

After all, who is responsible?

by Tom Strunk

After reading last week's edition of *The Collegian*, I wondered if our weekly paper had become nothing more than a place where students could bitch and moan about professors.

If I did not know otherwise (I do not have any professors that let class out early, and I have not yet met a professor boring enough to stifle my desire for learning), I would think that the Behrend faculty was a bunch of uncaring, lazy buffoons.

While the conclusions reached by the two writers last week were evident truths, their arrival at them was through some faulty reasoning. Clearly it is wrong for professors continually to end class early. Professors should also communicate effectively. Moreover, professors should help us attain the knowledge we seek.

What the two writers failed to mention was that young adults paying thousands of dollars each year should be most accountable for their

education. College students should carry most of the burden for their education.

Too often we rely on other people to take care of us. When they fail to take care of us we cry out that we are victims of an uncaring society. Rather than acting like helpless children, there are times that we should take responsibility for ourselves.

Our college years are such a time. We should not depend on others to assure our education. It is easy to point to a bad professor and blame them for deficiencies in our learning.

If there is something we do not understand and our professor is unable to explain it sufficiently, we can do independent research on the subject. At the university level, the obligation of producing educated graduates should not fall solely on professors.

We, the students, should have the primary responsibility of making ourselves educated graduates. So if we have a professor that cannot seem to produce unsmear-

ed overhead notes, it is our job to notify the professor that he or she might do better.

And if there is a considerable amount of time left at the end of class, perhaps we should seek to fill the void by creating some discussion. Students can contribute to class just as well as professors.



Earning an education takes hard work and we must be dedicated if we hope to reach such a goal.

The task at hand is not getting better professors but instead, making ourselves better students. Teachers should not have to come to class with the chore of maintaining an audience. They are not entertainers. They know

things that we need and presumably want to know.

Professors should come to class expecting enthusiastic students that are aggressively seeking the knowledge professors have. If we are to become educated we must ask ourselves whether we are pupils or students. Do we rely on others for our education? Or do we seek knowledge on our own volition?

There are too many people that attend college just to receive the degree. Few individuals are here for the education. As we, ourselves, improve as students we make those around us better. If a class challenges the teacher, that teacher will be forced to become better.

Professors should try to impart on us as much knowledge as possible. If a professor ever should fail to convey a message properly, it is our responsibility to find out what the intended message was. In any confusion, we should go to our professors for clarification (you will find that most do care).

We should not expect

our professors to foresee every miscommunication. Our professors should encourage our learning, but they should not be responsible for our success or failure.

It is obvious to all that professors should be capable and qualified. They must be accountable to their students. Yet, they should not have to carry us through the learning process. If there is something we do not like about a class or if a professor is failing to teach effectively, it is our responsibility to face the professor and present them with the problem.

As long as we sit silent the professor will continue on as they were. We need to confront our teachers and let them know we are dissatisfied with something. Professors are not here because they need us. We need them.

So the question is this: who, finally, is responsible for our education?

Tom Strunk is a fourth semester history major. His column appears every other week in The Collegian.

Opening day -- like it used to be

by Mike Royko

Opening Day, a great American tradition. I left the office at about 12:30 and took a cab to Cubs Park.

Then I met my host in our corporate reserved seats, which have a fine, unobstructed view of the playing field.

I wasn't sure what I'd have for lunch. As at most of today's ballparks, the food menu has become as extensive as that of a restaurant.

When the rain became bothersome, we stopped in at the stadium's private club and had a drink. Then, after the crowd subsided, another cab home.

A very nice way to spend the day at the ballpark, you must agree.

But it isn't the best way to do it. Not nearly.

The best way was to get up early, yell for the pal down the street to come on out and start walking at about 7 a.m.

It was about five miles to the ball park. Five miles wasn't that much if you could save the 10 cents streetcar fare and use it later for a hot dog.

At the end of the walk, there it was: the eighth wonder of the world in the eyes of a 12-year-old.

The idea was to get there early to be near the front of the crowd of other kids at the "seat gate." At least that's what we called it.

After a while, a guy would come out and point to us, one after another. "You, you, you ... and you, yeah, you. ..."

I don't know how he made his selection. Maybe size. Or maybe the most pleading, yearning looks in the eyes.

But when you became one of the youse, you dashed inside. No ticket: free, on the house. Of course, it wasn't charity. Strictly business.

In those days, the box seats -- those that were truly box seats -- had folding chairs. And the stacks of chairs had to be unfolded and put in place before the gates opened and the box-seat swells arrived.

So that's what we did, setting up a few thousand seats. And we thought it was a swell deal, which it was. Of course, it was a swell deal for P.K. Wrigley. For about \$10 worth of freebies, he got what a union would probably sock him \$2,000 for today.

By the time the seats were in place, and we were up in the grandstands, the players had started drifting out on the field. Loosening up, playing the pepper game, clowning around, spitting, scratching. Coaches hitting fungo flies to the outfielders. The more ambitious pitchers doing a few wind sprints in the outfield grass.

Then came the best part of the day. No, not the game. Batting practice.

This was when you could

study this year's prize rookie phenom to see if he hit the long ball as long here as he did in the minors. And when you would watch in terror as the visiting team's cleanup hitter drove shot after shot onto the street.

And if the Andy Frain ushers were nice guys, as many were, you could sneak down the box seat aisles and coax an autograph out of one of the Cubs. Free, of



course. The \$20 signature wasn't even a science fiction concept.

Why do I cherish Andy Palko? Because the Kid from Boyceville, as he was known to our world, took a few seconds away from the batting cage to sign a scrap of paper. And he even smiled. I hear that a smile costs an extra 10-spot today.

Infield practice. The strong arms of the hot corner guardian and the keystone combo

whipping blue darts across the diamond. (Sportswriters don't write that way anymore but I like it.)

Then the grounds crew, who I thought had the best jobs in America, raked and patted the infield, put down the chalk lines, and old Pat, the field announcer, said in that dust-dry voice: "Have your pencils and scorecards ready, and I will give you the correct lineup for today's ball game. Batting first, and playing second base. ..."

The game was on. And what made it so good was that there was nothing else. Only the game.

We didn't know what anyone on the field earned. And if we had known, we wouldn't have cared. We thought in terms of dimes and quarters, which could buy hot dogs and pop.

But we knew the batting averages. We knew how much Bill Nicholson's bat weighed to the ounce and that he would almost always pull the ball and that he had once smashed one almost to the concession stand in the center field bleachers. We knew that Philabuck always made contact and hit to all fields and would move the runner up. We knew that Clyde McCullough had a terrible hitch in his swing, a habit we should avoid at all costs.

We didn't know if this player was moodily yearning to be traded or if that player hated the

manager. We assumed that they were all happy. And how could they not be happy? They were Cubs and playing baseball in one of the most beautiful spots on the face of the Earth.

We didn't know about front office executives, marketing, TV revenue, salary arbitration, agents, contract extensions, incentive clauses or urine tests. We knew nothing of bond issues, expansion cities or congressional inquiries into the role of superstitions.

But we knew that it was not a good idea to get behind in the count to Stan the Man and that our outfielders had to hustle on shots in the gap because Enos Slaughter would always take the extra base.

In other words, we knew all that really mattered. And when the last out was made, and we trudged the five miles back to the neighborhood, we had the scrupulously maintained scorecard to prove it.

I think they ought to change the rules for who goes to Opening Day. Only ages 12 to 15 admitted. They know the score.

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