

To The Editor

T.H.E. takes gas again

Editor, the Argonaut:

ROTC has been the subject of much ridicule and persecution, as shown by Marty Peterson's column and the jeering of the color guard at the basketball games.

I am a junior in Army ROTC. I am not in it because I enjoy polishing brass and shining shoes, so I can wear my "hand-me-down" uniform. Perhaps Marty can use his influence in Washington, D.C. to get us new uniforms and increase the already staggering military budget.

As the draft law now stands, most young men are required to serve two years in the military. I feel ROTC is an excellent way to fulfill this obligation.

I consider the military a machine, which Congress and the President use to defend our country against aggressors. Granted, this machine is sometimes misused, but it is necessary for the defense of our country.

The military as a machine is ethically neutral; it has no politics. All major functions of the military dedicated by the President, and in most cases, Congress, not the ROTC cadet or military officer. I suggest oneself direct his opinions toward the government and not the military, since the government is one of the people, by the people and for the people.

This situation may be paralleled to a man who owns a rifle. A rifle defends his home from people wishing to do his person or property harm. However, if the man goes out on the street and starts shooting innocent people, it is the man's fault, not the rifle's.

Michael Black
Kappa Sigma

Music conflict explained

Editor, the Argonaut:

Because of your misapprehension of the situation which exists in the music department, I feel compelled to attempt to place the situation in perspective.

In my capacity as first bassoonist in most of the major performing groups in this area for the past five years, I have made a few observations. First of all, there is a basic lack of understanding on this campus concerning the special problems faced by the music faculty. Also there is an alarming inadequacy on the part of music students and the community to judge the real quality of a musical performance.

The only problem and the main reason for the conflict in the music department is the desire of a large part of the music faculty to raise the standards of academic and musical performance. I suppose it is unfortunate in a lazy sort of way that not all people are content to wallow in a pool of abject incompetency, otherwise there would not be a conflict.

The wind students are not really losing as they are receiving the best possible training in their field. There are some other fields of competence too. The losers are the students who prostitute their standards for sentimental reasons or those students whose lack of musical maturity leads them to embrace utter mediocrity as their goal. A good example is the unreflective way that certain students responded to the just criticism of the orchestra by E. Nagel.

The real question is: Do we allow incompetency to exist shielded by a fog of sentimentality or do we attempt to construct a situation where excellence is sought by students in all fields of musical endeavor?

John Lind
910 E. 6th St.

Why not Negro history?

Editor, the Argonaut:

The article that appeared in the December 10 issue of the ARGONAUT relative to the teaching of a Negro History course was somewhat ambiguous and terse. Hence I may not be interpreting correctly the action of the history department in response to a petition requesting that such a course be taught. But the impression I received is that the history department will simply ignore the request.

It seems to me the reasons cited by the department for its action are flimsy. Is it really true that so little research has been done in the history of the American Negro that the combined talents of the history department cannot put together an introductory course on the subject? Where did LIFE magazine get its material for a series on the subject? Where are the numerous colleges and universities across the land which are offering such courses getting their material? Across the state line, Washington State University is granting Ph.D.'s in Negro History. Come on, gentlemen of the history department! Who do you think you're kidding?

Also a word about priorities. I should think this would be one of the reasons for offering a course in Negro History—that it is a priority item in our society at this point in history. Throughout the history of our nation the black man has been ignored, academically as in most every other way. All of us have been deprived of an adequate historical knowledge of the American Negro as we have been educated. This situation is no longer tolerable and the history department is in a position to help change the situation. It is true that incorporating Negro history more adequately into the whole American History curriculum is one route to go, but in view of the long neglect of the subject altogether, and in view of the History Department's statement about scarcity of material, I am not too optimistic about the effectiveness of such an approach. A good many students have shown by their petition that they think such a course has high priority; many other institutions of

higher learning have instituted such courses thereby showing they think it has high priority; the polarization of our society between black and white cries out for increased understanding, thereby indicating a high social priority for such a course. What are your priorities, gentlemen of the history department, that you can so easily ignore these other voices?

It might be that initially whoever taught such a course would not be highly knowledgeable on the subject. But wouldn't it be a refreshing educational experience in its own right to have a course in which the professor openly acknowledged that he too had to learn a lot about the subject at hand so that he and the class could become mutual seekers after the truth?

Edward F. Weiskotten

Not Merlan again?

Editor, the Argonaut:

After reading the Editorial "Nothing for Something" Tuesday, December 10, 1968, I feel it is my duty to report a little known fact concerning another area where the University is mishandling our money.

Come one, come all, the Library will store your household goods or any other goods at no direct cost to you, or so it would seem.

Since returning to school this year I have learned that a gentleman by the name of Jesse Merlan, one way or another, got the library to store paintings, pottery, furniture, etc., for him at virtually no cost to him. (THIS FACT I HEAR IS SUPPOSED TO BE HIGHLY SECRET.) Reportedly, at least one of the paintings is valued near \$15,000. Knowing this, I would suspect that other items are similarly valuable.

To me the value of these goods would indicate that special precautions had to be taken to insure the safety of them. Hence some cost must be involved. I would suspect these costs would include insurance, employee time involved in making at least a yearly inventory, and the cost of allotting space to only these goods. What the total cost of this operation is, I don't pretend to know. I do know that these costs are to be incurred for an indefinite period of time. It seems that Mr. Merlan doesn't know when he will return to claim his property, but he expects the Library to bear the cost of storing and protecting his belongings indefinitely just because he donated several hundred books to the Library, many of which are worthless or duplicates of others which will eventually be discarded.

Elevator, elevator, we get the shaft again. Either the students or their parents are paying for this through tuition and fees or taxes. MERRY CHRISTMAS.

Question 1: Why can't Mr. Merlan use commercial facilities like other people for storing his property?

Question 2: Why on earth did the Library accept the responsibility of storing and protecting Mr. Merlan's property?

Name withheld to protect the jobs of my sources.

Writer explains UNICEF

Editor, the Argonaut:

Recently the YAF posted a sign on the SUB bulletin board telling people that by purchasing UNICEF Christmas cards they would be supporting Communist governments. On the bottom of the poster was a peace symbol. Several people saw this and thought Peace Action had put up the sign. If the YAF considered this a joke, I am unable to see the humor in it. If they did it in order to misrepresent the facts, I am very unhappy about it.

The purpose of UNICEF is to help children. I fail to see how providing serum for vaccination programs, clothes to keep the children warm, and food for them to eat is supporting Communist governments—or any governments. Children have a right to be happy and healthy regardless of the political ideologies expressed by their parents. I am unable to distinguish between the child of a Communist and the child of a capitalist. Children are children—they read and deserve the things UNICEF helps provide.

You people can give these things to the underprivileged of the world by purchasing UNICEF cards and gifts. Please help.

Dennise Edwards
Chairman, Peace
Action

It's a farce

Editor, the Argonaut:

Another Executive Board Gripe Week has just been concluded but of what was its significance? It appeared to me to be a week set aside in which E-Board could say, "We're trying to better the student government program." Well, this all seems logical, and really, the student should be appreciative of the efforts made by E-Board in trying to accomplish such a goal. But in reality, it appears to me that no current program can improve student government. Let's be frank. What is student government as known by the University of Idaho student? It's a FARCE. It's a large causation of apathy. It's an unworkable program in its now existing form. So what's new, huh?

Under our present program, student government is but a mere puppet of the Board of Regents. The U of I student is powerless no matter whether he be a class officer, an executive board member, or an everyday John Doe. Oh, I agree that there are times when a student can use his vote without needing the consent of the higher of the administration. I'm sure it makes little difference to them what movies play at the Borah Theater. But when issues of greater importance arise, where is the student's vote?—where is his fair representation?

To alleviate such unfair representational problems, would it be out of the question to construct a new form of student government such as a senate type of representation? Would it be out of the question to work closer with the faculty administration in trying to evoke a stronger student voice among the highest influential policy makers? Would it be so unfair to have perhaps the student body presidents of each of the three state supported universities have a vote among the Board of Regents?

It's clear to me that something needs to be done in constructing a new student government program. If student discontent and frustration continues to increase, I'm not so sure that situations like those which happened at Columbia University could not also evolve here at an institution as conservative as Idaho. It's a point to ponder.

Stan Tlucek
FarmHouse

Discourage war toys

Editor, the Argonaut:

Remember the old saying, "As the twig is bent, so the tree shall grow"? It's true. Childhood is not only a time for harmless fun, it is also a time for preparation. Girls play with dolls to prepare themselves for motherhood. Boys imitate their heroes to learn the virtues which someday will make them men. What children learn to enjoy now will stay with them and grow as they do. What children play they tend to do for real when they grow up.

If you are planning to buy your child a war toy for Christmas, Peace-Action begs you to reconsider. Our children can never build themselves a better world if they learn to value their ability to destroy more than their ability to create. This Christmas Peace-Action urges your not to give your children military games, miniature models of soldiers and army equipment, or replicas of lethal weapons. There must be a better way to celebrate the birth of the Prince of Peace.

Peace-Action recommends the following Christmas gifts as alternatives to war toys:

—education games (Scrabble, Authors, WFFn'PROOF, etc.) which will develop your child's mental capacity and make learning exciting rather than boring.

—creative toys (clay, paints, erector sets, building blocks, etc.) which will provide an outlet for, and encourage the growth of, your child's creative instinct, too often stifled by traditional education.

—athletic equipment which will help develop your child physically and provide a positive expression for his competitive drive.

Peace-Action Committee is composed of students at the University of Idaho and is not affiliated with any national organization.

Dave Kappes

Let's discuss apathy

Editor, the Argonaut:

Apathy, apathy, apathy, let's all discuss what to do about student apathy. Yes, let's! And shall we begin with an episode that happened at Hays Hall Tuesday night.

Tuesday night, as you all know, it rained. No, it poured; freezing cold it poured. And, as the girls of Hays are aware, sometimes when it rains (pours), the basement gets flooded. This is a result of water running off the hills, down the streets, and into a well for the basement door where it then moves into the TV room where it ruins the carpet and the furniture. The girls must then go outside and bail out (by hand, mind you) the door well in order to save their TV room. This was the situation last Tuesday night.

Our housemother phoned everyone she could think of that might be able to remedy the situation with no immediate avail. Finally, as a last resort, three cold, miserable, wet girls went running over to Campus Club in their bare feet to beg and plead for help. And what did they get? Apathy. Apathy in the form of "go call Captain Davy, don't bother us, it's your problem, not ours." And the men (if you can call them that) of Campus Club sat back in their easy chairs in their warm, dry living room and smoked their pipes while the courageous girls of Hays started a bucket brigade and worked, though there was a definite danger of pneumonia and Hong Kong flu, to save their TV room.

That's apathy for you! If you want to stop apathy, why not start at the bottom by caring about your neighbor! We can't truly call ourselves university minded if we won't even lend a hand to a neighbor in trouble. Don't worry Campus Club, we won't ask you for your help again. We wouldn't want you to get your little tootsies wet!

Beth Owens
Linda Canfield
Lillian Mankin
Julie Robb

Why am I blue?

To the Editor:

Things to write: Why am I blue? Because that is my color. You think you know prejudice, you black man, you white man. Wait until you are blue. Bigots think you are a sentimentalist; the calm fear your truth; the jingoist knows you—your color is blue. Blue is the color of unrequited love, Sadness for mankind's dream, lost innocence, and regained lust. Blue is the lust for knowledge when told not to ask. Violet is acceptance conformity to the ways. Black is the answer.

Bury the truth. Arm with slogans. Fear truth. Hide from others. Hunger and run to the black. Lay out your humanity—a quick spurt—a pain; then lovely black and white and yellow mumbo jumbo complacency fills the void.

Garr Hammond
Off Campus