

# the Seahawk



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## View From the Dodo's Nest

Thomas M. Ruyle

### When cartoons are a call to action...

On the Op-Ed page of last Thursday's *Seahawk*, we ran a cartoon that depicted a researcher showing what he called the "frat-boy gene," which was shown as a beer keg intertwined in a DNA double-helix. While the cartoon was lampooning the frequent announcements of genetic research milestones, it also labeled fraternity members as being focused only on guzzling beer.

Needless to say, the reaction from the Greek community - several members of which are on the *Seahawk* staff - was swift and vocal (although, strangely, we've not received any letters to the editor). Some have simply stated that they found the cartoon to be offensive to fraternity members, others have outright questioned the *Seahawk's* motives and objectivity, even hinting that the *Seahawk* is anti-Greek.

Editorial cartoons are a vital part of a newspaper's Op-Ed page as a commentary on the social and political issues of the day. Generally, such cartoons (as with all editorial literature) are intended to comment on a timely, relevant issue; the First Amendment of the United States Constitution protects the right of the press to publish such material.

Editorials of any kind are not, by nature, meant to make everybody happy. While some people may agree with the gist of something on the Op-Ed page, others will get totally pissed off, perhaps spurred to action. Such is the nature of the press: to make the reader think about the world around him or her.

But hiding behind the First Amendment doesn't always make us (the press) right. Last week's cartoon, while poking fun at recent progress in genetics, did make an unfair blanket statement about Greek life; it was not a timely, relevant statement, either. In retrospect, I - the one who has the final say on what we print - could have used better judgement in selecting a cartoon, one that had relevance to current news or events that shape this campus and our nation.

The *Seahawk* is not anti-Greek, nor is it pro-Greek; it is our job to report the news, good or bad, in an objective, timely fashion. Some critics have pointed out that the *Seahawk* can do a better job in reporting Greek-related events. I couldn't agree more.

We welcome any comments, suggestions and story ideas from everyone in the UNCW community, and letters to the editor are welcome at any time.



## Editorial Viewpoint

### Drugs and law - is there a solution?

Ecstasy's dangers hide beneath the happy high it gives its users. It's not like heroin, where an overdose can kill on the first use, or cocaine, which is physically addictive. Instead, ecstasy addicts psychologically, boosting serotonin levels and making it difficult if not impossible to feel the same heights of happiness and sensation one feels when under its influence. It can dehydrate users, an effect not well known and exacerbated by alcohol.

Ecstasy lowers inhibitions, as does alcohol, and also tends to make people very touchy-feely. Because it causes senses to be heightened, rather than dulled with alcohol, individuals under the drug's influence are more likely to sleep with many anonymous partners and have unprotected sex, spreading sexually transmitted disease.

Since ecstasy's rise as the drug of choice among young people is a fairly recent development, few college students are aware of the drug's danger. It seems a harmless and easy way of feeling extremely good for a few hours, and it doesn't cause hangovers. If the Powers That Be really want to prevent the use of ecstasy, they should educate public school students as aggressively as they teach the dangers of marijuana,

cocaine and heroin.

That said, possession of ecstasy should not be a felony. Selling drugs to elementary school children, yes, that's a bad thing and should be severely punished, but putting someone in jail because they want to feel better about life? Life is a very bleak thing sometimes, and arresting someone who can't deal with reality all the time is probably not the best solution. Prison teaches these small-time users how to become big-time sellers, getting them involved in much bigger and more serious crimes than they would have been if the law either left them alone or tried to get them help. Not that drugs are good. It just seems that there ought to be a better way to deal with drug users and to fight the "war on drugs" than throw everyone who decides they need a break from reality in jail.

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