

Opinions

The Banner

Editorial

Good enough

What counts

As the war continues to rage over Elian Gonzalez's extended stay in Miami, Fla., any remaining drops of sanity in the situation have evaporated in the political mess his story has become.

Regardless of our democracy-bred, high-minded beliefs about the state of life in Cuba, the boy belongs with his father. Who are we, way up here in our privileged middle-class existence, to say that the boy would automatically be better off here in the United States? With all this election-year focus on family, one would think Elian would have long ago been reunited with his father.

As trained as we are to believe that our ever-upstanding democracy is the be-all and end-all of world societies, we often forget that billions of people do not live under our rules of right and wrong. The rest of the world survives every day without the extravagant luxuries we take for granted in our materialistic and ultimately free lives. Fifty bucks says that very few of them ever think about our way of life, just as few of us consider theirs. That is, until it is forced into our social consciousness by the untimely death of a mother and the miraculous survival of her son.

It is not our right to make the morally weighty decision that Elian would be happier here. To do so would be a leap of phenomenal arrogance.

This seemingly simple debate has turned into a mad-house of fighting relatives, protesters, press and government officials. In the middle sits a young boy who seems to have been forgotten in the whirlwind of social and political upheaval. Is anyone actually concerned with the well-being of the child, or is everyone just arguing a cause? Even the newspapers are getting tired of writing this story.

So as Elian's father arrives in the United States March 6, we hope the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services will grant immediate custody, and allow Elian to return home and get on with his life. It seems that grieving the death of his mother would be enough for a six-year-old boy to handle without turning his tragedy into a circus.

Maybe that's something

A new federal program will begin cautioning parents concerning the administering of Ritalin and other psychiatric drugs to preschool children.

From 1991 to 1995, the use of ritalin increased 150 percent among preschoolers, while antidepressants such as Prozac increased over 200 percent, according to the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Will the future generations become drugged zombies simply because parents either do not know the ramifications of such drugs or because they prefer to have a sedated child instead of a rambunctious one?

There are far too many prescription drugs floating around that are easily attainable for all ages. Ritalin is intended for children with attention-deficit disorder, which is a small percentage of the population, not for any excitable child. In addition to children using these drugs, many are also having to take clonidine, a blood pressure drug that alleviates sleeping problems caused by drugs like Prozac.

Some authorities worry that these drugs are replacing behavior-modification and family therapies, according to CNN.

These drugs are often the easy solution to many of the children prescribed. Parents and doctors should look for other solutions besides an easily administered pill.

It might take longer to work through a child's problems, but in the long run it would be healthier and more complete. Is the answer to any problem a pill? Delving beneath childhood idiosyncrasies to find the root of the problem should be more of an emphasis than a prescription.

Who's got the keys?

Just a reminder: every time you log on to buy a product, hear a song, research a project or e-mail a friend, you are giving any other Internet user access to your private information.

Though sometimes it might be nice to know how many crimes everyone in your neighborhood has committed, realize also that criminals can just as easily obtain your personal history and present whereabouts.

Be aware of any security warnings given on sites. They are required by law, so they do serve a purpose. The right to information applies to everyone, not just the good guys. So look both ways before changing lanes on the information superhighway.

A few suggestions to promote cleanliness on our campus



Liam Bryan

columnist

I hate clutter. No, really. I know it sounds somewhat odd, coming from someone whose desk currently hosts a family of boll weevils and an escaped Indian elephant, but I really dislike messes.

That is why I am so disturbed by the aesthetic aspect of our campus. Here we are, a clean, tree-hugging community, and when you get right down to it, we are pretty trashy here.

First, I do applaud the existence of a recycling program here. I am glad that UNCA has made allotments and given encouragement for a greener Terra mostly Firma. Not only is there recycling, but I have noticed a healthy trend of reuse of materials as well. All that excess paper generated by the computer labs is generally gathered as scrap paper for the various areas that need it.

Yes, some professors still insist on printing handouts for every day of class, of which the material content of the handouts could perhaps be better expressed in a Web page. But I think that there are enough people and faculty who use electronic media rather than paper. The paperless office is here, but not enough people are willing to look for it.

But this campus is getting messy. First, there are the animals. I love animals. Cats, dogs, ferrets, marmosets, even Republicans. But stepping in their messes is not my idea of a good time.

People, I do not mind your pets

being on campus. I doubt if anyone here does mind a wet nose and begging eye now and then. But clean up after them. If you have to leave, tie them up somewhere, and then clean that area when you get back. Remember, a carnivore's stool is not conducive to being fertilizer.

Not that pets are the only problem. I know that you all are nature lovers, enjoying the sight of squirrels and what-nots. Well, enjoy those squirrels and birds, but please do not leave out seed for them, because it will get wet and rot, making quite an unattractive mess.

But I still must praise the students. The outdoors are thankfully devoid of trash and discarded items. This does show that people do care about the condition of this campus.

The interior of these buildings, however, does not strike me as even close to the beaver-like industriousness of groundskeeping. First item on note are the corkboards.

These boards were put up on campus to alert students of events. Now, they have become collages of pretty colors, but not much else. Everything from ENIAC sales to political propaganda to "Action Jackson" posters decorate these boards.

So, no current information can be gleaned from these boards, as all that appears to the observer is old, outdated information.

But, there are solutions. Yes, there are still ways to attract the attention of passers-by. These methods include covering more area of the

board by putting up multiple flyers on the corkboards, and by spreading the areas where such flyers may be viewed. Namely, putting up such advertisements on places other than these boards.

So, of these two alternatives, let us examine the first. This takes up quite a bit of paper, and is made even more inefficient due to the fact that said paper is usually colored. Not to mention that the more of one kind of ad that a person sees, the more inclined they are to ignore it.

As for placing these ads up in places other than the boards, — that action is deplorable (oh, goable a dig on a r r r r r).

There is a reason why people are encouraged to place their advertisements upon the bulletin boards, and that is cleanliness. Not only do these boards limit the space of such announcements,

but they also help protect the walls from tape.

As any painter could tell you, tape is very destructive to interior paint. So, when some industrious student decides to tape up their flyers about campus, they end up peeling off the paint job of the walls.

Not to mention the fact that these pieces of paper thrown up everywhere are quite ugly. Seeing paper after paper after paper is more than just a little annoying.

So, what can we do about this? More than a little, I can assure you.

First off, stop using the walls. Use the boards which have been provided for you by the school. I know that you feel that your advertisement might get missed among the many other notices. Well, that brings me to the second point.

Keep these things updated. Students will not pay attention to the boards if they still have old information on them that is irrelevant. Maybe a student organization could sponsor the upkeep of these boards.

On the note of bulletin boards, also remember that the drama department displays are just that: the drama department's. They are not for other organizations or students. If you put something up on them, it will most likely get taken down.

Now, one last issue of campus appearance (at least, that we have control over) remains. De face me.

Why? Why is it so important to destroy sculpture, scratch our faces and change the words on announcements? How juvenile. If anyone at the collegiate level still gets off on destroying things, then admissions needs to take a serious look at who they are admitting.

Give your campus some credit, people. So, when you see a item of trash, or someone defacing the school or even a stray dog, take a little initiative and do something about it. Presenting a boorish front to the prospective students is not an intelligent plan.

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Take note of the under'Dogs



Matthew Rossi

columnist

You know, I really think the amount of sports coverage contained within our school's newspaper, *The Banner*, is impressive. While I am not much of a sports fan, I realize that in many ways athletics is a very important part of any university, a sort of glue that binds the community together.

So, I find it quite heartening that every week we can read about our various teams and their successes. We can see how well the baseball team has done, how good our tennis players are and the astounding achievements of the track team.

Oh, wait. We never really hear about the track team. Well, maybe there's not much to tell. Maybe we don't have a track team of any size or value. Then who are all those people I see running around in biker shorts and sports bras? Surely they are not just random fitness fanatics. Well, no. The fact of the matter is that we do have a very strong track team, and they are all but ignored

in this campus community. I would not have known a thing about our track team, even that we had one, if not for the efforts of Molly Demattos, who has been trying to single-handedly advertise the strengths of her peers. And I feel that it's high time we saw more about the track team, one of the largest and hardest working athletic teams on our campus.

According to Demattos, the track team is far from weak in distance and field events. During every meet practically everyone breaks a personal record, and some even break school records. Recently, Michelle Ray, a senior, broke a school record in the hammer. And Clint Bardon, a freshman, broke the school record in the discus. Who, also a freshman, Crystal Goutre, who competes in high jump, pole vault, javelin, discus and shot put, regularly places in four out of those five.

Far be it from me to send a

thousand words criticizing the very people who have given me a venue to air my gripes, but this needs to be said. In fairness to the *Banner* staff, it is not their fault that the track team is often ignored.

I know little about how our journalists decide what sports events to cover, but I assume they decide based on their knowledge of upcoming sporting events. There is a little bulletin board in the gym which advertises whatever is happening through a given week or weekend. Track events don't make it to that board. In their place fits baseball, basketball, tennis, women's volleyball. But no track.

And it is not just the *Banner* that forgets to cover the track team's wide successes. During basketball season, I received string of mass e-mails from the chancellor's office giving practically a blow by blow coverage of the basketball team's successes, demonstrating pity for their losses, and asking us to come out and support our team and our campus as a whole. But I haven't to receive a single e-mail supporting our track team and their efforts.

And it is not as though there have not been opportunities. Track is a four-round sport. According to Demattos, there is not a single time during the year when the track team is not active. They have their preseason, two seasons through the spring and fall during which they have met all the time, and then post-season.

They work nonstop at their sport, trying to perfect it. It is practically a full-time job to be on the track team, and their efforts pay off. They go to meets and compete with world-championship athletes, often times holding their own very nicely.

So, why does the track team, who works so hard to perfect their sport, their art, get all but ignored in our campus media? Molly suggested that people think track is a "participation sport," meaning that just about anyone can get into track. They do not realize just how hard it is to be on the team and the level of effort that the team puts in.

"It's a lack of respect, and it is really annoying," said Demattos. "It's like if you worked for months to put on a play and then nobody bothered to advertise it or give it coverage in a paper. Nobody would show, and you be like, 'What the hell!'"

The track team is just as much an integral component of our campus community as any other sport. I think it's high time we supported them in their efforts. So, on April 21 and 22, the team will be competing for the conference championship. If they gain no support and nobody shows, they will likely lose the bid for further conferences. In school which is trying so hard to gain respect through sports, it would be a shame for apathy to stifle a team's chance to grow. Please support them.