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The Parthenon, December 2, 1993

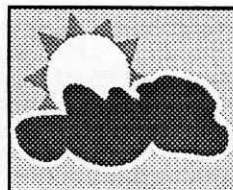
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Thursday
Partly cloudy;
high in 50s

The Parthenon

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY



Rubber shortage bounces event

By Susan Weaver
Reporter

AIDS Awareness Day at Marshall University was postponed due to a lack of condoms.

The event, coordinated by the Lambda Society, was supposed to be Wednesday, the national observance of World AIDS Day.

But the group's order of literature and condoms didn't arrive on time.

Stanley Young, chairman of the World AIDS Day campaign at Marshall, said the event is likely to be postponed until Gay Pride Month in April.

"We ordered a thousand condoms from family planning to be distributed to students on the plaza," Young said. "But our order didn't come in, and we can't do it without the condoms."

Young said the Lambda Society had some pamphlets to distribute, but not enough.

Brian Davis, president of the Lambda Society, said World AIDS Day is important and needs to be publicized.

"We need to increase awareness to prevent the spread of HIV," Davis said.

"The public needs to be mobilized to put a stop to the disease."

Davis said the biggest problem with AIDS is public ignorance of the crisis.

"We have been desensitized to the effects and spread of AIDS through the media," Davis said.

"I hope that through activities such as this we can get people talking about HIV and safe sex."

Young said he hopes to expand Gay Pride Month activities this year, which might include AIDS Awareness Day.

Davis said that World AIDS Day is celebrated all over the world by many social and religious groups.

A Christmas tree was decorated in Memorial Student Center last year in honor of people who died from AIDS-related illnesses.

"It is now the sixth leading killer in the United States," Davis said. "It is not something that you can ignore."

AIDS Awareness Day at Marshall was sponsored by several student organizations, Young said, including Student Government Association.

"I think that AIDS awareness is an issue that needs to be addressed," said Student Senate President Pro-Tempore Kristin Butcher.

"I hope that when they have it again, they will receive more support from campus and community."

A thousand condoms to promote World AIDS Day were supposed to be passed out to students.

■ PLYMAIL

Former student wants new verdict

By Deborah Blair
Reporter

A former Marshall student convicted of rape in August was back in Cabell County Circuit Court Wednesday in an attempt to have his verdict overturned.

Charles Franklin Plymail, 28, formerly of Athens, Ga., argued his case in Judge Alfred E. Ferguson's court Wednesday.

Plymail was convicted of raping a female Huntington resident last September, when he was attending the university.

Plymail said several reasons, including flaws in Prosecutor Joseph Margarella's closing arguments and inconsistencies in his presentation of evidence, led the jury to return a guilty verdict in this case.

Ferguson overruled Plymail's argument that the state's inconsistencies affected his case and put off deciding the matter of closing arguments until early next week so Ferguson could reread the prosecutor's closing statements.

Remaining motions to overturn the verdict, including the claim that his former counsel was ineffective and rulings on undecided motions, will continue Monday.

In his motion Wednesday, Plymail questioned evidence concerning marks left by physical attacks the victim allegedly suffered and the actual chronology of the September evening's events.

Plymail argued that the victim's testimony of when the time events occurred differed greatly with the actual times on police and hospital reports.

The victim claims that after she and Plymail left a local bar at 2 a.m., they spent approximately three hours at his apartment.

Plymail claims this would place her at the hospital at 5 a.m., while hospital reports show her there at 4:30 a.m.

Ferguson said a rape case can be based on "uncorroborated testimony, unless the testimony is so unbelievable that no one would believe it."

Plymail also argues that the prosecutor introduced his own opinion into the closing argument, biasing the jury before it made final deliberations.

He alleges that deliberations were prejudiced when Margarella portrayed Plymail as a "man with a sweet tooth for sadomasochistic terror" and urged the jury to return a verdict that would satisfy "woman-kind."

Ferguson also is considering the fact that Plymail was not allowed to testify at his own trial.

The judge said he will return a decision next week.

Plymail was asked to testify at the trial, but sample questions from his former counsel, George Beter, convinced him that he shouldn't.

Plymail now contends that the trial results would have been different had he told his version of the events.

■ REGISTRATION

Directory information not available for sale

By Stephen T. Keyser
Reporter

Students concerned about information given on registration forms should be relieved to know that the campus does not sell mailing lists, Marshall administrator said.

Robert H. Eddins, registrar, said the information is not released to any organization unless the student checks the "yes" option on the registration form.

"There is a campus policy that we do not sell mailing lists to any organizations. We (the registrar's office) consistently refuse and do not sell mailing lists," Eddins said.

Eddins said every office that has access to student information is supposed to follow the guidelines set by the campus policy concerning mailing lists.

Eddins also added that if the student checks "yes" on the directory information section, "Information can be released as defined by the directory information definition located on the back of the registration form."

Eddins said various organizations have contacted his office for years requesting mailing lists, but the requests are denied.

"I could have made a fortune selling mailing lists, but I didn't. Everybody wants one but we do not provide them," Eddins said.

Eddins stated that students should still beware.

"People can make mailing lists from the campus directories, but the Registrar's Office does not provide information and no one else is supposed to, either."

■ DEC. 23 MAILING DATE

Grades could hamper holiday

By Stephen T. Keyser
Reporter

While most students enjoy their Christmas break, some will receive unwanted packages — grade reports.

According to Registrar Robert H. Eddins, some grade reports will contain a message students do not want to receive.

The message will tell them not to come back.

It's the first time the reports will contain the bit of advice, Eddins said.

"On students' grade reports with 20 or more deficiency

points, there will be a message telling the student that they are ineligible to return to the university," he said.

"For some it could be a merry Christmas or not."

Eddins added that students with deficiencies, which result from failed classes, also will receive a letter from their dean stating their ineligibility.

"Any students with 20 or more deficiency points should not return to the university until contacting the dean of their college," Eddins said.

"Also, if the student is registered for the spring semester, that student will be adminis-

tratively withdrawn."

According to Eddins, the phone call to the dean is vital and just showing up at the university in the spring will not result in the student being admitted.

"We are trying to save the student a trip and ensure the student does not get in the hole academically and financially," Eddins said.

Eddins said his office plans to mail the grade reports Dec. 23.

"We will be able to process the grades and mail them before we quit for Christmas, just as we have for the past 12

This & that

Whoop...Goldberg chicken recipe roasted

NEW YORK (AP) — Whoopi Goldberg was accused of ethnic stereotyping in a joke recipe she contributed to a fund-raising cookbook.

Her "Jewish American Princess Fried Chicken" appears in "Cooking in Litchfield Hills," a cookbook sold to benefit the environmentalist Pratt Center.

Goldberg owns a house in the affluent Litchfield County of northwestern Connecticut.

Among the recipe's directions: "Send a chauffeur to your favorite butcher shop for the

chicken," "Watch your nails," and "Have cook prepare rest of meal while you touch up your makeup." "I don't think it's funny," Abraham

— Abraham Foxman

Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League told the Daily News. "It's totally insensitive because it raises all the ugly anti-Semitic stereotypes."

Goldberg's publicist, Brad Cararelli, said: "Maybe (the critics) are not aware that Whoopi is Jewish, so she is certainly not anti-Semitic."

Cathy Setterlin of the Pratt Center said she received only a couple of complaints after selling more than 3,000 books. "My personal feeling is that it suits her humor."

Goldberg, who is black, defended her then-boyfriend Ted Danson when he was accused of being racist and tasteless for performing a skit in blackface Oct. 8 at Goldberg's Friars Club roast.

"My personal feeling is that it suits her humor"

— Cathy Setterlin

FYI

Friday

The Graduate Student Council will meet at noon in MSC 2W10.

Ahead

Cedar Sanctuary, 350 Staunton St., Guyan-dotte, will have Bible study Sunday from 11:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and services from 12:15-1:30 p.m. For more information, call Pastor Tyrone Saunders at 697-6411.

The writer's group **Inkbleed** will meet Monday at 9:15 p.m. in MSC 2E10. The group meets every first Monday and third Tuesday every month.

Alpha Epsilon Delta, the pre-med honor society will host speaker Dr. Kenneth Guyer. His presentation on MCAT will be Monday at 4 p.m. in S376.

What, when, where

To get your group's announcement or activity in **FYI**, stop by The Parthenon newsroom, 311 Smith Hall, Monday-Friday to pick up a form.

Dalton 'Rhett'y for miniseries role

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The name is Butler, Rhett Butler — as Timothy Dalton changes from master spy to Southern gentleman.

Dalton will take over the role immortalized by Clark Gable for the eight-hour television miniseries "Scarlett," the sequel to "Gone With The Wind."

He stars opposite fellow Brit Joanne Whalley-Kilmer in the series based on Alexandra Ripley's novel that

picks up where Margaret Mitchell's romantic epic of the Civil War South ends.

The miniseries is scheduled to air on CBS next fall.

Cuomo criticizes violence in media

NEW YORK (AP) — New York governor Mario Cuomo urged members of the International Radio and Television Society to join a campaign against the proliferation of sex and vio-



CUOMO

lence in the media.

He cited the current push in Congress for greater government media regulation as social problems worsen.

"Maybe instead of regulation by government, we should consider trying a little regulation by ourselves," he said. "Can't we work harder at delivering more constructive messages? Shouldn't we, especially the parents among us, be doing more to reject the violence and filth we see around us?"

Brotherly love hits Myrtle Beach

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. (AP) — The Gatlin Brothers are the first big names to set up shop in this seaside community.

The country band will use one of two theaters planned for a complex near an outlet mall for six months, Larry Gatlin said.

The new complex is the second announced this week for this South Carolina resort that wants to become a center for country music.

AIDS research to be sped up

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government will enlist experts to help remove obstacles to the discovery of new drugs to combat AIDS, Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala said.

Shesaidhernewtaskforce willbring"anunprecedented high-level collaboration among leaders in the field."

An organizer from Act Up, an activist AIDS group, dismissed it as "smoke and mirrors."

"Where's the Manhattan Project? ... Where's the action?" asked Act Up's Wayne Turner.

"We see this as an action item," replied Shalala, who said the Clinton administration and Congress raised the AIDS research budget this year by 21 percent to \$1.3 billion.

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morning

THE PARTHENON 3 THURSDAY, DEC. 2, 1993

Gore promotes NAFTA south of Rio Grande

V. P. discusses 'nuts and bolts'

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Vice President Al Gore is consulting with Mexican officials on the "nuts and bolts" of putting the North American Free Trade Agreement into effect and examining prospects for extending its reach to more of Latin America.

His two-day visit to Mexico is a mix of celebration and consultation: He came to personally congratulate Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari on the hard-fought NAFTA victory and to work through details of how the trade agreement will be implemented.

In addition, the vice president was delivering a speech Wednesday President Clinton billed as "a major address on American engagement in Latin America," in keeping with Gore's growing prominence in foreign policy.

At a festive airport arrival ceremony Tuesday, Gore said NAFTA — scheduled to take effect Jan. 1 — offers the United States and Mexico a chance to address "uncertainties that link our two nations in an equal partnership" and reap prosperity from freer trade.

"This agreement represents a commitment by our two nations to face the future as economic partners," he said.

Gore brought along Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner and Labor Department officials as

part of his effort to work out "specific nuts and bolts strategies for implementing NAFTA as quickly and as smoothly as possible."

Concerns about pollution and protections for U.S. workers were among the biggest worries cited by critics of the free-trade pact. Aides said that while various details had to be ironed out, there were no major sticking points with the Mexicans.

The trade pact is designed to link the United States, Mexico and Canada in the world's largest free-trade zone. It gradually would remove tariffs and other barriers to trade and investment over the next 15 years.

U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor said one of the things Gore planned to discuss was the process that should be set up for other Latin American countries to join the free-trade agreement.

Officials of Chile and other countries have expressed a willingness to join NAFTA. Clinton often referred to the expansion of NAFTA beyond Mexico as one of the biggest benefits that would result from the trade pact.

At a White House meeting Tuesday with seven Central American presidents, Clinton said he hoped NAFTA could serve as a "catalyst for the expansion of free trade to other market democracies throughout the hemisphere."

Kevorkian jailed again; Refuses to be bailed-out

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) — Dr. Jack Kevorkian wants to stay in jail and starve himself while the state tries to prosecute him for violating Michigan's law against assisting in suicide, an attorney said.

Kevorkian, 65, was jailed Tuesday after Oakland County District Judge Daniel Sawicki set a \$50,000 cash bond, which must be paid in full before he can be released.

His lawyer, Michael Schwartz, said he had received a telephone message indicating a New York man wants to post bond. Kevorkian objects, but if bail is posted he will have no choice but to go free, Schwartz said.

While jailed, he will take vitamins and fruit juice but no solid food, Schwartz said. "They can't force him to take sustenance," Schwartz said. "That will be a horrible thing ... people strapping him down, putting tubes down his mouth, torturing Dr. Kevorkian."

The judge scheduled a Dec. 10 hearing to

"They can't force him to take sustenance. That will be a horrible thing ... people strapping him down, putting tubes down his mouth, torturing Dr. Kevorkian."

Michael Schwartz
Kevorkian's attorney

decide whether there is sufficient evidence to try Kevorkian in the Oct. 22 death of Merian Frederick of Ann Arbor.

Frederick, 72, who had Lou Gehrig's disease, died by inhaling carbon monoxide gas in Kevorkian's Royal

Oak apartment.

Twenty people have died in Kevorkian's presence since July 1990, including five since the Legislature enacted a law specifically to stop him. While the law is under appeal, Kevorkian awaits two trials under it in neighboring Wayne County. If convicted, he could receive four years in prison.

Increasingly defiant in court, Kevorkian muttered "Go to hell" under his breath while Sawicki set his bond, and he called a police detective a liar.

Kevorkian went on a hunger strike in which he took only juice, water and vitamins during a three-day stay last month in the Wayne County Jail. He was bailed by a lawyer who thought the doctor got too much publicity.

U.S. Economy growing at a moderate rate

WASHINGTON (AP) — The economic growth rate in the United States revived to a moderate 2.7 percent annual rate in the third quarter and analysts are looking for fur-

ther improvement during the final three months of the year.

The seasonally adjusted gain reported Wednesday by the Commerce Department in the gross domestic product, the

sum of all goods and services produced in the U.S., was down slightly from the 2.8 percent rate estimated a month ago. Analysts were looking for a small improvement of 2.9 per-

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opinion

THE PARTHENON 4 THURSDAY, DEC. 2, 1993

our view

Brady bill might blast violence

▼ The issue: The bill is a little late, but we're glad it's here.

"Twelve years ago, my life was changed forever by a disturbed young man with a gun."

Until then, James Brady said he never thought about gun control. If he had done so, the White House press secretary might not have been the victim in the assassination attempt against former President Reagan in 1981.

But in almost 90 days, the Brady bill will go into effect throughout the United States. The bill, which was signed by President Clinton Tuesday, will require a five business-day waiting period and background check before a person can buy a handgun.

It's about time. The signing marked the end of a seven-year battle by Brady, his wife, Sarah, and gun control advocates with the National Rifle Association and its congressional supporters.

Although it will take more than the Brady Bill to wipe out violence, the measure might decrease the number of shootings in the U.S.

A Washington Post story revealed background checks and waiting periods in California, Florida, Virginia and Maryland have halted more than 47,000 attempted gun purchases.

Brady's bill is a second step in a long journey to stop crime and violence. So far, the U.S. has picked a slow pace.

The last major gun bill was passed in 1968, when Congress banned mail-order purchases of rifles, shotguns, handguns and ammunition and ended out-of-state buying of those firearms.

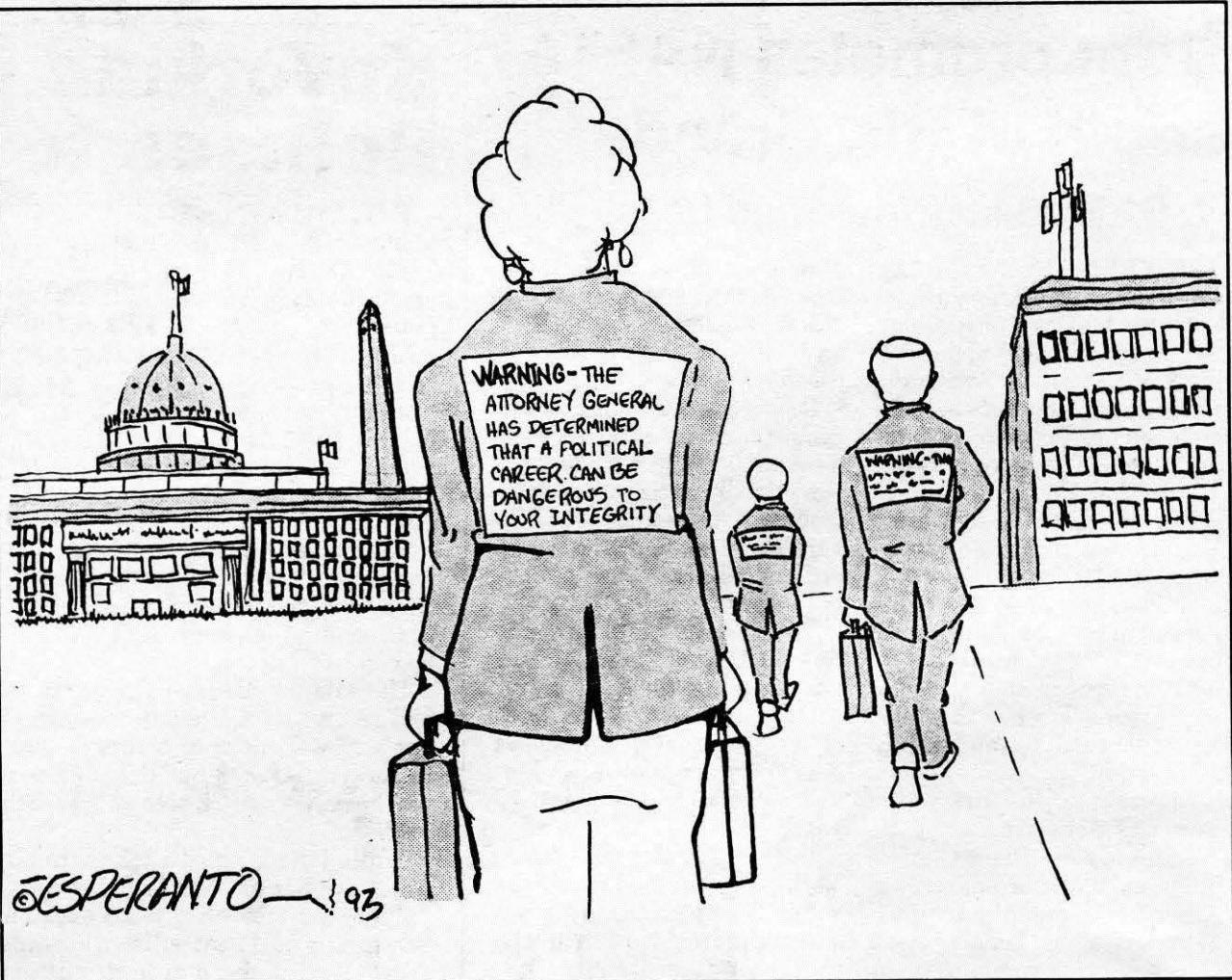
It took the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. to convince Congress 25 years ago to pass a gun control law. Years of lobbying from Brady and his supporters encouraged Congress to approve this one.

A pattern seems to be developing.

We hope it doesn't take the attempted assassination of another important public official to remind politicians and citizens how much the U.S. needs gun control.

However, forgetting shouldn't be a problem for people living in the '90s. More than ever, violence is increasing. It's not secluded to big cities, either. Families living in suburbia and even small towns witness drive-by shootings, children bringing guns to school and drug-related killings.

Although people might purchase guns in illicit markets if they can't obtain them legally, at least the government won't be responsible for giving permits to convicted felons, the mentally incompetent and drug addicts.



letters

Better luck next treaty

To the editor:

To who it may concern, especially Mr. Tomblin: America got NAFTA, you didn't. It's called progress, look into it. The House did. Better luck next treaty. Congratulations to the proponents of democracy and opportunity everywhere.

Matthew Bromund
Washington, D.C., sophomore

City group shuns releasing names

To the editor:

I read with complete and utter disgust the comments of Maureen Johnson, vice president of MU's Society of Professional Journalists, in The Herald-Dispatch. ("Faculty Senate wants victims' IDs concealed," Nov. 19.) Miss Johnson believes that the new policy that prohibits the public release of rape victims names is illegal. She contends that the policy not only violates First Amendment press rights, but also violates West Virginia's open records law.

Perhaps if Miss Johnson was an attorney (instead of hack journalism cut from the cloth of the National Enquirer), she would realize that the university could protect campus crime records under provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended (P.L. 93-380).

Of course, Miss Johnson could have simply picked up the phone and contacted Mr. Layton Cottrill, university counsel, before

▼ Letters



The Parthenon encourages letters to the editor on topics of interest to the Marshall University community.

Letters should be typed and include the author's name, hometown, class rank or title, and a telephone number for verification.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters for space and potential libel.

Address letters to:

Letters
The Parthenon
311 Smith Hall
Huntington, W.Va. 25755

deciding to play Perry Mason. I guess, however, this would considered unethical for a Parthenon muckraker.

Miss Johnson, in addition, contends that, "the people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know."

Does Miss Johnson contend that the people have instead vested this trust in yellow journalistic rags such as The Parthenon? If it was not for the \$6 per term Parthenon fee extorted from students by the West Virginia legislature, Miss Johnson and the rest of her ilk would be forced to find real jobs with real newspapers in the real world.

How does putting a victim's name, Miss Johnson, on the front page of a paper qualify as "being good for the people?" At best, the victim will become a publicly-humiliated leper in the fashion of John Wayne Bobbitt. At the worst, a name-printing policy will dis-

courage women from reporting rapes, therefore allowing the bastards who commit this insidious crime to roam the streets freely in search of more victims.

Miss Johnson, obviously you must believe you have no possibility of being raped. Otherwise, you would put yourself in the shoes of victimized women and realize that victim name printing is as horrid as the actual crime itself.

John M. Nance
co-chairman of the City Young Republicans, MU division

Mom says thanks for weekend event

To the editor:

My daughter recently was invited to attend Outstanding Black High School Students at Marshall University for the weekend to see the campus and to find out about the university. It was a very well-planned weekend and extremely informative regarding how to register for college and how to go about getting grants and financial aid.

I just wanted to extend a thank you to Kenneth Blue and his staff for all of your efforts for making the weekend the wonderful experience that it was for the students who attended. All of your hard work was very much appreciated and noticed.

Teresa Minter
Huntington resident

The Parthenon

Volume 106 ■ Number 46

The Parthenon, Marshall University's newspaper, is published by students Tuesday through Friday during the fall and spring semesters.

Responsibility for news and editorial content lies solely with the editor.

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Thursday, Dec. 2, 1993

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Finals kits could be antidote to stress

By Tina Trigg
Reporter

When some students receive final exam kits, it could be just what the doctor ordered, or maybe just what their parents ordered.

"It's a gift for the students, from parents, wishing their son or daughter good luck on exams," said Charles A. Boone, area coordinator for residence services.

Residence Hall Association contracts Campus Fund-raisers out of New Jersey to help organize the final exam kit, Boone said.

Campus Fundraisers receives addresses of parents of on-campus students and letters are then mailed to parents, asking to purchase the final exam kit for their son or daughter, he said.

"We take care of all the orders that the parents buy and then we deliver it to the students the week before exams," Boone said.

Boone said there are three types of final exam kits that parents can choose. There is the fast aid kit that is packed with cookies, the fruit kit that contains a variety of fruits, and the combo kit that is a combination of the fast aid kit and the fruit kit, he said.

Boone said the program is to help students cope with stress of studying for final exams.

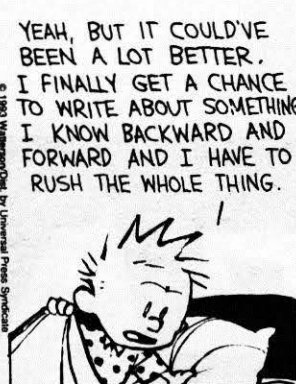
"I think that this is something nice for students," he said. "We all need a boost around exam time and this is just one way too do it."

The profits Residence Hall Association gets from the sale of the baskets goes toward more student programs for the residence halls, Boone said.

"Final exam kit is one of our major fundraisers for the year," he said. "This project has been going on for the last two or three years and has been very successful."

Calvin and Hobbes

by Bill Watterson

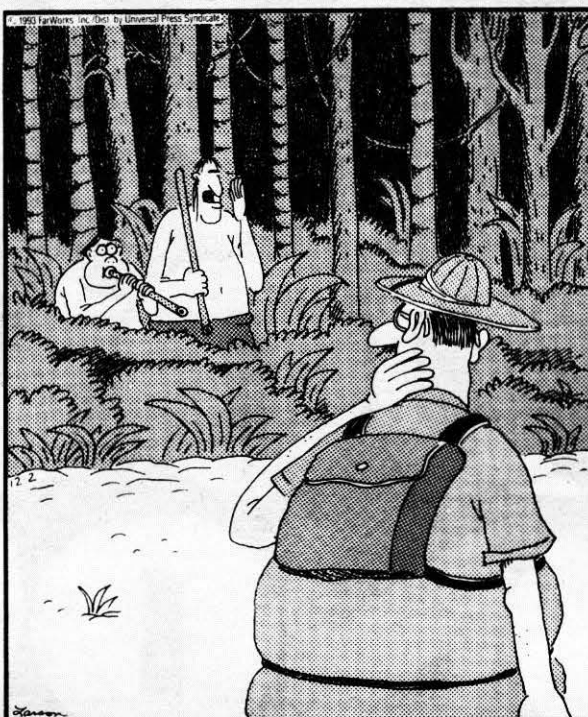


THE FAR SIDE

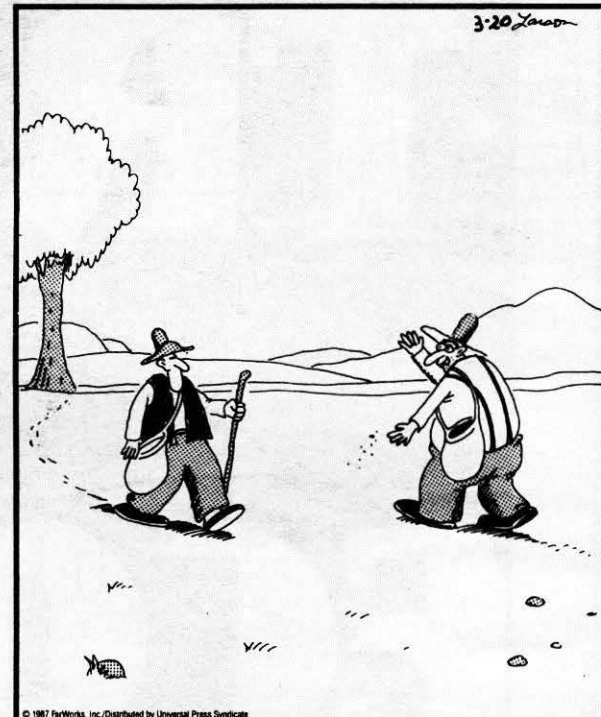
By GARY LARSON

THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"It's OK! Dart not poisonous ... Just showin' my kid the ropes!"



Crossing paths on their respective journeys of destiny, Johnny Appleseed and Irving Ragweed nod "hello."

Art exhibit displaced

By Karl Thompson
Staff Writer

Renovation sent senior art majors packing.

Exhibits required for six graphic design majors to graduate have to be shown at the Research and Economic Development Center while renovation of the Birke Art Gallery is completed.

It is the first such show at an off-campus site, senior Jamie Hamstead said.

The exhibit displays portfolios of the students' past four years of work at the university. It featured various pieces of art work, such as sculptures, paintings and graphic designs.

The students display the best of their work, which conveys the feelings and versatile

perceptions of the artists. Pieces ranged from oil/acrylic portraits and company advertisements to black and white photographs and computerized graphic photo images.

"It is basically what we are taking with us for jobs after college," Hamstead said.

Several of the students opted to put some of their artwork up for sale, and all six have lined up jobs after graduation.

Hamstead and Kevin Perrine will be employed with the Marriott Hotel in advertising and marketing department. Dan Shute will be with Ashland Oil, Steve Lewis with a T-shirt design, Amanda May and Carol Johnson with different local companies.

The display will run through Dec. 10 for the public.

Gonna hitch a ride...

By Laurice Smith
Staff Writer

Can I have ride? Could I have a lift?

How many times have you heard these questions? Have you found yourself asking it? At any given moment you could probably find someone on campus in need of a ride.

Not having your own car can make life difficult, but when you're away from home and mom isn't there to be a chauffeur things get even more difficult.

Without wheels, four basic options are open to stu-

dents — ride the bus, ride a bike, walk or bum a ride.

Given a choice, many students would probably choose to bum. Do they feel guilty?

"No," said Chris Curry, Huntington freshman. "It's always give and take with your friends."

The habit could become old to the designated drivers. Others, though, are patient.

"I don't mind it (giving rides) as long as it doesn't become a habit," said Stanley Young, Hairlan senior.

Bumming rides is a part of campus life and the college experience. The majority of students say they don't mind their

"I don't mind it [giving rides] as long as it doesn't become a habit"

Stanley Young
Hairlan senior

friends bumming rides as long as it is done in moderation.

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Two-party system balances political power

Lord Acton said, "Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely." This simple statement comprises the reasoning behind a nation's having more than one political party. The two-party system is very beneficial to the voters because the existence of an opposition party serves in a check-and-balance role.

The United States Constitution favors a two-party system since it does not mandate pro-

portional representation; in other words, the "winner takes all." In an American Presidential election, the candidate who receives the most votes in a state is almost always given the total number of electoral votes the state possesses, regardless of the actual percentage of the vote the candidate received.

For example, in the 1992 election there were few states in which any of the three Presi-



ROBERT PAINTER

COLUMNIST

dential candidates received over 50 percent of the popular vote, yet in all cases in each state one candidate received all of the electoral votes.

Throughout most of its history, the United States has only had two major political parties. Thus, based on the lack of proportionality in elections it is very difficult for a third party to penetrate, with any great impact, into the system. There are pros and cons to this system, but it certainly eases the transition of power.

In many countries, such as Italy, a majority vote is required to win an office. Since Italy has a multi-party system, coalitions among various parties often must be formed in order to obtain a majority. Thus, the voters often do not get the same "package" they voted for. The American system of elections also disfavors the splitting of major political parties.

When a candidate is elected to office, his or her concern about the political parties cannot end. The opposing party carefully monitors all the actions of the elected official and will use any negative aspects in the next election against the

official. Therefore, the existence of a two-party system incites diligence and excellence in the performance of duties by elected officials.

Currently in many states the two-party system is in jeopardy. States such as Utah are exceedingly Republican, while others such as ours consist of a majority of Democrats. Neither situation is ideal. Only when both parties are organized, functional, and active will the system work best. In no election should a candidate run unopposed, since in essence this grants a license for corruption, as per Lord Acton's quote.

To summarize, the two-party system is a crucial component of our system of election. It encourages political parties to work hard to earn the support of voters, and induces elected officials to keep in the forefront of their thoughts the constituents who elected them. When the two-party system becomes functionally dominated by one party, incidence of corruption increases and a marked decline in quality of government is observed.

What happens, though, when members of the two political parties feel that their party leaderships are not responsive to their needs? Do new parties result? This may explain today's phenomenon of the growing presence of national leaders interested in starting third parties. Ross Perot has tried to make his "United We Stand" organization a third party by saying whatever he thinks the public wants to hear. Some

Democrats think their party is too moderate and wish to find a more liberal party.

Within the Republican Party, many conservatives are worried. Howard Phillips, in 1992, founded the U.S. Taxpayers Party and ran as a presidential candidate in 21 states. Many conservatives say that they feel morally obligated to form a new party if the Republican platform moves to the left concerning moral and social issues such as abortion.

"When the two-party system becomes functionally dominated by one party, incidence of corruption increases."

The founding fathers advocated a government that changes to meet the people's needs. Could it be that we are now at a time in which we need to amend the Constitution to provide for proportional elections, i.e. eliminate the "winner takes all" idea? Perhaps. If this were to occur, elected officials would certainly be more accountable to the public. Furthermore, the parties would be more responsive to all their component facets.

With all the diversity of thought that permeates the contemporary political scene, modification of our election system is an undoubtedly an option that should be seriously considered.

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Autism Training Center



Photo by R. Morton Boyd

Joshua Merritt gets encouragement from his education specialist Lesa Pascavis-Smith.

Teaching the skills of life

▼ *Marshall's Autism Training Center provides people with autism opportunities for greater independent living through communication and social skills training and intensive support groups.*

When they hear the word autism, most people think of the movie "Rain Man."

But that's not the whole story, said Barbara J. Becker, director of the Autism Training Center. "Autism is a neurological disorder, or a physical disorder of the brain. It actually physically affects the way people perceive things and process their environment."

Becker said the cause of autism is unknown, so medical treatment is virtually impossible.

"The literature tells us the best treatment for autism is behavioral treatment. It's diagnosed by its behavioral symptoms. There are no tests that you can take to show you have autism," she said.

Fourteen-year-old Joshua has autism. His family, including his parents and two sisters, goes to the center for help in teaching him communication and social skills.

"The center has really helped us a lot," said Joshua's mother, Regina Merritt.

Becker said the center, located in 316 Old Main, is helping over 360 families like Joshua's all over the state.

"We are the only place in the state, and one of the few in the country, that actually trains autistic people to be more independent and learn life skills."

Becker said people with autism have behavioral problems because they are frustrated by their inability to communicate.

"[Autism] is considered one of the most challenging disabilities; I mean, if you couldn't talk you would probably have a lot of behavior problems too," she said.

Physically, autism affects the way people like Joshua use their senses and perceive the world.

"Fifty percent of people with autism are nonvocal/verbal, meaning no vocalization [talking] at all. Whatever is going on neurologically is inhibiting the motor process," she said.

Becker said some autistic people have extremely acute hearing.

"We now know that a lot of these kids are very hypersensitive to sound. Sometimes it is even the

air conditioner. We have seen behaviors come out of the blue, and we don't know why. Then, one day, someone turns off the air conditioner and it's a perfect day," she said.

Becker described the process most families encounter when coming to the center.

"Our training always begins with a really good assessment of what's currently going on. We sit down with parents and educators and ask them to prioritize behaviors they would like to see a decrease in," she said.

The center focuses on individualized training and has several education specialists who visit families' homes and clients' schools to educate those working with the autistic person.

Lesa Pascavis-Smith is an education specialist at the center.

"I go out and provide training to children, their parents and their teachers. I go all over the state and train people of all ages," she said.

Becker said the center added intensive support group training to its program last year.

"It is very time- and work-intensive, but the support groups work so much better," she said.

Attendance is high at the monthly meetings, Becker said. "People come to these because they know they are changing a person's life."

Joshua's support group includes his three teach-

ers, his parents, his sisters, a case worker and his education specialist, Pascavis-Smith.

Becker said, "Josh is really lucky. His father and his teachers are really involved in helping him."

She explained why the support group method is successful. "It's amazing because when you get a group of people sitting down together, they each have a little piece of information about that person. Everyone gains a real knowledge of that person and it's a real team collaboration."

In addition to individual training and the semi-independent group work, the center offers monthly lectures offering practical information.

"We talk about things like how to take assessment data, how to assign certain things to different people in the group, the other general information," Becker said.

Also, the center offers undergraduate and graduate classes on autism. "We mostly get education, communication disorder and psychology majors. Sometimes parents who want to learn more about autism will take the introductory class," she said.

A library with videos, journals and other publications on autism is open to students and faculty.

"Success often comes in very small increments. But sometimes those increments mean a lot," Becker said. "They are tremendous; they are great! When [independent behavior] first happens spontaneously, we sometimes have a party. It's like, 'Yes! Now let's do more!'"

"Success often comes in very small increments. But sometimes those increments mean a lot."

Barbara J. Becker
Autism Center director



Joshua and his family participate in a training session. From left: Regina Merritt, Courtney Merritt, Pascavis-Smith, Joshua, Brittany Merritt, Joel Merritt.

Story by R. Ward