

Opinions

Patience just might be the right answer

By Matt Tessnear
matthewt1984@earthlink.net

Bear with me if you don't like sports. I promise I'll lead you somewhere.

My fall has gone exceptionally well from my perspective as a sports enthusiast. Those who know me know that I am a huge high school football fan, and this season has been one for me to remember.

East Gaston, my alma mater, had arguably the best season in the school's 34-year history. East won 11 games this season, the most in school history. They won only the third conference title in school history, tying Boiling Springs' Crest for the Big South 3A/4A championship.

East's quarterback, Stephan McQuage, has the county record for career touchdown passes. East Gaston has scored more points this season than Independence, arguably the biggest high school sports dynasty in the history of North Carolina.

Other than a loss to Crest Oct. 30, everything has gone right for the team since August. But the wins on the field are not what get me going. Those wins have brought everybody in the East Gaston family back together. I've seen people at games this fall that I haven't seen since I graduated. I've had a chance to catch up, and I've had a chance to share new times with those friends from back then.

Heading home on Fridays for game nights, or traveling to other parts of the area to watch the team play, has been a joyful experience for me. I've had the pleasure of sharing that with my roommates at Gardner-Webb and other friends who have at-

tended some games.

Things are going right for East Gaston this season, but things have been frustrating for me this fall with a variety of other sports.



Tessnear

The Atlanta Braves missed the playoffs for the first time since I was 6 years old. My defending Super Bowl champion Pittsburgh Steelers have been horrible to say the least, not even resembling a shell of the team they were last year.

My Carolina Panthers have bumbled to a very mediocre record, even with "Super Bowl" talent. I wasn't one of those people who predicted the Panthers to get to the Super Bowl this season, but I very much expected them to dominate their division. But it just hasn't happened.

Instead of getting penalties for various "team demonstrations" after miraculous touchdowns, it's been a more familiar sight to see Panthers quarterback Jake Delhomme slamming the ball on the ground and fussing with his teammates. Steve Smith argues with referees instead of running wild on NFL defenses, and it's never a good sign to see your players trying to bargain for calls.

Whether you think of me like a brother or have never seen my face, few people know that I've often felt like joining Jake Delhomme in slamming things on the ground this fall.

For some reason, I've been in one of those funks that I just can't seem to climb out of. Ev-

erything I try to do, it seems something turns me back.

I attempt to get online to do research for a paper, and the Internet on campus goes down for a large chunk of the weekend. I attempt to print something from a Photoshop file in the Mac Lab in Communications Studies Hall; the print folder flashes "out of memory," mocking my attempt at productivity.

I'm one of those rare college students who likes to be productive. I'd rather do something now than later, so that it's taken care of and there's less of a chance for last-minute problems. Whether it be a person not sharing his or her duties and getting a job done so I can do mine, or a technical issue that prevents me from finishing a project, I've encountered wall after wall this fall. It's really frustrated me.

I often think that my summer might have something to do with these issues. My 40-hour work weeks on a Monday through Friday basis this summer allowed me to get into a rhythm. There was no homework. I left my work at the office when the day was over. I lived at the beach and had an instant place to get away for relaxation.

Now, there is no defined work week. Hours come as they need to, and often go overtime because of problems or errors on my part. There is always homework, whether it's assigned by the professor, or induced by my own need to study and stay on top of everything.

My work seems to follow me home, which is more likely since my bedroom also doubles as my personal office. And there's a lake on this campus,

instead of a beautiful white-sand beach. I feel like I'm stuck halfway in the work world and halfway in my college world.

I'm not one to offer advice, but I can say that my internship over the summer taught me something more than just journalism.

The "real world" or the "working world" is a lot different than college, and not just for the reasons I provided above. There are a lot more responsibilities in the real world, but there are also clear boundaries between work and home, in many cases.

In either of these worlds, you have to be patient.

East Gaston has been patient through many years of football futility, and it's now enjoying a fantastic season. The Panthers are just average, but most of the players are patient and will hang around to wait for another good season. I'm trying to learn to be patient when things don't go my way.

Psalms 37:7 says "Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways, when they carry out their wicked schemes."

That verse has been a constant reminder for me lately that good things come to those who wait. I can't let problems and other people get in my way, and neither can all college students who are trying to find their groove.

Maybe if I possess such patience, my fall semester will end up being one of the best ever, just like the season has been for all of those young football players at East Gaston. I challenge everyone else who's been struggling to seek that patience as well. Something good must be waiting just around the bend.

The Pilot
Bob Carey
Nancy-Pat Dire
Faculty Advisors

Matt Tessnear
Editor and Chief

Stephanie Kay
Designer

Rachel Lloyd
Katie Bryant
Photo Editors

Ciara Lilly
Sheyhshe Littledave
Copy Editors

Jacob Conley
Sports Editor

Rebecca Clark
Ali Cunningham
Jack Naish
Staff Writers

Haley Black
Ashley Carter
Joseph Fluty
Kayley Potter
Rachel Tucker
Staff Photographers

Phone Number: 704-406-3533
P.O. Box 5192
pilot@gardner-webb.edu
www.gwupilot.com

WISDOM ON WHEELS: Summer paycheck spent on 3 hours is fair trade

By Jacob Conley

This past summer, I had an opportunity to work at a men's basketball camp here on campus. While my job simply consisted of pushing buttons on an electronic scoreboard, it was definitely better than pushing buttons that control Laura Croft.

In addition, I earned a little money. I put this cash aside to buy two slips of paper. These were not ordinary slips of paper; they could gain me entrance into the Mecca of professional football — Bank of America Stadium.

On July 31, I had the Internet and telephone occupied for hours to purchase elusive Carolina Panthers tickets. When I finally got through, the only tickets left were in the Charlotte skyline seats, and not handicapped-accessible.

Fast forward to game day, Nov. 19. While most sports fans on campus were heading to Chapel Hill to watch Gardner-Webb take on the Tar Heels, I was headed to the Queen City to watch my

team take on another set of Rams (St. Louis).

That morning, as I was folding the walker, wheelchair and myself into Matt Walters' Mustang, I mentally went through a checklist: tickets in section 553, check; Sherpa guide and mountain goat to help get there, check; oxygen tank to help with breathing at that altitude, check.

We arrived at the stadium at 9:30 a.m., and found a parking spot about a block from the stadium at the economical price of \$20.

Once inside the stadium, I faced a far more challenging obstacle than overpriced parking. I faced steps.

I don't care for steps. The foremost reason is that my legs aren't exactly Hercules in nature. Therefore, I was worried about how well they would hold up. Second, I have a totally irrational fear of heights and steps usually signify height is involved in some form or fashion.

But this was football and I quickly overcame these fears. Twenty minutes

after beginning my climb, I reached the summit of the stadium and my seats. Rocky would have been jealous. Once there, I was privileged to receive audio commentary, not from the Panthers radio network, but from a 6-year-old kid who asked the questions that everyone else wanted to ask.

"Daddy, why did Jake Delhomme throw the ball to the other team?"

That's the same thing every Panther's fan wonders on a weekly basis.

Thankfully, the defense was able to overcome the offensive mistakes and the Panthers won, 15-0.

On the way home, I began to wonder if it was worth an entire paycheck to spend three hours in a hard plastic seat that was so high that I could see everything but the game.

The emphatic answer is yes. There's nothing like cheering your favorite team on, along with 66,000 of your closest friends. You will leave with memories and an empty wallet, and, in my case, sore legs.

Parking issue doesn't make me H.A.P.Y.

By Sheyhshe Littledave

Parking is a real issue on campus. Of course, to the many students who go here, I'm sure that's not new news.

Not a day goes by when you don't see a car driving aimlessly around the lot searching for a place to park. Or you see a person park at the far end of a building, only to go back and move his or her car closer when someone pulls out and leaves.

I've done it and, let's face it, you have, too, if you have a car on campus.

So the question is: Why is parking such a problem here?

I offer one conclusion: There are too many students with cars and not enough spaces. What seems to be a big belief among professors (who themselves probably have a time trying to find a spot to park) is that some students are just too lazy to walk to class and drive. I'm not even going to mess around with that issue right now.

I live in H.A.P.Y. Hall

And as a "H.A.P.Y. girl", I know I'm not the first to say that the parking (or lack of it) by H.A.P.Y. and Stroup is absolutely ridiculous. If I waste any money it's due to constantly refueling my car because I used all my gas circling the parking lot, only to find that the solution is to invade the Royster parking lot. That means I either park way, way in the back behind Royster or park my "H.A.P.Y." self in the Washburn Hall lot.

Some girls choose an alternative and park behind Craig, or sadly, in Lutz/Mauney. But that's not the worst of it.

You H.A.P.Y./Stroup girls know what I'm talking about: You come back from Wal-Mart one night, you've got bags of stuff ... and ... bam! it starts to rain. What do you do? You park wherever it is that's closest to the door, be it in Suttle parking lot or Washburn.

Then you wake up the next day to find a ticked plastered on your windshield. So you grab the ticket, toss off a curse word of your choice, suck it up and

go pay for not having an available parking spot.

But we can't focus on just H.A.P.Y. and Stroup. I know the apartment residents aren't having any luck either. I've seen cars drive in circles, then park in the nose-bleed section by H and trek their way up to A and B.

Parking is one problem that has no easy solution.

So, what can solve it? UNC-Charlotte has just created a new shuttle service to make it easier for students to get around campus. At UNC-Chapel Hill, students can get special permits to park in non-student areas if other lots are full — but they pay a parking fee to use any of the available lots. The school also provides a shuttle service.

At Duke University not everyone is guaranteed parking privileges, but it, provides a shuttle services.

There are some things we at Gardner-Webb could do to help ease the parking situation when it comes to classes. But what do we do when it comes to simply parking your car to get to your room? I have not a clue.



Jake
and
Jack

Debate the Issues

BCS: No

By Jacob Conley

'Tis the season to play bowl games, fa la la la, and that's a shame.

You may be wondering why a huge sports fan like me has a problem with big-time college football. It's called the Bowl Championship Series, or the BCS for short.

The BCS is the epitome of big business in college sports. Bowl games have become more and more like NASCAR. You now have every team with a .500 or better record playing in

bowl games.

Why are so many average teams invited to the post season?

Money and prestige. That's not so bad in itself, but having bowl games takes away from the possibility of a playoff. And a playoff is sorely needed.

Major college football is the only major college sport without a playoff system. The lack of such a system has caused many injustices in the past few years. This year is no exception. If things go as expected, USC will play Ohio State for the national title.

The only problem is that

computers will decide the top two teams instead of an on-the-field battle.

Most human pundits believe that Ohio State should play Michigan in a rematch of the Big Ten Conference match up in November. This human pairing is based on the fact that, while USC and Michigan both have one loss, USC's loss came at the hands of the unranked Oregon State Beavers. Michigan's single defeat was against the top-ranked Buckeyes. A loss to Ohio State looks much better on a resume than one to the Beavers.

That's why a playoff system is necessary.

I-AA football has a 16-team playoff system that works well. There is no reason why the 1-A ranks could not do the same thing.

Here's how it would work: Once a champion from each of the BCS conferences has been decided,

eight at-large teams will be selected. Preferably, a majority of these at-large bids will come from the non-BCS conferences. That way, there is an element of unpredictability.

In the BCS, two titans of the game always face each other, which have made for some great match-ups. But I want to see David vs. Goliath. I want to see Doug Flutie-esque plays and upsets.

And that can't happen when we have the Scrubbing Bubbles Toilet Bowl.

BCS: Yes

By Jack Naish

The Bowl Championship Series format for college football's postseason began in 1998. Many have deemed it a flawed system.

However, before the BCS made an impact on college football, bowl games were inherently flawed anyway.

Typically, bowl match-ups were based on tradition, rather than game quality, often causing the top-ranked team to play the third- or fourth-best team for the national championship.

The BCS poll ensures that the two top-ranked teams square off for the national title, certainly earning more viewers and creating a more exciting football game. Also, the Bowl Championship Series creates many different bowl games. This gives a handful of teams the opportunity to finish their seasons with an exciting, championship-style victory.

Many who oppose the BCS institution are in favor of an NFL-style playoff concept, perhaps in part because of their familiarity with the format. As simplistic and infallible as this system may seem, there is no real way to create such a tournament in Division 1-A college football.

In the NFL, a single loss has far less impact on a team's overall standing when compared to Division 1-A football.

A season-opening loss can remove a team from national championship contention in the first week of the season.

The BCS ensures that teams play full force throughout the season in their chase for the national championship.

Also, it's very important to remember that these are college students we're talking about.

The majority of these players will not go pro. They all need time to study and make good grades. Collegiate life is based on semesters, not 16-game seasons.

It would be ludicrous to institute an additional set of games in what is already recognized as an overly stressful 12-game schedule in a physically taxing sport.