

Letters to the Editor

Censorship of Ideas Appalling

To The Editor:

Why did we use the causewalk to voice anti-war sentiment? The wall was established as a medium for protest and was very effective twenty years ago. But today it serves little more than a personal message board—it has lost its impact. Desperate times call for desperate measures, and large-scale bloodshed indicates desperate times. We cannot go about our lives normally, using normal procedures, when such a violent act is taking place. Furthermore, we took into account the plant and animal life on this campus by using non-toxic, water-soluble paint. There was nothing environmentally irresponsible about our methods.

We are not hiding behind our anonymity, nor are we unsure about our convictions. All of us have taken stands publicly against the war—you know who we are. Our intent in this case, rather than to focus on the names of individuals, is to concentrate attention on the wrongs of war and the strong anti-war sentiment that exists in our country. It is hard for us to understand why someone whose family is in danger would be against pleas for peace. Everyday that one is not reminded of the war, with all of its suffering, pain and blood, is another day that ignorances breeds violence in some, and apathy in others. The whole of the United States media is devoted to the pro-war point of view. We, who are for peace, are constantly immersed in it, spoon-fed the idea that this war is okay, and the U.S. is right in its actions. The inequalities of the war's coverage in the media are

echoed in our own community. Journalists abroad are prevented from photographing bodybags and other ugly facts about the war for fear of showing the public something that is easier for it to ignore. Censorship on a national level is appalling, but no less so is the oppression of ideas on a college campus, an environment designed for learning and free exchange of ideas. The many people of this campus who oppose the war are exposed everyday to the sloganeering of the pro-war movement. "Desert Shield" and "Desert Storm" are bandied about with full realization that they are vague symbols for all to real bloodshed.

When people complain about our calling attention to this issue, they complain about exposing a truth. We find this truth important to convey: that war is bloody and harmful. There is no moral wrong for expressing a truth, especially in an institution of knowledge.

The United States administration's latest action proves that peace is not on the agenda. Their denial of the revised Soviet plan appalls us. Not only will more Iraqi lives be lost, including thousands of innocent civilians, but those of U.S. citizens. One idea that aptly describes this short-sighted policy: the U.S. prefers amputation to therapy. Perhaps we should learn from that observation, come out of our safe, comfortable holes, and open ourselves up to what is going on. The U.S. can do wrong, we are not always the good guys, we are not perfect. Help stop the suffering, help stop the war.

Name Withheld by Request

War is Not a Terrible Thing

To the Editor:

An open letter to the vandal(s) who destroyed the causewalk:

When I walked across the causewalk this morning, in the gray light, I saw your handiwork, red and pink tempera paint, scattered all over the causewalk. My first thought was, "Wonderful, another display of peace." As I noticed how much paint you had spilled on the causewalk, our causewalk, not yours, not mine, but the community of St. Andrews, my curiosity turned to anger. I like to think that those of us here at St. Andrews care about each other, and would not willfully destroy the property of someone else. Well, you have done that. Not only have you created an expensive clean up for the school, out of money that I paid for my education, not to clean up your mess, but you broke the understanding that if you had something to say, you would use the wall, or some other acceptable means of expressing yourself.

Sincerely hope that you are caught, and forced to pay for the cleaning of the vandalism. In addition to the vandalism, you have forced your views on whomever chooses to visit this school. Now, if parents of prospective students visit the school, and see your handiwork, we may lose some very valuable new students, ones whom would contribute positively to the college, and not detract from it.

Lastly, on this note, why are you

telling us that War is a terrible thing? Many of us, probably more than you could imagine, have lived on military bases a good portion of our lives. We have parents, life-long friends, and acquaintances whom we think of daily as they are risking their lives for your freedom of speech, which you have so blatantly abused. We, the children of the military, have lived with accidents on bases, boats, and planes, and every time a military man loses his life, we feel sad, for we are part of a family that exists from the Saudi desert, to the DMZ in Korea, and each death diminishes us.

Now, concerning your views on the war. I do not support war as a general method of solving problems. But, I do support this war. As I recall, one of the slogans of the 60's anti-war movement, was love your fellow man, and support your friends. Kuwait has been a friend of the U.S. since the end of WWII. They have been one of our best allies. But now that their country has been taken over, and their citizens slaughtered, you're saying that the U.S. should turn its back on a friend of 40 years. I think not.

In addition to protecting a friend, there is a measure of self-defense involved. Just about every nation in the world including ARAB COUNTRIES, have joined forces to oppose unwarranted aggression. Hussein is known to have chemical weapons, which he hasn't used, yet. In ten years, when we get NUCLEAR MISSILES,

do we want to have ICBM's coming down on Philly, L.A., D.C.? No. And the presence of the Arab countries in the allied opposition to Hussein shows how real many countries take that threat. What if the SCUDS that have been falling on Israel were nuclear? Would you still be anti-war? What if those flying bombs had been falling on your family and friends? It's a hell of a lot different sitting over here in the U.S. We are doing this so that the people of Kuwait can have their homes back, and not live with a government that they have no say, no representation in. We are doing this so that Kuwaiti children don't have to cry when Iraqi soldiers kill their father and rape their mother. WE are doing this to protect the children of Israel, and the U.S., so that in ten or fifteen years, it won't be American children in gas masks.

If we were there for oil, don't you think that when the oil wells were set on fire, and rendered useless, we would have pulled out?

GOD BLESS THE USA, AND MAY HE WATCH OUT FOR OUR MEN AND WOMEN FACING DEATH TO PROTECT YOU.

Sincerely,
Matt Clark
Kevin Buckley
Charles Wheeler
Scott Spencer
Heather Jenkins

Students Ignorant of History

To the Editor:

This notice was posted several weeks ago, but it's message needs to be heard again.

To Michael and Laura,

Your act of burning the flag on the evening of January 17 was entirely irresponsible and has served only to display your ignorance and self-centered lack of concern for others. Your transparent statement of interest and support for the troops easily conveys your feigned sincerity (or are you honestly so dimwitted that you do not recognize how detrimental your actions could be to their morale and confidence?). Perhaps you haven't been listening to the troops themselves. They have so much pride and love for their country and believe so strongly in the reasons for their fight. They support their leaders, and need most from you confidence in their abilities and their leaders. The only way to support them is to support our country with the same passion with which they will fight for it.

Your statement also displayed your lack of knowledge of the situation and its history, making your actions entirely irresponsible. We are not caught up in "patriotic rhetoric"; rather we are the ones who truly know the severity of the situation. It is you who are obviously caught in a cause you do not understand. With family and friends already fighting, we understand the reality of war far more fully than you ever will. I support your right to your own opinions, as well as your right to express them responsi-

bly with a full knowledge of the circumstances. But I will never stand silent as you maliciously inflict them upon those around you with an act so vulgar as the one you carried out.

I pity you. It is a sad thing not to understand the greatest symbol of our country—the American flag. It stands for more than you realize, and your actions stand for far more than your unfounded reasons for burning the flag. It didn't take guts to do what you did. It took a naive, selfish, egotistical desire. When you burn the flag, you denounce not only the actions of our leaders, but also the love, pride, hope, freedom, concern, responsibility, courage, honesty, history, tradition, beauty, and unity of our country. Next time you take up a cause, make sure you understand it with all of its implications.

To continue my address to those incredibly naive students on this campus, I have a few comments and questions for those who continue to protest the war. First, to those of you who vandalized the causewalk on the nights of February 22 and 24, it makes me sick to have to walk over that filth every morning. Put aside Bush's "ego trip." Once again, a couple of cowards have gone on an ego trip of their own through this gross vandalism. But rather than gaining respect, they have only reestablished their ignorant, bull-headed, pitifully childish ways. The military members can't wait to go to Saudi, and they do not want to come home without finishing their job. So much for the causewalk's "dead soldier comments."

As for the rest of the protesters, I

have just one question: Where the hell were you when Iraq attacked Kuwait? You didn't seem quite so concerned about the value of human life then! I certainly didn't see you holding peace rallies, posting notices, and vandalizing school property then. My best guess is that you plain did not care until you were afraid that you might become the casualties. No one is asking you spineless cowards to fight for our country. But keep in mind that the soldiers are dying not for oil, but to give the Kuwaitis the same freedom that you are using to protest. Think about this as well: If successful, what good will your peace rallies serve 10 years from now when Hussein presents his new nuclear and chemical weaponry along with his overwhelming insensitivity for human life? Thank goodness we won't have to face that; a lot more people would have been dying. But I wonder if that will concern you even half as much as the fact that in that case, you probably would have been among them.

And a final note to Abe Walston III: My father, uncle, and several close friends are now fighting in Saudi Arabia. Your statement that military personnel in that area have become dehumanized is not only offensive, it is entirely untrue. Yes, I am calling you a liar. Through their letters, I feel as if I am beginning to know these people better than I ever have. Tell your father that I am sorry he has such an ignorant son... and tell him that even if you do not support him, I do.

Semper Fi
Laura Anne Van Riper

Graffiti Unjustified

To the Editor:

In the past week I have heard many explanations for the sorry state the causewalk was put in. Some of these, I believe, came from those responsible. I would like to take the time to answer the reasons I have heard.

Reason #1: To draw attention to the war in Kuwait and make people think about it.—To my knowledge, there is not anyone who is not aware of the war. Many people have family in Kuwait and think nearly continuously about it. Even those who would rather forget about the war entirely are unable to do so, as there are constant reminders such as television, newspapers, magazines, and other students who are concerned about this situation. There is and was no need to deface the causewalk to draw attention to the war; attention is already drawn to it by people competent to do so without alienating an entire school campus.

Reason #2: To try to get more people involved in the peace effort.—Throughout history, violent or vandalistic protesting has done very little to bring people's opinions into agreement with the protestor's views. In fact, as was demonstrated by this act on the causewalk, it tends to have the opposite effect on those who might have agreed with those protesting without inducement, causing them to recoil and rethink their views.

Reason #3: To protest the war -

There can be no doubt that this was accomplished in defacing the causewalk. But was it truly worth getting the majority of the St. Andrews' campus angry, not at the war, but rather at those who committed the vandalism? There are more effective means of protesting the war than treating the causewalk as a dump site. The most obvious outlet is the wall. A letter, evidently written by the same people who trashed the causewalk, states that the wall is no longer an effective way to express one's opinion and that the students at St. Andrews are too used to the wall to pay attention to what is written on it. I beg to differ. My friends and I wrote response to the graffiti on the causewalk and I am still hearing responses to what I wrote.

I do not intend to disprove the opinions written on the causewalk, merely to disprove the means in which these opinions were expressed. I did not appreciate the first thing I saw as I crossed the causewalk being t-shirts with red paint on them and red paint and chalk marks all over the blacktop and cement. If I wanted to see that type of trash, I could have stayed in Charlotte. I feel that I speak for many of us who attend school here, and I think that everyone would appreciate it if things such as this were never to occur again!

Sincerely,
Sean Clinton Nolan