

the Seahawk

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Thomas M. Ruyle

VIEW FROM THE DODO'S NEST

5 p.m.: The hour the music died

Much has been said about the new clocktower that now graces our campus, courtesy of the Class of 2000. Many people questioned the practical uses of the 50-foot-high time-piece, the four clock faces now partially hidden by trees. Why not use the \$150,000 we spent on the clock for additional materials in the library? Why not put the money into starting a new academic program at UNCW? Most importantly: What are the odds that a Category Three hurricane will reduce the clock to a twisted hunk of metal?

Alas, it is too late. Like it or hate it, the clock is here to stay. Until the next hurricane, at least.

Now the questions are, "Will it ever tell the correct time? Will the chimes ever be in sync with the displayed time on the clock? And what the hell are the 'bells' playing every afternoon at 5:00 p.m.?"

After exhaustive research into that last question, which involved standing directly under the clock as it went through its clangy late-afternoon repertoire, I came to two thoughtful, scientific conclusions: A) I'm very deaf now; and B) I have no clue as to what it's trying to play. All I can tell is it's certainly not playing "N Sync."

While the faux-chimes are, I'm

sure, attempts to recreate beautiful music, I believe I speak for a very large number of people on this campus when I say I'd almost rather be listening to Britney Spears emanating from the clocktower. Anything but those bells!

In addition to the poor-music-choice factor, there is the question of noise level and location that needs to be addressed. Playing these bells at their current volume is certainly a distraction to the classes at Morton Hall; for all we know, the clock tower might be affected by the new noise ordinance currently in discussion by the City Council.

Placing the tower so close to Morton Hall with 'bells' that loud was not exactly the smartest decision. There isn't much we can do about that now, unless the Class of 2001 wants to raise funds to move the clocktower to Pender County — that is, if Pender County residents agree to it. Tough sell.

Take heart, though, fellow Seahawks. Even if you can't get to class on time (if you go by the clocktower's information), you can still sleep in class comfortably, secure in the knowledge that we at least have a freshly repainted water tower. At least something looks better around here.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Seahawk encourages all readers to submit letters to the editor for possible publication. Please limit correspondence to 300 words. The Seahawk may edit letters for space. The Seahawk reserves the right to refuse publication of any letter. Libelous, false and misleading material will not be considered for publication. All letters must be signed by the author. Letters to the editor are the individual opinions of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Seahawk staff or the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Letters can be submitted in person at the Seahawk office, University Union room 205E, by mail at The Seahawk Newspaper, 601 S. College Rd. Wilmington, NC 28403; or by email at shk.editor@uncw.edu.

Editorial Viewpoint

Drugs are bad...so is discrimination

A 17-year-old takes a toke off a joint for the first time at a concert. The youth sticks the remainder of the gift joint into his pocket, and decides to walk out of the auditorium onto the public sidewalk, where a police officer just happens to be standing. The officer says hello, and politely, the juvenile returns the greeting. Only the officer notices the pungent smell of marijuana emanating from the youngster's breath and clothing. He arrests him on the grounds of use and possession of marijuana.

A year after conviction, the youth applies for federal financial aid in order to be able to afford to attend college. He is denied on the basis that he violated the anti-drug law under the Higher Education Act. Therefore, he does not go to college and ends up struggling for income for the rest of his life. Perhaps even to the point where he commits crimes to feed his family.

This could happen based on the new anti-drug, anti-education law.

Hypocritical people who are out of touch are once again shaping the future of America. Congress recently enacted a new anti-drug law, which denies federal aid to college students if convicted of an illegal drug offense.

This provision to the Higher Education Act has more flaws than there are senators. College students all across America have expressed their discontent with the aid-buster's blatant shortcoming. The law protects few while inadvertently destroying others.

Discrimination rings loudly throughout the college aid killer. Students who are intelligent enough to attend an institution of higher education, yet may not have the monetary resources to afford to go on their own, suffer gravely. Low-income pupils rely on financial aid as a means of tuition payment. This bill at-

tacks the underprivileged directly, due to the fact that middle to upper-class Americans rarely depend on federal aid.

If that is not enough, the privilege-destroyer targets a crime that primarily remains a non-victim offense. *What about violent or property crimes?* Oh no, they're okay. Burglarize a home, assault a police officer, steal a car...just don't use drugs. The bill does not enforce denial of aid to any of these crimes, but if you are busted trying an illicit drug, you risk losing an education.

The fourth amendment to the United States constitution protects Americans from search and seizure. This includes a right to privacy. The American government enacted this clause to keep our personal matters to ourselves. Disclosing private information infringes on these rights because one's past does not necessarily reflect how one will perform in college. How would the government be wasting money in this situation? Should we not invest in our future?

The personal information is also protected under the fifth amendment of the constitution. A clause in the amendment clearly states that any information, which can be self-incriminating, can be left undisclosed. This situation is a prime example of when a student with a record should partake in the liberties of the fifth.

Most importantly, why do we as Americans want to penalize a potential educated leader for any crime where the punishment has already been carried out? Double jeopardy comes to mind.

Men and women, elected to office to protect the rights of Americans, apparently forgot to read the Bill of Rights. *Remember Congressmen, the constitution blankets all Americans.*

The bottom line is simple. Reform the bill. Find the real criminals of society. Kill crime, not education.

