

Opinions & EDITORIALS



From the Editor

Is the service worth the price?

When we stop to smell the roses or take time to look at the wonderful world that we live in, we soon realize we live in a world that is nothing more than commodities.



CAESAR

Karl Marx's ideas on commodities led to the advent of the term commodification, which essentially revolves around the transformation of relationships formerly untainted by commerce. The relationships soon become commercial and become a process of buying and selling.

It does appear that higher education these days has amounted to money. Yes, it is a business, one that seems to be in pursuit of the biggest and best things.

But there are some students who do not agree with the planned tuition increase that is about to be implemented in the coming academic year.

In the past year and a half, there has been a steady increase in student tuition. This money many times goes toward things that will add an pleasing image to the eye. Everyone will agree that there are things that need to be fixed in the departments. Still, what is hidden in the middle of this are the students, many of whom wish only to get an education so that they can go out into the real world and make good money.

This continuous cycle that we all exist in has taken away our good names and replaced them with numbers. In the form of commodification, you are tracked by this number that can tell an employer more about you than anything else.

Commodities.

How many of us can turn to CNBC, MSNBC, CNN, etc. and know what those financial tickers are all about?

Cell-phone companies make billions of dollars each year. They continually come out with a new phone with more features. But the crux of this is once roaming fees kick in, people are getting higher bills. Is the service as good as you want?

Who will be on the front lines of this potential war with Iraq? What is this war really being fought over? Can you live losing a loved one over a vendetta?

The formula for us as commodities is simple: Work + Want (need, greed) = Money. Now my question — how much of this do we own?

In this dragon called society, all we really ever amount to a smile as we hand our dead presidents over to the cashier.

What we choose to do with our hard-earned dollars is up to the individual.

But let's be real. Who's really controlling whom?

Letters to the editor

Dear Editor,

In 1992, at perhaps one of the lowest times of my life, I sat in a Waffle House restaurant at 3 a.m. eating greasy eggs with country ham and potatoes while drinking too much coffee, when a young brother with very red eyes looked at me and refused to loosen his visual hold on my presence. I was not concerned because at the time, I didn't care what he did. At the time, I didn't care what I did or if I did. He had no idea that he was treading on dangerous ground — or so I thought. He pointed his finger at me and said, "I know you." His tone was very accusing as if I had stolen the raising from his cereal of something. "I know you," he repeated.

I had gotten a little uneasy with his accusations, and so had several other customers in the Waffle House. I decided to put some coins in the jukebox (piccolo we called it growing up) and allowed my newfound friend some time to cool down. I didn't know what he was accusing me of, but in the state of inebriation he had accomplished, if it was going to get ugly, I at least wanted a little music to accompany what I thought was an unavoidable dance. I don't like fighting, but in 1992, I had nothing left to give a damn about. One of the most dangerous creatures on the face of the earth is a human being without rhyme, reason or cause.

As I sat back down at the counter, my acquaintance continued his taunting.

"You don't know me, but I remem-

ber you." He was so drunk he could hardly keep his head up out of his plate. I didn't know what he was going to do, but I sat there drinking my coffee and trying not to further agitate his state of delight. He stood up by his chair and the people between us moved away as he pointed his finger at me and once again accused me of what I didn't know.

"You don't know me, but I remember you. I'll never forget you."

I didn't know what I had done, but he wouldn't forget it, so whatever it was, the entire Waffle House was about to find out. Did I mistreat his mother, steal his Corn Flakes, rain on his parade, just what had I done? I did not know, so I was prepared for the worst.

He sat down next to me in the chair that had been vacated by patrons not interested in our reunion and began to recite:

"Little Brown Baby wid sparklin' eyes

"Come to yo pappy and set down on his knee.

"What you been doin suh, makin' san pies

Look at day boy he as dufty as me."

He went on to recite Paul Lawrence Dunbar's poem, *Little Brown Baby*.

I had chosen him out of a group of students in an elementary school 20 years earlier, and he had never forgotten. He was drunk. It was 3 a.m. His eyes were bloodshot, and God

knows what we both had been through since then. The important thing to me (at a time I needed assurance most) was the fact that he remembered something that I had done; secondly, the fact that I had done something positive in his life, and the effects were lasting.

When you, the sophomore class honored me, that young man crept back into my mind. I started thinking about how 20 years will make the same kind of differences in the lives of those of you I have had the pleasure of interacting with, either in the classroom or across the campus. I hope and pray that something I might have said or done will be encouraging, lasting and helpful for you.

You must also know the joy I had in the presence of my wife and colleagues. That moment was as significant for my sanity and well-being as the lonely night in the Waffle House 20 years ago. Henry Brooks Adams, in one of his essays on education, wrote, "A teacher affects eternity; we can never tell where our influence stops." I know that the things I learn from you delight and stay with me always. I certainly hope the same is true of those things I have tried to teach you.

Lorenzo Meachum,

Take heed, the real world has high expectations

By James Jones Jr.
SPECIAL TO THE ARGUS

I have been a professional writer/editor at the *Winston-Salem Journal* for almost a year. Wow, how time flies! It still feels crazy to be a part of the "real" world, considering that I graduated in May.

As students, we wait in anticipation for the day Chancellor Martin tells us, "Candidates, you may don your hoods." Then Ms. Montgomery calls our name, and we proudly receive our hard-earned degrees. Unfortunately, we can only bask in that glory for a day.

alumni spotlight

what are they doing now?

After that, it's time to face reality. It's time to get ready to pay bills without contributions from our parents. It's time to make critical decisions (if we haven't already done so) about where we want to live in the world, with whom we want to spend our lives, whether we should attend graduate school, etc.

These are some of the things I thought about and still think about.

These are some of the things you will also think about.

I hope you have kicked any bad habits developed in college. If you took an apathetic approach to your studies and managed to get by, the ghost of "make your bed and lie in it" is sure to haunt you. Keep in mind during those "I'm not going to class, but I'll chill in my homeboy's room" days that millions of students graduate from college each year. That means businesses and organizations get to choose from millions of candidates, and they are highly selective.

See ALUMNI, Page 7

Chancellor Martin opens lines of communication in new column

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the first edition of "Chancellor's Corner." This column will appear in *The News Argus* on a regular basis and will serve as a vehicle for important objectives.

A major focal point of the column is to provide an open line of communication between you, our students, and me. Establishing an open system of communication is representative of the importance of student input. For our campus community to grow and flourish, this input must be given fair consideration when shaping the university's agenda.

chancellor's corner

with Dr. Harold L. Martin



Therefore, the column will provide you with an opportunity to submit questions and concerns. It will also provide me with an opportunity to answer them in the following venues: subsequent editions of the column, e-mail responses, forums and personal dialogue on campus. The message must be clear that your involvement and opinions are an integral part of our community.

In understanding this message, you must recognize that learning is a key aspect of your successful involvement at WSSU. Let us remember and embrace our motto: "Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve." The core of this motto encourages learning through academia and through your community. In this effort, you must rise to the challenge of staying informed of our tremendous growth and providing those around you with insight.

"Chancellor's Corner" will give you some of the tools you need to add to your base of knowledge for learning. Topics

will include highlights of the WSSU Master Plan and Strategic Plan and student concerns. You are the best and the brightest, and you must continue to use your abilities to share our vision "to be a premier, comprehensive, regional institution contributing significantly to the social, cultural, intellectual, and economic development of the Piedmont Region and beyond. Because of high quality academic and co-curricular experiences, our graduates will distinguish themselves as creative leaders in their professions and communities." — WSSU Strategic Plan

This is an exciting time for the WSSU community. We have experienced tremendous growth and development, while maintaining a sense of history. Understanding this history allows us to embrace the challenges before us without losing our focus on the well being of our students.

"Chancellor's Corner" is another opportunity to build our vision together as we address the concerns of the student body. I look forward to our time together.

Send all questions and comments to chancellors_office@wssu.edu.