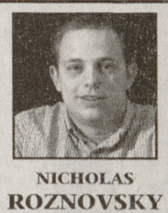


Wednesday, April 26, 2000

Go! Spoon Racer, go!

Seven-year-old should be punished for late night drive not rewarded by General Mills, national media



NICHOLAS ROZNOVSKY

Second grader Perley really likes to have his daily bowl of Cheerios. In fact, that he was willing to break the law to get his daily fix of whole-grain oat O's.

During the early morning hours of April 1, while his family slept, Perley took his dog Bear, and climbed into his sister's automobile. Using skills he picked up from playing video games, he proceeded to drive three miles down some of Tacoma's busiest streets in search of a grocery store where he could get a box of Cheerios.

Perley's adventure made him the media darling of the Northwest. Soon afterwards, his exploits made it into a number of papers across the country, and he soon found himself making television appearances. For little Perley, however, the best news was yet to come.

General Mills, the company that makes Cheerios, and a number of other breakfast cereals, has decided to give Perley a year's worth of Cheerios, a bicycle and other prizes. "So he'll never have to drive to the store again," said General Mills spokesperson Liv Lane.

Once again, it appears that the media fascination with cuteness has superseded rational thinking. Instead of reflecting on the dangers that a 7-year-old behind the wheel presented, newspapers and television stations are choosing to focus on the cuteness factor so they can lump the story into the "happy news" category.

What is so cute about a 7-year-old endangering the lives of innocent people on the road? Why should a child be rewarded for sneaking out of the house and illegally driving a car? Would General Mills have given Perley the year-long supply of cereal if he had hit a pedestrian or parked his car in the front window of a store on his way to the supermarket?

It would be ridiculous to throw Perley in jail or give him a ticket. He is, after all, a 7-year-old child who really wanted a bowl of Cheerios. But it was also wrong to reward him and reinforce his behavior.

Parents complain that violent video games and television shows are turning their children into monsters. Movies and music lyrics are also frequent targets for parent outrage when it comes to the behavior of this generation's youngsters. How about companies and parents rewarding the stupid behavior of their kids?

Perhaps parents are so busy looking for scapegoats that they fail to recognize the detrimental effects they are having on their own children.

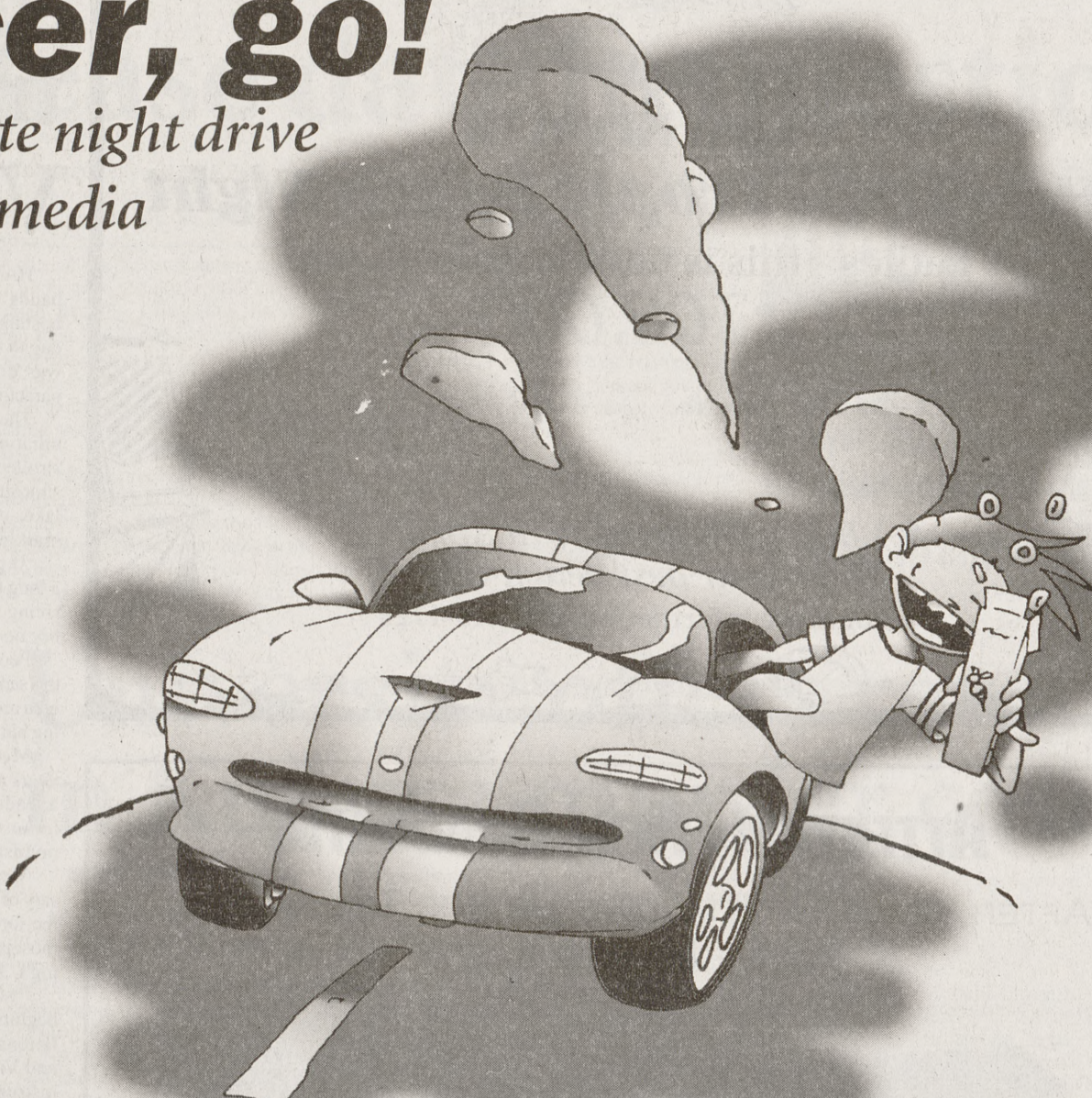
It is doubtful that a string of copycat pre-teen drivers will take to the road, but what kind of message does the entire incident send to the kids of America? For Perley King and any other 7-year-old watching television news coverage of the episode, it says that you can pretty much get away with whatever you want and be rewarded for it.

To be fair, General Mills is not attempting to corrupt the children of America and encourage them to drive their family automobiles. They saw a cute kid on the news who had a hankering for Cheerios and saw a unique publicity opportunity. Sure, Mikey might like Life cereal, but Perley was willing to drive to town for a box of Cheerios.

The problem is that society sees a cute face and suddenly forgets everything else. Would Elian Gonzalez have attracted so much attention if he had been an overweight 40-year-old truck driver? Sometimes the pitter-patter of little feet is the only thing the human mind can hear.

Perley's parents should not let him be rewarded for doing something wrong. He deserves to be raised better than that.

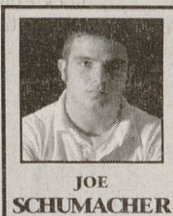
Nicholas Roznovsky is a junior political science major.



RICHARD HORNE/THE BATTALION

wannabe anarchy

Riot planners heavy on instruction, light on explanations



JOE SCHUMACHER

Environmentalists, human rights activists, animal rights activists, anarchists and other groups converged on the nation's capitol Apr. 14-17 to protest the World Bank, World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund. These protesters, with Rage Against the Machine playing in the background, and the smell of pepper spray from the "Battle in Seattle" fresh in their nostrils, went to Washington, D.C. Their goal: To help liberate third-world countries from growing debt and plundering international corporations.

Upon closer examination, one can find hypocrisy and contradictions throughout the protest setup. One glaring contradiction has to be the use of the Mobilization for Global Justice Website to promote their propaganda. The largest user of the Internet is middle-class, affluent kids whose parents have probably reaped the benefits of the "evils of free-trade" they are protesting against. Most of the protesters in Seattle and Washington D.C. ranged in age from 15-28 years old.

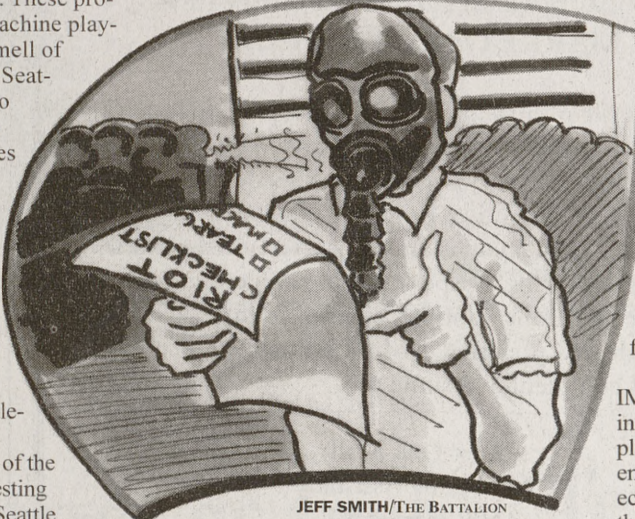
Unfortunately, that is the target of the groups — self-centered kids with a lack of identity, enough disposable income to spend the weekend protesting and, should they be arrested, a family lawyer to be dispatched to bring them home.

It is difficult to discuss this protest because there are so many groups with so many agendas and so little column space. Also, most of these groups are agreeing to protest but cannot decide what exactly to protest. The labor

unions do not want China to be a member of the WTO; the human and animal rights groups abhor the suffering caused by the WTO and the IMF. As for the anarchists... it is their off season from their soccer league, and it is just another weekend on the town for them.

So given all that, here is an examination of the rhetoric of the protest.

Mobilization for Global Justice, like many "revolutionary" or "direct-action"



JEFF SMITH/THE BATTALION

sites, discusses tactics, not beliefs. Simply put, how one should protest takes center stage over why one should protest. Which is good because most people enjoy a good protest, which can become dull and even fall apart if there is too much talking. Common riot shouts of "Resist!" and "Pork — Murder with a knife and a fork!" are a lot more fun than listing to some pseudo-intellectual ramble about the sufferings of some starving child in Tanzania.

Days before the protest, the Website contained various tips on protest tactics, every-

thing from group organization to necessary supplies were described. Those new to protests and did not have their own gas masks were instructed on how to use makeshift air filters. Dates and times of scheduled protests were also posted. One can just hear the protesters now, "Hey, man, don't start the protest without me."

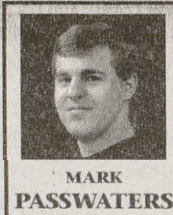
As far as group organization is concerned, one member of the group was selected as the "spokesperson." The spokesperson's job is to memorize three or four random facts available at the Website and recite them over and over again as answers to the question. Basically, if a spokesperson were asked, "Why are you protesting?" They were to answer, "Because the IMF gives money to companies that contribute to deforestation," or "The IMF enslaves the children." These spokespersons are to take the information at the Mobilization for Global Justice site for truth and regurgitate it for all who will listen. Too bad there is not a "thinkperson" assigned to the group responsible for doing actual research and thinking for themselves.

Even more ironic is that the World Bank-IMF and the protesters both claim to be working for the same goal: bettering the lives of people in the third-world countries. Or, as far as the environmentalists are concerned, helping the ecology of these countries. The original goal of the bank was to ease the transition of third-world countries into the Western world. True, The World Bank can be a cappuccino shock to the system of a third world economy but often these countries do not have an alternative.

There are several reasons to oppose the World Bank and the IMF. However, one should look into and research it carefully before joining other protesters and throwing bricks through the windows of Starbucks coffee. Oh, and don't play soccer with the anarchists. They cheat.

Joe Schumacher is a senior journalism major

Students' protests of U.N. sanctions misdirected



MARK PASSWATERS

One of the greatest things about living in the United States of America is having the right to be stupid. Every once in a while, some group will come around and do something that would make the general public question whether that right has been abused.

It is time for the public to take a moment and congratulate the student-run organization Aggie Students for Peace. They have gone above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that it is still safe to be stupid in this nation. Their attempts to see the embargo on Iraq lifted could be considered gallant — if it were not for the facts that they are not only informationally challenged but coddling a dictator. Aggie Students for Peace have shown such blissful ignorance on the issue of suffering in Iraq that it is highly doubtful they are on the same planet as the rest of us.

Aggie Students for Peace President Angelique Dorazio-Sanders has complained that their newsworthy actions have not been sufficiently covered. The only problem with her complaint is that the actions of the group were not newsworthy, merely loony. Among the "student actions" not covered was a "postal action" in which 10 students mailed nine packages to Iraq in an attempt to work against United Nation (U.N.) sanctions.

First of all, what is a "postal action," anyway? Thankfully, there were no automatic weapons involved, just a few kids wasting postage. The painful truth behind Iraq's suffering is that neither the United States nor the United Nations are responsible for the deaths of innocent women and children — Saddam Hussein is.

Apparently, Aggie Students for Peace has forgotten that Iraq is ruled by a ruthless dictator who does not care what happens to his citizens. Well before U.N. sanctions were imposed upon Iraq, Hussein was ensuring the deaths of thousands of people. He now has a convenient excuse to deflect blame from himself.

Examination of the real situation in Iraq shows a classical situation of the "haves" versus the "have-nots." Saddam Hussein is a Sunni Muslim, a group which comprises about one-fourth of Iraq's population. Shiite Muslims and Kurds have long been opposed to Hussein and have suffered greatly since Aug. 2, 1990 when Iraq invaded Kuwait. On the other hand, those who have supported Hussein have actually lived in the lap of luxury.

Saddam Hussein's only concern is staying in power. With the application of U.N. sanctions, it is illegal for Iraq to export oil its major money maker. In spite of that, hundreds of thousands of

barrels each day are smuggled out of the country and sold. That money goes directly into the coffers of the Iraqi government — or, more precisely, Hussein himself.

Members of Hussein's Baath party have been given expensive luxury cars and interest-free loans to build houses. The Republican Guard, the best units of the Iraqi army has to offer, has been given half a dozen pay raises and other monetary incentives to remain loyal to Hussein.

Hussein himself has built — not rebuilt, but built — 70 new palaces since the end of the Gulf War, a tally which is estimated to cost over \$100 billion. When these expenses are coupled with the down payments on new weapons systems from Russia and France that can be delivered as soon as the sanctions are lifted, it becomes quite plain to see who the true villain is here.

While Aggie Students for Peace condemn the United Nations for being evil, Hussein continues to murder his own people. The Kurds, who live in the northern part of the country, have been displaced from their homes and into the mountains by the Iraqi army. The Shiites, who live in the southern part of the nation, have had their wetlands destroyed so that they will

While Aggie Students for Peace condemn the United Nations for being evil, Hussein continues to murder his own people.

have no place to hide if they chose to rebel as they did in 1991. This destroyed their ability to farm as well, condemning them to the slow fate of starvation.

It is true that Iraqis are dying by the score every day. It is not every Iraq; it is merely the ones that Hussein considers expendable. The Shiites and Kurds of Iraq receive no aid from the government and are subjected to starvation and disease. The only times that the Iraqi government pays any attention to them whatsoever is to suppress their dissent or use them as examples of how evil the West can be to Islamic nations.

This is a complete farce, and Aggie Students for Peace has swallowed it wholly. They should be ashamed of themselves for sucking up to a blood-thirsty dictator in this fashion. If this is not enough to change their minds, perhaps they should be reminded of Hussein's track record. In 1980, he attacked Iran. In 1990, he invaded Kuwait. If we lift sanctions against Iraq, what will a rearmend and re-energized Hussein do next? Would Hussein attack Saudi Arabia? Israel? Jordan? In any case, the United States will almost certainly become involved, and lives will be lost.

Aggie Students for Peace are in dire need of vision adjustment because they plainly cannot see the big picture. They are perfectly content to coddle a murderer and tacitly support his ability to spread his reign of terror elsewhere. Or, perhaps this is what they desire, so they can have another "postal action."

Mark Passwaters is a senior electrical engineering major.

MAIL CALL

Wireless campus idea simply a proposal, not associated with RHA

In response to David Lee's April 25 article.

The article stated that "the proposal by the Residence Hall Association (RHA) to implement a wireless campus is seriously flawed." However, this is not the case at all, because the wireless campus proposal has not been made by RHA or the Department of Residence Life. A guest speaker informed RHA of the concept at our last General Assembly and wanted opinions and feedback from on-campus residents.

This idea was brought by the Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Administration; it is under research by them and they are currently seeking student input on the subject. RHA is a representative organization whose sole purpose is to represent the views of the on-campus residents.

After more research is done and the official presentation is made to us, we will seek more student input before passing our recommendation on to the administration.

Lee made several good points about the concept and these are already points that we have been investigating for several weeks. If anyone would like more information on the idea that the University is proposing, then we encourage you to contact RHA.

Josh Kaylor
RHA President
Class of '02

The Battalion encourages letters to the editor. Letters must be 300 words or less and include the author's name, class and phone number.

The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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Wednesday, April 26, 2000

Registration: April 24-28 9-10 am, 3-4 pm May 1-5 1-5 pm

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