

So few people use Freedom of Speech

by Andrew Festa

"This is school."
 "I've other things to do."
 "I don't have the time."
 "Besides, what difference can one person make?"
 "No one will listen to me; I'm just one tiny voice in a sea of noise."

"It takes a lot of people with the same ideas to make things happen, to bring changes about."

And to think, such words come from "educated" people.

Are we building a nation of apathetic morons? Are there no people out there who have a reaction to the world around them? Where is the courage to speak out against injustices? Are things so perfect there's no need to 'rock the boat'?

How quickly we forget the people of earlier generations. While it is often true that one voice by itself is too often seen in a negative light, one voice which speaks true is heard by others and, over time, is joined by those in agreement.

When I hear others talk about the generation I grew

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up in, I hear negative and uninformed interpretations. Many people recall the negative aspects of 'the old days' (the younger folk going only by what they've read or have been told) and they speak as if those days should be forgotten.

Young people who weren't there talk in derogatory manner of those times, failing to see any good. Many say, "The 60s and 70s were full of drugs and free love."

Get your head out of the middle part of your anatomy and take a hard look at the world you seem to be so ignorant of. Look at today's drug epidemic; the growing corruption of the media and the porn that's creeping its way into television shows; the violence; the growing debt our inept government

keeps increasing; our foreign policy which supports a foreign government figure, no matter the injustices, until we no longer need him.

Look at the realities of our modern world and stop avoiding your responsibility to that world and to yourselves. Get off your butts and speak out. You can speak, can't you? If nothing else, you were at least taught how to open your mouths and release audible and intelligible sounds?

Are people generally lazy? Do few people care about making positive changes? Are they afraid to rock the boat? Do they have little real intelligence or are they just afraid to test the level of the intelligence? What right, if taken away, would people speak in defense of? The government

can take those rights away because most people are either afraid to make a stand and voice their concerns or they're unable to act or see what's happening.

Smokers no longer have the right to smoke indoors. We may soon lose the right to burn the flag, a crime against and the murder of the IDEA of Freedom. Women's bodies are being ping-ponged between various groups of politicians looking for a platform on which to run.

The media has grown in its coverage of world news to the point where the wrong person can come along and utilize it as the most powerful propaganda tool ever devised. All this, and no complaints or questions?

Small social groups meet in local hangouts or other

social settings to bitch about the state of the world, but few openly voice their concerns. Few have the courage to speak, the kind of courage which was prevalent in the 60s and 70s.

The next generation will be hard pressed to find pride in being the offspring of the apathetic. Years from now, today's apathetic will bounce grandchildren on their laps and reminisce about what they could have done or should have done but didn't have the nerve to do. Those children will inherit what ignorance, inability, stupidity or apathy to exist or be forced to die.

I'm glad I grew up in the 60s and 70s. I look back with pride at my accomplishments and the things I spoke up for and spoke out against. Maybe I didn't change anything, but I didn't fall back on excuses. I tried.

Andrew Festa is an eighth semester English major. His column appears every other week in The Collegian.

Ed. Note: What happened? We were getting all these Letters to the Editor, and now nothing. I hope that somebody out there still has an opinion on something happening on campus or about something they've read in *The Collegian*. If you would like

to voice your views on an issue, write a Letter to the Editor.

The Collegian encourages letters on news coverage, editorial content or 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. All submitted letters become property of *The Collegian*.

Letters should be submitted to *The Collegian* office, first floor of the

Reed Union Building or *The Collegian* mailbox located in the SGA suite also on the first floor of the Reed Building no later than noon on the Tuesday prior to the desired publication date.

For each veteran, his own memories

by Mike Royko

Mayor Daley says Chicago's parade to honor the Gulf War troops will be the biggest in the city's history. If so, fine. Everybody loves a good parade.

And there will be big parades in other cities, more joyous family reunion scenes at airports and the grand finale on the 4th of July when President Bush leads the nation in a massive celebration.

But watching all of this, I have to wonder how veterans of other wars are reacting.

Actually, I'm really not wondering. I'm sure many or most veterans are enjoying the patriotic surge. But some that I've talked to are bemused or puzzled.

As Harry, a Chicagoan nudging 60, said: "I had to laugh at something I saw on TV. There were these reservists who just got back. And there were people all over them at the airport."

"They interviewed one guy about how he felt, and talked about how great it was to be back and what an experience it had

been. It turned out he had been there about three months and was some kind of a welder at an air base.

"I'm not taking anything away from guys like him. He did what he was told to do, and that's what it's about. But I had to think about what it was like when I got back. I was an infantryman in Korea and that was the Chinese army up there and they were one hell of an army and I saw them up close. I froze my ass off for a whole winter and a lot of guys in my outfit were killed. I was just lucky it wasn't me."

"So when I got back, I went home and my mother cried. My father shook my hand. Then I went to the neighborhood bar, and the guys I knew asked me how it went. I told them I was alive, so it went OK. That was the last time anybody mentioned it. Maybe it's the TV. It wasn't all over the place in those days."

Roger is 67 and lives in a suburb. "I spent my 21st birthday as a POW. I was caught right in the middle of the Battle of the Bulge. I'm not proud to have been a POW. I suffered some and

I know a lot of my buddies did too. And they beat the hell out of me too. I lost 50 pounds. I was bloody from lice. Our guys marched for 10 days with no shoes on because the Germans took our shoes."



MIKE ROYKO

"But I'm no hero. You want to talk heroes, let's talk about the guys in Bataan. Or those English guys in Dunkirk. Those guys were heroes."

"A lot of this, to me it's like propaganda to get America to feel

like Rambos. I think a lot of veterans feel this way, and we're afraid to talk. That's why I don't want you to use my name. We sound like sour grapes. So we can't say anything. I don't like this. Everybody feels good, everybody feels euphoria. Is that what we killed all those people for?"

"Oh, yeah, when I got home. They mustered me out when I got off the ship. Then I went home. That was it. Whatever parades there were were over. I just went home. It was no big deal."

There were some grand parades after World War II, but most of the GIs weren't in them. They got off slow troopships, went to a military base, received their discharge papers and took a train or a bus to their hometowns.

I remember the arrival of one of my relatives, the family hero. A paratrooper, he spent almost two years in the Pacific fighting on one island after another. He was in a foxhole with his closest buddy, the best man at his wedding, when his friend took a Japanese bullet in the head.

The day he came back, his

young wife and the rest of the family gathered at a tiny flat his wife had rented on Lincoln near Montrose. There was some beer, tears and sandwiches. Then everybody went home and left the young couple alone.

A week later he took a job scrubbing the outside of streetcars until something better turned up.

And to this day, he doesn't talk about his own wartime experiences or, for that matter, about wars, in general. The last time he mentioned war, I think he said: "They're stupid."

Many of the politicians who are organizing the festivities say they will not only be honoring the Gulf War victors, but also the veterans of our other wars.

I suppose that's a nice gesture, and many veterans will appreciate it. But there will be others who will ask to be excused. No offense meant, of course, but they had their own wars, and they have their own memories.

Mike Royko is a Chicago-based, nationally syndicated columnist. His column appears weekly in The Collegian.