

opinion

RUB Rats disrupt the Reed Building

We would like to thank Jack Horner for finally bringing the issue of the RUB Rats to print. We have watched an entire semester go by while this deviant subculture carries out their unusual and sometimes unacceptable social rituals. They gather, quite literally in the middle of our daily routine, and we watch—both fascinated and disappointed that the actions of so few can disrupt the lives of so many. Yet, in order to address the issue objectively, we must not stand in judgement of them as individuals. Recall, if you will, the injustice Athenians dealt to Socrates by condemning him for his nonconformity in a time when ignorance truly was bliss. Rather, we must look at how their actions affect the college community.

We will not address the issue surrounding their language, their mess, or their preoccupation with backrubs. Sure it's an eyesore, but so is the bizarre wooden pop-art on the ceiling of the Wintergreen Cafe. We live with it. We will not live with blatantly unacceptable behavior. A woman walking through the lobby should not be subjected to an insulting, degrading, sexist remark coming from a brain only a mother could love. During classes and other programs in the Reed Lecture Hall, faculty members are often forced to play mommy and reprimand the boisterous children in the next room. In spite of this, they continue to be themselves, maintaining that they have a right to gather in the lobby and, consequent-

ly, ruining such events as "A Night of the Arts." After thoroughly disrupting the evening, they relax by helping themselves to the food at the reception. You've got to give them credit... they've got style. It is unfortunate that their noise often disrupts the study room. It is also unfortunate that these people have prevented commuters from using the pay phone outside of the Wintergreen Cafe because it is now their private line. It is unfortunate that this group of altogether well-meaning people mindlessly disrupt the college community. But let's not start feeding hemlock to the RUB Rats yet. After all, everyone has the right to express their individuality. However, lest the RUB Rats forget, there

are over two thousand other individuals here who might not want to deal with their individuality—especially not in the lobby of the Reed Building.

Paul Sarkis

Paul A. Sarkis

Third Semester, English

Bill Packwood,

William H. Packwood

Third Semester, Biology

In moderate defense of Ratdom

The two articles on the "RUB Rats" published in the Nov. 20 issue of the Collegian, presented, together, a balanced statement of what it means to be a student, and what it means to be young. The Rats are not unresponsive to the opinions of students and administration, and they are cleaning up their acts. But, as Henry James remarked, the Aristotelian "golden mean" in human behavior can only be discovered by exploring its extremes. These students are doing just that - not necessarily to my entire approval. But then, whose behavior ever gets total approval?

The tonal virtues of alliteration notwithstanding, I would prefer, however, that the RUB Rats clean up their collective name. After all, rats eat filth, survive at all costs, and spread disease. These students do none of the above. They are a bright and imaginative. They test the waters of reality in ways that young folks should in the business of making sense of the world.

They are also nice, caring people. I write this in my unofficial capacity as faculty preceptor for the group. As an "elder rat", I will make two elderly observations: (a) Let it be. (b) When they get out of hand, let them know.

Dr. Jeffrey S. Wicken

Jeffrey S. Wicken

Associate Professor of Biochemistry.

RATs could be more considerate

I would like to thank the editor of the Collegian for bringing the RUB Rat's behavior to the attention of Behrend.

I totally agree with him and would like to add a few comments.

What I find most distressing about the RUB Rats is that they seem to be sexually frustrated and they release their pent up frustrations in a public lounge.

Last week, I walked by the lounge where two couches were pushed together. On the pseudo-king-sized bed two people (One male, one female - Thank God!) were feverishly groping each other as if one of them was being sent to

the electric chair in thirty seconds. I, for one, don't really like to see something like that before I eat (or attempt to eat) my lunch.

I would appreciate it if the RUB Rats would be a little more considerate and behave in a slightly more mature manner.

The Rub Rats will probably read this and sneer; I suppose ignorance is bliss.

Sherry Simpson

Sherry Simpson

Fifth Semester, COMBA

The RATS arise

In a recent issue of the Collegian, Editor Jack Horner voiced his opinion of a group of friends who meet in the upstairs lobby of the Reed Union Building. Shameful as such an activity may be, we RUB Rats feel that the concerns of Mr. Horner are insubstantial. In the editorial, Jack speaks of our vices, abuses, and self-centeredness, but the Rats fail to see how we deviate from the norm. (In these respects.)

According to the editor, an itemized list of our vices can be made from an ugly picture the author paints of a "typical evening." We employ such Satanic vices as playing cards, smoking, and God forbid, swearing. Horner's article complains of at least one Rat "spouting filth" and implies that it is the course of action at all times. As a matter of fact, this is a close enough approximation, but foul language is a form of humor, however pedestrian. This humor works on the principle that the most ridiculous proposition is the funniest one. We are sorry for violating the virgin ears of our editor, but college is traditionally a time for growing up and learning about the real world, which includes all forms of humor.

The use of cigarettes is certainly socially acceptable. Indeed, it is a pervasive habit in colleges across the nation. If James Dean were to read Horner's disgust of this habit, he would have dismissed Jack as a "square." As for playing cards, certainly this age-old pastime can not be construed as evil. Our vices are the vices of the world. Perchance we should not swear or smoke, but it is poor journalistic style to try to make one small group stand out for doing so.

Mr. Horner's second attack was of the abuses we conflict upon the school. We make too much noise, we leave clutter about, and we abuse the furniture. The noise level in the lobby is no longer a question. David Stuntz, whose office is nearby, complained once. On another occasion, a teacher from Reed 117 also complained. After this, Jamie Grimm from Student Affairs talked to us and we have agreed to keep loud conversation away from the lobby during class time. No one has had any problems with us since then. The clutter we leave about is mostly our own possessions. Like

all college students, rats have books to carry about, and jackets to wear. When we settle down to study or talk, these items settle with us, and get left about. This is the normal order of things. As for cafeteria garbage, the Rats have made another agreement with Miss Grimm, to maintain the lounge by ourselves. When we leave, the room is clean. The cafeteria personnel applaud this agreement and continually wish that a similar one could be arranged for the Gorge. The situation is much worse in there. The RUB Rats may also use the furniture in manners unintended by their makers or the University, but never let it be said that we abuse it. First, the chairs cannot be comfortably used by people over six feet tall. More than seven Rats are at least that tall. If Jack had taken the time to look at the chairs, the backs are perfectly vertical and the rear legs placed directly underneath. The engineering of the furniture makes sitting on their back neither dangerous nor damaging.

The Reed Union Building Rats

have saved the most painful attitude for last. The editorial complained that we are isolationists, not caring about anything else and actively excluding all others from our group. This rather hurts because such an assertion denies everything that the Rats stand for. Our group is a group of friends and as such we talk about what is happening in our lives. We share interest in the word-of-mouth free advertising idea. Should the Rats show enough enthusiasm for, say, the Outdoor Club, he or she may spark interest in another Rat to try it. Many Rats are active in many organizations, it is only our free time that we spend in the lounge which is what Rats do anyway. No Rat has ever intentionally chased anyone away from the lounge! A Rat rarely takes up more than enough space for one person. If we should just happen to take up that space in only one room of the University, that opens up spaces in other lounges should people be uncomfortable with us. Indeed, many a time other groups have displaced

us by sheer size. Good or bad, this situation allows the most freedom for all Behrend students.

Finally, RUB Rats are people who happen to be friends. We made friends because we have all chosen the same place to spend our free time. The people who are there are the same people as last year, plus a few newcomers. In no other way has the situation in the second floor lobby changed, outside of the fact that we have given ourselves a name. Why do the complaints crop up now? Why did Mr. Horner decide to draw out anything that can be construed as wrong-doing? Does the editor of the paper dislike the idea of friendships on campus? We do not know, but the Rats have done no harm as of yet and poses at least the potential to do some good. Rats have often helped prepare the gorge for dances and other special events, and our friendships offer support and companionship that is much needed in all colleges across the nation. What Pray tell, is so bad about that?

Sincerely,

MIKE "MIKEY" PETERS

Wendell

Jim "Bajji" Benjamin

Brian & Raymond "Splice"

Rollie

Mayberry

Jan Down

Brian E. (BOPS) Sarno

Concerned RUB Rats

Editorial Policy

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The little things in life

There are very few things about this campus that I don't like, and you are about to be subjected to them. Some of them trivial—and some are earth-shattering. I'll bet you can't guess which ones are which.

It's a shame, but students living on campus never really have a chance to participate in radio contests, because by the time you dial your access code, the station already has a winner.

A la board point paranoia: That second of panic when the worker at the Wintergreen Cafe has run your meal card too quickly through the sensor and your card is rejected. Is it my imagination or is that noise of rejection that comes from the cash register saying, "na-na na-na-na?"

I also experience a moment of fear when the MAC machine takes one or two extra seconds to return my card. Thank you and please take your receipt. That is, of course, when it isn't temporarily out of service.

I'm afraid to go into the library because I'm afraid of the LIAS computer. When I do finally go into the library and sit down at one of those study carrels I always think the person on the other side is wondering about what I'm wondering about. Hmmm.

Sometimes when my mailbox partner gets mail and I don't—I push his mail through to the other end of the mailbox and onto the mailroom floor.

I will not under any circumstances eat at Dobbins alone.

On the pathway the other day, I heard two girls laughing about someone who had one of those dryer sheets stuck to the back of their shirt, and when I got to my German class a Cling Free fell from my shoulder and onto my desk.

When I go Christmas shopping I have to buy myself a few things first—just to get me started. Then I don't have any money left for anyone else and I go home—just call me Mr. Thoughtful.

I still haven't seen anyone Wang Chung.

Whenever the person cutting my hair makes a mistake they always tell me I have a natural part there.

I recently bought a wastebasket, and I carried it home in a paper bag. When I got home I put the paper bag in the wastebasket.

I live in constant fear that I can't get my watch set to the correct time and the ten different times on the ten different clocks in the Reed Building don't help any.

If I never hear Madonna's "True Blue" again it will be too soon.

The girl behind the "Hi. This is a recording from the Behrend College of the Pennsylvania State University. The number you have reached is not a working number...." better never let her identity be known.

What comes over me that I have to unbend paper clips?

The person who designed the hot and cold water handles in the bathrooms—you know the ones that don't stay turned on when you turn them—needs to be imprisoned.

Why can I read through the curtains on my residence hall window?

When I picked up my schedule of classes for the Spring semester I had gotten one of the classes I had requested. Tell me it's nothing personal.

Perry Hall is the root of all evil.

That little red light that tells me that the vending machine is out of Mountain Dew is almost as annoying as the blinking red light on the Change machine in the Cafe that tells me there is not a single quarter to be had.



A wise person once said that the little things in life are what's really important. They must have been talking about my Grade Point Average. Had they said that the big things in life were important, then I would have known they were talking about my phone bill.

Nothing gets me more into the Christmas spirit than walking out of the room where I've taken my last final.

Happy Holidays, everyone.
Jack Horner
Collegian Editor