

# Opinions

The Blue  
Banner

Editorial

## Who's really in control?

Basic morality implies a respect for truth, something which seems more and more rare in our leaders, our media, and ourselves. Of course, one thing about truth is that leaders set the example, even though we think we no longer need someone to show us how to act.

If our administration is not willing to tell the truth about what happens in student court, or what decisions are made concerning students with criminal records, why should we expect them to tell us the truth concerning anything else?

And why are they the ones in charge? And why is the student court acting as though the administration is dictating their thought?

Student court is for students to evaluate and judge their fellow students who have broken university laws or federal laws. Student court is not a puppet for the administration to use.

Student court and student government are, as the names imply, student entities. They are run by students, for student affairs, accountable to students.

If a student organization will not answer questions that students have, then it does not fulfill its function.

So the questions remain, who told student court to stay quiet? If they can't say anything because of closed session, and Reid was judged to be harmless, why don't they want that fact published? If he is not harmless, why the overwhelming concern for the one against the many?

Wouldn't the prudent course of action include at least informing the university population of the matter so that students can use their own judgement in how to respond?

We do not advocate infringing on his right to privacy, but we do ask that a matter of such grave import be opened to public knowledge, so that each and every student may do what he deems best in this situation.

Hopefully, we can act grown-up enough to know when to be kind and forgiving, and when to be cautious, but please, we ask that we be given the whole truth, in order to make an informed decision.

Why was this closed, if Reid is innocent, (or at least, barely guilty), and who, if anyone, is behind administration's reluctance to speak on the subject?

Let's act like the truth has some relevance for our lives, and free the student court to make their own decisions, based on evidence, not on some misguided utopian view of UNCA.

We should keep in mind what Oscar Wilde said, "The pure and simple truth is rarely pure and never simple."

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The Blue Banner welcomes submissions of letters and articles for publication. All submissions are subject to editing and are considered on the basis of interest, space, taste and timeliness.

Letters must be typed, double spaced, and must not exceed 300 words. Letters for publication must also contain the author's signature, classification, major or other relationship with UNCA.

## Interporn: The demise of Big Brother

James Hertsch

Columnist

There is no Internet pornography problem.

The media are lying to us about it. They're looking for a story. It's the minority who run around with pornography rings.

There is no Internet pornography problem.

There are some scum out there who exchange this stuff regularly, child pornography rings, etc. They can be arrested, tried, and sentenced under existing law. Such people should go to jail, and they do.

There is no Internet pornography problem.

The knee-jerk reaction to all the hype has been to write legislation about it...totally outlaw "indecent" on the Internet, or any computer networks. To prosecute not only those who distribute it, but those who are the providers for those who distribute the dirty pictures. We would as soon sue the phone company for somebody making an obscene call.

There is no Internet pornography problem.

Finding publications like *Playboy* and *Penthouse* on the Web is not that hard. It's also not that hard to get hold of them in a bookstore; indecency hardly began on the Internet.

There is no Internet pornography problem.

Where are the parents? Why don't they supervise the kiddies on the computer? Why don't they turn the computers off?

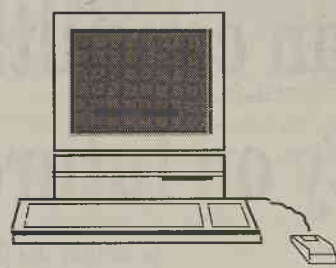
There is no Internet pornography problem.

The Internet, a decentralized group of computer networks, is the ultimate expression of

free speech. You can say anything. Do anything. You flame. You get flamed. And all Big Brother can do is watch.

Officials at the Simon Wiesenthal Center have sent notes out to Internet providers, asking that content which would spread racism, anti-Semitism, or general mayhem, be censored. Be removed. That ideas be destroyed. That ideas be restrained.

Providers, as a general rule, state that they're not responsible for their users. And well



they should say this, for we need this freedom to exchange ideas. We need the ability to discourse, without having to hide behind the veneers of politeness we use in real space.

For the human species, there can be nothing more valuable than this communications medium. In cyberspace, everybody can hear you scream—and multitudes will scream back. It sounds like the main "problem" is free speech.

The Internet is the ultimate expression of the "free marketplace of ideas." As it stands now, the Internet is not peaceful, but it is a hubbub of activity. It is freedom, it is liberty. The Internet is home to everybody and nobody.

There is no problem on the Internet.

Yet, as we've seen above, some say there is. Some ask that the Internet be regulated. Some believe the marketplace be restricted. Some would even require that the Internet be closed.

And, why should the government regulate the Internet? The answer is that the government is here to protect us. To shield us from the unknown. To address our fears.

That's the larger issue here. Fear. Fear of change. Fear of the unknown. The information Revolution is wonderful and frightening.

With modern technology, you can send a message from here to the South Pole. Thanks to the miracles of e-mail, we are coming closer to becoming a true global village. Camaraderie, friendship, and understanding across national boundaries are more possible than ever before. With e-mail, a person can get to know you on a deep, personal level...from a thousand miles away.

With your Social Security number, and some hacking, a person can find out almost anything about you. Your name. Your birthday. Your shoe-size. Your credit rating. Anything you say or do.

It's like the ancient gods and their priests, who saw all, knew all, and, with a few words of power, could strike you down where you stood.

Today's priests can sacrifice you on the altar of technology. Today's priests, though ridiculed, hold a certain mystical power. They are the gate keep-

ers of the information superhighway. They sit, huddled at tiny keyboards... who knows what they think?

Today's priests mutter incantations under their breath, chants as unintelligible as ancient mystical verse. WYZIWIG and GUI and Source Code and Executable.

The Church on a Hill is a Church in a Valley. Silicon Valley. Bill Gates might as well be the Pope. Some of us are clergy. Most of us are the flock. The congregation.

With the new technology, we can move beyond this physical world. Touch another one. We can reach across the planet to shake hands...or to break them.

The only way to control this, some people believe, is to regulate it: You can't say this. You can't say that. You can't do this. Meanwhile, the hackers, the devils and demons of this new mythology, become instead minor deities. They thumb their noses at the authority which would trap them in the name of some "greater good."

It's chaos in the midst of ordered series of binary data, zeroes and ones in perfect harmony.

Internet pornography and cybersmut and extremist political rhetoric are only part of the "problem." Most of the "problem" is free speech. Free speech is only part of the revolution. The revolution is happening all around us, awful and glorious.

It's coming.

It's here.

It's gone.

And we can't even try to stop it.

## Basketball, it's not a game anymore

Nate Conroy

Columnist

Man, I hate people.

Particularly parent sports "fans" at their child's high school athletic events. These contests are low-profile games with a few normal fans, but abounding with "parent-fans." These overzealous moms and dads eagerly pick up the slack for the small crowd, screaming and hollering about offense and defense. Many even yell during time-outs and halftime when the teams are in the locker room.

Having escaped the ranks of the participants in high school athletics, I now grudgingly take my place among the mob in the bleachers to watch my sister play... JV high school basketball - the worst of parent-fan hells.

On one particularly dark and stormy January evening, my seat choice landed me right beside a lovely woman who, for lack of a better name, we'll call "Bertha." How shall I describe this prodigious hulk of woman? Just conjure up the most hideous, obnoxious, repulsive, jackass of a woman of

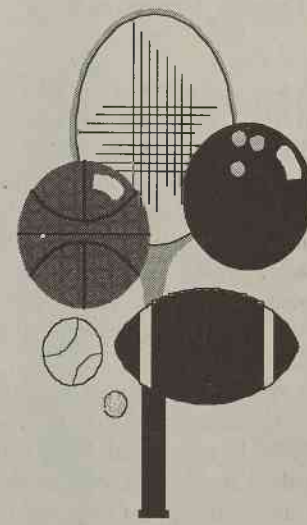
which you could think. Next picture her bellowing cheers and jeers continuously for two hours. Then put two little rat-tailed children scampering around at her feet.

Imagine Bertha encouraging them to mock the other team and make screeching noises during free throws. Imagine her arguing with the other team's parents; imagine her arguing with her team's parents; imagine her arguing with the world.

One of Bertha's slams on her fourteen year-old enemies (the other team) was "We got a sumo out there!"

When one of the larger girls bumped into somebody. Ironically, Bertha looked about as close to a Sumo wrestler as any woman I've ever seen, except she was much louder and much less attractive. Nonetheless, Bertha's children found the remark extremely humorous, showing their approval by

repeating the comment for the next ten minutes. Bertha was obviously pleased with herself for having made the eight year-olds laugh as she chuckled along



with them.

By the time the game reached halftime, hate and loathing had filled the gym as if the pink slime from "Ghostbusters II" was bubbling up underneath the bleachers. Random parent-fans (probably easygoing, friendly people who could func-

tion normally within society during the day) were transformed into screaming, raving lunatics. These people all had jobs, friends, and families, but the fact that their child was on the court caused them to lose all self-control.

I asked one particularly ruthless fan, "Would your mother like it if she saw you act like this?"

"This is my mother!" she responded, pointing to a lady who was screaming twice as loud and foaming at the mouth.

"AND THAT'S MY GRANDDAUGHTER!" granny roared, gesturing towards the girl on the court arguing with the ref.

Who was winning the game on the court? I almost forgot. Luckily, with a few minutes left everyone realized there was a good game going on! Even Bertha quit stomping and started supporting her Neanderthaloid daughter. The thundering fans quit yelling at everybody and actually started cheering!