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Opinions

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E-mail and letters from our readers

Tailgating ban hurts alumni relationship

I'll be the first to admit that I have been shocked and angered by the condition of North Campus following several home games.

There need to be steps taken to try and control the problem.

However, the severe tailgating restrictions are not the solution. In fact they are only adding to a growing problem that the Adams administration and the Athletic Association have created over the past decade.

With absurd season ticket donation requirements, extremely limited parking and now even more limited tailgating areas, recent alumni are finding it nearly impossible to attend games.

Many that simply can't afford to buy tickets still come to Athens to see old friends and enjoy the gameday atmosphere. Now even that is slowly being taken away from them.

Only current students are a more rabid fan base than recent alumni and when you remove them from game day you not only hurt the atmosphere that day but also for years to come.

Once many grow accustomed to staying home on Saturday rather than making the journey to Athens, they won't do so even when they do have the finances to buy tickets and reserve a spot in a parking deck.

Though the university does provide a fine education to those that attend, the undeniable truth is that football games, not books, are what bring the alumni and their wallets back to campus.

This means donations and other support will decline as the older alumni retire and are less able to travel and the younger alumni continue to stay away.

With 5,000 or so new alumni created every May and December, the numbers grow quickly and the administration would be wise to keep at least one eye on the future while keeping the other on bags of trash.

PATRICK SHEPHERD
 Alumnus, Griffin
 Political science

Right decision to preserve campus

Back in the fall, I wrote a letter to the editor complaining about the lack of respect and manners exhibited by tailgaters on North Campus.

I was disgusted and upset at the lack of respect that students, alumni and fans could show for this campus and its historical landmarks.

I'm still horrified at their behavior, only now it's enhanced by the complaints I'm hearing and reading about the University's decision.

So to all of the complainers who believe that "tailgating is dead," riddle me this: when you were little and didn't clean up your room or you behaved badly, did your parents take away a toy or a privilege that you enjoyed? Were you grounded?

Well, 20 years may have passed, but the concept still survives. If you don't treat things with care and respect you will lose them. And that is exactly what has happened.

The tailgaters of North Campus abused the campus and now they have a

punishment.

Also, tailgating is not dead. This campus is large, and there are plenty of places where debauchery and celebration can continue without damaging the most beautiful and historic portion of campus.

I have oftentimes been a critic of President Adams, but I am thankful that he stepped up and recognized the dangers of the out of control tailgating that was occurring on North Campus.

He may have made some enemies, but everyone should be grateful that he and the board are taking a stand and making attempts to preserve our campus, even if they do not realize it yet.

Just remember, come fall, respect the new rules and the rest of campus, because if not, then our other privileges will be taken away and we will be punished even further.

And what fun would a Georgia Saturday be if we could only tailgate for four hours all over campus, all while paying for our spots?

JORDAN SHOEMAKER
 Junior, Bishop
 History

Tailgating limits not right answer

Tailgating on North Campus is dirtier than a used jockstrap. It's loud, people are obnoxious and it's packed in tighter than Charles Barkley in a size-32 waist. It's everything you'd think I would hate about game days, but you know what?

I wouldn't trade it for anything. Not for all the spilled beer in the world — which, coincidentally, happens to cover each of my three pairs of shoes to this day. When I pack up my cooler on Sept. 4 for the first game of the season, however, I'm going to have to find a new place to enjoy the pre-game festivities.

Tailgating on North Campus for the upcoming season will be limited to four hours before kickoff.

Banned items during this short period will include tents, kegs, televisions, amplified music, grills or cookers of any type, larger tables and household furniture. Essentially, all the ingredients to a successful tailgate.

The reasoning behind this change is to preserve the historic North Campus, as it has taken a beating from some of the heartier partiers over the years.

The problem here is a combination of a lack of preparation on the University's part and a large population of inconsiderate tailgaters who don't care if their trash ends up in a garbage bag or the fountains by Herty Field.

But, to me, a virtual ban on tailgating in the area is not the answer. Do I want to preserve the landscape? Absolutely. It is one of my favorite areas on campus. But that tailgate is just as important.

Follow the example set by Ole Miss. Increase garbage receptacles and patrol the areas more closely with police. But don't take away my tailgate. I'll never find a place where I can be closer to my fellow fans — literally.

DAVID MITCHELL
 Senior, Peachtree City
 Red & Black sports writer



Congressman's facts promote paranoia

Congressman Paul Broun, Athens' Republican delegate in the United States House of Representatives, has demonstrated yet again that he is a ludicrous embarrassment to the institution in which he serves and the electorate he purports to represent.

The latest outrage in his parody of a political career occurred on the floor of the great legislative body he has befouled since 2007.

During a debate on health care legislation, Mr. Broun babbled the following: "If ObamaCare passes, that free insurance card that's in people's pockets is gonna be as worthless as a Confederate dollar after the War Between the States — the Great War of Yankee Aggression."

It's hardly worth mentioning Mr. Broun's facts are wrong about the Democrats' health care plan — there will be no "free insurance card" — because his view of the Civil War is so egregious.

The readers of this newspaper don't need a review of the most grievous and menacing hour in our nation's history, but Mr. Broun evidently does.

Using states' rights as a rhetorical instrument, the Confederacy attempted to destroy the United States by ripping it apart through acts of treason, sabotage, secession and warfare, all to preserve racist slave labor. For this he blames the North.

Now Mr. Broun, as a member of a political party whose first and greatest president was martyred while fighting to preserve the



ANDREW WIDENER

union and abolish slavery, has the effrontery to use neo-Confederate language to denounce a black president's well-intentioned — if ill-conceived — health care proposal.

That he should invoke an event most saliently identified with racism and secessionism to argue against a wholly unrelated matter like health care suggests he harbors a dark and pathological paranoia.

Mr. Broun has a history of making hysterical comments. On Nov. 10, 2008, he told the Associated Press that President Obama's plan to expand the role of civilians in national security and diplomacy was "exactly what Hitler did in Nazi Germany and it's exactly what the Soviet Union did."

He continued, "You have to remember that Adolf Hitler was elected in a democratic Germany. I'm not comparing him to Adolf Hitler. What I'm saying is there is the potential of going down that road."

These statements epitomize Mr. Broun's thoughts and methods; his staggering historical imbecility leads him to offensive and indecent conclusions.

He says he is not comparing Mr. Obama to the Nazi dictator, yet in the next sentence says there is a potential that they are comparable because he may lead the U.S.

"down that road."

Since the president has not engineered the burning down of Congress, opened a concentration camp and sent his political opponents there, or instigated an atmosphere of xenophobia, racism and intimidation, Mr. Broun should issue a long-overdue retraction. The slithering non-apology he cravenly made last year was utterly insufficient.

Mr. Broun routinely encourages irrational bigotries and unfounded fears. On March 4, when Sirius XM radio host Pete Dominick asked if Mr. Obama was a Christian and an American citizen, Mr. Broun answered, "I don't know."

His office later explained "it wasn't fair to speculate" about the president's religion and citizenship. This is racism — cynical, filthy, scandalous racism, and it stinks to the heavens.

If the fires of racial animosity are not alight in Mr. Broun, then he should explain his propensity to phrase political disagreements with Mr. Obama and the Democrats in racial and neo-Confederate language.

I don't expect an intellectually honest answer — just more wild accusations, outlandish historical analogies and a continued affinity for extremist groups like the John Birch Society. In that case, he must be expelled from office at the polls this November.

— Andrew Widener is a senior from Sharpsburg majoring in international affairs

Universal health care redistributes wealth

I'm no medical expert. I can't even begin to wrap my mind around the complexities of the health care system.

But I do know health care needs to be reformed, and I have reservations about the current plan in question. Let me repeat that. I know health care needs to be reformed.

But is Obama's way the right way? Where is it written that the government has the right to extract money from us to care for those who cannot or will not care for themselves? And furthermore, what is a right?

Freedom of speech, of the press, of religion. All great rights. They grant Americans certain liberties and they require nothing from other people. But what about the right to health care?

Should every American be entitled to health care even if they can't afford it? And how does a government with no resources of its own provide nationwide coverage?

Simply put, the government must take money from another American to pay for it, explained Walter Williams, a professor of economics at George Mason University, in a recent essay.

"If one person has a right to something he did not earn, of necessity it requires that another person not have a right to something that he did earn," Williams wrote.

I cannot understand how our country could be OK with this. If



KATE PARHAM

you're concerned for your fellow man's health, nobody is stopping you from contributing to private organizations like the Red Cross. That's what I'm doing.

But the kicker here is that charitable donations — be it time or money — are voluntary. We're not forcing people to give 10 percent of their paycheck to Oprah's Angel Network. It's their choice.

"Reaching into one's own pockets to assist his fellow man in need is praiseworthy and laudable," Williams wrote. "Reaching into someone else's pockets to do so is despicable and deserves condemnation."

Imagine you are out to eat with a friend. The bill arrives and your pal reaches across the table and snags your wallet to pay for his meal.

Or you're in line at the pharmacy waiting to pick up your prescription when the woman in front of you informs the pharmacist that you will be covering her tab as well.

Ludicrous? Maybe, but these principles are the foundation upon which this new health care system is built. We, as a country, must now decide which right is more important: our right to health care or our right to keep the fruits of our labors and pick our own health care pro-

vider.

Now, I, like Williams, wish that everyone had adequate health care, decent housing and nutritious meals. What I do not wish is to take something from someone else and violate their rights to achieve this ideal.

Which is exactly what universal health care is: an ideal. There's no feasible way for a government funded by the people to provide satisfactory care to 307 million without trampling on the rights of someone else and reducing the quality of care. Investor's Business Daily reports if an American citizen requires medical treatment, 79 percent are treated in a timely manner.

Under government-controlled health programs, the picture is quite different. In Canada, that number drops down to 39. And in England, it plummets all the way down to 25. Not to mention the fact that this plan benefits less than 10 percent of the population, with a \$940 billion price tag to boot.

If you're OK with that, then so be it — or move to England.

I may not fully understand premiums, deductibles and Health Savings Accounts. I may not comprehend medical research findings or preclinical research.

But I do know that none of us can have a right to universal health care without sacrificing the rights of others. And that isn't right.

— Kate Parham is a senior from Roswell majoring in magazines

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