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GAZETTE EDITORIALS NCAA's flawed plan

N A EFFORT to "restore balance between academics and athletics" at America's institutions of higher learning, the NCAA is considering a proposal to reduce the number of athletic scholarships a college or university may award. In theory, it's a good idea. But the specific plan before the NCAA contains an obnoxious flaw: It would disproportionately reduce the number of scholarships available to female athletes.

Christine Grant, the director of women's athletics at the University of Iowa, opposes the plan and says the U of I will cast a vote against it. Other NCAA schools should follow the U of I lead.



The NCAA plan to cut athletic department expenditures puts an undue burden on women's programs.

Track and field scholarships provide a prime example of how the proposed cuts would adversely affect women. Currently, NCAA schools annually offer 16 track and field scholarships to women; 14 to men. Under the new rules, the schools will be able to offer only 13 scholarships to women and 13 to men. That's a net loss of three scholarships for women and one for men.

Some may view that as equitable, since the women start off with two more track scholarships than men. But there is one very good reason for that difference: College football. Women don't qualify for any of the 95 football. scholarships awarded by a university. No women's sports program awards anywhere near that number of scholarships. So, the two extra track scholarships for women, combined with other measures, insure that schools distribute scholarships in rough proportion to the malefemale athletic participation.

Not all universities offer the same mix of sports, so the proposed NCAA rules would not affect every school alike. But uniformly, women's programs will be hurt the worst. According to figures supplied by the Womens Sports Foundation, the University of Iowa will lose six male athletic scholarships (3.4 percent of the male total) and nine female athletic scholarships (8.5 percent of female total). The disparity is even more pronounced in the Southeastern Conference, where a typical school will lose three male scholarships (1.9 percent of the male total) and eight female scholarships (10 percent of the female total).

Christine Grant's crusade against the new rules is commendable. Already twice as many scholarships are available to male athletes than female athletes. There is no need to aggravate that disproportion by adopting the NCAA proposal. Although it seems desirable to reduce athletic department expenditures, the NCAA should go back to the drawing board. As a matter of fairness, the organization should defeat this proposal at its special convention June 29-30 in Dallas.

Disaster-tape tale

HE LATEST small development in an endless saga of people's right to know vs. governments' propensity to hide finds the courts giving open information a helpful nod. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration must make public an audio tape of space shuttle challenger crew conversation on the flight to doom in January, 1986, a federal judge in Washington ruled last week. Earth-shaking principles were not involved, but it is good to see this contest come out right.

What triggered the forthcoming disclosure was a New York Times lawsuit seeking the Challenger tape's release under the Freedom of Information Act. NASA had refused, contending that it would invade the astronauts' families' privacy; these oral tapings were a privileged "personnel record," officials maintained. The Times disputed any "privacy" contention in a much more realistic view of the flight: These were public employees doing work for pay from public funds in a highly public program and an indisputably public event. A further purpose of exposing fully certain safety aspects of the shuttle program and of answering the sponsors' (taxpaying public's) questions about all this added weight to the tell-it-all side.

Judge Norma H. Johnson solidly ruled for divulgence. "It is an undisputed matter of record that the tape at issue here contains no information about the personal lives of the astronauts or any of their family members, but only the comments, observations and communications of certain of the Challenger astronauts concerning the launching and flight ...," she observed. Hence no exemption to a publicizing and no valid reason for the government to hold things back.

Assuming all this holds up through a possible appeal, NASA's ultimate disclosure also will show whether what had been revealed earlier as a "verbatim transcript" of the tape in question was entirely what NASA represented it to be. When governments shortchange the public on these kinds of items, usually the reason is to dodge deserved embarrassment. Let's hope no element of that was present here. But when it proves to be the case, the net result is often far more damaging embarrassment than early candor might have caused.

Beyond the added information helping everybody understand the score, a reinforcing of this always-useful lesson thus would be another welcome dividend from diligence in prying out the truth.



LETTERS TO THE GAZETTE No Shepherd 150th Knowing each other

It's probably obvious, by the lack of public announcements, that there will be no organized celebration this year of the 150th anniversary of the settling of Cedar Rapids.

Family priorities, my health, my job and previous volunteer commitments to the Downtown Promotion Committee have not allowed time to make the phone calls, write the letters and otherwise organize any special activities to celebrate Osgood Shepherd's arrival and building a cabin on the banks of the Cedar.

Those people and organizations I had talked with were enthusiastic and, in most cases, willing to help in some way. (The Cedar Rapids Public Library summer reading program has a Cedar Rapids history theme.) But I have not been able to locate anyone to accept the main responsibility of organizing a community-wide celebration.

I'm sorry we won't be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the first settler to Cedar Rapids. I hope this community doesn't miss the chance in 1996 to hold a 150th anniversary of the city's charter. (I have a good-sized file of ideas and information to share.)

> Florence W. Robertson 904 American Bldg.

Mentally ill succeed

recently heard a presentation about two businesses in Moline that employ only individuals with a mental illness. Both businesses — a restaurant and a lawn care service - were created about three years ago by Frank Ware, executive director of the Alliance for the Mentally Ill in Moline. Both businesses are so successful that expansion into other business ventures is imminent.

Just as individuals with a physical disability have limitations, so do individuals with a mental illness. Society has accepted the limitations imposed by a physical disability and makes an effort to accommodate those individuals in the workplace. We have not reached that same level of acceptance of the limitations faced by an individual with a mental illness.

But both the restaurant and the lawn care service have taken into consideration the capabilities and needs of their employees. And both the businesses are thriving, successful enterprises.

The forum was sponsored by Mental Health Advocates as a project of Mental Health Month. If anyone who missed the forum is interested in having a copy of the notes that were taken, call Mental Health Advocates at 364-6305.

> Nan Schroeder 810 First Ave. NE

Rough go

The excitement that many of us felt at the opening of the drop-in center for the homeless has turned to absolute disgust. It is being run by persons who need to fill their lives with causes. They are people who cannot make decisions, but when they must (when the roof threatens to cave in), the decisions are not sound.

In the beginning, there were many volunteers for the project both from the community at large and the free-lunch population. But when the attitude of the persons in charge and the general chaos became obvious, volunteers turned away.

Jeff Stack, with an air of superiority, acknowledges serving "the drunks." The meal is rarely on time. Moldy bread is served. Fights are frequent. Drinking is done on the premises. . .

The faulty attitude and management of this project doom it. But the need for one good meal a day, access to a telephone and shower facilities and a gathering place for the homeless does exist, and there must be groups in the community who can meet these needs.

> Colleen Williams 514 Sixth St. SE

. . . A foreign student-exchange program such as ours at St. Jude's School can bring about more peace among all the countries of the world.

Young persons who attend school in another country have the opportunity to learn about their host country's way of life, including people's customs, religious beliefs, traditional foods and forms of entertainment. This learning experience

teaches each student to better understand why

the people of that country respond the way they

do and to realize that everyone has similar

feelings and dreams despite our differences. By educating the young people - who are the future of the world - through such valuable programs, we hopefully will be able to live in peace with each other one day. I hope everyone supports these exchange programs and keeps teaching others about the need for peace. Young people can make a difference.

> Brett Michener 227 Auburn Dr. SW

Shared hopes

. Peace can bring about a unity and understanding between nations. We can't have peace until we stop competing and start communicating with other countries. I believe that if U.S. citizens and Soviets could talk, our ideas about war and peace would be about the

Soviets must be as afraid of nuclear war as our people are. I hope they are not just sitting over there waiting for the world to blow up, saying, "What our leaders decide to do in the end will turn out to be the best." They're not stupid. Just like us, they know what the consequences of nuclear war will be.

.The United States alone has enough weapons to blow up the world 13 times. Why do we need all these weapons? Why do we keep building more? So that we can brag about having more weapons than the Soviet Union, or vice versa?

I don't have all the answers on this issue, but I do believe that if we could communicate with other nations maybe we could figure out a way to make peace. At least, we've got to try or our beautiful world could be destroyed.

> Amy Elbert 917 Belmont Pkwy. NW

Eliminate the bombs

. . . Just glancing through the papers I see so many questions and hear a lot of views on war. "Should we have bombs?" "Should we keep our armies in foreign countries?" "Is war really solving our problems?" There should only have to be one answer, and that is "no."

Peace can't be brought about through fear; we can't scare peope into loving each other. We've got enough nuclear bombs to blow up the world again and again. Even if it didn't instantly kill us all, the radiation would. Many people would be deformed, and it isn't a fit punishment for anyone. Yet we have to live in the constant fear that all we have accomplished may, in one second, go up in smoke. Everything we've achieved throughout human history could vanish instantly.

I think for us to live in true harmony we must stop making bombs and other nuclear weapons (no matter how cool they look, they're going to blow up the same). We need to see the good in everybody and start communicating. You see, what people's governments want may not be what the people want. We have to remember how much destruction and violence have been caused in the past, because a nuclear war would be much more.

It's a one-way street to freedom, and through love and peace we can find the path.

> Kelly Carrothers 23 Roxbury Dr. NW

OUTLOCKS

... periodic observations from some thoughtful Eastern lowans invited to express themselves here. The topics are unlimited. The views are theirs.

RETTIG

of South Amana is assistant to the vice president for educational development and research at the University of Iowa. He is active in several community service groups in the Amana colonies.



Modern life is composed of trade-offs

Trade-offs. Life is full of them. If I take that job on the East Coast, I'll make more money; but what about the lifestyle? (Is it worth the frenzied pace, the commuter hassles?) Should I tell my friend what I really think about his latest adventure? (I can't condone it, but should I risk our newfound friendship by telling him so?) I can't seem to stop smoking, but do I really want to continue harming my health and that of others?

Everyday decisions, right? The stuff life is made of. But there's a more basic trade-off that we often fail to consider because its effects are not always as immediate or as apparent. It's the trade-off between civilization and nature.

Let me try to explain what I mean. The tradeoff, as I see it, involves what, for lack of a better word, I'll characterize as "connectedness." Here's an example. In answer to the question "Where does water come from?" many children (some adults as well) will automatically respond, "the faucet." If we attempt to trace that water from the faucet to its ultimate source, however, we end up talking about natural phenomena such as chemical bonds, evaporation, condensation, percolation and so on. We've crossed from the realm of civilization (plumbing, an invention of humankind) to the realm of nature.

As modern human cultures on our planet become more "civilized," they remove themselves by degrees from the basic processes of nature. The crucial importance of the link between those processes and the continued advancement of a particular culture - indeed, its continued survival - becomes increasingly blurred. It's just in recent years, for example, that we've really become aware of the connection between our sophisticated way of life and its environmental impact. Ground water quality is only the latest in a long litany of environmental concerns that have sharpened our awareness of the trade-offs we're really making to maintain and "advance" our way of life.

We're slowly but surely beginning to see the price we've paid so far for the fragile veneer we like to call "modern life." We're gradually coming to the realization that if we don't do something soon, the water that comes out of that faucet will no longer be drinkable - or worse yet, no water will flow when we turn the faucet on.

Actually, the reminders of that fragility I just mentioned have always been with us. They have come primarily in the form of "natural disasters." Tornadoes swoop down from clouds, ignoring the sophisticated veneer, to pulverize our civilized landscape with indiscriminate fury. Lightning crackles, thunder booms, and our lights go out. When they come back on, we may discover that our TV no longer works or that our expensive stereo equipment has been ruined by a powerful electrical surge fueled by a stray lightning bolt.

I don't mean to dwell on environmental issues or on the dramatic intervention of natural phenomena. The concept of connectedness and the increasing vulnerability of humankind as the connections become less apparent are part and parcel of our existence. Take the computer as another example. I'm writing these words on that modern miracle called a word processor. Used to be, in that now old-fashioned era of the mechanical typewriter, that when I struck a particular key, I could instantly make the connection between the keystroke and the letter that appeared on my paper as a result of my tap. I could actually see the mechanical arm bearing the character as it struck the ribbon and made the imprint.

But when I strike a key on my computer keyboard, an incredible series of transparent events takes place. An electronic signal is generated which travels at mind-boggling speed through cables and circuits, resulting in a display on a cathode ray tube of the character on that key struck. If something goes wrong, and the character doesn't appear on my screen, I can't simply check to see whether perhaps the ribbon is bad or whether there is some mechanical failure of the typing mechanism.

In choosing to use my word processor, I've become thousands of times more vulnerable to failure than I was with my old Underwood. The electricity could go off (where does electricity come from? - the outlet in the wall, the Amana Society Service Co., IE, nuclear fuel, coal, electrons. . . .), some electronic component could fail, or - since I'm actually hooked up to a central computer - there could be human error on the part of those who staff the computing center. The success of my keystroke, in short, depends on literally thousands of human beings and man-made elements responsible for supplying the energy source and the computing capability. I can't simply look at my machine and say: "Aha! So that's why my character didn't appear." Talk about layers of veneer!

The point here is not to denigrate modern civilization nor to advocate a back-to-nature movement. I wish only to call attention to a very important trade-off we make as contemporary residents of this planet. The accoutrements of modern life are great. But they come with a price tag that has more than just dollars and cents written on it. We need to turn the tag over and read the fine print on the other side.

WRITE RIGHT/CARL KANE Something new in 'martial' arts

same amount of exertion as the climbing of two flights of stairs." A friend of mine wonders, "How much energy would you have to expend if you didn't have to fight for it?"

Martial has to do with such subjects as wars, armies and navies. Obviously the guideline writer wanted the word marital. Presumably "marital sex" requires less exertion than "nonmarital sex.

Whereas the guideline writer merely reversed two letters, a sportswriter selected two wrong letters. The sentence in which the erroneous letters appeared was an abomination in itself. Here it is in all of its 62-word glory:,

"Agent Steve Zucker says he contacted the FBI

A hospital makes available the publication after Kathy Clements, a Zucker aide, was "Exercise Guidelines for the Cardiac Patient." severely beaten two months ago by a man wear-Item 9 warns, "Martial sex requires about the ing a ski mask, apparently setting off the train of events resulting in the meeting of a special federal grand jury in Chicago each Tuesday to investigate the dealings of agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom, and possibly others."

> Many intriguing events have happened on the Orient Express, so it could be called a "train of events." Ordinarily, one refers to "a chain of

> The sentence would score poorly in readability tests involving length of a sentence and number of syllables. Admittedly, it is hazardous to rate a sentence by the numbers. Nonetheless, Bruce Westley reflects a consensus with this comment in his book "News Editing": "In general, writing can be improved by converting long and difficult sentences into shorter and easier ones."