

Letters to the Editor (continued)

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have gotten away with it.

What was your thinking when you did it? "What are they gonna do? Boycott classes?" Not after paying \$2000 to attend them I won't. Is that what you were planning on? Hmmm? Well, enjoy you lavish receptions, and get the most out of that rent-a-jungle you have in the Reed building. It's on me.

James Barrett
9th semester
Electrical Engineering
Technology

Defending GU

I noted that the Gannon University men's basketball program was negligently misrepresented by a member of your staff in the Sept. 6 issue of *The Collegian*.

Susan Cepicka's interview with Behrend basketball player Gregg Blair concerning his former basketball career at Gannon was misrepresentative of Blair's actual comments, and was therefore in violation of acceptable journalistic standards.

The article in question states: "At Gannon, Blair saw a different type of athletic program in which it was basketball first and classes second. At Behrend, he claims to not have that type of pressure on him anymore. I am known as a college student here, not as a basketball

player," remarks Blair. "I just want to play here."

There is nothing in Blair's quoted comments that even implies that his athletic program at Gannon put "basketball first and classes second." I also could not find anything in the comment "I am known as a college student here, not as a basketball player," that even suggested that he no longer has "that type of pressure on him." I am also unclear as to where the idea of "pressure" originated in this matter -- again, there is nothing in Blair's comments that mentions pressure of any sort. Not only is the article inaccurate, it is extremely ambiguous.

Since Cepicka does not attribute these comments to Blair, it is clear that she is imposing her own personal views and opinions upon the subject matter, which is unprofessional at least, and libelous behavior at most.

A conversation between *Gannon Knight* sports editor Jim Roddy and Cepicka confirmed that Blair did not actually say anything to confirm the implications that appear in her story, and that Cepicka was in fact writing what she perceived to be the truth, based on what she had "heard from other people."

This type of bias has no place in news writing, and I think it is your responsibility to be sure that all future news is based on facts and can be properly attributed. Personally biased pieces like Cepicka's should only be found on the editorial pages of a newspaper.

I suggest that in the future a

bit more care be exercised by *The Collegian* editorial staff in editing nonobjective and unprecedented information from "factual" articles.

Michele Wroblewski
Editor-in-Chief
The Gannon Knight

Glaring mistake

I am writing in response to a Sept. 6 article in *The Collegian* which headlines "Players discuss coaching change."

As sports editor of *The Gannon Knight*, Gannon University's student newspaper, I noticed a glaring mistake in the article. It reads: "At Gannon, (Gregg) Blair saw a different type of athletic program in which it was basketball first and classes second."

I believe that a few facts were overlooked.

For Bob Dukiet, the head men's basketball coach at Gannon, academic success by his players is the number one priority. Written on his marker-board in his office, where he often meets with players, is the following list:

1. ACADEMICS
2. BASKETBALL
3. WORK ETHIC

It cannot be made any clearer. Dukiet practices what he preaches, also. He, along with assistant coach John Reilly and Academic Advisor Sally LeVan, actively monitors each student-athlete's academic progress. In fact, academic activities double athletic activities time-wise.

Each team member is required to work on his basketball skills — individually and with the team — for just ten hours a week.

Team members are also

required to attend classes (approximately 15 hours/week), go to study hall (5.5 hours), and meet individually with the academic advisor for one half-hour per week.

So compare the numbers: ten hours of basketball to 21 hours of academics.

"...it was basketball first and classes second."

Also, each player's professor fills out a form every two weeks about the player's attendance, class participation, assignment quality, and present grade in the class.

The form is then returned to the basketball office, where the coaches and academic advisor determine if the player is meeting the academic requirements.

If he is not, he is suspended from the team until improving his academic standing.

"...it was basketball first and classes second."

Has the system produced results? Three of four Gannon seniors on last season's team graduated in May of 1990. The fourth is on schedule to graduate this coming May.

Graduation is the objective in the Gannon basketball program.

"...it was basketball first and classes second."

Finally, Dukiet instructs to his team to "Use the game of basketball. Don't let it use you."

Dukiet wants his players to take advantage of the educational opportunities they have received because of their athletic ability.

He has clearly set the standard that, at Gannon, the emphasis is classes first and basketball second.

Jim Roddy
Sports Editor
The Gannon Knight

Nine under fire

In a previous Letter to the Editor, nine members of the English faculty claimed to find offensive a particular word used to demean people of African descent.

Nonetheless, argued the nine, the novel "Huckleberry Finn" deserves to be highlighted in the classroom despite its repeated use of this offensive word. Their excuse is that no book "cannot or does not offend someone."

But there are different ways to offend people. We can offend narrow-minded people by presenting ideas with which they do not agree. (The nine gave the example of some Fundamentalist Christians who might be offended by the teaching of evolution.) We can offend people of color by using racial slurs. The former is unavoidable if our goal is education. The latter is unacceptable at an institution which values a diverse constituency.

By suggesting that literature courses would be bland if they were not peppered with ethnic slurs, nine members of the English faculty do a disservice to their discipline. They should re-examine their stance in light of their stated commitment to a "just and color-blind society."

Gary Nelson
Assistant Professor
Mathematics

It just isn't cool to talk about war

by Mike Royko

"You know what's great about Americans?" asked Slats Grobnik. "We're so cool, that's what."

What prompts that proud observation?

"Well, just listen to what people are talking about."

Such as?

"They're talking about who's winning the football games, the baseball games, what they saw on TV, how was their vacation, how their cars are running, how the job's going, what the weather's like, how much sump'n costs. Yeah, that's really cool."

But those are normal, everyday topics of conversations. Why does it strike you as being noteworthy?

"Because if you listen to people, you wouldn't have a hint that we're gettin' closer and closer to a real war. And it looks like there's no way we can avoid it, and a lot of people are going to get killed. But do you hear people talking about that? Nah. We sort of say, 'Hey, what me worry?'"

Oh, I'm sure people are concerned.

"Who? Ted Koppel?"

Most people. They're aware of the growing tensions in the Middle East.

"Yeah? But are they really aware? Or do they think this is just another made-for-TV crisis where we put up some yellow ribbons for hostages, then the whole thing kind of fades away? You think people really know that when this thing gets going there's probably going to be thousands of American troops getting killed? Not hunnerts, but thousands. And that this could be the biggest land war since Korea?"

Well, there is still the possibility that it could be averted.

"How?"

Saddam Hussein could withdraw from Kuwait as we're demanding.

"He won't do that because then he'll look like a loser and all the other Arabs will laugh at him and then he won't go down in Arab history as big heat."

Then maybe our blockade will be effective. Deprived of food and other necessities, he'll have to be reasonable.

"That sounds good, except they can grow enough food to scrape by for a long time. And there's ways stuff can be smuggled in to them. You know how long the blockade would have to last? Some of the GIs over there would have gray hair."

Then we might have to negotiate a settlement that is satisfactory to both sides.

"Like what? President Bush says we won't settle for anything except getting Kuwait back. And Hussein says he ain't never giving it back."

Maybe Bush will change his mind.

"No way. Remember when people said Bush was a wimp? Professor George Will even called him a lap dog. Now he's acting like a tough guy and you can tell that he likes it. But if he pulls out, Hussein wins. Or if he just lets the troops sit there for the next year or two or three, Hussein still wins. So people are going to start saying Bush is a wimp again. And he's like every other president, worrying about what the history books will say about him. I don't know why presidents worry about that. More people read the National Enquirer than history books."

Assuming you're right, that conflict is inevitable, then maybe we can end it quickly with those quick, surgical air strikes the experts talk about.

"Bull. You don't win wars with any air strikes that are quick and surgical. This ain't like taking out tonsils, you know."

But we have air superiority.

"Yeah, we had all kinds of air superiority in Korea. And before we landed at Normandy, we had air superiority over Europe. But where were those wars fought? Right down on the ground. Because that's where you fight wars. So forget about surgical air strikes. When this one gets going, it'll be down and dirty. The only time air superiority ended a war was when we nuked Japan."

Well, there are those who say we should consider...

"We should consider what? Nuking Iraq?"

I've heard readers say it.

"Then refer 'em to a shrink. We nuke Iraq and every Moslem in the world is crazy mad at us. And the rest of the world will say we're creeps. And Bush goes down in history in the same chapter as Attila or Dracula. Yeah, we'd look good. I can read it now: 'The United States, to preserve stability in the Middle East and protect its national interests, nuked Iraq, killing a few million innocent men, women and children.' Hooray for our side."

You sound alarmingly pessimistic. You seem to think there can't be a negotiated settlement, that war is inevitable and that it will be a terribly

costly conflict with great loss of life.

"Yeah, great loss of life. That's what usually happens when two big armies come at each other with their bombs, missiles, tanks and bullets. With all these wonderful computers and high-tech gizmos, some old-fashioned things never change. Like when a bullet smacks you in the head, you die. When a bomb lands on you, there's nothing left but bits and pieces."

You paint a very bleak picture.

"Hey, don't worry. Be cool like everybody else. Just say: Hey, the president knows what he's doing or he wouldn't be president. And let's all call the local talk show guy on the radio so we can fax a cheery message to the boys over there. And, remember, if all hell breaks loose, this country has got a big supply of yellow ribbons. Besides, the timing looks good."

What timing?

"The experts say the shooting won't start for a few months."

Why is that good?

"It won't screw up the playoffs or the World Series."

That's a relief.

"You're learning to be cool."

Or stupid.

"Either way, it works."