

## High ratings for Hillary

First lady steals political spotlight from Giuliani on 'The Late Show' with wit and charm

Four words: Severe lapse in judgment." was one of first lady Hillary Clinton's Top Ten Reactions for finally appearing on "The Late Show with David Letterman." Funny, but far from the truth, Clinton's decision to finally take the hot seat on the "Late Show" stage turned out to be anything but a bad idea.



MELISSA JOHNSTON

Image is essential in American politics, and Clinton presented a very likable one on the stage of the Ed Sullivan Theater.

She was poised, she was knowledgeable, and she even gave Letterman a run for his money in the humor department. She did admit that she was "a little nervous" when she sat down next to the "Big Guy." Please.

When rating stressful events in Hillary Rodham Clinton's life, an interview with David Letterman ranks there with having to decide what to eat for lunch.

The only thing she had to be nervous about was whether Letterman had changed the quiz questions about New York.

Clinton's appearance on the show was much anticipated, as she had dodged Letterman's nightly broadcasted interview requests for nearly a month. He called her staffers "pinheads and weasels," resorting to bully tactics in challenging her to appear at his playground after school.

Truthfully, she was lagging behind her likely opponent in the senate race, New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani, who had already graced "The Late Show" with his presence 16 times.

Though Giuliani was leading Clinton in the polls 49 to 41 percent, not one of his 16 appearances full, of Clinton-bashing and Yankee talk, could have been as memorable as the single appearance the first lady made last week.

Letterman offered some advice about the race, informing Clinton that she could make comments about Giuliani's hair to unnerve him during debates, a tactic she surely slipped into her file. Nervous or not, she was charming, and America took notice.

The idea of a first lady, particularly Clinton, running for political office has been met with a large amount of opposition. Clinton's critics have portrayed her as a power-hungry carpetbagger, arguing that one Clinton in politics is enough.

It would actually be somewhat of a first if she were to win her yet undeclared race for a New York seat.

First ladies and their ex-President husbands have traditionally gone on to live private lives with their families when their days in Washington were over. What a twist it would be for ex-President Clinton to be the one offering a briefcase and a kiss for his Senator wife on her way out the front door. If he still lives there, that is.

Maybe the calm and polished woman who appeared in Letterman's hot seat is a sign of things to come. She certainly did not seem like the ice queen of the past, and she did not appear to be on any kind of power-starved rampage.

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She might have even shed some of that unapproachable image that the media has built up around her for so long. The President's wife, ambitious and intelligent in her own right, may have finally decided it is time to reclaim a life of her own. For the past seven years, she has done little right in the public's eyes.

She has been continually besieged with criticism of her actions, her appearance and her attitude. Nothing she ever tried to do was "appropriate" for her role as the first lady. She did not seem to fit in anywhere. No wonder she is ready to take on a role where she can accomplish something.

Expecting Hillary Rodham Clinton to move into a quiet post-White House existence is like expecting January in Texas to be cold.

She will not simply disappear. She is determined to emerge from her husband's shadow, and if that means running against Rudy Giuliani for a chair on the Senate floor, that is what she will do.

David Letterman seemed impressed. It remains to be seen if the rest of New York is impressed as well.

Four words, Hillary: Go for the hair.

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JEFF SMITH/THE BATTALION

## Go south, young man

Attempts to keep Elian Gonzalez in America lack reason

Relations between the United States and Cuba have a history of being strained. Americans do not seem to comprehend why Cubans have a dislike for the U.S., despite the numerous invasions and a U.S. imposed embargo.



CHRIS HUFFINES

However, there is no mystery about the Cubans' irritation at the extended stay of little Elian Gonzalez. The six-year-old Cuban was discovered off the coast of Florida after the boat carrying him and 12 other refugees, sunk, killing 10, including his mother and stepfather. Since then, his great-uncle Lazano Gonzales has tried to keep him in the country, while Juan Miguel Gonzalez, his father in Cuba, wants his son back. In this situation, not only the law but common decency demand Elian be returned to his father.

As most Americans are aware, there are federal laws governing immigration. There are even specific laws governing immigration from Cuba. These laws state that since his mother and stepfather have died custody of Elian reverts to his nearest relative, his father. Only the legal guardian (his father) can apply for asylum. Thus far, the only applications for asylum have come from Elian's great-uncle. These illegitimate applications are the reason Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) has decided to deport the boy. The law states that in the absence of a legitimate request for asylum Elian must be sent back to Cuba. Period. No mas.

But the "forces of justice" in Miami are exerting pressure on the government to defy its own laws and

keep Elian here. What would happen if the United States of America decided to ignore its own laws? Loss of face would not even begin to describe the situation, as news of American hypocrisy spread around the world. Third-world dictatorships twist their own laws to suit their purposes. The U.S. government should be above that.

Further, one need only compare the actions of the Cuban-American community to those of the Cuban community to understand which side

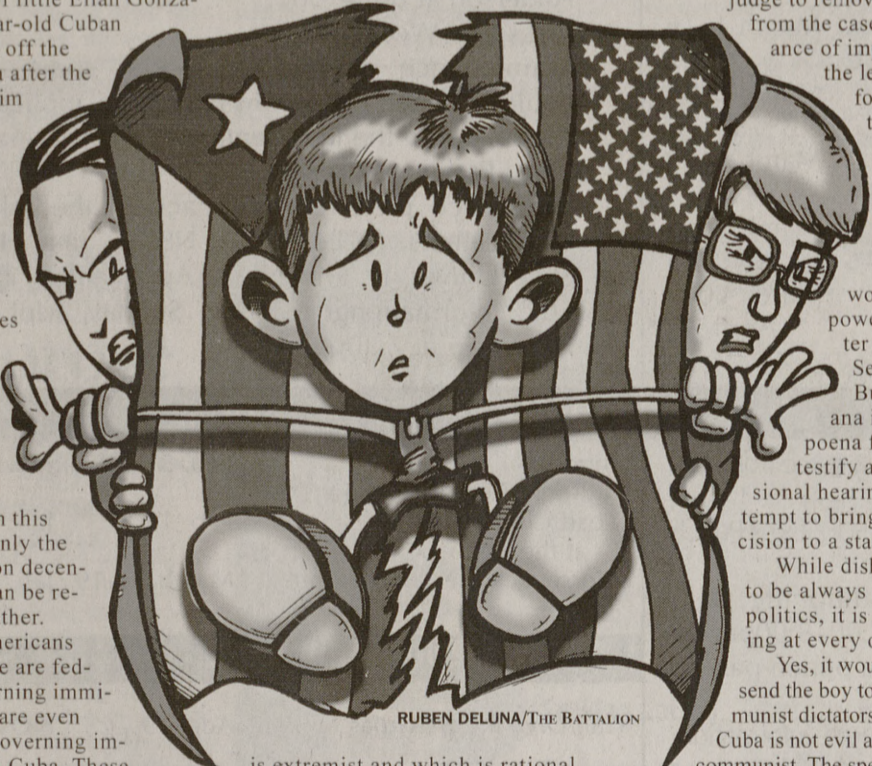
is threatening the U.S. with massive unrest if its citizens allow the law to be enforced as it is written.

Cuban-Americans have engaged in even more questionable tactics by bringing a suit in family court before Judge Rosa Rodriguez. Aside from certain previous scandals and an utter lack of jurisdiction in the case, Judge Rodriguez is notable for having employed the spokesperson of the fight to keep Elian in the country. While there is no proof a favor was called in, the appearance of misdeeds should have been enough for the judge to remove herself from the case. The appearance of impropriety is the legal standard for removals of this nature.

The fact she did not remove herself is definitely interesting. Perhaps the worst abuse of power in this matter comes from Senator Dan Burton of Indiana issued a subpoena for Elian to testify at a Congressional hearing in an attempt to bring the INS decision to a standstill. While dishonesty seems to be always prevalent in politics, it is still disgusting at every occurrence. Yes, it would be bad to send the boy to a evil, communist dictatorship. However, Cuba is not evil and is barely communist. The specter of Cuban communism is smoke and mirrors made semi-real by political rhetoric, not fact. U.S.-Cuban relations have always been about bravado and not justice. It is a shame that policy is being played out on a six-year-old.

The law says he has to leave. If Elian does stay, he would be staying with people who have lied, threatened the United States, and bent the legal process to get whatever they want. There is no choice but to send Elian Gonzalez to his father and grandparents in Cuba.

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RUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

is extremist and which is rational. The Cubans have held many peaceful rallies that featured Elian's father and both of his grandmothers, who are determined to travel to Miami and retrieve their grandson when they are assured he will be not be forcibly kept in the United States. Elian's father is afraid he will be prosecuted the second he sets foot in America.

And Gonzalez should be concerned. The Cuban-Americans have resorted to blocking traffic, attempting to shut down the Miami airport and call for a nationwide campaign of civil disobedience if Elian is deported. In effect, the Cuban-Ameri-

## COLLEGIATE ROUNDUP

from U-Wire editorial reports

### Dartmouth goes too far

From the California Aggie at U. California-Davis

(U-WIRE) DAVIS, Calif. — The message is clear: If students cannot start making decisions that fall into line with the Dartmouth University administration's vision for campus life, privileges will slowly and forcefully be snatched away.

After a scathing report recommending drastic changes to Dartmouth's greek system was released earlier this week, it became obvious that university officials had missed the mark.

While it makes perfect sense to tweak the system — holding rush activities during winter quarter and implementing stricter alcohol policies than are currently in place — completely overhauling student life on campus in order to make it mesh with a professional administration's ideal is a bit rash.

Drinking, partying and skipping class are all inevitable side effects of leading a life free from curfews and watchful parents.

Trying to quietly tell students they need to act more responsibly may not work, but wrenching away alcohol from adult hands is simply insulting.

Spiting students by stripping them of the option to make rational choices might be a temporary solution destined to lead to the demise of Dartmouth's Greek system, but administrators cannot presume that their job descriptions include parenting duties.

Banning fraternities and sororities on campus may lead officials to presume they have solved a difficult dilemma but in reality, they cannot remedy the underlying problem in this situation.

Alcohol is everywhere and if students are of legal age, it is, for better or worse, their prerogative to walk home from parties in a stupor and spend rent money at the bars. This may not be ideal, but at least it means acknowledging reality.

Furthermore, the university's recommendation that faculty members schedule early Thursday morning tests and create more rigorous course requirements to help keep students too overwhelmed to drink perfectly illustrates the pettiness of the administration. There are ways around these ridiculous encroachments and intertwining

the Greek and educational systems only complicates what the administration seems to be after — lessening the influence of sororities and fraternities on campus. Making greek and non-greek students pay for having a social life is ludicrous.

If calming down the university's greek system means completely taking away fraternities and sororities, then officials need to act quickly and decisively.

Snatching away various privileges one by one is demeaning, but identifying a course of action and sticking to it deserves much more respect.

Constructive criticism is what this situation calls for — let students understand what they can do to ease tension on campus before condemning their actions.

Outlining realistic goals and openly sharing campus priorities will send a message that student safety and academic excellence are what the administration is concerned about, not the abolition of alcohol and good times.

### Up in smoke

From The State News at Michigan State U.

(U-WIRE) EAST LANSING, Mich. — Though Michigan's citizens deserve to vote on whether to legalize marijuana, a ballot proposal one Michigan lawyer is pushing probably would not gain voter support.

Saginaw lawyer Carl Schmid has proposed a "Personal Responsibility Amendment," which would fully legalize the growing and smoking of a limited amount of marijuana for Michigan residents older than 21.

Schmid plans to actively pursue efforts to add the measure to the November ballot. The proposal also legalizes the use of marijuana by minors who have parental consent.

Schmid said he has 1,000 volunteers who will petition for the 302,711 signatures needed to put the proposal to a public vote.

Obtaining the substantial number of signatures needed to put the proposal on the ballot would prove the issue is relevant to the citizens of Michigan.

Any issue that can gain support from such a large number of people is worthy of a public vote. The measure also requires a public poll because legislators may not bring issues like these to the congressional floors or represent true public opinion on matters as sensitive as this one.

The people most likely to support Schmid's proposal are probably young adults, who typically avoid voting more than any other demographic. This factor would present a problem if the matter is put on the ballot in November.

The act also attempts to make marijuana fully legal without taking intermediary steps.

The proposal probably could gain more support by shooting a little lower. Alaska, Arizona, California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington have made marijuana legal for medical use — perhaps Schmid should have considered this option first.

A proposal to legalize marijuana for medical use would be a better transition step before full legalization, and this goal might have a better chance of being accomplished.

If the proposal passes, it would be difficult to regulate the specifics of the act. The proposal states that users would be allowed three full-grown plants, seedlings and up to three ounces of dried marijuana. It would be difficult for authorities to monitor whether or not citizens comply with this rule.

An undeniable benefit the proposal could have is allowing the critically ill to use marijuana for medical purposes. Marijuana can be used to help cancer patients tolerate chemotherapy and can also help AIDS victims regain their appetites.

One argument for the legalization of marijuana compares marijuana to alcohol and tobacco, which are legal, but, many believe, more harmful.

However, it is not very rational to promote marijuana by ranking it among other dangerous substances. A drug being less harmful than others does not warrant its legalization — it is, after all, still harmful.

Schmid and his supporters are moving too fast in pursuit of marijuana legalization. Because of the host of factors involved, the proposal should have a poor chance of passing if it makes it to November's ballot.