

Letters to the Editors

Apathy among students is alarming.

I know it's snowing and that's exciting, but even during the winter season I've tried to venture outside the NCSSM bubble.

The Trent Lott scandal did not enrage me, nor did news that the Republicans had gained control of the Senate in November (Dissenters? What dissenters? Russ Feingold? Anyone else? Ever since you-know-when and the USA Patriot Act, I just don't know...) And I've been concerned for months about our motivations in this "War on Terrorism" or Saddam or whatever (not that we're being told anything very specific about who we are attacking or why, just that they are a threat to our freedom, our liberty, our Americanism, or maybe someone else's freedom - just that it is something worthy of going over there and stopping them, whoever "them" is).

Today is the 30-year anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion in the U.S., and in Washington, demonstrations are being held on both sides of the issue. Currently, the Supreme Court is 5-4 for abortion rights, but there is a possible retirement in the Supreme Court that would allow President Bush to appoint a justice who is against abortion rights.

The Republican Party lists the ban of late-term abortions as first on its official agenda, and although former President Clinton vetoed the bill in 1996 and 1997, President Bush has said he would sign it. These developments are quite frightening to those of us who believe in a woman's right to choose.

What was even scarier to me when reading of the demonstrations was that I had almost forgotten the issue, what is going on in Washington, what might happen in this country to individual rights (let's not mention the USA Patriot Act again...).

Does the name Jerry Thacker mean anything to

anyone? He has recently been chosen by the Bush administration to serve on the Presidential Advisory Commission on HIV and AIDS, a panel that has existed since the Reagan administration. Thacker has publicly called AIDS the "gay plague."

Yes, it is 2003. This is not to mention that Thacker calls homosexuality itself a "deathstyle" as opposed to a lifestyle and supports "reparative therapy" for homosexuals, saying "Christ can rescue the homosexual." It's not as if he's prejudiced against cab drivers or environmentalists or golf ball manufacturers. It's not as if he has a warped concept of the flu, or chicken pox, or rabies. I repeat: This man has been chosen to serve on a committee to advise the president on a worldwide epidemic.

Charles Rangel, a New York Congressman, calls for a military draft to be reinstated because he claims that blacks now make up a disproportionate number of combat troops likely to be killed in war. This stance, widely called a "draft for equality," does not agree with the statistics, which say that blacks make up less than 5 percent of the military's combat force, compared to making up 12 percent of the population (USA Today). Wait a minute...Reinstitute? Draft?

These are just a few issues that came to my attention this week; there are plenty more in Washington that will stand to affect our country for years to come (remember that a Supreme Court justice does not leave with the end of a President's term). For a variety of reasons, I think it's quite a scary time in American politics right now. Apathy among students and in the general population, stemming largely from lack of information (which I admit to being guilty of), is alarming. There are more significant things to think about than getting an A on a test, in my opinion.

BRYAN BUTLER
CLASS OF 2004
Thursday, 1/23/03

To: 3rd West (the best brother hall)
Roses are red, Violets are blue,
You guys are awesome,
And thanks for the food!
Love, 3rd Bryan

To: Albert Ren
Fix our Internet sweetie.
Love,
Everybody

To: Mi increíble, A-fisica David
Eres fantástico y de reche-pele. ¡Te amo muchísimo!
::embrazados y besos::
Erin

Dear David,
Thanks for being such a great senior brother! You helped my year get off to a good start.
Happy Valentine's Day!
Your junior sister, Leah

It is not the workload, that causes stress or depression; it is weakness in the actual character of the student body.

For twenty years students have crossed the stage at graduation and received their diplomas, because they accepted the greater challenge. Now it seems as if students no longer care about the greater challenge. No one seems to realize that the amount of work that teachers give you prepares you immensely for college. I have heard about the students who are too stressed because of workloads, and the advice I have to offer is this: learn to deal with it.

It is important to find an outlet for stress, but lowering the academic standards at NCSSM should not be considered an option. First of all, it is an insult to every graduate of NCSSM. We have all done the work that you have, experienced the stress of Phys-Tops tests, and we've all become stronger because of it. We never asked for concessions to be made on our behalf, and even if it was a lot of work we did it. We had to, and we have to in college - or deal with the consequences of not doing our work.

It is not the workload that causes stress or depression; it is weakness in the actual character of the student body. It is meant to test your character and build it. I respect every teacher I had at NCSSM because they made me a better student and prepared me for college. I look around at my peers and I realize that I am more prepared than all of them, all because of the fact that I attended NCSSM. So save yourself and your school - step up and actually accept the greater challenge.

DAN PIERGALLINI
Class of 2002
Valparaiso University

A Haiku for Trent Lott
Thank you senator,
for making
everyone else look
so much smarter.

To: Ashley
You are much cooler and prettier than that girl in Final Destination.
I hope you are never hit by a bus.
Love, Chris

Cameras In Your Home

DYLAN FERGUSON

In case you have forgotten, every time that you step off the Hunt elevator or walk off hall in Hunt Dorm you have the potential of being watched. Dr. Boarman made the statement clear to Brian Phelps and others (including myself) that the cameras were no longer on and would remain off as long as the vandalism ceased. That may have felt like a victory to some students, but the fact is that the cameras are still there and that with the flip of a switch the administration could be watching us again. This article is not to imply or accuse the administration of these acts, but it is to remind you, as a student, that these threats and symbols remain in our elevator alcoves.

The biggest issue at hand is whether or not the school has the right to watch us. Legally they have most, if not all, of their bases covered. Now, there is little we can do except try to rebuild a relationship and reconstruct a trust that once was. NCSSM finds itself on relationships of trust and comradery that tie the students and the staff together as one community - but somewhere, something has slipped. I cannot and will not point out where change could help.

SGA is one of our biggest and most useful tools, but it is also one of the most under-used and forgotten resources on campus. Other student groups like the MPCs and RLAs should also be utilized to make an effort for change. All the weight can't be put on SGA, nor can it be put on a handful of students. It must become a campus wide effort, where people step up and take responsibility. This also means taking responsibility for personal actions, namely vandalism.

Vandalism is the reason for the cameras being

installed. To quote a student on my sister hall, "You stupid 4th Westers brought this all on yourselves! If you didn't always find it necessary to break everything you wouldn't be in this situation! The only reason you want them taken down is so that you can get away with more of your usual crap!"

This is a very strong, yet biased statement. First of all, I don't know if the rest of campus remembers, but the cameras are aimed at 4th East, and every other hall in Hunt Dorm. They are also in the west stairwell. We all want things to go back the way they were before we were limited access to other halls.

Vandalism is a plague that not only eats away at our campus but it eats away at all societies on all levels. While some vandalism comes from pure entertainment or for other miscellaneous reasons, most is done as a sign of protest.

This vandalism was a message that no SmartCard reader will keep us separated from our family in NCSSM.

The first problem is that vandalism was not the way to go. It did nothing but get us into the mess we are in now. The second problem is timing. With all of this happening right before exams, few people had the time or energy to fight back; now with it being second semester few people care.

As a campus, as a student body, and as a family we must rise to the occasion and fight for a change - not just a change in cameras, or smart cards, but a change in attitude, and a new plan of action to bring us this change. Let the cameras be a reminder that the question we need to stop asking ourselves is "What kind of campus do we want to live in?" and the question we need to start asking is "What are we willing to do about it?"

To: My Favorite Jellyfish
Happy Valentine's month,
may you have the fairest of odd luck.
-The Man in the Turquoise coat

To: Ben Jarrell
My Darling, I have a mad crush on you, Ben! I want to make sweet love on your couch all night long!

To: Everyone
Since I have been conned into this, I guess I should take the time to send love to my friends all around campus and to my boys on 2E!
- Ben Wise

Dear Thien,
Happy Valentine's Day!
You make me so happy!
Come to Hunt Kitchen at 7:30.
Love, Emily