

Editorials

Stressing the Importance of Writing Skills

by Caroline F. Kearns

This year, Methodist College abolished the Writing Proficiency Exam and replaced it with a requirement that students take a writing enrichment course in their major field. The new system places the responsibility for teaching writing skills on all academic departments, not just the English Department. Some headway has been made in improving student writing skills, but, unfortunately, many students still don't understand the importance of good writing.

In our society, people are turning more and more to fax machines and computers for interpersonal communication, and effective written communication is becoming as important as verbal communication. I challenge any graduate of this school to find a job in any field which doesn't require basic writing skills.

I have been editor of *Small Talk* for two years, and I've recently become the stu-

dent member of the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee. While serving on this committee, I have noticed that *many* students at this school have very poor writing skills and that *few* of these students are interested in doing anything about it. I have also learned that there are still some professors who believe that teaching writing is the responsibility of the English Department, and, consequently, don't even bother to attend meetings. I believe that it's the responsibility of *all* instructors to teach writing since writing is a skill required in all disciplines.

Writing is not a talent but a skill that improves with practice. And practice, especially when it is used to incorporate constructive criticism from instructors, is the only way that students will improve their writing skills. I believe that all Methodist College students should take a number of writing intensive courses to improve their writing skills. And I think that all instructors should stress the importance of writing in their classes.

Athletic Ax

by Tim Eshelman

Spring is in the air! This is the time that people like to open up their windows and let the clean, fresh air enter their rooms. It is also a time when people throw out the old and bring in the new to freshen things up. The Methodist College Athletic Department has given new meaning to the term "spring cleaning."

Five people associated with the Athletic department have recently been "let go." This group includes four coaches and one athletic trainer. There may have been one coach who everyone knew was in trouble, but the rest of these people must have been surprised.

This all started when John Crea was fired in November. This did not really come as a surprise. The football team's record over three years was 2-28. It was the way in which the firing was handled that is troublesome. Coach Crea was called into Rita Wiggs' office (she is the new Athletic Director) and was told he was being let go. I believe that the President of the school, who hired him, should have been around to tell him that he was being let go. The President was out of town.

Trainer Byron Schulken had been nothing but dedicated to this school and its students. He would go out of his way to make sure that the athletes he was taking care of were all right. I guess he was guilty of enjoying his job and of being liked by the students.

Basketball coach Dan Lawrence was next to be let go. His teams had not shown much success in the years he was coach here, but they did show a definite improvement. Coach Lawrence always brought in a large number of basketball players to this

school. It is hard for me to believe that he too was let go.

Sandy Davis, who is an assistant coach for the baseball team and head coach for the junior varsity baseball team, was next to face the ax. He was in charge of the pitchers on the varsity team and had built up an excellent staff. Many of the current players could not understand why he was fired and said the main reason that they went to the World Series last year was because of Coach Davis' pitching staff. This is another unexplainable decision by the Athletic Department.

The last coach to be fired was tennis coach Pete Kendall. This is by far the hardest of all the firings to understand. Coach Kendall coached both the men's and women's tennis teams and had turned both into a very competitive programs. He was actually named Conference Coach of the Year last year. To claim that honor and then be fired less than a year later shows that there is something not right with this school and its Athletic Department.

The Athletic Director, who is also the Women's Basketball Coach, has been here longer than most if not all of the people who have been fired. This past season was the first season that her team has had any real success. Based on those who have been fired and the length of time they were at this school, she should have never had the chance to be coaching here this season.

This school is obviously having problems in the Athletic Department. I believe that someone needs to look into what is going on and find out what is going on. Until this happens, everyone there needs to keep an eye out for the Athletic ax.

The Scum Always Rises

by Joy G. Kirkpatrick

What is the world coming to? I often ask myself this question as I read the newspaper every morning. I merely skimmed the front page headlines a few weekends ago, and I learned a lot of interesting things, not necessarily from the newspaper, about the world that we live in, the scum that we live with, and the government that oversees it all.

One shocking bit of information that I learned is that there are thieves that can actually read. A few months ago, I spent the morning at the house of a friend whose mother had just died. I guess one could say I was there to comfort her, but not with a casserole and a hug. I was house sitting, guarding the house against prowlers. There are thieves that actually read the obituaries in order to find out when the funeral services will be held so they can take advantage of this situation and deprive these poor victims even more.

I also learned that even in the world of crime, timing is everything. Burglars are better off if they rob the house during the daytime funeral service rather than during the nighttime wake. If caught and convicted they face a less lengthy sentence for a daytime robbery. Personally, I think that they should receive a lesser sentence for nighttime burglaries in order to encourage more nighttime thefts. Yes, at night the victims are home--which is exactly my point. With any luck at all the perpetrator will

be shot by the homeowner, thereby reducing the number of scum in the world by one. But then again, if you happen to shoot the intruder in the back as he is fleeing with your property and the thief turns up dead later, you may be charged with murder. If you have followed the case about the candidate for the county Board of Commissioners you know what I'm talking about.

An article in the Larry Cheek column that I read a few months ago also reinforced my doubts about our judicial system. A drunk driver who caused a wreck which left a two-year-old girl dead was tried and found guilty--guilty of driving while impaired, driving without a license, driving without insurance, and vehicular manslaughter. This person also had a previous drunk driving conviction. Yet this person, who killed another human being, was given a sentence of 6 months. The following day I learned about Michael Milken, the junk bond king. Milken simply took money from those people that were stupid enough to give it to him and to invest in risky bonds, but he is currently serving a 6-year sentence. In my mind there is a definite iniquity here.

One solution might be to totally reorganize our judicial system. Why have sentences become so inflated that in order to actually spend your life in prison you have to be sentenced some outrageous number of years (like 875)? Someone needs to sit down and figure out a system of equating the crime to the sentence. But Larry Cheek and I can't do everything so we'll have to wait and see what the next president has to say about it.