

## Is MC campus user-friendly?

By Amanda Fellers  
Editor

If you're left-handed, you know what I'm talking about. If you're right-handed, use your imagination for a minute. Try to imagine, those of you who actually take notes, what it would be like to sit in a left-hander's desk for an hour and fifteen minutes. Try to imagine what it would be like to take notes when the only place you have to rest your arm is in the air.

Left-handers do it all the time, especially since the majority of desks in the classrooms are designed for right-handed people. They come into class and put their left arms in all kinds of positions in attempt to make writing somewhat comfortable.

Should there be a certain number of left-handed desks in every classroom? I think there should be. When I actually started counting, I was surprised to find that there are some classrooms that don't have even one left-handed desk.

The situation is soon to be taken care of. Storage is being checked to see if there are more left-hander's desks, which will immediately be put in the classrooms. I encourage left-handers however, not to settle for discomfort. If you're in a classroom where there is not a left-handed desk for you, make sure you get one. We're all paying a lot of money for our education. We all deserve to be able to take notes without twisting our arms and our wrists and our bodies into the most unnatural positions.

The absence of left-handed desks in our classrooms might not seem like much of a "special need." It led me to another question though: are there other special needs on campus, possibly more serious ones, that have gone just as unnoticed? My answer is yes.

There are two issues that I want to address here. The first, still pertaining to desks, is the size of them—"one size fits most." The second is the accessibility of our campus for students in wheelchairs.

First, the issue of the size of the desks. I remember the first time she walked into class. She walked over to the side of the room where I was seated and squeezed herself into a desk that was obviously inadequate. She sat sideways in the desk and faced the windows.

She couldn't even watch the teacher give his lecture.

It really bothered me that she had to sit in that desk. I kept thinking, "Why can't they put a chair in here so that she can just sit at the table?" Finally, five class sessions later, she has been provided with a table and a chair. I commend the college for taking action, although I think that she should have been given the proper accommodations one class session later.

I now suggest that at least one table and one chair be placed in every classroom on campus. Does it seem like a lot of work? Yes. Is it worth it? Yes.

I think this student said it best when she told me, "There are people of all shapes and sizes in this world. They should make proper seating arrangements for everybody." She strongly believes that as she pays the same amount of money as everyone else, she should have the same comfort as everyone else.

I think that adding a table and a chair to every classroom would do a lot for the campus. Not all overweight people see themselves as being handicapped. They don't necessarily think they should have to contact someone to be comfortable in their classes. It would make them feel so much better and it would make things so much easier if tables and chairs were already available.

Think about overweight students who might visit the campus before they enroll. They would feel pretty good about our school if they looked into every classroom and saw that their needs had already been taken care of. It would save the college the hassle of having to find out what classroom each student is in every day, and then acting accordingly.

There should be one table and one chair in every classroom.

The second issue deals with the question, how accessible is the campus for students in wheelchairs?

The college has certainly done a lot to meet the needs of students in wheelchairs. There are ramps all over campus. There are handicap-accessible dorms, complete with bathrooms and elevators. The college even make sure that students in wheelchairs have their classes upstairs in the Trustees Building.

If you dig a little deeper though, you'll find that the campus isn't as handicap friendly as one might think.

I met David Allen, who is confined to a wheelchair, and his roommate and best friend, Rodney Parker, who has helped David since the third grade.

We discussed that Methodist has accommodated David's needs to a great extent, as well as what else they could do to make getting around on cam-

pus a little easier. The main concerns are the ramps, the bathrooms, and the library.

It wasn't enough though to say, "the ramp by the fountain that leads up to Reeves is too steep." It was when the three of us toured the campus that I got a clear picture of just how steep that ramp is. David was brave enough to let me to push him up the ramp, while Rodney followed close behind. I pushed him to the top, caught my breath, and concluded that it would be nearly impossible for a handicapped person to wheel himself up that particular ramp without any assistance.

Just putting a ramp somewhere doesn't necessarily solve the problem. I suggest that others take a little walk with David and Rodney. See what they've got to deal with. See how it can be made better.

I think that it is fair to say that the absence of handicap-accessible bathrooms in the Trustees Building is a major problem, one that should be taken care of as soon as possible. I am in that building three days a week from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Think I might have to use the rest room sometime during that five hours? Enough said.

Finally, the library. I find myself having a little trouble when it comes to leaving the building. You've got one bar to push through. You've got one door to open before the bar is even behind you. You've got a second door to open before the first door is closed. How do you think David manages that one? Well, he has Rodney. He's fortunate in that he always has Rodney. But how do you think a person in a wheelchair wheels himself through the bar, opens the first door, wheels himself a little, holds open the first door, opens the second door and wheels himself out? I don't know either.

I was told by the Vice President of Academic Affairs that with the addition of the new library annex in a year, the problem would be eliminated. Until then?

I'm not suggesting that Methodist College redesign the campus and the buildings. I'm suggesting that they take what they've got and make it a little better. Put some more left-hander's desks in the classrooms, along with some tables and chairs. Make the ramp a little less steep. Make the bathroom stall a little less narrow. Make the library department a little less frustrating.

As you so often hear, a little bit goes a long way.



## Tabloid fever must be stopped

By Sonya Sparks Murdock  
Staff Writer

I stood in the check-out line at the grocery store the other day and, as usual, scanned the tabloid headlines to pass the time. The headlines screamed at me: "Jon Benet's mom dressed her after murder!" "Dodi to Di for!" and "President Clinton caught wearing a gold earring!" Some made me laugh, others made me curious, even more made me outraged.

Then I stopped myself; I realized I'd been seduced by the tabloids again. Just by giving one minute of my time to read their headlines, I have been reeled in like a flounder on the tabloid fishing line. That's when I remembered Princess Diana, Dodi al Fayed, and their driver. Three lives lost in the tabloid pursuit of more invasive photos to smear across their covers.

The verdict is not in yet; the world waits to hear what really happened that night. In the end, there will be plenty of blame to go around: an allegedly drunk driver who may have been driving at speeds over 100 mph to shake the paparazzi; a millionaire's son who was rumored to have been known for demanding that his drivers "step on it;" the photographers who hounded the Princess and her new boyfriend, chasing them through the streets of Paris on their motorcycles; and the tabloids who promise to pay thousands of dollars for each of these types of photos.

*I find the public's insatiable hunger for the morbid and the mundane details of celebrities' lives repulsive.*

But there is another unnamed suspect in this story: the people who buy and read these tabloids. It's as simple as Economics 101—the law of supply and demand. The public's demand for information about the rich and famous fuels the supply of this information via the tabloids. The greater the public's demand, the bigger the supply of tabloids. Demand pushes up price; thus, a photo in high demand will raise the price a tabloid is willing to pay for it. The higher the price on a celebrity's head (i.e., Princess Diana), the bigger the swarms of photographers combatting each other for the \$100,000 shot. Inevitably, the underlying truth is that if the demand is not there, the supply will follow suit.

So, why is there such a demand for these photos? Why does the average American pay \$1.39 of his hard-earned money for a *National Enquirer*? And what even makes the public want to read a story about, for instance, a 100-year-old woman in New Zealand who gave birth to a two-headed alien, when they know that it isn't true?

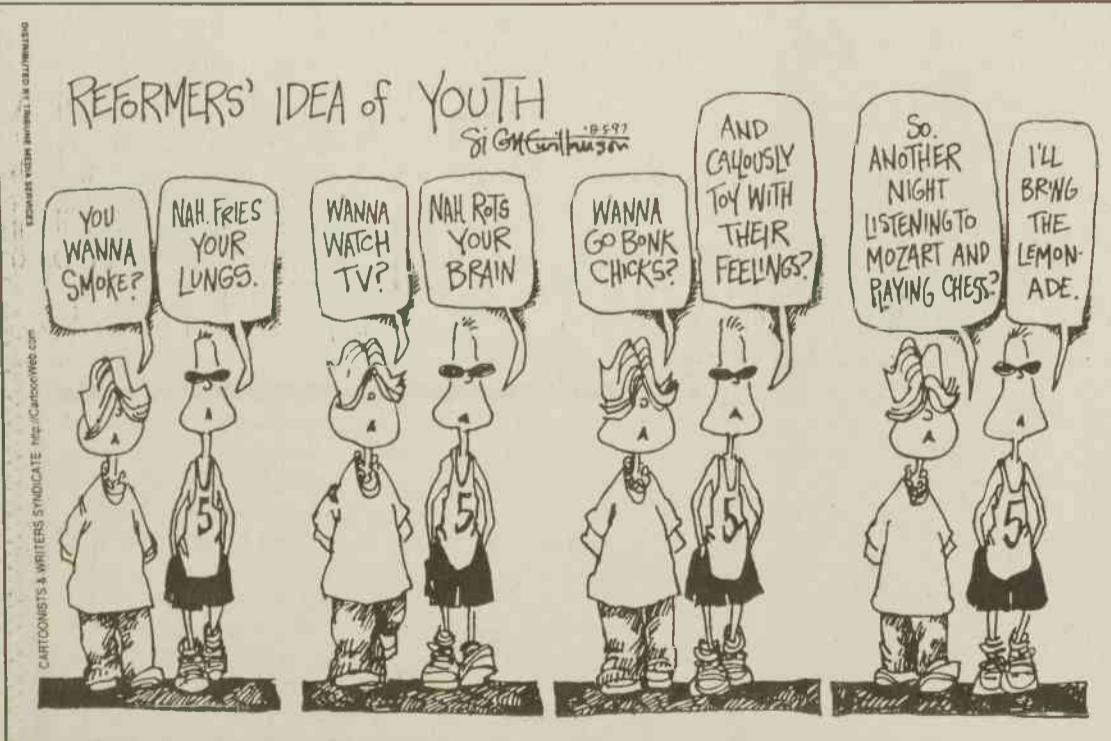
I find it sad that our society feels the need to know every single move a famous person makes on any given day. Why do we need to see a photo of Diana leaving the gym? Are we a more enlightened society having seen John Bryan sucking Fergie's toes?

Can we possibly benefit from seeing a photo of Liz Taylor leaving the hospital after brain surgery or autopsy photos of Jon Benet Ramsey? I find the public's insatiable hunger for the morbid and the mundane details of celebrities' lives repulsive.

I realize that the average person's life is so dull that he needs to read stories about celebrities for entertainment. But I question a person's motives for delighting in another's misery. Maybe if we see that celebrities, with all their wealth and status, still have common problems like we do, it makes us feel better. But in that understanding, we overlook the obvious: that these celebrities are human beings with feelings and emotions just like us.

Do we have the right to know all we want to know about celebrities, regardless of how intimate or private the details might be? I think not. The status of celebrity does not make a person the property of the public. We cross the line of "freedom of the press" by trampling the rights of the individual to maintain a certain level of privacy. The public eye has become more like "Big Brother" for the rich and famous, and they have nowhere to hide from the "stalkerazzi," as many celebrities call

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## Who's to blame for Diana's death?

By Amanda Fellers  
Editor

The day after Princess Diana's death, my communications ethics teacher said to me, "Amanda, would you have taken the pictures?" We had been discussing some of the photographers' unethical decisions to snap a few pictures immediately after the accident.

No, I would not have taken the pictures.

Diana's death affected me in two ways. The first way is the same way millions of other people were affected. I was also saddened by the tragic death of such a naturally good person. I just can't believe that someone who endured hardship to the greatest degree had to die the way she did. It seems unreal, unfair.

The second effect her death had on me came from my choice to be a communications major and to become a member of the "media." No, I didn't feel like I was in any way responsible for her death. But it made me think about the media that I so often support.

Did I believe the paparazzi had the right to take the pictures? Was the media even responsible for her death? If not, who was? The blame—that is the issue I have dealt with most over the past week.

My initial reaction was

anger toward the paparazzi. I truly felt that their high-speed chase on motorcycles, along with the rumor that one motorcyclist had been swerving in front of the Mercedes, had caused the accident. I thought, "How could they? How could they chase her car at a speed more than 100 mph just to get a picture?"

Somehow at least one photographer managed to get some pictures. Most recently we have learned that at least one of the pictures shows the driver being blinded by the flash of the camera. Diana's bodyguard is also seen in the picture pulling down the sun visor to shield the light. Have the photographers become even more responsible for the crash?

I became even angrier when I learned that several photographers immediately took pictures of the mangled car. Whether or not they could have saved anyone's life isn't an issue. It was wrong.

My dad told me another side to the story, though. He agreed that the paparazzi were out of place to be chasing Diana and Dodi al Fayed through the streets of Paris. The driver he had, though, was for the question. What made the driver feel the need to take his life and the lives of three other people into his hands and try to speed away from the paparazzi? Who was he to decide that on that particular night the paparazzi would not get any pictures? Besides, what pictures were they possibly going to

get through the tinted windows of the Mercedes? Would the pictures be worth dying for?

I can't imagine what it would be like to be hounded by the press with every move I made. But I also can't imagine why that fateful night was any different from the rest of the days the press had been at Diana's heels. Why couldn't the driver just drive Diana and Dodi to their destination and let the paparazzi get a few pictures? Would it really have been that bad?

Of course, we now have the allegation that the driver was loaded with alcohol, far beyond the legal limitations. Investigators are also looking into the suspicion that there may have been substances in the driver's blood other than alcohol. It has not yet been confirmed, but there are reports that there anti-depressants were found in his blood. These drugs may have heightened the effects of the alcohol. In that case, he is still to blame. The question becomes, how could he get behind the wheel, as drunk as he was, and still make rational decisions?

I don't condone the actions of the paparazzi, but I certainly shifted the blame.

The al Fayed family has even taken some heat. How could Mohamed al Fayed employ such a senseless, careless driver? How could he be trusted to safely take

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