

Elected officials let us voters down

By PATRICK BRANNAN

As the government shutdown entered its third week, 18th day, it appeared to be as bad and maybe worse than the last Major League Baseball strike.

As we enter 1996 I want to remind each of you that this is an election year and one of the many things that make this country great is that most American citizens have the right to vote.

I certainly hope that we all remember what happened in December as our *elected* government officials allowed the second government shutdown to occur.

What has now become the longest Federal Government shutdown was absolutely ridiculous.

Some 760,000 federal workers have been affected. Due to the ripple effect, who knows what number of the general public has been affected.

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As my family had Christmas dinner with my Aunt and Uncle, both of whom work for the federal government, the discussion turned to the shutdown.

During the first shutdown, my uncle who works at the Pentagon was affected. In a move which most American workers would dream of, and that only illustrates the waste in government, he was off during the shutdown. Eventually he received full pay and lost no time either for sick time or vacation days. Must be nice.

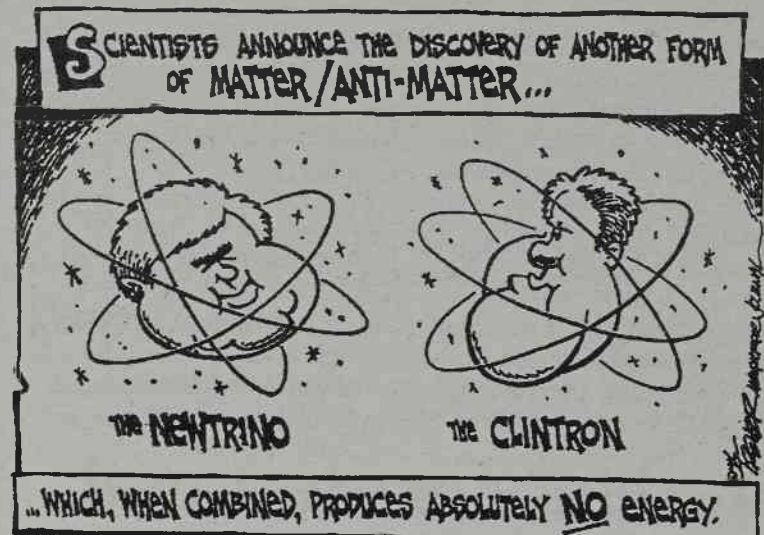
My other uncle, who lives in Zebulon, works for the Social Security Administration and has been affected by both shutdowns. What he, along with many other federal workers, worry about is

how the shutdown affects them financially.

Along with many regular people who depended on certain benefits from the government, federal employees are feeling the financial strain. How do you explain to creditors that because the government is shut down you can't make payments?

Meanwhile, Congress continued to get paid their extraordinary salaries. Sure some federal employees effected by the shutdown make \$100,000 a year. But our *elected* officials take home salaries in the \$150,000 range.

What irked me, and others I've talked to, even more is that Congress still took their "holiday recess." Never mind the fact that more than 7000,000 workers were temporarily out of a job. Never mind that countless other Americans depend on those 700,000 workers.



Still our representatives continued to take their salaries, and travel worldwide. I suppose that's what you are supposed to do when you're a government official.

In the end, I certainly hope that we, as the voters and the power holders in American gov-

ernment, remember this when we enter the election booths this spring and again in the fall.

It is time for someone to take a stand, and it might as well be us as we show our *elected* officials that we won't put up with this garbage anymore.

Community damage charges unfair

By GRANT LONG

In our college lifetime there are certain things that are inevitable, such as exams, studying for a test, maybe a 10-age paper or two (depending upon your major), and community damage.

As for the issue of community damage, I want to say that I am 100 percent for it. But I also want to know why is it too excessive? What should be the limit for it?

Is there anything the Wesleyan student community can do to avoid paying exacerbated community damage costs? What I am trying to do is question the whole community damage system.

I know when it comes to the community damage question, most people are not guilty, but due to the ignorant few who continue to damage Wesleyan property, we are at your mercy. When people live in a community envi-

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ronment, things will get broken, but not always on purpose. To rectify this, Wesleyan charges a fine to pay for all broken or damaged property. That is the way it should be, but sometimes these expenses are unfair to the resident who lives in the particular

hall where the infraction occurred.

To cite an example, I am going to talk about the community damage from North Hall in the fall of 1995. This is a bill that most residents of North Hall were upset with, especially the third floor. The only people who were not mad about it were the Resident Assistants who do not have to pay community damage.

The first item in question was a lamp that was stolen from the North Hall lobby. Every resident was fined \$50 for a lamp that was gone for a day. Should we be fined for something that was returned?

The second item is that we have pay \$20 for a lamp that was damaged in the North Hall study room. I have no problem with that, but to this day I do not know how this lamp was damaged.

The one fine that the parents of all North Hall parents had to reach in their pockets and pay was \$250 for damage done to tile in the guest bathroom. Do not get me wrong, maintenance did everything it could to fix the tile. I admit I don't know everything concerning the tile, but I still do not think that the whole dorm should be charged \$250 for writing on a few measly tiles.

Then there is the \$240 levied on the third floor when eight toilet paper dispensers were torn off the wall. Speaking out of experience (living in North for three years), I can vouch that there are only eight toilet paper dispensers

on the third floor and I know that eight were not ripped off, because I used the same two bathroom stalls all semester long.

My final gripe is that 16 rolls of toilet paper were destroyed, and on occasion that happens. The third floor as a whole was charged \$38 for this. At that rate the third floor was paying \$2.45 for each roll of destroyed toilet paper, just a bit exorbitant.

The final tally for community damage came to \$613. Let me correct myself, \$613.27 with tax.

I also talked with a few North Hall residents on the issue. One student, who was irate about the bill, said, "I cannot believe this. We pay all this money to come here and they do something janky like this. I think toilet paper is cheaper in Russia than it is in North Hall."

There is an irony to his statement because people wait in line for hours to get toilet paper in Russia.

Although I question Student Life damage policies, I want them to know that I have nothing against them. It is their policies I question. If 85-100 strangers live in a building for a period of time, things will get broken; that is not in question. Although damaging your resident hall may give one person a sense of satisfaction, it will not give our pocketbooks that same sense of satisfaction. If people do not do these things in their homes, why do it here?

