

# Public shares blame for bad legislators

By PATRICK BRANNAN

I am a firm believer that the people are to blame for the shape of the country.

We, you and I, have the right to vote do we not? Granted there are many problems with the way the system is set up that prevents people from having a complete true voice in elections, the Electoral College for example. Still people are the ones that have the right to vote.

The issue of term-limit laws, laws which would limit the number of terms a congress-person could serve, has been a topic of discussion recently. A few weeks ago a federal court ruled a Washington state term-limit law was unconstitutional.

The problem with this is that many other states, about 15 in all, have similar laws modeled after

the Washington state law. So the question remains as to where the finally ruling will decide. The group supporting the term-limit law is ready to fight to the Supreme Court.

The issue of term-limitations is one that I follow with great interest. Partly I support the idea because I think that it would at least guarantee the removal of legislators every so often. Yet, because we have the right to vote we also decide who will be our legislator and therefore do not need term-limit laws, which support our laziness.

The major problem I have with term-limit laws is that it will make fewer people vote. The fact is that not enough people vote now as it is. While the factors for non-voting vary, the fact is that if one is truly concerned with America the best way to do something about it

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is to vote. We are one of a few countries that has free elections, not in cost but in the sense that most people are able to vote if they want.

The problem is that our society has developed a sense that it's not important to vote. The majority of people just don't care about following the issues and voting. With the birth of the information highway and many other new technologies it couldn't be easier to follow the issues and possibly even vote.

Imagine if you could vote from home through your telephone, computer, or better yet your television. Maybe Al Gore should check out this part of the information highway. I'm sure the technology could be developed if it does not already exist.

People should care about following the issues and participating in the American system. We are proud about our system. Yet how can we truly be proud if only half of our population participates in elections?

Another thing about our legislatures, if crime and other issues are a major concern to the people, why are the representatives wasting time, our time, de-

terminating on pointless issues like the state folk dance or something?

In my home state of Maryland, that constant issue of what the state sport should be is always raised during the legislative session. Currently the state sport is jousting, yes that's right, jousting. The debate continues between the lacrosse and duckpin bowling supporters to have the state sport changed.

Now there are bills in the works to make the diamondback terrapin the state reptile and square dancing the official folk dance. If you ask me why don't we make solving the rising murder rate in Baltimore the official state issue?

## Overseas trip useful

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barrier, I really try to think before I speak to make sure what I am saying is logical.

It has been said that the average college student's attention span is eight minutes in the classroom. In France one must pay complete attention and hang onto every word for two full hours. As a result, you find yourself a better listener.

Another beneficial aspect of an education abroad is that one's acceptance level of various cultures and lifestyles increases. European lifestyle is a far cry from the typical American lifestyle. I had to put aside my American customs to really appreciate European culture. Now I find myself more appreciative of U.S. diversity and its "melting pot" image.

A trip across the great Atlantic is also an excellent history lesson! Reading and looking at pictures is not the same as visiting the actual places.

For example, I have seen some pretty incredible historical sights including: the Place de la Concorde (the location where Louis XVI was beheaded), L'arc de Triumph (where French Troops marched after WWII), Le petit Arc de Caroussel (where Napoleon's troops marched after victorious battles), the 2,000-year-old coliseum and ruins of Rome,

Goethe's house in Venice (writer and poet), Chateau de Chillon (the castle that Lord Byron wrote about in Switzerland), Normandy (the beach that American troops landed on in WWII), the leaning Tower of Pisa (a natural phenomenon), and many famous churches that are scattered throughout Italy and France.

Not only have I learned about these wonderful places, but their images are imbedded into my mind, and will never be forgotten.

As far as culture is concerned, my mind is open to all horizons! I saw my first opera in Paris, and a live jazz jam session in Lyons, France. Also, I saw a ballet in the famous opera house in Paris, visited the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, the Peggy Guggenheim Museum in Venice, the National Museum and the Sistine Chapel in Rome, Italy, the Henri Matisse Museum in Nice, France and, of course, the Louvre in Paris.

It's quite difficult to express in words my experiences, or the knowledge gained from my trip abroad, but I can honestly say it was the best adventure I have ever experienced. It is a feeling that will stay with me the rest of my life. Vive la France!

**Tara Schreiber**  
(Former Wesleyan student  
Tara Schreiber spent the 1993 fall semester at the Sorbonne in Paris, France.)

## Flaws mar Education budget

By SCOTT ROLFE

Will President Bill Clinton's new education budget affect NCWC students? Do you receive Pell Grant, (SSIG) State Student Incentive Grants, Perkins Loans, Work Study? If so, you may be affected by Clinton's changes.

Clinton's fiscal year 1995 budget seeks an extra 4.5 percent for student financial aid. The gain is great, although we may be paying for the increase somewhere else. Some of the positive aspects of the new budget include a \$100 increase in the maximum Pell Grant, which is the first increase in three years. If enacted by Congress the maximum grant will be \$2,400. This sounds good, but, \$2,400 is the same amount that was given in 1992 before the Pell Grants were cut. Are these changes just a way to show some

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sort of increase in educational funding while hiding the fact that other viable programs are being cut or eliminated?

The new budget also contains \$100 million more for college Work Study, bringing the total amount spent on Work Study to \$717 million. This sounds good as well, until you find out that State Student Incentive Grants will be eliminated to pay for it. Federal support for Perkins Loans are also being cut in the new education budget. Is it all right to cut other useful federal education programs just for the sake of change? I think not.

Although Education Secretary Richard Riley called the budget

"a new plus for students and educators," I am not quite as sure about the new budget. The Pell Grant increase is not truly an increase, because we are now just reaching an amount of aid that was cut in 1992. Stephanie Arellano, vice president of the U.S. Student Association, said, "It's more of a restoration than a new investment. The elimination of the SSIG grant could have negative effects for students, since states use the money as an incentive to fund their own financial aid program."

Clinton's Education Budget may seem great, including many increases in aid and support, but the money for this support is coming from other programs that many of us are now depending on. You do have to give a little to get a little. The question is where do we take it from?

## Caring reporter dies from AIDS

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were controversial. He was a pervert; he was a gay Uncle Tom. To his credit, he had the guts to keep on the story. San Francisco began the debates about casual sex and prevention that changed sexual behaviors. Shilts made safe sex an issue. He saved lives.

But in that Kafkaesque irony that I've been talking about lately, he had caught the virus himself, before he began his writings (he said probably in 1980). And now, 14 years later, it has killed him. He was 42 years old.

Shilts discovered that he was HIV positive on the day in 1987

when he turned in the manuscript of *Band*. I can only imagine his feelings. Those who have seen AIDS-related deaths know what they look like. To the healthy, they are terrifying; to the potentially ill, they must be devastating. He could have turned inward; he could have retired. But he didn't.

He finished *Conduct Unbecoming*, an account of the military purges of homosexuals in the 1970's and 1980's just as pneumonia was overtaking him in 1992. It was another well-written and conscientiously documented study.

What Shilts was good at was compiling facts to oppose mere opinion. He could make a person's story real and make the reader hear the voices of real people suffering real pains. Like the enlisted woman whose children were grilled by military investigators during soccer practice.

Shilts is one of about 50,000 Americans who will die this year because AIDS has destroyed their immune systems. Maybe he wasn't a great man. Maybe he didn't have any more good books in him. But, damn, I wish he and we had had the chance to find out.