared of a black person is whether or not the fear is ideologically or experientially based.

White people gather their knowledge of fear from the media and stereotypes and rarely from actual experience. Black people gather their fear from being pulled over by a white officer while driving under the speed limit. People from ethnic minority groups have a higher risk of victimization than white groups, according to the CRE.

Race is tricky. Where does one make the line between real safety issues and a societal learned behavior? Exploring this line is a step in the direction of equality.

### The BLUE BANNER

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The Banner is UNC Asheville's student newspaper. We publish each Thursday except during summer sessions, finals week and holiday breaks. Our office is located in Karpen Hall, 017.

The Banner is a designated public forum and welcomes letters to the editor and articles, considering them on a basis of interest, space and timeliness. Letters and articles should be e-mailed to banner@unca.edu and limited to 300 words. They should be signed with the writer's name, followed by the year in school, major or other relationship to UNC Asheville. Include a telephone number to aid in verification. All articles submitted are subject to editing.

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