

Opinions and Editorials

Book censorship attacks education

The rising tide of attempted book censorship in the schools of North Carolina and other states should be of concern to any college student. As future educators, business leaders, and parents, we feel that the Wesleyan student should see book censorship as an attack on education in general. Therefore, the Wesleyan student should become more informed about the nature of the problem in order to protect against becoming dangerously apathetic about the issue.

In this day of emphasis upon freeing man from the bonds of ignorance through education, is there cause for serious concern among professional educators sufficient to warrant a vigilant attitude among students concerning book censorship? We believe so.

Recently, Gene D. Lanier, professor of library science at East Carolina University, and chairman of the Intellectual Freedom Committee of the N.C. Library Association, cited just a few examples provided by librarians from across North Carolina of censorship attacks. There have been more than 200 such reports received by Mr. Lanier since 1980.

According to Mr. Lanier, among these efforts to censure books in the schools was an effort in Durham to remove the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* from the library because the basket the little girl was taking to her grandmother contained a bottle of wine and because of the story's violence.

Also, in Wilmington, efforts were made to remove the "R" volume of the World Book Encyclopedia from a school because

critics object to the way the topic of "reproduction" is treated.

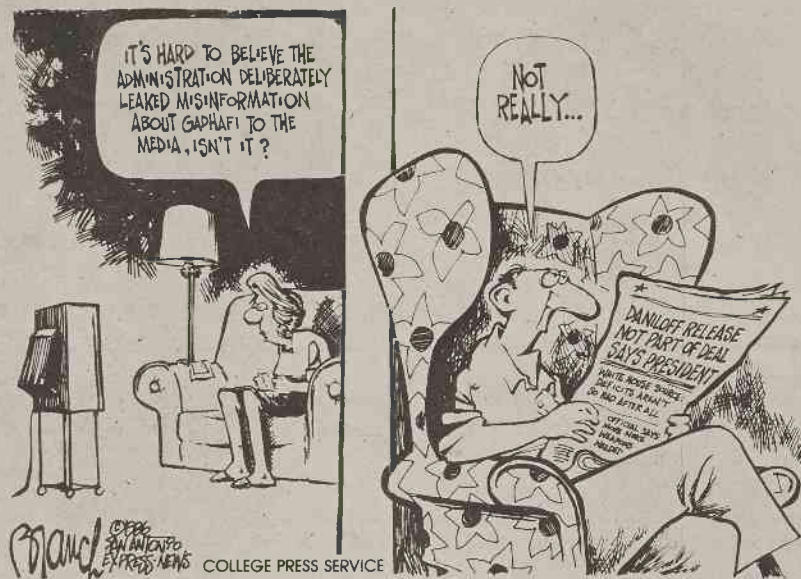
Notwithstanding the well intentioned efforts by parents and others to attack education by censoring certain books, we believe that the effort is misguided. The efforts to ban books seems to be a search for quick fixies to complicated social problems.

Our children, however, do not live in a bubble and the banning of books will do nothing to protect them from the realities of life. In fact, if a student can not find information in a school library because of the arbitrary banning of information, where can he or she find it?

One of the hoped for results of many book banning campaigns seems to be the restoration of student morality. We believe that such a view is narrow and unrealistic given the students susceptibility to peer pressure, television, and other media. The French philosopher and political theorist Rousseau wrote in his essay, *The Social Contract*, "Censorship may be useful for the preservation of morality, but can never be so for its restoration."

We subscribe to the policy set forth in the American Library Association's *Library Bill of Rights* which states in part, "Libraries should provide books and other materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times; no library materials should be prescribed or removed from libraries because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval."

This seems to be a more prudent approach to the dissemination of information in a free and open society.



Required drug tests unfair

By Dr. CHRIS CARSTENS

North Carolina Wesleyan Athletic Director Mike Fox is quoted in *The Decree* (10/17/86) as saying that Wesleyan College is considering mandatory drug testing for student athletes. I think that I understand the rationale for such testing programs. It runs something like this: Illegal drugs are not good for people, and mandatory testing would discourage people from doing bad things.

What I cannot understand is why this line of reasoning applies exclusively or especially to athletes. If one group among us must be tested, why not English majors, or assistant professors, or red-haired persons? Why not all members of the college community?

However, since the members of the Athletic Department are honorable and intelligent people, it must be the case that there is a logical solution to this perplexing conundrum. Accordingly, I have cleared my mind of all distracting thoughts and foreign substances, so that I can attempt to figure out why athletes alone merit special consideration in this matter.

Perhaps athletes are inherently more valuable human beings than non-athletes; this would certainly justify singling them out for drug testing. I scoured my Bible for theological validation for this position. I initially thought that the search was over when I learned that Jesus gave special attention to lepers. Imagine my chagrin upon learning that lepers are not persons distinguished by their jumping ability.

If athletes are not intrinsically superior to non-athletes, then maybe what athletes do is more important than the mundane behavior of non-athletes. Is this the critical feature that sets athletes apart? Call me sentimental, but I think that teaching Western Civilization and running the Admissions Office and learning French are as important as kicking a ball in a meritorious fashion.

Perhaps athletes are, on an actuarial basis, more likely than non-athletes to take illegal drugs, so that we must monitor athletes more closely. Logically possible, yes, but

hardly plausible.

Maybe athletes are not inherently superior, nor behave in a more valuable way, nor behave in a more licentious way. Perhaps they are simply easier to coerce. Indeed, are they not over a barrel? They want very badly to participate in team sports, and can do so only with the consent of the Athletic Department.

Athletes want to be on the team so badly that they may be willing to give up their constitutional rights to privacy, to due process of law, and to protection against self-incrimination. Perhaps there is a rationale to this whole business: If you want to

trample on basic human rights, make sure that the victims are in no position to fight back.

I hope that no one will construe these comments as a criticism of mandatory drug testing. I am not one of those Walter Mondale wimps who would allow trivialities such as the Constitution to stand in the way of Nancy Reagan's Drug-Free America. As a matter of fact, I plan to propose mandatory sexual orientation tests that would involve physical evidence, preferably videotapes, of heterosexual intercourse at least once a week. But that is a matter for another article.

Why aren't alarms fixed?

By TOM ROSS

I'm lying on Laguna Beach in sunny, southern California overlooking the waves crashing on the Pacific Coast shoreline. There is a woman lying on each side of me, listening attentively to every word I say. Things are going just perfectly when all of a sudden it's dark, I'm alone, and in my own bed at N.C. Wesleyan College. Yes, I've been awakened from my dream by the sound of the fire alarm. I quickly, and very unhappily, get out of my bed to go outside into the freezing cold. Why don't these alarms work properly?

When I attended my first dorm meeting in the 1986-87 academic year, I was informed of the procedure to follow if the new fire alarm sounded. I was told that there may be some false alarms for the first few weeks, as the system had some "kinks" to work out.

The first few times when the alarm sounded I quickly evacuated the dorm, following the procedure I had been told to follow. Again, I wasn't happy about being awakened during the middle of the night, but I just knew that these "kinks" would soon be worked out.

Well, here we are in the ninth week of the semester and these "kinks" still appear to be in the system. I was awakened just this week once again by what I heard someone call a "faulty detector." I

realize that there is no way that my RD, or anyone else on this campus for that matter, can control this system, but why don't we call the people who installed the system and ask them to come and find out what is wrong with it?

I'm also a little in the dark about another aspect of this alarm system. Why is it that every time the alarm sounds the system is left inoperative for several days? Maybe I'm confused about the whole idea of having a fire alarm system installed in our dorms, as I thought it had been put in to warn me in case of a fire and allow me a chance to escape safely. How can the system alert me of a fire if it is not even on?

I don't know about all of the other people in the dorm, but it worries me to think that if there is a fire I will not be warned about it because the system is inoperative.

I know that there is no one answer to my complaints regarding the new system, nor is there a quick cure for this entire problem. I suppose the people in charge have made every attempt to correct these problems — or have they? I just can't understand the reasoning behind installing a fire alarm system in each dorm, at a great cost to the school, when the time that the system is operating, it works improperly, and the remainder of the time is not even on. Therefore, again I ask the question, "Why don't these alarms work properly?"

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