

Student Government Is Accessible — If You Utilize It

It is early morning. The door yawns open, quickly swallowing a pair of shadows before slamming shut. Two figures emerge inside, then disappear into a dark hallway. The first is a short but built figure; he is intense and cautious — definitely the leader of the two. The second is lanky and more awkward. Tall, thin and aloof, he would be lucky to take three steps without walking into a trash can.

As they sink down the hall, the second figure turns to the first.

"Narf! So, Michael, what are we going to do tonight?"

"Fred," he replies, "tonight we're going to do what we do every night."

"Try to take over the world!"

OK, OK. We don't kid ourselves. We know all too well that our jobs in Suite C aren't on the same level as Pinky and the Brain's plans for world domination. However, as representatives of student government, we seem to be regarded with the same sort of bemused apprehension previously reserved only for our animated heroes.

We are regularly informed that we are plotting politics, slaving away in a dank cave for the benefit of, well, we're not sure exactly who we're tools of — we just call our puppet master "Number One." (Just imagine some evil, omniscient Dr. Claw-like figure. Wowsers!)

MICHAEL WOODS FRED HASHAGEN POINT OF VIEW

And although we've yet to catch Pruitt-like flack for anything, being subjected to constant suspicion, and occasional criticism, has registered with us, and (after checking the latest poll numbers) we feel we should be appropriately offended.

As rookies in the abyss known as Suite C, we don't have first-hand knowledge of the exact causes of this perception. When recruited, we knew that the general opinion of student government wasn't exactly glowing.

We realized that this perception could only be changed through hard work and serious thought.

So we gave up.

We now spend our time day trading, drinking Whipper Snapples and faxing our fat résumés to lobbying firms worldwide.

Currently, we are weighing offers from the National Rifle Association, Newt Gingrich and the Milosevic Forever campaign. But we're not making a move until we hear back from Pat

Buchanan.

It is truly a sad day when two public relations officers realize that they can't convince others that the group they represent deserves at least as much respect as the tobacco industry. But such is the nature of devil worship, or student self-governance as we like to call it.

Alright, we know what you're thinking. Why the sarcasm, right? What injustice has been committed that gives us the right to whine? So glad you asked.

Earlier this year, the Office of the Student Body Secretary sent a letter to the leaders of 30 of the largest organizations on campus. In it, we informed them that a new mailbox had been built in Suite C for use by their organization. And, knowing that a box alone would be inadequate, we offered to attend a meeting of each organization in order to find out what (if anything) student government could do for it.

All we asked was that someone let us know where and when to show up.

Well, it's been a few minutes since that letter went out — 45,240 minutes to be exact — and the response has been pretty underwhelming. Only a handful of organizations have requested mailboxes, and no one has called to invite us to a meeting — not even Buchanan!

Nevertheless, being the slick politicians we are, we started attending meetings sans invitation

and inviting folks to our own Cabinet meetings.

Although this approach was helpful, we began to wonder why so few had taken advantage of student government's latest attempts at accessibility and accountability. Pollsters advised that we start asking the leaders why they haven't requested a mailbox.

The responses left us dumbfounded. One campus leader told us, "Well, when I got that letter, I thought that the mailboxes were a veiled attempt at getting people to come into Suite C."

Now, we always thought that getting more people into Suite C was a good thing. We thought that most people wanted student government to be more accessible. So we resolved that our altruism was too "veiled."

Since our risky approach to public relations — honesty — seemed about as popular as the Honor Court, we decided to do some more polling. But with the Dow dipping, we had to be more conservative with our slush fund (SAFO) expenditures. So we decided to perform a cheap experiment, replacing integrity with a little cash money. We put a dollar bill in each of our 156 new mailboxes, figuring that if someone came to check a box she would pocket her dollar — and probably several others.

Twenty-four hours later, we recovered \$154. We were mildly excited, until we found out

that the Student Body Treasurer had "borrowed" two bucks to buy a Whipper Snapple.

We can survive being snubbed by Buchanan, but when you can't give money away, you've got to hang up your Palm Pilot.

But even though we'd be more than happy to continue to blow your money covering our losses on the market and buying fruit drinks, we'll make one final attempt to dupe you. The question is simple. To paraphrase the wise DMX, "What y'all really want from a (bunch of politicians charged with representing you)?"

Student government belongs to you. You fund everything that we do, and you are the only reason that Suite C even exists. You are already paying for an organization that is supposed to do your bidding, so if there is something you want done on this campus — use it! We would much rather serve you than our current overlord. Number One hasn't picked a good stock in months.

Student Body Secretary Michael Woods is a sophomore history and journalism major from Chicago, Ill. Assistant Student Body Secretary Fred Hashagen is a sophomore philosophy and journalism major from Long Island, N.Y. If you would like to discuss plans for world domination over a refreshing Whipper Snapple, e-mail them at sbsunc@hotmail.com.

Drop a Nasty Habit in the Pit

Smoking is cool. After having read through a few copies of Cigar Aficionado, I'm thoroughly convinced of this. Kevin Costner adorns this month's cover, and if that isn't a firm declaration of the desirability of smoking, I don't know what would be a better one.

Therefore, this Thursday the 16th, the date of the Great American Smoke-Out, it doesn't surprise me that the number of Americans who quit will be dwarfed by those who will continue to smoke.

And that's a shame.

Although I concede that Kevin Costner has a lot of sway, there's no better time for college students to quit than now, while we're still young. Students who quit now can live the rest of their lives with life expectancies only slightly lower than those who have never picked up a cigarette or a cigar. Not everyone who smokes dies, but by quitting students can become 10 to 20 times less likely to develop lung cancer. Now is the time to act and also to convince friends that they can make a difference at this early stage in their lives.

Let me briefly make some points, although I know that most of us have had them hammered into our heads since our 8th grade health classes. Smoking is responsible for one out of five deaths in the United States. And these aren't all peaceful, quiet deaths by the elderly living in rest homes; some of these are horrendous, painful deaths lived by men and women snatched out of what should be the

JIM DOGGETT POINT OF VIEW

prime of their lives. Smoking is extremely expensive. Smoking one pack a day annually usually costs more than \$1,000. Finally, smoking is disgusting. Living with my mother's smoking habit for 12 years before she quit convinced me that yellow teeth, constant coughing and bad breath are hardly desirable traits.

Of course, some people feel that these arguments aren't enough.

Some view smoking as an acceptable hobby that's been demonized by a health-crazed society obsessed with calories, exercise and dietary supplements. Although I'm writing this editorial, I've never been a fanatic regarding my health. I've thrown a few sneers in the direction of people entering the Student Recreation Center who appear to be slightly overzealous about Tae-Bo, their rowing machine or their shapely abs. I've also from time to time indulged my healthy respect for the slightly artery-clogging food to be found at Bojangle's.

However, when it comes to smoking, it's clear that a little overindulgence can first be addictive — and then

deadly.

So, this week, Carolina Cancer Focus will be in the Pit Tuesday through Thursday for the Great American Smoke-Out. Smokers who come by and sign the pledge to quit for the day of the Smoke-Out will receive a packet with tips on how to quit, coupons for Nicorette gum, information on how to join a cessation class sponsored by the Center for Healthy Student Behaviors and also a free stress ball to help them get through their day of privation.

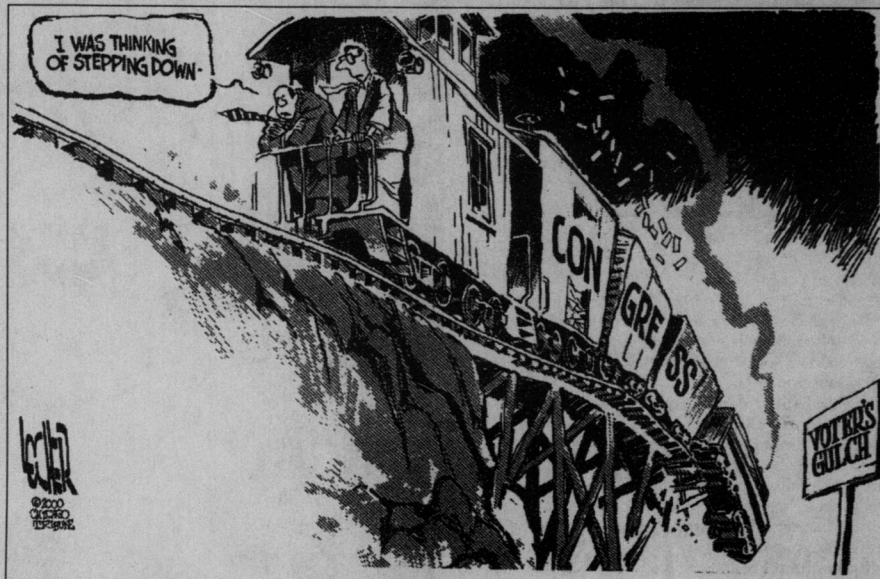
We'll also have free postage and envelopes for students to send any information they want to family members or friends.

So, this Tuesday through Thursday, stop by the Pit and try to make a difference in your own life or someone else's.

We won't be as well-dressed or glamorous as anyone you'll find in Cigar Aficionado, but hopefully we can help convince students that although quitting smoking might not seem cool — it certainly is very smart.

Jim Doggett is a sophomore political science and international studies major from Greensboro and is the education co-chairman of Carolina Cancer Focus. For more information on the Smoke-Out or his shapely abs, e-mail him at jdoggett@email.unc.edu.

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Retracing the Dramatic Moments Of Indecisive Election Night 2000



AMOL NAIK EDITORIAL WRITER

For a country in which only half of all eligible voters go to the polls, it's amazing how the uncertainty surrounding the results of the presidential election has obsessed the nation. During the past week, the media constantly have been giving us the latest scoop on every possible issue concerning the elections, from what color sweat pants the vice president was wearing on his morning jog to why Dubya has that big-ass band-aid on the side of his face, and we've all been eating it up. I've walked into living rooms this past week expecting Cheech and Chong and instead ended up getting Peter and Dan — "Yo, turn down that new Outkast, I think Gore just picked up three votes in West Palm Beach."

So in the spirit of this newfound political fervor, I figured I'd fill y'all in on my experiences from Election Night 2000.

Tuesday, 6:45 p.m. — I settle in for a long night of TV watching. Sadly, it's not much different than many other nights, but at least on this day I feel as if my actions are socially acceptable.

I grab all the essentials of an extended stay in front of the tube-munchies, a six-pack and the cure for my cataracts. With all these necessities in tow, I'm set to watch history unfold.

7:40 p.m. — It becomes clear that the higher education bond will pass in North Carolina. I wonder how much of the money will be used to buy state-of-the-art slop buckets at N.C. State University.

8:30 p.m. — The networks project that Gore has won Florida. As a Gore voter, I'm thrilled with the news and begin to think that he might actually win the White House.

I crack open a Heini to toast his possible victory.

9:30 p.m. — All the networks take back the Florida win from Gore, declaring the race still too close to call and making me anxious about the prospects of four years of Dubya. I crack open a Heini to bemoan our plight.

Midnight — The election is still as tight as two fat men trying to pass each other in the halls of Venable.

My munchies run out, so I falsely tell my roommate Brian that he left his car lights on.

As he runs out into the parking lot to turn them off, I steal a couple of hot dogs out of the fridge — nothing like a conglomerate of pig snouts and hooves in the a.m.

Wednesday 2:30 a.m. — CNN claims that Bush has won Florida and thus is our new president-elect. I feel like regurgitating the Oscar Meyer goodness consumed just a couple of hours ago.

2:45-3:00 a.m. — The realization of the apparent Bush victory sends me into a tirade to John and Keely about how bad our system sucks when the next president of the United States was nothing more than the lame duck owner of the Texas Rangers just five years ago — the worst part being that he wasn't even good at that, as his trading away of Sammy Sosa shows.

3:30 a.m. — Having scared Keely and John into their rooms because of my incessant ranting and raving, I'm left to ponder the events of the night alone. In the noble cause of civil disobedience, I hit the bubbler to protest the election results.

9:30 a.m. — I awake to the news that Bush hadn't actually won Florida yet and that the election was still too close to call. I convince myself that it's better to watch history on TV than to go to history class, especially since I can get the notes from a couple of my roommates.

10:15 a.m. — It now being apparent

that the hangovers my roommates have are more than just the political ones the rest of the country usually has the morning after a national election, I hurriedly get ready for my 11 o'clock class.

11:53 a.m. — As I'm leaving class and noticing that a lot of other people look like they've been up late watching the election results too, I also notice that the clothes that I put on that morning are pretty damn dirty. I have an ink stain above the left pocket of my jeans and a Kool-Aid spill on the bottom right side of my shirt. To hide the blemishes, I tuck in the right side of the shirt and let the left side hang down to hide the ink stain, kind of like a frat tuck gone horribly wrong. I tell myself nobody will notice and walk to my next class.

11:53-noon — I see everybody that I've ever known at Carolina, even some people that I didn't even know went to school here anymore.

Even though everyone notices the stains, only a few comment.

I begin to think that I have bigger problems than who our next president is going to be.

Now almost a week later, we still do not know who the next president is, and everything else in the country is pretty much moving along without any major glitches.

All joking aside, the fact that this is possible is a testament to this nation's greatness.

I only ask that if Dubya does win the presidency that he not be given access to too many major decisions; we all know how that Sosa trade turned out for him down in Texas.

Amol Naik is a senior history major from Lumberton. Reach him at unc2001@hotmail.com.

Sangam Preparing for Show

Chug, chug, chug, chooooo-choooo. Are you prepared for the South Asian Express? It's on its way to Chapel Hill full steam ahead.

Picture 100 of the finest South Asians on UNC's campus percolating (I know, the notion scares me a bit too) while they lead you around the far reaches of South Asia with songs and dances for an entire evening — and you will understand just a hint of the entertainment that is headed your way.

This scene will conclude with the phat fall show Aaj Ka Dhamaka put on by Sangam, UNC's South Asian awareness organization. Aaj Ka Dhamaka highlights the premium South Asian singing and dancing talent in this region. Colleges from all over the South and Mid-Atlantic come out to try their hand at winning part of our loot.

But underlying their need for fame and moola is a stronger vision: a vision to improve the lives of South Asians all across the globe. All proceeds and donations at this event will support the Mahatma Gandhi Fellowship.

The fellowship is a grant given to two students per semester who dedicate their efforts to increasing awareness of South Asian issues. The grant aims to promote the value of education through experience and give students a broader global perspective in hopes of enhancing their future career goals. The fellowship stemmed from the entrepreneurship of Sangam members, who are working nonstop to continue the noble goals and principles upheld by Mahatma Gandhi. All the donations and funds collected go towards the endowment of \$125,000 Sangam needs to raise to establish a permanent fund at UNC for the fellowship. One Sangam member made the long journey to India last summer, and his work forever changed him and the community he worked for.

We lay our scene in fair mother India: A less-than-happy hoard of patients circles the free government hospital and waits to be seen early Monday morning. Doctors cram themselves into closet-sized offices to conduct research and see patients. This is not the chaos that one expects for a summer internship, and it certainly wasn't what Tilak Shah expected as he strolled up to the entrance of the hospital to begin his summer in India. Shah spent the majority of this summer conducting

MONICA MODI POINT OF VIEW

research on effects of calcium deficiencies on osteomalacia, a type of bone disease. Despite the cramped quarters and hoards of patients, the doctors' training and work was nothing short of exceptional, according to Shah. And from this research team came nutrition recommendations that will be announced by the Indian Council of Medical Research (akin to our National Health Organization) to help decrease the likelihood of contracting this disease.

But he didn't spend his entire summer cooped up inside medical facilities. He found the time to trek through the Himalayas as well as study the concepts of Ayurveda — an ancient Indian herbal type of remedy that looks to heal individuals through traditional means. This experience would not have enriched his life, or the lives of countless Indians suffering from this disease, if the Mahatma Gandhi Fellowship wasn't available.

Past students have shown the same drive and persistence to further South Asian causes. Their projects ranged from educating mine workers in Gujarat about hygiene practices to teaching high school and college students about AIDS, exploring trends in South Asian economic markets and researching the religious impacts on societal behavior in South Asia.

So, come out to the Carolina Theater this Saturday at 5:30 p.m. for a seriously amazing South Asian Cultural Show. You'll get to see a vast majority of those "brown" folks (it's all good, I'm one of them) that congregate in that "private dining room" called Lenoir Dining Hall and the second floor of Davis Library shake their "groove thangs."

And don't forget about the phatty after-party following the show at the Marriott next to the Carolina Theater. It'll be a throw-down to remember.

To inquire more about the Mahatma Gandhi Fellowship or Aaj Ka Dhamaka contact Nikheel Purohit at 914-5122. To buy tickets for the show, contact the Carolina Theater at 560-3030 or talk to your resident assistants to see if they reserved tickets for your residence hall or building.

Monica Modi is a senior business major from Columbia, MD. Reach her at modi@email.unc.edu.

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OPEN TO ALL

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