

OPINION

Whines & Gripes

collected by Jillian Curtis

How charming can an evening be if it's in Belk Dining Hall?

Why is it that more and more teachers are insisting on having a "paperless" class and then cannot even figure out how to work Blackboard properly?

Dear girl who was buying lingerie from Victoria Secret while in class: trust me, it would be a better Valentines Day for your boyfriend if you didn't wear that.

Thanks Jersey Shore, for making every NC State guy think they're "The Situation."

Will someone please fix the bathroom on the ground floor of the library. Seriously, we're going on 2 weeks now.

Classified Ads

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An Uncomfortable Homecoming

Caitlin Griffin, Staff Writer

After spending two semesters abroad in Mendoza, Argentina, I was excited to return home and see everyone again. Much to my dismay, this feeling lasted only until I picked up my best friend since seventh grade for a girls' shopping day. She jumped in my car, immediately turned towards me with a sad little smile, and said, "I already feel like you're going to leave again." Confused, I asked her what she meant by that comment; after all, hadn't I spent the last week in Raleigh already depressed that I couldn't hop a plane right back to Mendoza until after graduation? She simply shrugged and replied, "Maybe not now, but after you graduate, or something...I feel like you're going to go away again. But I want you to stay here always."

I would be lying if I said this comment warmed my heart. Instead, I defensively shrugged it off and didn't respond. Irrationally angry thoughts raced through my head: How could she want me to stay here forever, when there is so much more of the world to see? Shouldn't she be happy for me if I have the opportunity to live abroad again? She could tell she had said something that bothered me, and I couldn't fume in silence much longer. So I took a deep breath and tried to explain...

My personal transformation began as the result of an extremely meaningful home stay experience.

As I slowly formed a strong attachment to my hosts in Argentina, I broadened my personal definition of the word "family" and developed a profound appreciation for everything that simple word could possibly encompass. My hosts took me into their home and treated me like a "real" family member, meaning they allowed me to make positive contributions to the group while at the same time teaching me that some mistakes I made hurt all of us because we shared a true kinship. I could never imagine saying a "final" goodbye to Mama Susy and my two host sisters, all of whom helped me mature so much. As a direct result of my wonderful home stay experience, I returned to the United States with a renewed interest in spending more time with my own "familia de sangre" (blood family), but I miss my hosts every single day.

Also while in Argentina, I acquired a newfound love of traveling and a sense of how much there is to see and do in this world. Now I consider myself a true global citizen, with a responsibility to travel so as to know various countries and cultures and make personal connections with the people there. I wish to never travel as a tourist but instead to always travel with the mindset of a citizen, so as to intimately familiarize myself with other countries' idiosyncrasies.

I explained all of this to my best

friend, even speaking through tears at some points in the conversation. But when I was finished, she just looked at me with true bewilderment in her eyes and asked: "Don't you think that maybe this is all just some crazy phase you're going through?"

In that moment, I felt defeated, as if she would never understand the woman who returned from Argentina. So although she will always be my best friend, I have since recognized the importance of sharing my experience with people who have studied abroad and thus understand the ways in which I grew and the importance to me of the values I brought back from my host country. Many of these people have already counseled me well by sharing strategies they utilized to learn how to be an unfamiliar "new you" in a previously familiar environment. In addition, sharing my experience with other students helps me continue reflecting on aspects of my own international experience and asking myself, "Now that I'm home, how can I allow this study abroad experience to continue transforming every facet of my life?" Of course, I am anxious to go abroad again. I am committed to taking advantage of any possible opportunity to continue my intercultural learning and development of self through travel, study, or work abroad in other countries. Are you?

Censorship: Right or Wrong?

Kristen Gallagher, Staff Writer

The buzz has been going around about Melissa Hussain, the Wake County teacher who has been suspended because of Facebook comments she made about her students. As the Monday, February 15th *News & Observer* article describes, Hussain wrote negative and inflammatory comments about her students on her page; the comments focused on her class, Southern "things," and religious ideas. She is currently suspended with pay from her Apex middle school.

I read this N & O article as well as one by *The Tribune*, based in San Luis Obispo, CA, and saw several of the things Hussain posted. While I don't agree with her opinions, tac-

tics of expression, and lack of professionalism, Hussain said nothing that would not be protected by the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights. Here are the words of that amendment: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." Hussain worked at a public school – one provided for by the same Congress that upholds the First Amendment. Hussain's use of a public social networking and expression tool was in no way

a violation of that amendment, nor were her comments grounds for suspension. Granted, I do not agree with her views, but then again, no one in this country will ever agree with everyone else's views 100% of the time.

I don't understand the reason for Hussein's suspension; it doesn't matter what she said or whom she offended – a person should not be fired for saying things within their right, no matter how ill-informed or unintelligent! Unfortunately, there are "ignorant Southern rednecks" in the world. There are children who will, thinking their pastor would want them to, put Bibles on your desk. There will be kids who

sing "Jesus loves Me" in public schools (even when people ask for separation of church and state...so there isn't supposed to be prayer in school...so if singing is really praying twice, why is there prayer in school?) Stop playing favorites – you can't ask for one thing and do another, and you can't infringe on free speech.

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