

Opinions

Blogs connect people, spur creativity, provide honest look at life

By Rebecca Clark
Pilot editor

Technology is an amazing tool. In the past, most citizens lived out their lives in relative anonymity, but thanks to the wonders of e-mail or Facebook or Myspace, an individual's ordinary voice can be heard around the globe, opinions voiced nationwide and friendships established across continents.

Now, with the rising pop-

ularity of weblogs, or blogs, your personal opinion on sushi or global warming or gas prices can be published for literally billions of people to read.

According to Wikipedia.com, as of September 2007, there are more than 100 million blogs on record. That's a lot of blogging.

I was first personally introduced to the blog world when I took a media class at GWU. One of our assign-

ments was to start and maintain a blog throughout the semester.

The theme for my blog was journalism, my chosen career. I ended up dropping the class but keeping the blog, and which morphed into something more personal. It chronicled my journey through a difficult year and gave me a creative outlet to express myself anonymously.

I discovered that there is a unique blogger community where ties between strangers are forged and connections are made between posters.

It was a fun way to be heard and it allowed me to glimpse other people's lives in a personal way.

Blogging can be so much more than an online diary, though, and can impact people in important ways. Over the years, it has become an important news tool, able to reach a varied audience and giving a wide range of opinions on topics that might not be covered by regular media.

According to Wikipedia, since 2002, blogs have gained increasing notice and coverage for their role in breaking, shaping and spin-

ning news stories.

The second Iraq war is called the first blog war because so many soldiers wrote about their experiences. These warblogs gave new and personal perspectives on the realities of war, as well as often offering viewpoints that differed from those of official news sources.

Blogs are also used by politicians, policemen, housewives, teenagers and everyone in between.

Different genres have even evolved, giving us political, fashion, travel, project and niche blogs; and legal

ones known as blawgs. There are blogs devoted to spamming, called Splogs.

Video, links, audio, pictures and other elements can be added to blogs giving users the ability to combine media into one source.

Ultimately, I gave up my blog, but it was a fun way to publish views, opinions or things that were going on in my life. I still haunt the pages of my favorite blogs and keep up connections forged in my blog neighborhood.

If you haven't tried blogging yet, I suggest giving it a try.

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Wisdom on Wheels

Miracles come in all varieties and sizes

By Jacob Conley
Pilot editorialist

People have often asked me if I pray for miracles, and I assume they are talking about my disability.

To be honest, I don't ask for those types of miracles any more.

But that doesn't mean that miracles don't happen in my life. These miracles are not of biblical proportion, of course, but they are no less important.

Two such miracles have happened to me this past week and I am just as excited about them as if I suddenly leaped up from this wheelchair and onto the football practice field.

The first miracle is that I have a date for the Homecoming dance.

I know this seems commonplace to most people, but dates come around for

me about as often as a Duke victory on the gridiron.

Secondly, my cousin is coming for the weekend. Again, no big deal, right?

But my cousin never comes to see me. He has been to Rutherford County once in his life.

With all these things going on, to can say that my weekend will be a little hectic. So you as my readers can sympathize with me here is idea of my schedule for this weekend.

Friday: As soon as I get classes out of the way, I'm headed to my room to catch a few hours of sleep; probably the only sleep I will get the entire weekend.

Then it's time to get ready for the powder puff football game.

I'm going to be a cheerleader. Why? Is it for school spirit?

Partly. Is it to have fun?



Conley

Partly. But it's mostly because I look good in a skirt. I just hope it's not cold enough for my water balloons to freeze.

In order to thaw my next stop will be the bonfire.

Then I'm going to help roll the campus. Yes, that pun was intended. Feel free to laugh.

Saturday: I'm getting up early so I go to the swim meet at 9 a.m. I am excited that we have a men's team, but I'm going mostly to see the ladies. Can you blame me?

Next, I'm off to help with the Dawg Pound float.

By the way, I'm going to need some help because we are trying to become a club instead of people who simply

sit in the stands.

Please come out and help with the float and selling T-shirts at the game, or else we might have to dissolve the club.

Then it's time for the game. While the game might be considered secondary during all the other activities, the Bulldogs will be fighting for a conference title.

Be there; be loud; and be proud to be a Bulldog.

After we win it's time to celebrate with some dancing, or in my case, rolling in circles while trying not to run over feet or dresses.

Sunday: Up early once again. I'm going to the Panthers-Colts game.

I hope the Cats start Vinny Testaverde. I haven't seen an Italian that old perform so well since the last "Rocky" movie.

Have a great Homecoming, everyone!

News

Noel groups another road to success

By Samba Fall
Special to The Pilot

The Noel Program for the Disabled, which began its mission of accommodating disabled students in 1977, now offers a new way to help students achieve academic duties.

Our mission as a program, said Director Cheryl J. Potter is to provide reasonable accommodations in order for qualified students to receive adequate tools for suitable college education.

The latest tool is a weekly academic support groups for students who choose to participate.

The Noel program has a full-time staff of five who now serve an average of 100 students with a wide variety of disabilities. To assist them more efficiently, Potter and Senior Disability Specialist Cindy M. Rochester each lead a 90-minute academic support group on Thursdays.

Our academic support groups are more turned towards interactions sessions

than anything else. They are periods during which we provide encouragements and supports, but also provide specific study strategies, and things like tests taking strategies, said Rochester.

During those academic support groups, time management is emphasized the most, she said.

Thirty years after its inception, the Noel program has helped many graduates integrate into society with skills for many kinds of job.

We have a graduate who is a lawyer and another who is a professor at East Carolina today, said Rochester.

But at Gardner-Webb University today, talking about the Noel program's success includes talking about the new building that will house it, Frank Nanney Hall.

The program is looking forward to getting into its new location for better facilities and adequate rooms, said Rochester.

The new building, located near O. Max Gardner Hall, will provide far more space



Photo by Rachel Tucker

The Noel Program welcomes new disability specialist Michele Wallen (right) to the team. She is standing with fellow specialist Parrish Walsburger. Each specialist provides a wide range of assistance to the academic support program available at Gardner-Webb University through the Noel House.

than the current one. Plans call for it to be completed in the summer of 2008.

Instead of concentrating all of our activities in one

single room, the new building will offer three main rooms for activity purposes, said Rochester. Plus, we will have a resource room, a testing facility and a career center.

Potter, too, is eager for the new building to be completed.

"From time to time, I drive by just to see how the construction is going," joked Potter.

"But I think that with a more adequate building, the program, which recently added Michele Wallen as a fifth disability specialist, will be able to work reasonably well towards helping these students.

"Today, technology has opened up the world to disabled people out there looking for jobs," said Potter. "But I think that here at Gardner-Webb, the community of students, faculty members and staff members are already doing a great job of accepting and integrating these disabled students into the society."

Homecoming festivities are in the air as weekend comes

By Jared Graf
Pilot staff writer

Gardner-Webb University Homecoming is a weekend for football games, parades and alumni coming back to cheer their alma mater to victory.

This is the first year that Jeremy Fern, the new director of Alumni Relations, is in charge of Homecoming. Fern has been working as director for only two months and he feels that the job is "humbling and exciting at the same time."

He has made sure that there are plenty of campus-wide activities to keep current and former students busy.

Friday's activities start with a luncheon and golf tournament at River Bend Golf Club, which serves as a fundraiser for the GWU golf teams. In the evening there will be a reception and banquet for the alumni being in-

ducted into the Athletic Hall of Fame.

There is also a choice of athletic events to cheer at: a men's soccer game or the Powder Puff football game.

Saturday full schedule begins with a luncheon and induction into the Gallery of Distinguished Graduates. There's an opportunity to feed hungry alumni and entertain younger and older visitors alike before the football game - just attend the Tailgate Bash. There will be food, music and inflatables from 4 to 6 p.m.

At 5 p.m. the Homecoming parade will travel down Main Street in Boiling Springs and head down Stadium Drive to Spangler Stadium, where the Running Bulldogs will play Charleston Southern University.

If the parade doesn't interest you, the women's volleyball team will take on East Tennessee at 5 p.m. in Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center.

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Practice makes perfect



Photo by Kate Gazaway

Dr. Terry Fern leads cast members of the opera "The Birthday of the Infanta," which will be performed on campus Nov. 8 and 9.

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