

Editorials

Student apathy

If apathy were a fatal disease, about ninety percent of the students on this campus would drop dead.

There are some students on this campus who do get involved and voice their concerns, and they can stop reading here.

But most students on this campus do zero. They are content to sleep, feed their heads and attend class. The administration can raise their tuition and charge them for nonexistent parking spaces; the Wintergreen Cafe can raise its prices and make them stand in incredibly long lines; even *The Collegian* can run articles, columns and editorials that outrage students and still they will do nothing but grumble among themselves.

There is an option. If you are upset with something on campus or in *The Collegian*, write a Letter to the Editor. Just comply with the Letter Policy in the staff box on this page.

If you really want to make a difference, you might even try getting involved in student government or another student organization.

Anyone can sit in the Gorge and complain, but nothing will change without action.

Here we go again

University administrators are planning to raise tuition 6 percent for each of the next four years. This is unfair to students, who already pay a hefty amount each year.

University tuition has risen every year since 1967. By the time in-state residents of the Class of '94 are seniors, they will be paying \$4,738 per year. That cost doesn't include room and board or the newly implemented computer fee.

Students should not sit idly by. Each 6 percent tuition increase means about \$250 slipping through their fingers each year. If students are concerned about the rising cost of tuition, they should tell President Thomas. Students can write letters and lobby to express their concern.

Although they're becoming an annual event, tuition increases don't deserve a permanent spot on any calendar.

The preceding is an excerpt taken from the September 24 editorial by The Daily Collegian, University Park.

The Collegian

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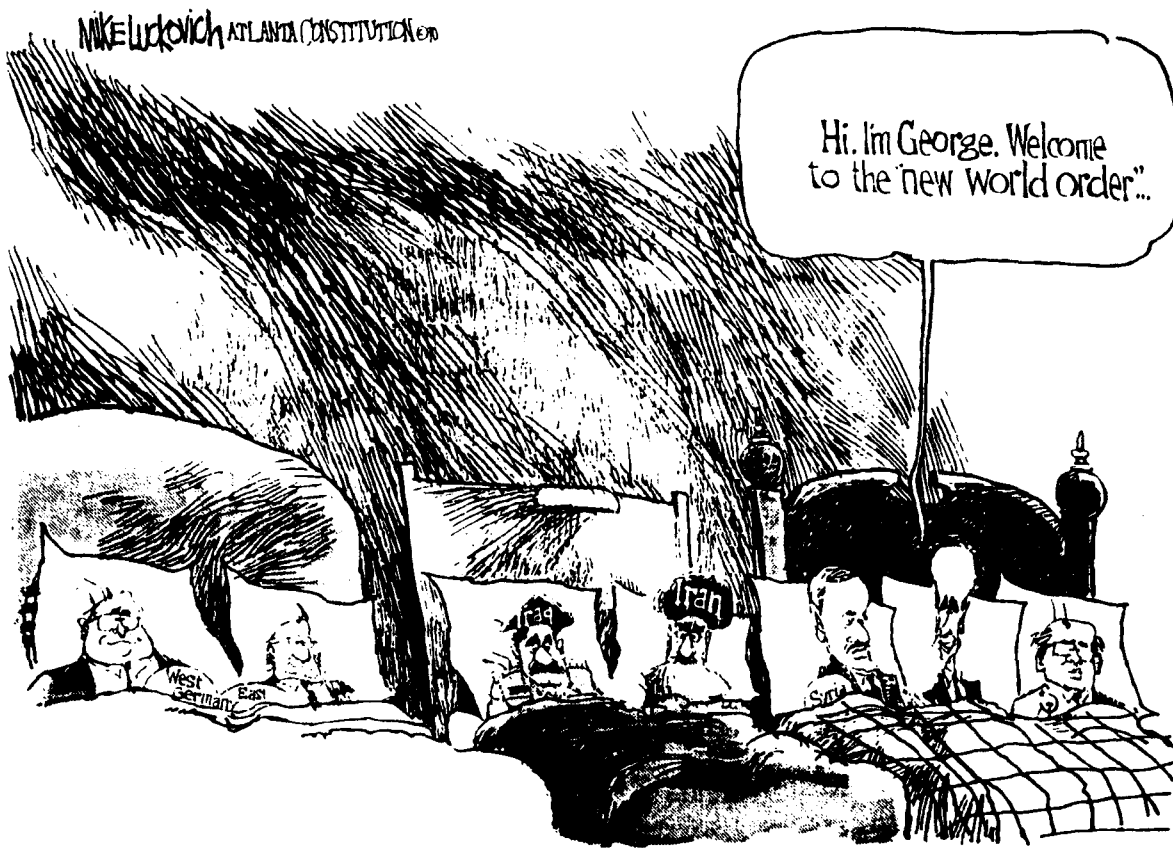
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Letter Policy: *The Collegian* encourages letters on news coverage, editorial content and university affairs. Letters should be typewritten, double-spaced and signed by no more than two persons. Letters should be no longer than 400 words. Letters should include the semester and major of the writer. All letters should provide the address and phone number of the writer for verification of the letter. *The Collegian* reserves the right to edit letters for length and to reject letters if they are libelous or do not conform to standards of good taste. Letters should be submitted to *The Collegian* office no later than noon on Tuesday prior to the desired publication date.

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Opinion / Editorial



Letters to the Editor

Tucker misguided

Eva Tucker is a valued colleague and long time friend of many of us in the English Department at Behrend College, but on the issue of *Huckleberry Finn* we believe that Mr. Tucker is misguided and perhaps uninformed.

Huck Finn is an acknowledged American classic; many would call it the great American novel. Like all great literature, it both reflects and transcends its own time, and like all great literature it fearlessly raises and seriously confronts the moral issues of its day. The moral issues of Mark Twain's day, alas, were little different from the issues of our day--racism, individual freedom, loyalty, the individual and society, individual conscience and social responsibility.

Being a Realist, Twain wrote in Huck's dialect, and Huck's dialect included the word "nigger," which Mr. Tucker rightly finds offensive, as do we. It's a word that all of us wish would disappear, along with all the other hate words and slur phrases that people have invented to demean those of other races, creeds, genders, or sexual practice.

But banning a book from the classroom, even in the backdoor way that Mr. Tucker proposes, will not make the hate words disappear from students' vocabularies any more than it will eradicate the attitudes that give rise to such words. All that censorship can accomplish--and make no mistake, it is censorship that Mr. Tucker proposes--is to restrict teachers to bland books that offend no one, in other words to dull, stale, flat, and unprofitable reading.

There is no book written that cannot or does not offend someone. The books Mr. Tucker

uses in his geology classes, with their references to evolution, geologic time, and the "big bang" theory of creation, would no doubt offend many Christian fundamentalists to whom such phrases and ideas are anathema.

But you cannot teach geology without reference to evolution, geologic time, and the "big bang" theory, any more than you can teach American history without reference to slavery or the American novel without including *Huckleberry Finn*.

We need great literature to stimulate our imaginations, to challenge our moral complaisance, and to force us to confront our history. *Huckleberry Finn* does these things and more, for it contains the first truly human portrait of a black man that we know of in American literature. As Huck and Jim travel down river, we see friendship deepen between them, resulting in a resounding portrait of understanding and affection between a white boy and a black man.

Does Mr. Tucker really want to deprive students of the chance to know Huck and Jim and to learn from their examples? Does he really want to turn literature classes into bland exercises in safe ideas? We don't think so. What Mr. Tucker wants is what we all want: a just and color-blind society in which all people, like Twain's Jim, are judged for what they are and not for the color of their skin or the shape of their beliefs.

Huckleberry Finn is Mr. Tucker's ally in this struggle, not his enemy.

Nine Members of the English Faculty
Behrend College

Ed. Note: *The Collegian's* letter policy states that letters

should be signed by no more than two persons. In order to abide by our policy, the signature box above has been changed accordingly. The names of the nine members of the English Faculty who signed this letter are available in *The Collegian* office.

Soldier support

I think that it is safe to assume that everyone knows what it is like to go to a mailbox, expecting or hoping to get something, but nothing is there. Just an empty box. It stinks, right? It's no big deal though, really, because there will probably be something there tomorrow, or else you can save the hassle of writing and just make a phone call.

Imagine being a couple of thousand miles away in a desert, where mail is about as scarce as a good rainfall, and telephones...well, good luck. Now that stinks!

Now, if I may appeal to your good nature, this is what I would like you to do. If you have a spare five minutes, how about dropping a line to someone over in the Middle East? I don't think that anything would be more appreciated than a letter from someone that cares. So how about it?

If you give a damn:
Cpl. Mark Rocco
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F.P.D. New York
09503-5512

When you write to him, wish him a happy birthday, it won't get there in time, but it's the thought that counts. His birthday is October 1. What a way to spend your 23rd birthday, isn't it?

Greg Geibel
Fifth semester
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