

attention!!

The other day I asked one of my professors why my grades were not what I wanted them to be. My objective was to exhibit the true concern all good students are supposed to possess in expectation of the old "Let's talk about how you study" rhetoric.

My expectations were shattered. "Rizzo, no one has ever forced you to make the effort to achieve the quality of work you are capable of," he said.

I thought to myself, "Who are you, the Omniscient?" and proceeded to conjure up numerous barnyard descriptions for this man.

To prevent myself from saying something I might regret, I politely excused myself, conceding that greater effort on my part was in order.

Stepping out his door, I tightened the cinch on my backpack and started to recite my favorite repertoire of foul verbiage, when suddenly I was struck with the impact of what this man had said.

He was not interpreting my study habits, he was diagnosing a disease. Not an isolated incident, but an epidemic. The disease: ambivalence of the mind complicated by apathy of the soul. The afflicted: Everyone. Some terminal, some suffering from milder infections.

However, I do not exclude myself from the ailing masses. No, no, señor.

I am self-admittedly as afflicted as the most terminal case because I have been exposed for at least the last four years I've been in school. Prior to these years, I was listed among the more mildly infected. But I am not alone.

Safely speaking, 18,000 people, roughly 50 percent of the people enrolled at my university, pay upward of \$6,000 every nine months to live in a city they care nothing about.

During these nine months (and sometimes twelve) they do as much as possible to accomplish as little as possible while convincing their peers they are doing as much as possible to accomplish as much as possible. These people are referred to as college undergraduates.

Pondering the origins of this ailment, I decided it was possible, even likely, that it was manifested by an educational environment. Eavesdropping on some conversations around campus produced sufficient proof of this theory.

However, the origin became augmented following further scrutiny.

I realized this affliction is not confined to the student body of this university, or universities across the nation, but it extends to the entire population of the United States.

The culprit contagion is leisure time



This week's attention!! photo was taken in New Orleans by Greg Bailey, a senior journalism major and *At Ease* photographer.

— that sacrosanct activity that people since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution have striven so hard for.

However, complications result when leisure time is optimized at the expense of academics or some other form of productivity. I decided this is the root of the ambivalence in today's United States society. People proving their success by doing less and less. But who should bear the blame for this misconception of priorities?

Much of the world's economy is dependent on people striving for more leisure time. From vacations in Europe to home-delivered rental videotape players, and from fast-food to instant coffee, advertisers tell people that doing as little as possible is the essence of "the good life," between doses of rose-colored sitcoms.

As a result, the students groping around campus and excelling at leisure activities are convinced that when they get out of school they will be offered a \$50,000-a-year salary just for waving a sheepskin around.

Right, and there really is a Santa Claus.

What I think the ailing masses need

is two heaping spoonfuls of self-initiative followed by an injection of self-confidence, or, as my Dad used to say, "a swift kick in the lazy butt."

I'm not implying immunities to this ambivalence don't exist — if such were the case there would never be a Nobel Prizer winner, diseases would go uncured, and many people would never get out of bed.

At any rate, if you suspect you are a carrier, or just want to avoid becoming one, take action. The next time someone suggests a pitcher of beer in lieu of that boring lecture, reach for that bottle of self-initiative, get two big mouthfuls, and say, "After class. That beer's not going anywhere."

Robert Rizzo is a senior journalism major.

Editor's Note: This attention!! page will be used each week as a forum for you, our readers. We encourage you to submit any original work that would be suitable for publication in At Ease.

Pictures should be black-and-white shots that are unique either in content, angle or technique. Columns, essays or poems should be no longer than 500 words, and should relate to an unusual experience, a new perspective on a common experience, or just about anything else you want to share with our readers. Please don't send us your gripes, complaints, or sermons on heavy-duty issues — send those to the Battalion's Opinion Page.

Don't forget to put your name and phone number on anything you send us. Then just drop it off at the Battalion, Room 216 of the Reed McDonald Building. Be sure to specify that it is for At Ease.