

Chelsea Cook | Editor in Chief editor@randb.com
Daniel Burnett | Managing Editor me@randb.com
Yasmin Yonis | Opinions Editor opinions@randb.com

Phone (706) 433-3002 | Fax (706) 433-3033
 opinions@randb.com | www.redandblack.com
 540 Baxter Street, Athens, Ga. 30605

Opinions

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E-mail and letters from our readers

Anti-gun resolutions 'completely illogical'

The anti-gun sentiment the Board of Regents and SGA have is completely illogical.

More UGA students die from alcohol and motor vehicle accidents and even natural causes than guns. Current laws allow permitting individuals who have passed a background check to carry guns in public places such as Wal-Mart. You do not hear of any gun fights in Wal-Mart.

Gun control proponents look at the Columbine incident as the impetus for a need for gun control, but fail to remember that laws were already on the books to prevent either of the attackers from purchasing a firearm, or carrying it onto school grounds.

Laws existed in Virginia to prevent the Virginia Tech student from bringing a gun on campus, but that did not prevent the tragic events there.

We could "what if" every situation to the point that it sounds like a bad idea.

The bottom line is a person who is legally allowed to carry a gun and has passed a federal and state background check to do so is very unlikely to commit a violent crime.

I just want the same rights to apply to campus as apply to other public areas that do not contain educated individuals.

ANDREW YOUMANS
 Senior, Griffin
 International affairs

Public gatherings include — but are not limited to — athletic events, church functions, political rallies, all publicly-owned or operated buildings and all places where alcoholic beverages are sold for consumption on the premises."

Additionally, Bobby Andres, the president of the Young Democrats, is mistaken in his assertion of facts. Fewer guns in a community do not lead to a safer environment.

In fact, the FBI reported in 2009 that crime had hit record lows, while gun ownership has increased to the highest level in history and the number of guns owned per family has peaked as well.

Do not overlook the fact that student life is more than just class — we live here, meet here and conduct a majority of our college life on this campus, and we should not be deprived of rights based on a proximity to classes.

If we would like to see crime rates similar to those of Washington, D.C., New York or Chicago, then by all means oppose this bill, but for those of us who like safe communities, safer schools and choose not to be victims, we will support the ability for responsible, licensed adults to conceal and carry firearms on campus.

CHRISTOPHER HOWARD
 Sophomore, Gainesville
 Political science

Gun possession a right for citizens

In the April 1 edition, The Red & Black reported that SGA intended to pass a resolution in opposition to the current senate bill residing in the state's congress.

It is extremely troubling that SGA, a group intending to advocate for the student body, would perpetuate an oppressive law that continues to restrain responsible, licensed Americans from exercising their Second Amendment right to bear arms.

Essentially, SGA and our president have told us we are not to be trusted to defend ourselves. This city is riddled with poverty, and the students are the sector of the population most susceptible to the runoff of violence stemming from Athens' many problems, which makes our Second Amendment right all the more indispensable.

Many of our dorms are located near high crime areas, and like myself, many students live in areas of Athens that are either targeted for robbery and theft or in lower-income neighborhoods where it is rare to sleep through the night without being awoken by sirens.

This resolution to oppose SB 308 told the couple that was threatened, slapped and harassed in a taxi on their way through East Campus that they are to remain victims, and it told the numerous women that reported rape at the University of Georgia — as reported by The Red & Black — that they must wait until their assailant completes his task to stand up for themselves.

The fear of bar fights turning into shoot-outs is irrelevant to this issue. Georgia law already states, "Firearms may not be carried to any 'public gathering,' even by an individual licensed to carry a firearm.

Comeback not easy for Woods

Austin Pratt opined on March 29 in his column, "Comeback easy for celebrity Tiger Woods," that Tiger Woods' road to redemption will be free of roadblocks, that his return to the PGA Tour will be devoid of conflict, simply because he's a celebrity.

Interesting theory, albeit wholly inaccurate.

In fact, your claim that Woods will be "welcomed back with open arms" is downright comical. Woods' re-entry to golf — and public life — at the Masters is scripted. Returning at Augusta makes the most sense.

It's the safest landing spot. Patrons will be respectful — any heckler risks losing his lifetime badge.

For all of Woods' transgressions off the course, he's still one of the game's most decorated champions.

At Augusta, all is forgiven once he sticks his tee in the ground at hole No. 1. After that, crowds could be less genial. Celebrity status can't protect him once he's inside the ropes.

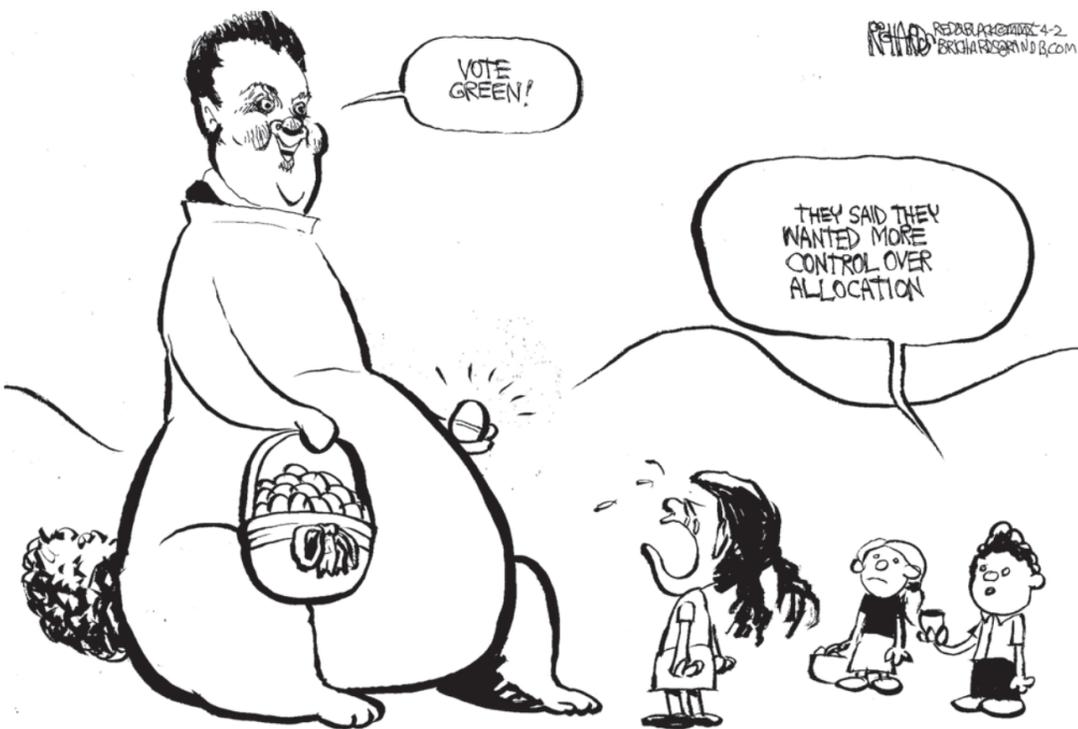
When the starter announces, "Tiger Woods now driving," do you really think people won't laugh?

When Woods walks from the green to the tee box, do you really think there will be no mention of his multiple infidelities?

And when Woods is seated in front of a microphone at every pre-tournament press conference, do you really think he won't be flooded with questions about what happened Thanksgiving night?

Woods' return to the game will be captivating, emotional and one of the greatest spectacles of our generation. It will be everything but easy.

RYAN LAVNER
 Alumnus, Orlando, Fl.
 Assistant editor, Golfweek



Gay couples deserve equal civil rights

A few weeks ago, a 17-year-old lesbian in Mississippi challenged her school district's rules that would prevent her from escorting her girlfriend to the prom. Her prom was canceled. Although a federal judge ruled Tuesday that the school board violated the student's rights, the prom was not reinstated.

What is the matter with this country? Is being a lesbian so horrible that we must deny her and her fellow students their prom experience?

I'm sure there are a few of you out there saying, "Yes, lesbianism is so horrible. Homosexuality is an abomination!" And you're right.

According to Leviticus 18:22, homosexuality is detestable. But to all of you who believe this, I ask — are we really going to interpret the Bible so literally in this modern day and age?

A scene from NBC's "The West Wing" comes to mind. After a Dr. Laura type informs Martin Sheen's character, President Bartlet, that the Bible says homosexuality is an abomination, the President begins to question her.

"I'm interested in selling my youngest daughter into slavery as sanctioned in Exodus 21:7. She's a Georgetown sophomore, speaks fluent Italian, always cleared the table when it was her turn. What would a good price for her be?"

He also mentions Exodus 35:2: "Whoever does any work on the Sabbath must be put to death."

And then Leviticus 11:7: "Touching the skin of a dead pig makes one unclean."

"If they promise to wear gloves, can the Washington Redskins still play football? Can Notre Dame? Can West Point?" Can UGA? And the list goes on and on.



KATE PARHAM

One of the most foolish arguments is that it's a slippery slope if we allow gays to get married.

"What's next — marrying an animal?" opponents always ask.

Why do so many people go straight to marrying donkeys whenever gay marriage is mentioned? Need I remind you, a donkey is not human. I think it's safe to say that marriage can be kept between human beings, although it's clear who the real asses are here.

Now, I realize gay rights and gay marriage are two totally different issues. But for the sake of space, let's kill two birds with one stone. To those of you who are OK with homosexuality, but oppose gay marriage, I have to ask: Do you really think the government should have the right to tell people where or how they can get married?

Why don't we leave it up to the individual institutions to decide, a concept the constitution refers to as separation of church and state. I knew those Founding Fathers were onto something!

Some people argue that by allowing gays to get married, we're increasing the possibility that more gays will begin adopting children, as if this were a negative thing.

It's quite the opposite actually. A review of nine studies, published by The New Press, revealed no significant differences between children of homosexuals and children of heterosexuals with regards to self-esteem, moral judgment and intelligence.

Another flawed argument is

that gay marriage would weaken the institution of marriage. With a divorce rate at 50 percent among heterosexuals, I can't help but wonder how many Americans truly value marriage of any kind anymore.

Interestingly, in Massachusetts — one of five states that allow gay marriage — the divorce rate is about where the U.S. divorce rate was in 1940: 20 percent, according to the most recent data from the National Center for Vital Statistics.

And finally, the law in most states is discriminatory against gays, as they are not afforded the same rights as heterosexuals (i.e. tax breaks, insurance benefits and over 1,000 other matrimonial perks). And picture this, dear reader: gays cannot visit their partners if they are dying in the hospital no matter how long they've been in a committed relationship.

One of my closest friends has a gay parent. My friend is one of the most kind, sane, compassionate people I know and she was raised by a gay man. It breaks my heart to think of her dad as not being able to include his partner on his insurance plan or visit him if he was hospitalized, even though they've been living together for almost six years.

We are a constantly evolving society. Allowing women to vote was revolutionary in its time. So was allowing people of all races to be equal under the law. Now it's time to allow two people of the same sex to legally share their lives together.

For as far as our country has come in so many areas of human decency, I can't fathom how we now can be so shortsighted on an issue that affects so many.

— Kate Parham is a senior from Roswell majoring in magazines

Seat on Board of Regents campaign goal

This year, students around the state found a common cause for concern — proposed budget cuts to higher education.

We have asked ourselves questions such as, "Will my major be cut?" and "Who decides which programs or jobs to sever?"

Although sufficient time has passed since these issues were raised, the questions still persist.

None of us know what the future holds for this university, but The Snapshot ticket has some long-term proposals that will ensure continued representation of the student voice.

We need to be included in the budget decisions made by legislators and the Board of Regents, particularly when pertaining to urgent matters that directly and greatly affect us, such as emergency mandatory student fees and budget cuts.

The Snapshot administration will work closely with the state governor and Student Alumni Council to establish a student position on the Board of Regents.

Unfortunately, student opinions and concerns are not always made aware to our state and school administrations — not because we lack a voice, but because we lack a seat at the table.

President Adams' administration



JAKE CAMPBELL

has promised Snapshot's executive ticket — Josh, Stephen and Maddy — a voice in matters that affect the quality of student life, such as tailgating on North Campus.

Furthermore, it is essential to incorporate voices from all corners of campus when we raise our concerns with our school and state administrations.

To address this, we feel it is necessary to increase the amount of Senate seats to include representatives from student organizations. Outside the realm of the classroom, students at the University of Georgia pride themselves on active citizenship through leadership.

There must be representation on all aspects of this campus, from the budgetary issues at the Capitol and Board of Regents to the decisions made by President Adams and SGA.

The Snapshot wants to include you in the vast issues that affect all of us. I believe that if we are not included in these discussions and create a dialogue with officials, then we cannot solve financial issues of

students, or affect the withdrawal policy, ticketing and tailgating, or the issues that student groups have with representation.

In my sophomore year, I was approached by an upperclassman with, "Will you run for SGA Senate?" I had to ask, "What is Senate and what does SGA do for me?"

In my past three years working with SGA, I have learned that it is the organized voice for students, advocating on behalf of the student body. I have also learned how important The Snapshot's new goals for student representation are.

As a person who has worked with members on both tickets, I believe that The Snapshot will be more responsive, inclusive and representative of UGA.

As president pro tempore of SGA and a concerned student, I endorse The Snapshot, and I encourage you to vote for them on OASIS April 5-8.

Join our movement — vote for Josh, Stephen and Maddy and the senators of our ticket.

Are you in?

— Jake Campbell is President Pro Tempore of SGA and a senior for Marietta majoring in Political science, geography and sociology

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 The Red & Black is published Monday through Friday fall and spring semesters and each Thursday summer semester, except holidays and exam periods, by The Red & Black Publishing Company Inc., a non-profit campus newspaper not affiliated with the University of Georgia. Subscription rate: \$195 per year.