

# OPINION

## The Appalachian

Your student newspaper since 1934.

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Founded 1934.

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## Our Perspective ...

### Feasible, fair parking plans were ignored

Parking at Appalachian State University is now an excessive tax on students and lower income faculty and staff members.

The \$204 parking permit, approved by the Board of Trustees in June, takes a large bite out of everyone's budget, no matter how large it may be.

To the lowest paid staff members and students who can barely afford their education, the 85 percent increase in parking is a daunting burden.

The parking and traffic committee presented a feasible and fair solution for Appalachian State University to keep parking prices lower last spring. Their plan to charge one-half of 1 percent of a salary was ignored in favor of a flat fee everyone must pay.

Vice chancellor for Business Affairs Jane Helm told *The Appalachian* there are no other goods or services on campus based on income.

That is an interesting response given most other goods and services on the campus are not a necessity for attending class or going to work.

If students can get assistance for the high costs of college, why should staff members have to bare the brunt of transportation to their place of employment?

Did we learn nothing from Barbara Ehrenreich and "Nickel and Dimed" at Convocation only a few short weeks ago?

Faculty Senate has asked to

charge visitors for the use of Appalachian's limited parking spaces. Campus visitors only pay for parking in the Rivers Street Parking Deck during the weekdays and for football games.

All other parking lots during campus events are up for grabs.

Faculty Senate certainly has the right idea with Office of Cultural Affairs bringing over 40,000 people to events each year. Granted, a lot are students, faculty and staff, but many are from off campus.

Visitors cause just as much wear and tear on the parking services as anyone else, and they should offer some assistance in paying for it.

Appalachian football and basketball sold a combined 48,956 tickets last season. Students get into the games for free. The administration said adding a parking fee to ticket prices would act as a double tax to some people.

A small double tax is still better than an 85 percent increase across the board. Either way, two very feasible options to the parking problem were rejected.

Was the parking and traffic committee just a front? Will anything they suggest aside from increasing prices be considered?

Like many things, it all comes down to the money. Those with money do not want to pay more, even though they can afford it.

## Lessons from the storm: Isabel hits home

It's Monday night, there's a storm coming, and for once I have no idea what to write.

Usually, I'm never short of opinions or reasons to back them up. Usually I have no trouble putting those words to paper, but this night was different.

While the storm, Hurricane Isabel, will probably only subject Boone to some heavier-than-usual winds and rain, the coast is a different story.

Isabel is heading right for the northeast coast area, which happens to be where my family lives.

Currituck County, where my mother teaches, was nearly emptied by an evacuation order. The same goes for Dare County, where I spent the summer working at K-Mart. Very possibly some of the houses along the beach will be kindling by the end of the week.

We're used to dealing with hurricane season, with the winds and rain, but this storm is larger than most.

So my mother has wisely made the decision to spend a few days in Raleigh until things, to use an apt phrase, blow over.

At the end of our phone conversation, she threw in a few words



David Forbes

"I'm not worried about us, I just hope there's a house left to come back to."

We said our goodbyes and hung up the phone. Those last words stayed with me, kept me up for most of the night even though I had places to be in the morning and by all rights should have been asleep.

Maybe it's just pointless worry. The storm's wind speed has dropped down, after all. By the time this gets into print, Isabel will probably just dump some wind and rain and leave, like so many other storms.

But there's an important lesson in all this: with all the technology

our world and society can muster, acts of nature still completely beyond our control can threaten our families and loved ones, and much less important, our material possessions.

As much as I value freedom of choice and tackling life's challenges head on, there are some things one can do nothing about. The only option is to prepare as well as possible and then accept some measure of powerlessness in the face of circumstances beyond one's control.

This lesson seems to be lost on most.

We are, at times, a society ruled by a need for security. Security from terrorists, criminals, drug addicts, economic collapse, exotic diseases, shark attacks, the list goes on and on, until we cry out even for protection from even the food we eat and the fact that we age.

While certainly we shouldn't be completely careless, a society so obsessed with security ends up being ruled by its fear.

In its more innocuous manifestations this fear simply leads us all to be a little too careful at times. At its worse, it sends us sliding

closer towards a place where we'll trade everything, even freedom, just for the hollow promise that nothing will hurt us.

True security is a lie. No matter how cautious, how careful, how protected we become, there will always be circumstances beyond our control, things that can harm or even kill us that we can do absolutely nothing about.

And eventually, no matter how safe things are, our body will age and die. This is life.

So it is time to grow up. Dangers are out there. Prepare as you can, fight when you must, roll with the punches you can't avoid, and live through the tragedies that will happen.

In the end, accept what you can do nothing about and don't let concern become worry or worry become paralysis. We're all guilty of this at some point, myself included.

Long story short, I pray some and end up going to sleep. This storm, too, shall pass.

David Forbes is a senior staff writer. He can be reached at [theapp@appstate.edu](mailto:theapp@appstate.edu).

## Ways to procrastinate: homestarrunner.com

If you, the reader, are anything like me, then at some point either today or tomorrow, you're going to be faced with having to do homework that you do not want to do.

So, in honor of the tradition of putting it off until the last minute, allow me to introduce one of many other things you could be doing instead of what you should be doing.

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you [www.homestarrunner.com](http://www.homestarrunner.com).

This Web site is filled with random humor, the kind that separates the sheep, who see it and die from laughter, and the goats that just stare at the screen with a why-am-I-watching-this look and possibly write a mean letter to me for recommending the site in the first place.

If you go, you need to understand some of the characters. For starters, the main two people newcomers should be familiar with are Homestar Runner, who has no arms and wears a propeller hat, and Strong Bad, a bare-chested character who wears a Mexican wrestling mask and boxing gloves.

Other characters to be aware of are The Cheat, a small cat whose language is completely unintelligible, and Marzipan, Homestar's



Justin Boulmay

girlfriend.

Strong Bad seems to be everyone's favorite character, and the truth is, the funniest material on this site always has something to do with him.

A friend of mine told me Strong Bad was nominated for student body president at N.C. State University, with The Cheat as his running mate.

Anyway, "Strong Bad's E-mails" are one of the best parts of this Web site. Strong Bad reads his e-mail, usually every week, and responds as viewers watch.

A viewer wrote in, asking Strong Bad if he had ever written a children's book.

"Yeah, I wrote a children's book," he replied. "Who hasn't? I mean, kids can barely read as it

is, so how hard could it be to write for them?"

A children's book appears on the screen, carrying the title "Everyone is Different" (actually, Strong Bad just took a children's book and edited it with a magic marker).

One page shows a picture of a boy named Frankie, who has freckles and is riding his bike. The original caption reads, "Some people have freckles. Frankie has freckles."

After meeting Strong Bad, the picture now shows an 18-wheeled truck right behind the poor boy, with a caption that reads, "Some people are about to be run over. Frankie has about five seconds."

Another of my personal favorites is Teen Girl Squad. Four stick-figure teenage girls named Cheerleader, So and So, What's Her Face, and the Ugly One, do normal things such as shopping and going to school, and at least one of them always meets an untimely fate.

So and So, for example, gets attacked by a band of rampaging possums as she's walking home from a thrift store in episode No. 3.

In their latest adventure, one of them (they all look alike, so I'm not sure who it is) falls into a bot-

tomless pit located in the hallway at school.

The regular cartoons in this site are pretty good, too, depending on which one you watch.

In one episode, for example, Homestar makes a sandwich for his girlfriend, but the sandwich looks so much like a face (two olives sticking out of the top gives the appearance of eyes, not to mention its "a big leafy smile") that she can't bear to eat it.

Instead, she adopts it and gives it a name: Homestar, Jr.

Along with cartoons, this site also features several games, some of which the characters themselves play. "Trogdor" seems to be the favorite among people I know.

In this particular adventure, you play a dragon that captures villagers and burns their homes down before the knights slay you. It doesn't sound very fun, but, much like the Web site itself, it is surprisingly addicting.

So there you have it, one of many alternatives to homework. If you don't like this Web site, you can always kill time by checking your friends' away messages.

Justin Boulmay is a staff writer. He can be reached at [theapp@appstate.edu](mailto:theapp@appstate.edu).

## The Appalachian

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The *Appalachian*, a student-run publication at Appalachian State University, strives to provide fair and accurate news for the campus community; to inform, entertain and create a forum for ideas; to be a watchdog for student, faculty and staff interests; and to remain independent and reserve its First Amendment rights.

### EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Appalachian* is published every Tuesday and Thursday of the academic year with the exception of selected holidays and breaks. The opinions expressed in the commentaries appearing in *The Appalachian* are those of the individual columnists and not those of *The Appalachian*. The opinions represented in the unsigned editorial are the majority views of those on the Editorial Board of *The Appalachian*.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The *Appalachian* welcomes Letters to the Editor. Letters should be 250 words or less, typed and double spaced. They should include the author's name, ASU Box, phone number, year in school and campus affiliation, if any. The *Appalachian* reserves the right to decline publication of any letter and to edit letters for the purpose of clarity and space. Although we are unable to acknowledge those letters we cannot publish, we appreciate the interest and value the views of those who take the time to send us their comments. Letters can be mailed to "Letter to the Editor", *The Appalachian*, ASU Box 9025, Boone, N.C. 28608. We can also be reached by e-mail at [theapp@appstate.edu](mailto:theapp@appstate.edu). Letters may also be brought to the newsroom, located on the second floor of Plemmons Student Union.

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# LETTERS

## Faculty Senate has right to ask for dues

### TO THE EDITOR

I'm glad to hear that the Faculty Senate is doing their part to fight the recent parking and traffic increase by asking athletics and Cultural Affairs to pay their dues.

With all the money athletics takes from students, it's good that they will finally have to give some back.

I do fear, however, that this proposal will be shot down due for some made-up reason from the department. Either way, excellent story on a forefront issue.

Jeff Zehnder  
sophomore  
communications major  
jz51525@appstate.edu

## SGA asks students to share their ideas

### TO THE EDITOR

I am writing this to go along with the article that David Forbes wrote: "SGA needs overhaul." I have been involved in Student Government for going on three years now, and I can tell you that we are not a perfect organization.

However, in order for this to change we need as much possible input from on-campus and off-campus students.

I can promise you that no matter what the ratio of senators to students is, we will represent you to the best of our ability.

Mainly, I just wanted to tell everyone that they can e-mail us at sga@appstate.edu as well as you can visit our Web site to find out

more about us and what we do at [www.sga.appstate.edu](http://www.sga.appstate.edu).

Also, if you want to talk to someone face-to-face then I urge you to come by the SGA office on the second floor of the Student Union and let us know what we can do for you.

Please get involved so we can better serve this university.

Callie Hargett  
Director of Internal Affairs, SGA





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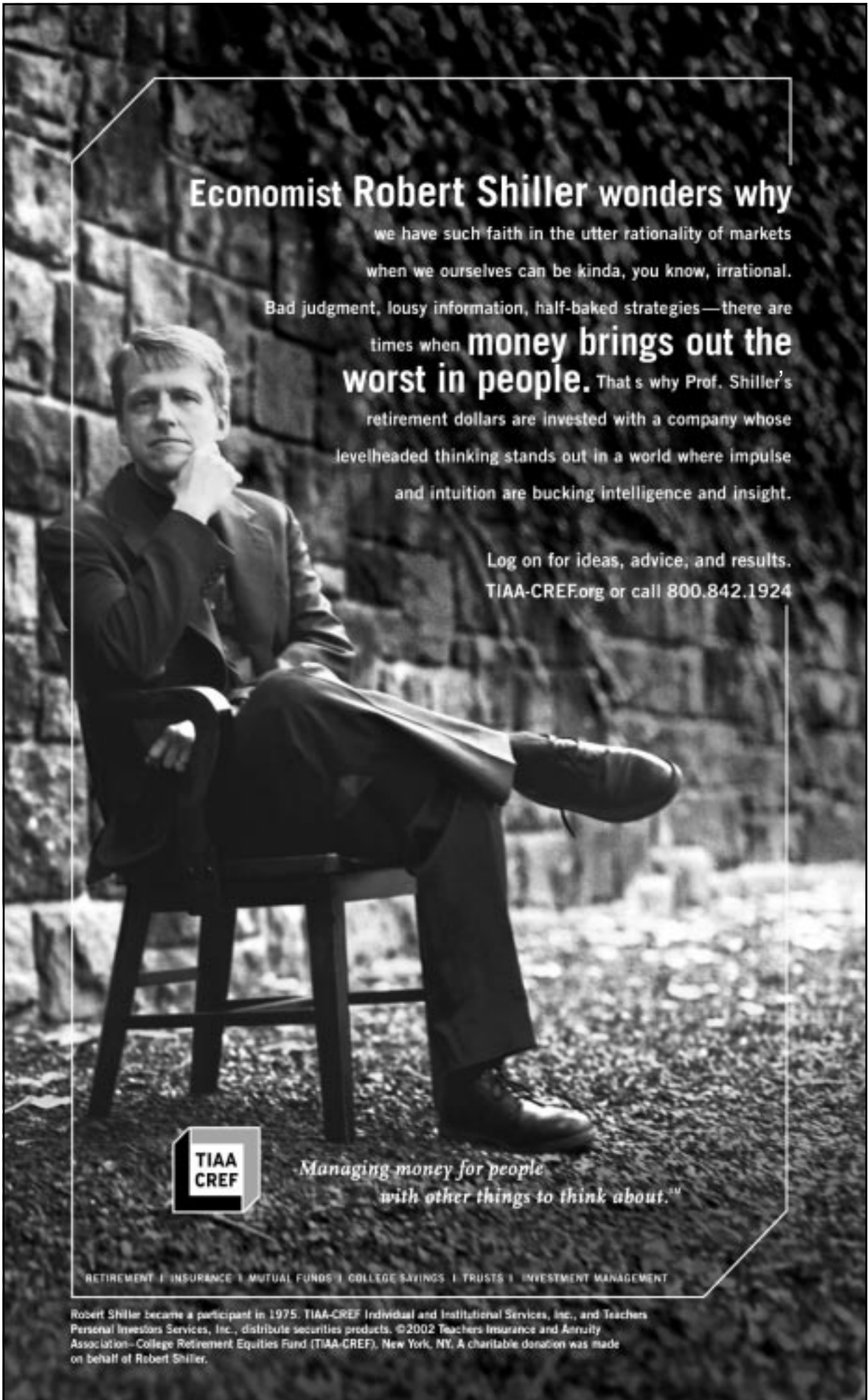
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