

## Editor's Comments

### THE GOVERNMENT

In the battle to keep government small, it seems that we are losing at a faster rate every day. The thing that we once called Uncle Same has now become "Big Mama," and the dependence of our population on "Big Mama" is increasing every day.

With the recent ban on saccharin, "Big Mama" has publicly shown her control over businesses and consumers in America. The freedom of choice is rapidly vanishing in our society because Big Mama is now dictating what is good or bad for us, just as if she really knows what she is doing.

It seems to me that the bureaucrats take us to be dumb, uneducated, and irresponsible. I personally feel that I am quite capable of making my own choices about a product based on published information that is readily available in most consumer magazines. It is quite simple to see that the test animals used in the experiments with saccharin were given a dosage that was several times the normal intake for any given period of time. Highly concentrated doses of almost anything will cause disorders and sometimes death to any living creature. It feels that it is reasonably safe to assume that if a person were to try to drink his way out of a swimming pool, he would drown; of if this same person tried to drink too much booze, he might die from lack of oxygen to the brain. The entire point of the matter is that excess amounts of anything might cause disorders in the body.

The banning of saccharin gives rise to a real and startling question. "Does the government have the right to make decisions in the personal choices of each individual in this country?" If it does, then I feel that it is time for me to leave. I value my freedom of choice, and I feel that the government has no right to interfere with that freedom. People should be made aware of the possible dangers of products, but the choice to use a product should be left to the individual.

I take this opportunity to remind everyone that cigarettes have been proven dangerous, yet because it is not economically sound to ban cigarettes, millions of Americans are happily puffing themselves to death.

### THE VISITOR LOT DISGRACE

The students and faculty of WCC are angry, and I am no exception. Parking is, and probably always will be, a problem at this college. However, the major topic of dissatisfaction among students and faculty is the visitors parking lot. Its location and size is a definite display of extravagance.

At other universities and colleges that I have visited, the visitors parking lots are quite small (4 or 5 spaces), and are located anywhere BUT in front of the administration building. Some colleges simply issue visitors passes and a person must park where he can find a place. Why must we be different at WCC? When tangible people such as the students and faculty who come here everyday are placed second in priority to three or four nameless individuals who may or may not come here, a bit of reorganization is definitely necessary.

Brenda Moore was able to sum up the entire situation in this statement: "We flatter ourselves to think that every day WCC will have 28 visitors to fill the visitors lot."

Aside from just visitors, the Lowe's Company personnel are allowed to utilize the visitors lot. As I understand it, these personnel are enrolled in a management training program. In other words, they are students, and they should park in the student parking lots. In no way do I recognize these people as visitors.

If anyone should benefit from the location of that lot, it should be the faculty or students here. Times change, and so do situations and opinions. It is time for this college to "get with it," rearrange a few things. Let's give consideration where it's due, to the faculty and students at this college.

### QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE

Since this newspaper went to the trouble of printing a questionnaire in its last edition, it will go to the trouble of printing the extremely poor response. Out of an estimated 800 copies that were circulated, only 7, yes, S-E-V-E-N, responses were received. Here are the results.

1. Would you like to see the Yearbook brought back next year?  
Six answered yes, and one did not care one way or the other.
2. Would you be willing to pay an additional fee to help cover the rising costs of publication?  
Five answered yes and two answered no.
3. Would you be willing to work on the Yearbook staff?  
Five answered yes and two answered no.
4. Do you think that the amusement machines should be allowed to remain in the Commons?  
All seven responses to this question were yes.
5. Do you feel it would be a good investment of tax money to help bury the power cables in Wilkesboro and North Wilkesboro, and do away with the poles and overhead wires?  
Three answered yes and four answered no.

You now have the results. See if you can draw a conclusion. I cannot. To the seven persons that were concerned enough to give a response, this editor thanks you. For the others who did not, thank you for showing just how much you care.

## Servomation

Servomation is the mechanical cafeteria in our main Commons. A mundane topic of little importance, maybe.

The bill changer seems to work most of the time, but the oven, milk machine, and some of the other money gobbling monstrosities are another question. It is time for the faculty and students who eat here to complain. The food selection is poor, the coffee awful. Servomation makes enough profit that we have a right

to expect a newer oven and better selection. It is certainly hoped that in the new construction there are plans for a cafe. This reporter would hate to think that those in power are going to sell out to another vending machine ripoff.

If it were not for the delightful service and friendly smile of the Servomation lady, who has retrieved many quarters from the mechanical monsters, this miserable excuse for a cafeteria should be boycotted.

-Ken Holmes

## "Diesel Exhaust" Or "Joe Zen, The Artless Motor Mechanic"

Joe Zen was a country boy from just outside of Wilkesboro, North Carolina. His family was of a strict Southern Baptist heritage, about as sinful as they come, and this maze of contradictions led young Joe to begin asking the universal questions of time and space which neither his family, church, school, nor even Mother Nature cared to answer and most likely couldn't answer. So Joe, a large fellow for his age (most people figured him to be at least drinking age), and having a reasonable vocabulary and a wool army jacket, left home when he was six years old.

Joe didn't fool around, and in the next fifty-five years he crossed every continent by foot and sailed across every major body of water on earth. No matter where Joe went, no matter what he saw or who he spoke to, nobody could give him a straight answer. He roamed from the pyramids of North Africa, to the Holy Lands of the Middle East, through the human masses of India, into the Himalayas of Nepal where he learned humbleness, down through Burma and the Malay peninsula and even along the Indonesian Archipelago to the magical island of Bali. No one had answers for Joe Zen. With little hope left, Joe island hopped to Australia, New Zealand to the Antarctic and then caught a freighter to South America where he spent a number of years in the Andes with some wise men. He enjoyed living high in the mountains and once thought he saw God, but still no one could answer his questions. No one could even speak English! Joe was completely given out (of money), so he left the Andes to come home and see his Great Grandmother who was getting very old, nearly 150, and to while away the rest of his life peacefully on his parent's farm.

For no particular reason, perhaps for the lack of a better one (Joe's father was going to throw him out of the house unless he did something productive), Joe enrolled in the Diesel Program at Wilkes Community College. The school impressed Joe, "Because," he said "it functions to fulfill the basic industrial, agricultural, and avocational needs of the community." This, he thought, was a far cry from the other four year undergraduate programs in North America which prostitute education with consumer inspired degree programs.

Engines were Greek to Joe (Joe never understood what made the Greeks act the way they did) when he began the course, and I recall him struggling wearily through his first quarter of school. While Joe practiced welding scrap tools together and searching for the spark plugs on the Cummin's diesel he was assigned to, he would sometimes notice the instructor with a handful of students gathered together, meditating to the hum of the engine sounds. In later courses Joe learned that they had been tuning the engine to the universal mantra "ohm". Any variation from this pitch would indicate a malfunction. Joe eventually learned, having repeated the course a number of times, that by understanding the numerous variations from this perfect pitch, he could identify the exact causal relationship involved with the malfunction.

The diesel instructors, Mssrs. Bright, Hash, Rash and Hash (The names are pronounced like

the Law firm Joe consulted in Katmandu for drug charges he faced when he was seven. They lost the case and Joe got fifty years.) were truly Masters of the Art. They spent endless hours with meticulous measurements and fitting procedures to insure the maximum efficiency and performance out of each rebuilt engine. This care and patience was transferred to the students as well. When a student erred, Bright, Hash, Rash or Hash would explain in some depth the concepts, procedures, and consequences involved with the error. The student would then repeat the procedure involved, correcting the mistake.

It was only when Joe gained some competence with tools and an understanding of the basic concepts of engines (in his third year) that he began to figure out a few answers for himself. These answers stemmed from three relative concepts which the instructors stressed throughout the course.

Quality was the first of the concepts. Perfect quality, as his instructors pointed out to him many times is meaningless in relation to internal combustion engines. At best, in ideal conditions a gasoline engine is 25% efficient and diesel 36%. This means that 75% and 64%, respectively, of the energy of every gallon of fuel used in these engines is either lost in incomplete combustion or from heat loss due to the friction of mechanical parts. ZAP! And this of course does not include the energy used to extract, process, and transport the fuel to service centers, nor the energy it takes to build the engines themselves. Quality, Joe figured must be the skill to prevent further energy loss due to unnecessary malfunctions of an engine (or doing the best with what's available).

The second concept stressed was independence. Joe knew that perfect independence was meaningless in any context. Even if a person was in a position to gain a little independence, someone else would try to take it away from him. He learned that in Katmandu. This idea is not exactly what the instructor had in mind, and he expressed his argument so Joe would understand. "A resourceful mechanic who can depend on his own skills and tools to repair a malfunctioning part is far superior to the mechanic who constantly discards and replaces parts indiscriminately. New parts may not always be available or economical to use." To continue the argument the instructor expressed that "improvisational skills also allow the mechanic greater mobility as different shops vary considerably with the quantity and quality of specialized tools." Joe conceded that independence to a mechanic was his ability to adapt to a changing environment.

The final concept stressed in the course was "truth." It is a bit more nebulous than the first two but perhaps more important. Joe, in a manner of speaking, had been seeking for the larger part of his life, some sort of truth, but his instructor looked him in the eye and said, "there is no absolute truth in diesel mechanics." Joe cried. "But there is a relationship, none-the-less," the instructor continued, "between the mechanic and his place in our society and among societies. It is a non-static relationship which changes with time and exists

within a very definite historical perspective." Joe observed that throughout history, technology had made greater and greater demands for precision and efficiency (for items such as electric carving knives and SST's). In return, the methods have become overly specialized, centralized and bureaucratized. The instructor looked at Joe again with a slight smile on his face and asked, "What's the future hold for the internal combustion engine, Joe? How long can we continue to rape the planet of its resources and pollute the air?" Joe didn't smile. "One more question, Joe, before you entered this course, did you ever feel uneasy about sending your auto to a garage to have it serviced? Were you ever afraid of being cheated?" Joe couldn't answer the question fairly because he never owned a vehicle. When he came of age to drive he was in prison in Katmandu. He did have a llama in Peru. Joe had heard stories, however, about garages and figured it was a risky thing to use them.

Joe finally inferred that "truth" must be the ability to recognize one's own role of influence in society and in personal life and to accept its consequences. He was thrilled with his new understanding and became a practicing diesel mechanic at the age of 71. He went bankrupt the next year because, even though he worked as a perfectionist, he was too slow and charged very little for his work.

This misfortune didn't discourage Joe, however. With the growing decline in the standard of living due to the pollution from malfunctioning internal combustion engines, a new law was enacted which legalized suicide. Joe went into business with K. Vonnegut and set up the first suicide parlors in the country. In fact, Joe and Mr. Vonnegut were so successful that they became multibillionaires overnight. Joe sold out the next day and bought out all the trucking companies on the East Coast and required that each driver and mechanic take the diesel course at W.C.C. Most of them quit and went West. Those who stayed flooded the Wilkesboro area and created a terrible morale problem because there was nothing to do in Wilkesboro after classes and at night. To deal with the discontent, Joe asked Mr. Vonnegut to set up suicide parlors next door to all the Hardee's and Holiday Inns. With all the truck drivers and mechanics in school on the East Coast, havoc erupted in the cities. Unfortunately, most of the West Coast cross country trucks were lost the next year when the St. Andreas fault slipped and sent California to the bottom of the ocean. It made a real mess of things.

Joe, recognizing the "truth" of the matter, was finally content with his life and wished to be of no more influence on the world. He went to Hardee's the next day, ate a Double Cheese and did himself in.

After Joe's death his Great-Grandmother took over his business interests and also enrolled in the W.C.C. Diesel Program. She put the trucks back on the road again and solved most of the countries problems. She was also influential in cleaning up the environment, world-wide and keeping the population stable. A few years later, however, during a

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