

Letters to the Editor

Politicians need to step back, as Horne points out

Ashley Horne makes a very good point in her article, "Politicians only worsening effects of massacre," and people on both sides of the gun debate need to take notice.

All the politicians are hanging onto Virginia Tech's tragedy like vultures, and it's absolutely sickening. Gun control is something to consider, but I disagree with those who say conserving the 2nd Amendment is the cause of the shootings. Regardless of these beliefs, both liberal and conservative groups are latching on this opportunity to either reject or conserve the 2nd amendment. Even President Bush said he believes in the 2nd Amendment.

This made a lot of people angry, and it made me

mad, too. But Bush is not the first person to be this callous. He was merely trying to defend himself, because lobbyists were immediately jumping to attack him for his pro-guns belief. Even though I understand this, he should have been the bigger person and ignored it, because it took away attention from the loss at Virginia Tech. The families and students deserved some respect at least until the victims' bodies were buried. The politicians have denied these families and all of the Virginia Tech community the peace they need to get over their shock and begin to heal.

Anna Grace Deierlein
freshman student

Wrong to feel sadness only for VA Tech victims

The majority of people in our society jump into hysterics when tragedy happens in our country. After more than 30 students were killed in an isolated incident at Virginia Tech, people started wearing the VT colors, coordinating candlelight vigils, taking part in moments of silence, intensifying media coverage and putting U.S. flags at half-mast. We seem to think we are untouchable, and we freak out if someone manages to upset our illusion of utopia.

In other parts of the world, societies live with this fear every single day. Bombings are an everyday occurrence. People die in acts of violence all the time. But in the United States we hardly even hear about it.

That American Idol contestant who was recently kicked off the show gets more media coverage than tragedies happening that affect world peace and war. The New York Times wrote this week that "suicide bombers killed 23 people in a series of attacks in Iraq on Monday, Iraqi police said."

On Monday, they wrote that "a roadside bomb

killed five Afghan intelligence officials, and a similar device killed two police on Monday, the government said, the latest in a wave of blasts blamed on resurgent Taliban guerrillas."

Why aren't we more moved by these incidents? Most of us know the students murdered at Virginia Tech just as well as we know the civilians and government officials killed on Monday. What I mean is, we don't know them. We just know they were people who had lives and families like us.

And in Baghdad and Kabul, the deaths are the result of decades of deep conflict; they aren't going to let up anytime soon. There's more where it came from. The incident at Virginia Tech is finished. But, if you're only interested in mourning over U.S. citizens, there are plenty of them dying, too.

Let's leave our flag at half-mast until there's a resolution in the Middle East.

Tierney Oberhammer
Junior Creative Writing Student

Virginia gun laws not the reason for campus tragedy

Ben Smith's statements, in "Lax Virginia gun laws in need of revision, strengthening," about the gun laws in North Carolina are misleading and represent an opinion formed without the benefit of knowledge.

First, Virginia is a Point of Contact state. That means that a Federal Firearms Licensee, a licensed gun dealer or FFL, doesn't actually contact the FBI's National Instant Criminal System. The FFL contacts the Virginia State Police in order to conduct the Background check for the firearms purchase. The Virginia State Police use the NICS database and it utilizes its own databases to conduct a deeper search than what NICS alone can offer.

Privacy laws in many states prevent mental health information from being disseminated to law enforcement. You can have all the waiting periods and permit requirements you want, but if the information isn't accessible, you're out of luck.

Smith's comment on the absence of a requirement for firearms training as a condition for a firearms purchase in VA incorrectly implies that the VA Tech massacre

wouldn't have happened if Cho had some sort of gun training.

Training doesn't make a nutball like Cho decide not to wipe out innocent people.

No law of any sort can keep a person from doing awful things if that person is so motivated. Had Cho answered truthfully to the question on the purchase form if he had "ever been adjudicated mentally defective or have you been committed to a mental institution," he would have been disqualified from buying or even possessing firearms.

The sad truth about the VA Tech shooting is that, like with any terrible act, if someone wants to do something terrible, he or she will find a way. Tim McVeigh had fertilizer and diesel fuel, the 9/11 terrorists had airplanes, and Andrea Yates had a bathtub and water; only Cho used guns.

Respectfully,
Stephan Horvath
Class of 1999 and current resident of Virginia

Possible misconception about SGA elections

There are possible misconceptions about the Student Government Association elections and the involvement of Ben Walsh, the former elections commissioner. While I am in a relationship with Walsh, my thoughts are guided as a member of the community not directly involved with the situation.

Walsh has always been committed to doing the right thing and is passionate about politics and wants to dedicate his life to making a difference in the world. Because of this, he has devoted his time to SGA serving three years in order to help make our campus better for the entire student body.

This election had one of the highest participation rates in the history of UNC Asheville. All but one position was contested, which is something SGA has not achieved until this year. The work Walsh and a small group of other people put into emphasizing the importance of the elections is one of the main reasons this was able to happen.

This achievement is something that should be recognized and celebrated. Instead, much turmoil and opposition against Walsh's character has been generated.

Card and Little are very popular people on campus and a large portion of the student body supported that. The news of their disqualification was appalling to many students, but the student body needs to realize that punishments have to be carried out when the rules are broken or else no respect for those rules can be established.

Card accused Walsh and the elections commission of making a biased decision concerning her disqualification from the election. Walsh and other members of the community have recognized Card's right to raise such concerns about her disqualification from the election.

I witnessed a majority of the investigation that eventually determined that the elections commission was biased and new elections would take place. It seemed no concrete evidence was presented to prove bias of the commission. I was disturbed to see that the members of SGA who voted the commission as guilty were open supporters of the Card-Little campaign. The senators still cannot explain why they made their decision the way they did. It seems that this fact directly indicates they conducted an unfair trial.

I have witnessed SGA senators having conversations about how Card and Little could not be put back in the race without declaring the commission biased.

It seems this unwarranted declaration of bias could have been avoided. Walsh and the select members of the commission I know are some of the most honest and hard-working people at UNC Asheville. They do not make decisions based on individual feelings they may have, but instead they base decisions on what is right and fair.

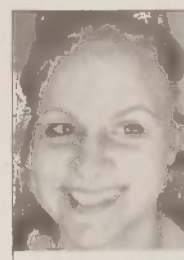
The rulings of the investigation seemed to be made with unethical reasoning in order to put Card and Little back in the race. It greatly disturbs me that the student body is OK with allowing this to happen. A new system needs to be implemented to keep this from happening in the future.

This is not just about the politics at UNC Asheville, but the politics of the outside world we will enter when we leave here. We are the leaders of tomorrow and need to start practicing now by making ethical decisions.

Lisa Schleicher
Senior Environmental Studies Student

Addressing tactics in Iraq

By Lisa V. Gillespie
MANAGING EDITOR



Lisa Gillespie
Managing Editor

The U.S. Military planned to put temporary walls around Iraqi neighborhoods to improve security.

This was met with outcry from both the Sunni and Shiite groups in Iraq on Monday.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki said he was ordering a halt to the construction of the wall on Sunday. American officials did not immediately concur, but said Monday they would no longer implement this strategy.

American military action is efficient, effective and means-oriented, thus reducing arbitrary decision-making.

However, it does not always work when implemented in a country where we do not know the norms and politics of that society like we know our own.

The actions of American strategy in the past have not pleased Iraqi leaders; Iraqi President Jalal Talabani said the American program to train Iraq's security forces has been a repeated failure.

He denounced a plan to increase the number of American advisers working with the Iraqi army, saying it would subvert the country's sovereignty.

The United States attempts to use this means-oriented authority to solve the issues in Iraq, because this is how we solve our own problems. However, the strategies do not take into account the possible consequences of the means.

Regarding the walls, the military

sect. They said the wall would increase sectarian hatred and fuel efforts to partition the country, according to their statements in The New York Times.

Rules are implemented because they are for a common goal and are often times impersonal. This sort of rule substitutes traditions, values and emotions with calculability.

Talabani said the Iraq Study Group recommended "very dangerous" proposals which would take away his ability to rule his country. He also said American officials in Iraq had poorly selected people for police force, making loyalty toward the state rather than individual religious sects.

Talabani is partially making decisions based on the past, or traditional action, because the past is greatly influential in Iraq.

Some American and Iraqi officials have said Shiite officials use their power to attack Sunni Arabs and vice versa. Obviously, Talabani has to take this into account and cannot simply rely upon suggestions from another system of governance.

Americans are looking at this situation through the wrong ideal type.

"These mistakes would be repeated if the Iraqi Army would be under the control of foreign officers, and we would never accept it," Talabani said.

The mistakes are being made again because our way of enforcement is not wholly applicable to this situation.

does not have a new strategy of building or creating "gated communities," according to the spokesman Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV. He described it as a method being used in few neighborhoods and not an effort to divide the country.

However, American military officials said last week in a statement that the wall was "one of the centerpieces of a new strategy." They also said the wall was aimed at separating Sunni Arabs in Adhamiya from Shiites to the east.

The bureaucratic officials are creating small tasks which are part of a larger plan, thus reducing any personal impact or opinions from individuals.

The strategy focuses on "how" to act, but not "why," thus focusing the most efficient means to the end, but not the value of the end or the problems this end creates.

The Sunni Arab Iraqi Islamic party and the Shiite group linked to the anti-American cleric Moktada al-Sadr both announced they opposed dividing Baghdad by

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Weekend Forecast

FORECASTED WEEKLY BY JAKE CROUCH AND SARAH DAVIS

Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
74° Rain and thunderstorms likely. Southerly winds 8-12 mph. Chance of rain 30%.	72° Mostly cloudy with a chance of showers.	72° Partly cloudy.	74° Bright sunshine.
55° Mostly cloudy with thunderstorms ending early. Winds 5-10 mph. Chance of rain 60%.	48° Partly cloudy with a slight chance of showers. North winds 5-10 mph.	45° Mostly clear skies.	48° Intermittent clouds.