

From the editor

The smoking issue is getting way out of hand. Last Friday we had a 60's-style protest in President Keyser's office. ASG is getting riled because they are being accused of not doing enough and we have a mess outside the community center. Well, I guess everyone needs something to bitch about.

I just wish there was some sort of quick solution to the smoking issue. The non-smokers adamantly refuse to allow smoking indoors, while the smokers are catching pneumonia because of their nicotine dependency. I admit that I'm biased - I'm a smoker (blame it on the government - I started smoking in the army). But wait! Maybe there's an answer here!

I will freely admit that I and the other smoking members of the Print staff smoke in the student publications trailer. I even have a "Designated Smoking Area" sign in my office (it worked in the army). Last Monday when Dr. Keyser attended the Print staff meeting he noticed the sign and said he would send all the smokers to the journalism trailer. What a great idea!

It's about time to move the Print out of the "temporary" trailer it's housed in and into better quarters. With the trailer empty it can be used as a pretty adequate smokers' lounge.

Does it meet the smokers' criteria? It's got overhead cover (well, the roof leaks, but it is a "temporary" building after all), it's heated, it has chairs and tables - a perfect setup. Now all we need is somewhere to house the Print. I did notice Friday afternoon during the sit-in that Dr. Keyser's office had plenty of room...

The Western news media are a pack of buzzards. A pretty strange statement from a journalism major, but it's true. I realized this after watching network coverage of the San Francisco earthquake. It wasn't long after the disaster that the bay area was invaded by the big "news monster." Even local stations sent reporters to cover the quake "via satellite." The last thing a disaster area needs is several hundred reporters and cameramen getting in the way. How many different shots of the Bay Bridge and I-880 do we need anyway?

Every network anchor did a broadcast from the site of the earthquake. Why? I still remember Tom Brokaw going to Armenia after their devastating quake, only to hear NBC use it as a promotional gimmick a week later in an ad for the nightly news.

Journalism is selling out to slick television advertising executives.

College students lack basic knowledge

A report came out last week explaining that one-fourth of college seniors do not know the time period when Christopher Columbus landed in the Caribbean. It went on further to say that a nearly equal number of students didn't know many other facts, such as when the Civil War was, who the President was during most of the Depression and World War II, and mixing up Winston Churchill with Josef Stalin.

In an article by John Camper of the Chicago Tribune, Lynne Cheney, chairwoman of the humanities endowment, was quoted as saying "It's astonishing to me that when you watch college graduates cross the stage to pick up their diplomas, one out of four can't tell you when Columbus sailed."

Is it astonishing, though? Where do these problems arise-

from lack of intelligence? No is the answer to both questions. Is it astounding in a country where everyone has a right to a free education classes are shut down for lack of funding or for their "liberal" reading material?

In fact, funding seems to be the cause for all of these problems. Twenty years ago, teaching was still a profession that was respectable and the salaries were just as respectable. Today, though, more than half of the States do not even pay their teachers the average salary of that State. Teaching is losing to other careers many people who would have become teachers. And why not? If most of us were asked the question "Would you like to take your Masters degree and make \$75,000 or \$29,000 a year?" who would not answer 75?

Without good teachers to excite students about subjects the

school system will constantly lose students to MTV. Those college seniors are not stupid; they may not know who wrote "Crime and Punishment" but they could probably tell you the person on the cover of People Magazine for the past week.

Whose fault is this? The legislatures of each state. Time after time they give themselves pay raises citing the need to draw people from the private sector to civil service. I wasn't under the impression that one went into civil service to make money, but rather out of benevolence for your fellow man. These self same legislators consistently pass up the job of hammering out a real scholastic program, or for that matter anything except those programs which help themselves be re-elected.

In a country which exalts "Jocks" to a height that half of a

football team can commit a felony sex crime upon one young girl then try to cover the crime up I suppose disrespect for education is the norm.

Property owners who pay taxes to support the school system would rather, complain about certain "dangerous" books rather than their child's ignorance when it comes to humanities, history, social science.

This continuing downward spiral into the pits of ignorance will continue until somebody decides to brave the winds of public opinion and tackle the beast of education to create a working system that graduates students who can face the world well enough to make considered adult decisions. I don't see this happening in the near future.

Letters to the editor...

Smoking ban issue intensifying

To the editor,

As you are aware, the issue of smoking on campus has become more intense in the last week.

Last Friday those in favor of lifting the smoking ban staged a successful sit-in at the office of President John Keyser. I would like to personally commend everyone who took part in the sit-in for their excellent behavior and consideration of others. It took real class to protest a ban on smoking without lighting up. This seems to be consistent for the group as they have said from the very beginning that they didn't want to infringe on the rights of others and only wanted their own space.

However, at the sit-in there were some misguided accusations that some members of the student activities staff along with members of ASG have been intentionally withholding smokers' comments from the President's Council. These accusations are totally without merit and nothing could be farther from the truth.

The persons making these comments should have researched the minutes of the President's Council before making such remarks. The comments in question are currently and have always been available to the public. To acquire this information, currently over six pages in length, one only needs to ask a member of the student activities staff or the ASG.

The sit-in was a good learning experience for all involved. However, now is the time to convince the students and staff of your

position. The key to doing this is organization combined with effective action. ASG must remain neutral on this issue but we are ready to support your effort in any way possible.

Garett J. Lytle
ASG President

Smokers need clean, isolated area

To the editor,

Today as I walked into one of the main entrances of the community center, where the smokers hang out, I was appalled by how filthy the area is. There are chairs scattered here and there, some occupied, others not, discarded napkins, empty cups and, worst of all, cigarette butts lying all over the ground.

I understand what it is like to be hooked on cigarettes, to need cigarettes and feel that it is a smoker's right to be able to smoke. I smoked for 22 years before I quit. But being a non-smoker now I also realize how annoying the smoke, ashes and cigarette butts are to the non-smoking population.

Smokers need a designated area away from non-smokers in which to smoke. It needs to fulfill several requirements such as being out of the weather, well ventilated, comfortable and easy to keep clean. I realize that a separateroom or building is probably out of the question due to budgets. Perhaps people would be willing to con-

tribute to such a cause (both smokers and non-smokers alike); after all it would be for the benefit of everyone.

Everyone should be concerned. We don't need cigarette smoke back in our main buildings! It is so nice not to have to breathe someone else's cigarette smoke.

Linda Partridge
Student

Latvians face loss of identity

To the editor,

The Chrysler Corporation is on the verge of getting involved in a bit of international genocide.

Please forgive if the assumption is made that you know little about the Latvian nation.

Briefly: Historically, Latvians have been unable to keep out of the affairs of their much larger neighbors. Toward the end of WWI, in order to free themselves from German barons, many Latvians joined Lenin and his Bolsheviks. During the ensuing calamity they managed to make many Russians very, very unhappy.

During WWII Latvians again got mixed up in the fight between the big boys and vigorously resisted the implementation of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, namely, the second coming of the Russians. When things settled down after

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