the eastcarolinian

Holly G. Harris, *Editor*
Melissa Massey, *Managing Editor*
Phillip Gilfus, *News Editor*
Stephen Schramm, *Sports Editor*
Susan Wright, *Features Editor*
Melyssa Ojeda, *Head Copy Editor*
Emily Richardson, *Photography Editor*
Jason Latour, *Staff Illustrator*
Dan Cox, *Web Media Director*
Janet Respess, *Ad Manager*

NEWSROOM 252-328-6366
ADVERTISING 252-328-2000
FAX 252-328-6558
E-MAIL ..... tec@studentmedia.ecu.edu

Serving the ECU community since 1925, The East Carolinian prints 11,000 copies every Tuesday and Thursday during the regular academic year. The lead editorial in each edition is the opinion of the majority of the Editorial Board and is written in turn by Editorial Board members. The East Carolinian welcomes letters to the editor, limited to 250 words (which may be edited for decency or brevity at the editor's discretion). The East Carolinian reserves the right to edit or reject letters for publication. All letters must be signed and include a telephone number. Letters may be sent by e-mail to editor@studentmedia.ecu.edu or to The East Carolinian, Student Publications Building, Greenville, NC 27858-4353. For additional information, call 252-328-6366.

OUR**VIEW**

If we needed a wake-up call about the level of the danger in this area, it has arrived. The College Community Crimecheck gave ECU a risk rating of nine on a scale of one to 10n a recent Uniform Crime Report. Ten is the most dangerous ranking.

Many students consider our campus to be their home away from home. We don't want to worry about someone coming into our haven and disrupting it; whether it be through vandalism, theft or usually the greatest concern, assault. But as much as everyone would like to believe "it won't happen to me," crime is an occurrence that can, and does happen every day right here in Greenville.

If we needed a wake-up call about the level of the danger in this area, it has arrived. The College Community Crimecheck gave ECU a risk rating of nine on a scale of one to 10 in a recent Uniform Crime Report. Ten is the most dangerous ranking. Although Sgt. Mike Jordan of the ECU Police department said he doesn't believe that our crime rates are anywhere near that high, it's still something our community should take into consideration.

Each year statistics for such crimes as assault, burglary, theft and sex offenses are listed. Although many of the statistics have fluctuated over the years, it can be reassuring to know that some of the most violent crimes have gone down. For example, in 1993 there were 11 reports of aggravated assault; in 1998, there were only five.

The university does take great measures in ensuring our safety. Our campus police department consists of 45 certified police officers, auxiliary officers, approximately 25 student patrol officers, a total of eight telecommunications officers, three full-time support service personnel and up to 15 library guards. In 1998 it was one of eight law enforcement agencies in NC to receive the Governor's Award for Excellence in Community Oriented Policing.

However, students must also take a part in ensuring their own safety by practicing the measures that have been taught to us over the years. If the crime rates aren't truly as high as the report states, it isn't to say that it could never be so. And if it is, students must be more aware of their surroundings and protect themselves in hopes that a criminal does not find his next victiman an easy mark.

OPINION **COLUMN**

Americans want know-nothing president

R.W. Hobbs, Jr.
OPINION COLUMNIST

Since he began running for the office of president, Governor George W. Bush has not been particularly clear on where he stands on certain issues. And Bush seems to test the waters before deciding which direction he is going to take. In fact, one gets the feeling after following his campaign that he is running for president just for the heck of it. It seems as if he knows he is popular, and he is going to follow the popular view on issues in order to get votes.

According to every poll to date, unless he makes a catastrophic mistake in the mean time, Bush will be our next president. It's a shame, too, because there are so many really good candidates out there with punctuated ideas and plans, namely Steve Forbes.

Forbes is a true Washington outsider, but is very knowledgeable when it comes to the economy and being a leader. He also has clear-cut answers for any question on any topic, with no doubt of where he would take America if elected.

With candidates who are obviously much better and more reasonably motivated than Bush, what on earth is America's problem? Why are we choosing a follower instead of a leader? And after the whole Clinton-Lewinsky debacle, why would we want to replace him with someone so similar in approach--someone who bases his every next move on polls and advisors rather than what is in his/her heart?

Under President Clinton and the Republican-led Congress, America is doing just fine. Sure, we have our share of problems to work out. But compared to other countries and our past, America is on top. We are especially going through a prosperous economic period. And economic prosperity leads to benefits in other areas.

Unemployment has gone down and will probably continue to do so. The good economy will eventually lead to a rise of the minimum wage. The stock market is also enjoying this period. And we can also be confident that social security will indeed be secure for at least the foreseeable future. So, with everything going so well, America is not really in dyer need of a candidate who wants to make big changes in our government--even if those changes sound good. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. So this time Americans want someone who will keep on rolling with the status quo, someone who looks and sounds like a President, who is generally good and who will not cause big and controversial chaos in Washington.

After last year's Zippergate, apparently anything goes as far as immorality is concerned. Cocaine use doesn't matter. In fact, to a lot of people our age, it's probably a plus (but then, most of you don't vote anyway) ... but that's another story.

It's rather like choosing a car: you can have the Geo Metro--not the most attractive or roomy car in the world, but it's a wise choice for your wallet (Steve Forbes). There's the Jaguar, which looks good and is comfortable, but expensive--but hey, you can afford to splurge (George W. Bush). Oh, then there's the hearse--the car for stiffs (Al Gore). In the end, anything is better than Al Gore.

This writer can be contacted at rhobbs@studentmedia.ecu.edu.

OPINION **COLUMN**

No need to stress over exams

Chris Sachs
OPINION WRITER

With final exams creeping up on us like a stalker, ready to pounce and rape our brains, you can almost feel the tension around campus. Students are getting zits, getting no sleep, getting frustrated and most of all--getting drunk. You would think the student body just found out that the Ebola virus was discovered in the dining hall. But it is not that serious, it's just final exams. Students are panicking like there is no tomorrow and I just don't see why. People should not be scared of finals, if you have been keeping up with your work all semester long. For those of you who have not, then you're hosed.

For weeks now I have told students that I tutored and classes I have taught that final exams are the easiest tests of the entire year. Students look at me like I just french-kissed their grandmother, but it's true. At what other time in your college semester are you allowed to take a test full of material that you have already seen before? That is all a final exam is: a compilation of all the tests that you have already taken. It should be a cake walk. That is, if you did well all semester long.

But if you didn't study much, barely passed the tests, got drunk the night before big tests, then you deserve to crumble under the pressure; it's your own fault. But if you did well all semester, and balanced your drinking and partying with adequate study time, then preparing for finals should be just a review session and cause you little or no stress.

If there were topics that you had trouble with during the semester, then you should have gotten help with them and knocked it out. But if you are just hopeless in that subject and cannot, no matter what, get the concept down, then it is survival of the fittest and maybe you should choose another major. Let the class die, and move on to what you are good at. That way you can relax about the final, take the F with dignity, and then go out drinking.

Students are always complaining to me about their classes and how they don't get the concept and how they screwed up the quiz or test. So I ask them if they went to their professor. They say their prof. is never there. Did you ask him for an appointment? No they say. Did you ask another professor? Nope. Did you read the book? nope. Did you try another book? Nope. Did you go to the help centers? Nope. Did you ask your friends for a study group? Nope. Did you talk to a counselor? Nope. Well guess what, stupid, you deserve your grade and I hope you fail miserably.

Maybe an "F" is just the wake up call you need to realize that you are lazy and ignorant. The professor teaches you your class about three hours a week. Ninety percent of the learning you receive is on your own time. You need to wake up and realize that not all professors spoon feed you and you may need to think for yourself for a change. They tend to pay for that unique feature out there in real world (unless you work for the government).

So work hard people, make sure you are in the major that is right for you, and learn that when you have mastered the subject, you can then go out and raise hell and party all you want. You won't forget the stuff in one night, believe me. You will do fine. And when the final comes around, you will beat it like a rented mule and you will feel great about. And for all you lazy, ignorant, slack-jawed students who refuse to suck it up and work, I hope you drown in F's and you better get my order straight when I come to your drive-thru in 10 years.

This writer can be contacted at csachs@studentmedia.ecu.edu.

OPINION **COLUMN**

Microsoft decision does not consider consumer

Marvelle Sullivan
OPINION WRITER

Microsoft is considered the most valuable, and perhaps, the most powerful corporation in the world. In the tradition of all great things, Microsoft's clout is now slowly coming to an end. Judge Jackson, in *US vs. Microsoft*, ruled that Microsoft is indeed a monopoly, abuses its power by thwarting and manipulating competition and therefore poses a threat to consumers' welfare and interest.

This decision, of course, made the Justice Department and many others (not to mention Microsoft's competitors) extremely exuberant since they see Microsoft as a ghastly monopoly whose current existence violates American economic principles. While there are legitimate arguments on both sides, in this case, the government's incessant need to knock down a thriving business is taking precedent over a common sense evaluation of Microsoft and its role in technology and the economy. Basically, justice has not been served in this recent decision against Microsoft.

Laws like the Sherman Antitrust Act, along with similar acts, are designed to "bust" trusts (which are also referred to as monopolies) that manipulate consumers and distort markets. Standard Oil, IBM and AT&T are all examples of companies that were regulated under the ideology that one entity should not dominate or monopolize an industry, good or service.

Microsoft owns 90 percent of the PC operating systems market. So, Microsoft definitely possesses a large corner of the market to say the least. However, being a monopoly is not a crime in and of itself, but it does subject the company to governmental regulation and that is where the debate essentially lies.

The real crime depends on whether Microsoft abuses its power and therefore harms both the market and the consumer. Microsoft officials admit they have a large share of the market but reasonably asserts that they are not preventing entrance into and competition within the market. Furthermore, they feel that they have been accommodating governmental wishes (through bundling software) and it is not their fault if they are thriving because they do what they do the best. Besides, isn't that the nature of the American economic design?

It seems that the government, in this particular case involving Microsoft, is less interested in protecting the consumer and more interested in gaining the ability to wield power over the leading innovator of information technology. To accomplish this, the Justice Department, et al. are depicting Microsoft as some dangerous monster. This portrayal is ridiculous and should not be entertained.

The extent of Microsoft's wrongdoing and its punishment has not yet been determined. Whatever the extent, now, the government has its hand in the affair. This is just an attempt to meddle in private industry. No matter how dangerous dominating companies like Microsoft are portrayed to be--the government handling this trust problem, much less information technology as we know it, is entirely more frightening and more damaging to the consumer and to any market.

This writer can be contacted at msullivan@studentmedia.ecu.edu.

OPINION **COLUMN**

Holidays test this writer's patience

Patrick McMahon
OPINION WRITER

Well, I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and is well rested for the exam blast that is right around the corner. My Thanksgiving sucked. First off, my father decided he wouldn't speak to me for a couple of days (even through Thanksgiving dinner) because of my eyebrow ring.

I have four earrings but does that bother him? Noooooooooooooo. But since I got my EYEBROW pierced he went ballistic. After that whole showdown, I decided not to show him my tattoos, figuring that he could probably do without the further trauma. So just to appease my parents and to ensure that they would continue to pay for my education, I took the eyebrow ring out. Yeah! Everybody do the happy dance! Damned parents. Just kidding, I'd do anything for them.

Thanksgiving further sucked really, really bad because of another reason. I'm gonna get serious for a sec folks, so pay attention. A student here at ECU who was also from my hometown decided to kill himself over the holiday. It came as a shock to the entire community. No one except for a select few knew about the pain this kid felt inside, and his friends were mainly shut out of it.

If you or anyone you know is contemplating suicide, it is NOT the answer. If it is pain you want to get away from then realize that all you are doing is causing more pain to those around you. If you want a way out, just hop in your car and drive until it runs out of gas and just settle down there.

There is a wonderful counseling center here on campus and numerous hotlines that are available 24 hours a day that are there just for you. USE THEM.

The week just got better when me and my friends played paper rock scissors to find who would be the designated driver for the weekend. Just take a guess as to who lost. Yep, I stayed sober the entire break while out partying three nights with my friends. It wasn't that bad, at least I could keep an eye on them and make sure they stayed ok.

All in all, it was one of the worst Thanksgivings ever but hopefully this upcoming week will treat me better. I'm sorry I have to mention this, for all the complaining I did previously about my dad, he truly is a great man and he is going up for a HUGE promotion this week so everyone say a little prayer for him (regardless of how you feel about me) so that he gets it. He worked his butt off to get where he is today and he really deserves the position.

Everyone have a safe weekend and I'll see you again next Thursday.

You can contact this writer at pmcmahon@studentmedia.ecu.edu.