

the Seahawk

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Thomas M. Ruyle

VIEW FROM THE DODO'S NEST

Knight firing exposes modern college values

It finally happened. After years of complaints, allegations, televised tantrums and accusations of assaulting his basketball players, Indiana University finally saw fit to fire Bobby Knight after grabbing a young student by the arm and lecturing him on manners.

Bobby Knight, the infamous IU coach, lecturing someone on manners. Ha! I would have paid to see such a farce, just to see how ludicrous it could be.

After narrowly escaping dismissal a few months ago amid a series of other alleged transgressions toward other students, this was the straw that broke the camel's back. IU President Myles Brand finally saw fit to solve the problem and dismiss Knight.

But the bigger picture is not Bobby Knight. It's the American collegiate athletic system.

Brand made a good call...but he waited way too long to do so. By waiting so long, Brand proved that his university is more concerned with having a winning basketball team than the safety of the players, other students and anyone else within chair-throwing distance of the coach.

Most of us would agree that if a professor were accused of the same behavior as Knight, that professor would be sent packing immediately. So why not the coach? After all, coaches are responsible for instilling leadership skills and molding young men and women – and they are responsible for their safety, too. It's a double standard.

All in all, it's a sad commentary on the values of the American collegiate system: the rise of athletics as the prime focus of the institution's existence, rather than the reason for building a school in the first place – as a center for higher learning. Modern American uni-

versities spend an insane amount of time and money building their athletic programs while today's college graduates enter the job market less and less prepared. In short, colleges are becoming more and more renowned as farm clubs for the professional sports leagues than fertile ground for tomorrow's leaders to blossom.

And to prove that point, we simply need to look at the IU campus after Knight was fired. Several thousand students from that supposedly great school spent several days demonstrating all over campus, causing damage and disrupting the academic pursuits of their fellow students – just because the head basketball coach, a well-known jerk, was fired. Sure enough, some of these enlightened protestors went so far as to threaten President Brand and his family, as well as the family of the young student whom Knight tried to "lecture" about manners.

And while Knight handled the situation badly and sealed his fate, perhaps our nation's universities need to take a lesson – and a long, hard look – at academic values.

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Editorial Viewpoint

Who Is Benefiting From the New Alcohol Laws?

Drinking is a rite of passage in college. Whether it is done to celebrate, as experimentation, or as a weekly ritual college students always have and always will drink.

The recent initiative to curb underage drinking is well intentioned in the aspect that it may cut down on number of drink drivers and the illegal sales of alcohol to minors. However, the tactics employed to enforce these laws are flawed.

On any weekend night one is sure to recognize the circling blue lights in front of houses that are hosting parties. In many cases the police officers who bust up these functions send intoxicated partygoers home and ticket the home's owner. The higher fines that the new legislation will hand over to party hosts who "aid and abet minors" may deter these people from holding parties, yet putting intoxicated individuals into their cars and on the road creates a much more serious problem.

Similarly, the process of holding party hosts responsible for the actions of their guests is unfair as few parties in Wilmington are "invita-

tion-only" gatherings where the host knows all of his guests. Parties can get out of hand and there is no guarantee that home-owners have knowledge of all alcohol and substance abuse on their premises.

The recent trend to create new laws aiming at preventing underage drinking is having a two-fold negative effect on today's youth. The legislators seemingly fail to realize that no amount of regulation will prevent underage drinking; the result of the new laws is that underage drinkers will find more secluded, less safe places to drink, and those who are caught will have a legal black mark on their record for the rest of their life.

Certainly, we must be vigilant in stemming the incidence of DWI offenses and other alcohol-related problems where safety is compromised. But to levy heavy fines and possible jail on those who drink underage – and those who provide a legitimate safe place to drink – will only create more problems for the police and legal system than it will solve.

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