ONE YEAR LATER

Coca-Cola

One year ago CSA Senate decided to make a statement against Coca-Cola’s poor human rights record in Columbia. Has the statement lasted?

JOHANNAH SCHEU, KATIE BARTON/guest opinion

A s a community we decided to begin something by banning Coca-Cola from campus last year. The ban may not have been complete (check out the bookstore or snack bar), but such a small campus is not really capable of hurting the profits of such a giant business anyway; that was not the point. We wanted to increase awareness about global human rights issues and to participate in the call for international accountability. Have we?

In an effort to gauge how much the dialogue has continued, we turned to the freshmen. They weren’t here through the weeks of discussion last winter. It would be the responsibility of the upperclassmen to inform them of our decision to ban Coke products, especially the reasons that motivated the ban. We asked a simple question: “Are you aware of why you can’t buy Coca-Cola products in the vending machines on campus?” Going door-to-door with this question we soon found our answer.

In a random sampling of 121 freshmen from dorms across campus, only 27 percent knew the reason. More disheartening, a significant portion of those who knew found out as prospies last year or from older siblings who also go to Carleton. Awareness has not spread to the majority of Carleton’s newest class, yet they’ll never know a Carleton where Coke is available in vending machines.

The class of 2009, newly admitted and enrolled, will be the ones leading campus discussions when the Pepsi contract expires. Yet, only one year after the decision, we have spent so little time and energy on the issue that most freshmen are not aware of it. Will the class of 2009 – the next decision-makers – be...
Most of us serving on Senate ran on a campaign of increased transparency and accountability – noble goals that are easier to place into rhetoric than carry out in reality.

Supplying the student body with more information is a wise practice and a means by which to ensure Senate accountability to those who elected us to serve those positions. However, as the discussion of Senate transparency takes place, it is important to note a number of issues that often get overlooked in our hurry to disseminate information to what we view as a public demanding it.

Initially, we must ask what information is currently available to students, and what is kept private. As this issue of The Observer goes to press, the Spring Allocations process is underway, with over eighty budget requests being analyzed by Budget Committee and allocated the limited funds available. Senate members will see all of these allocations, and final approval of next year’s projected budget rests with them. This information is publicly available, and makes it into the hands of the students who want to see it.

Additionally, the normal budgeting process that takes place each week is open to the public, and all information is posted online in weekly Senate minutes.

What information is missing? More importantly, who is not being served by the current process? These are two vital questions that need to be answered before the financial status of every group is printed or available in publications.

It is important to recognize why this information has not been provided in the past: numbers alone are notoriously misleading. During the Spring Allocations process, a multitude of factors are taken into account, sometimes across-the-board, and sometimes in regards to an individual request. To provide this context with the numbers would require substantially more pages than students would want to read, as well as potential-ly violate the privacy of student organizations who do not want this information published.

Another issue often neglected in our rush to promote fiscal accountability is that of the formation of a process. If we are willing, as a group, to sit down and develop a procedure by which useful information can make its way to the student body, we ensure that Senate is represented accurately, as well as creating opportunities for input at all points.

If individuals take it upon themselves to provide avenues for the distribution of financial information, it prevents others from being able to add what could otherwise be valuable insight into their methods. If there is an agreed-upon method, it gives everyone the ability to find the information in a predictable place, retains consistency and vital institutional memory, as well as providing students with avenues for input.

As indicated earlier, I fully support the proposal to increase the transparency of all Senate procedures. I only hope that some of these issues can be resolved in the context of a larger discussion before we begin printing numbers.

–C.J. Griffith, ’06
CSA President

I was pleased to see two issues ago that The Observer saw fit to publish the contribution of Carleton’s faculty. Openness in the political process is a lofty goal, and knowing who has helped pay for a political candidate’s campaign is part of that openness.

That this is important because the public has a right to know who those in positions of power may or may not be indebted, what they do or do not support, is a view I have often heard expressed in my four years here.

Until that is, I read the letters to the editor in the last issue of the Observer.

–John Slaight, ’05

Senate seats, referendum results
continued from pp. 1

We reserve the right to edit and print responses sent in any form.

| CSB BUDGET |

| POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS |

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Staff writer John Slaughter continued from pp. 1

The one referendum issue – whether or not the refuseable/refundable fee that funds MPIRG ought to be on the Comprehensive Fee Statement next academic year – passed with overwhelming support. 73.8 percent of those voting – 431 – chose to allow the fee to continue for another year.

Overall voter turnout was 36.73 percent, with 648 students out of the 1,764 enrolled casting ballots. The election extended for a week, from Wednesday, April 27 to Wednesday, May 4. Voting was only online, though Senators did table in Sayles in an attempt to improve turnout. However, polls were not available in Burton and the LDC as had been done in the past, and as is required by the CSA Senate Bylaws.

During the debate on April 27, several candidates voiced concern over the level of communication between the Senate and the student body. One candidate pointed out the fact that fewer than a dozen students observed the debate. Another commented on the lack of publicity, calling it “pathetic.” A banner hung in Sayles-Hill Great Space and the election was advertised on the Senate website. But the lack of posters, mailbox stuffers, and chalked sidewalks was noticeable. The intense publicity students have come to expect for major campus events was oddly absent. ■
Senate must be student voice

STAFF EDITORIAL

What happened at the Senate meeting last week? What is one big issue Senate dealt with this term? This year?

If you don’t know the answer to these questions, you are certainly not alone. The sad fact is the student body is sorely lacking in its knowledge of the Carleton Student Association (CSA) Senate. Student government ought to act as the voice of students, but because of a lack of information the Senate is unable to fulfill its mission to serve the student body.

Students ought to know and care about what is happening in Senate, but the greater part of campus does not read the CSA caucus, attend Senate meetings or regularly check the Senate website, to say nothing about actually voting in elections. Several of the candidates in the recent election pointed out this problem during the debates – attended by fewer than a dozen observers. Something must be done to remedy the situation, and soon.

Part of the fault lies with the student body. Each and every student should make an active effort to seek out the latest Senate news. The website (csa.carleton.edu) has been recently revamped and is kept up-to-date. Meeting agendas and minutes are posted online in a timely manner, Senate reports are given at most study breaks and most Senators are eager to be approached with questions.

While part of the responsibility lies with the student body, the Senate itself carries the burden of providing adequate information. Financial transparency needs to be improved. The Observer should not have had to publish the CSA budget; Senate should have done it.

Communication of current Senate issues and projects to students is greatly lacking. There is no regular report in any campus publication. Both the website and the elections must be better publicized. Did anyone know about the debate between candidates? Publicity for CSA elections ought to literally cover the campus.

Referendum issues, like the MPIRG fee, must be brought to the forefront. Voter turnout rates under 40 percent are deplorable for a college as small and active as ours.

It’s not only in the small things that Senate falls short – big issues tend to peak and then fall by the wayside. Regardless of your opinion of the decision to switch from Coca-Cola in CSA vending machines last winter, it is clear that Senate dropped the ball.

Just over one-quarter of the freshman class knows why the decision was made. Coke products are still available in the snack bar and bookstore. Senate ditched Coca-Cola with the promise of working to make a difference beyond our pocketbooks. That promise – like so many others – was broken.

The lack of information about the workings and decisions of the Senate must be remedied if student governance is to fulfill its mission.

Senate needs to think of, and utilize, more effective ways to communicate with students, otherwise we can never have a united and powerful voice. Only then can Senate truly speak as the voice of the Carleton Student Association.

The staff editorial represents the majority opinion of the editorial board, comprised of the editors-in-chief and copy, opinion, news and design editors.

Communication of current Senate issues and projects to students is greatly lacking.

There’s something exhilarating about spending 12 hours a day for several days in a small, dark, unseasonably warm room cranking out 12 pages of publication for, let’s face it, little or no material reward. The sense of pride that comes with distributing The Observer is the only thing commensurate with the work that goes into it.

You may notice that a few of our articles refer to the recent CSA Senate election. Mr. Navratil’s report of the election necessitated, quite literally, an eleventh-hour addition to the layout. Mr. Harrell’s, on the other hand, required nothing less than two fully-researched and drafted articles, one of which was inserted after the results were in. It is in these additions, these extra miles for students that we strive to meet or surpass the journalistic integrity demanded of us by educated, thoughtful readers.

Throughout the course of the next year we will continue to pursue investigative features – from departmental hiring practices to transparency and accountability with how your money is being spent. The Observer has an obligation to itself to adapt and improve; those of us who are fortunate enough to be awake at the crack of dawn bringing you news and well-thought out, well-researched and relevant opinions could not be more grateful for the opportunity to do so.

Think for yourself, question authority; we will continue to do the same.
Dear Dean Colwell:

I’m writing regarding the changes to the Spring Concert alcohol policy. I recently asked Campus Activities what the policies will be this year, because I want to follow them, as I always have. The response was appalling: “No containers allowed; only Nalgenes and water-bottles.” To say I was shocked would be a gross understatement. I was saddened. I was disappointed. And to top it off, I hadn’t even been informed of the new policy!

My questions are these: 1. Why have the policies changed? 2. Why didn’t you or one of your associates in the dean’s office sent out a timely email to the students? Most everyone on campus is under the impression that spring concert will be free and easy, like my freshman and sophomore years. 3. Are you trying to kill off spring concert? I know it’s an utterly frank question, but this is the way it seems to the few people I’ve informed about your policy.

The last impression I’ll get from Carleton is one of increasing conservatism and fewer student freedoms. I’ve worked hard for four years to get to this point in my life at Carleton. Spring concert is the celebration of all the hard work that’s gone into the past year. And I know that alcohol isn’t needed; but please, I’m 22 years old – at least treat me like a man. Just last weekend I was at Luther College in Decorah, IA for their Spring-Concert like event – Trout Fry. Trout Fry is an unsanctioned college event run by a fraternity. It’s held on private land well outside of the city. It’s a dangerous place. There is absolutely no oversight for the nearly 1500 students in attendance. I had to help a guy get out of the freezing cold water he fell into in a drunken haze; it was quite shocking. If Carleton continues to shutdown college-sanctioned, alcohol-related events, they will all go underground, which certainly isn’t healthy.

Going to Deco-rh was eye-opening. The students I saw there were having the same kind of fun we have here at Carleton, except there was no oversight, no law. I’m disgusted that what I bought into in 2001 is a much different product than what’s emerged in 2005. The fact that Carleton once gave us the wonderful venue of Spring Concert – and then took it away – saddens me deeply. Not merely because I, as a student, am being treated un-

Are you trying to kill off spring concert?

Dear MPIRG,

I would like to thank you for 34 years of public service and accomplishments. You have been instrumental in lobbying the state government for prudent action not only on things like environmental advertising, but also against frivolous lawsuits filed by special interests against citizen activists, such as yours truly. Just because I oppose public policy and projects doesn’t mean that I should be sued for my special interest. What would the public do then?! I would like to voice my strong support for MPIRG’s advocacy for women’s rights. Thank goodness you have the sense to claim that women’s rights are human rights; I might not have known without your expert knowledge and benevolent assistance. To think that I might never have heard what a vagina thinks. Oh, the humanity!

Your support for Fair and Clean Elections is also admirable. We can’t have these ignorant voters give their hard earned cash to conservative candidates without proper government intervention. That is why I also support your drive to educate voters and get out the youth vote. Thanks to the awesome work of MPIRG, Carleton’s voter turnout was over 90 percent – strangely similar to that of Dundas, home to relatively few college students. I can only assume that MPIRG has as much pull among farmers and small town folk as it does the young collegiate intelligentsia. Excellent job!

I am proud to be a member of such a distinguished and successful organization, with its roots in the great student strike of 1970. Shame that one collapsed, here’s hoping the next one overthrows the exploitative establishment. Just imagine if MPIRG wasn’t here for us today: would we have the Vagina Monologues, or instant runoff voting at the U of M, or no sweatshop apparel in the college store? Just think of all those poor children who can now spend more time outside in the scorching hot sun with their families.

I am also grateful to MPIRG for providing me, and many other eminently qualified college students, with part-time jobs. Where would you be without your student volunteers and donors? The refusable/refundable fee is a perfectly accountable way of attaining capital. Just like you say on your guide, it is to pay for a necessary service, a guarantee in reliable funding, democratic and transparent.

Let me warn you though, there are some radical conservative activists on this campus who will do whatever it takes to cheat the public. Thankfully they haven’t yet decided to challenge the morality or legality of a negative option. These selfish interlopers have consistently fought to remove our funding.

I urge you to take action at once – wherever and whenever such fiendish tricks are played, like calling the refusable/refundable fee unfair, and campaigning against it – mobilize our 20,000 community members to drown the young upstarts with reams of flyers and our cohesive, critical, collective voice of the citizenry. For you know, we are completely unique in this state for having the ability to mobilize broad membership for the cause of social justice. They might even have the gall to propose alternatives to MPIRG!

Once again, thank you for all the years of public service and helping to build a more perfect campus.

Sincerely,

Eric Smith, ‘05

“Truth is the most sacred virtue of the human heart.”–SENECA THE YOUNGER
Drilling sense into ANWR

ANNA DUCHON/opinion

Let me start by coming clean: I’m a liberal who believes we should drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). The primary argument against drilling in ANWR is the environmental impact. But even an environmentalist looking at the issue in perspective should support drilling.

First, we must get a full picture of the land in question. Although the entire reserve encompasses over 19 million acres, the proposed drilling affects only the biologically poorest 2000 acres. Because winter temperatures fall as low as -40ºF, the Coastal Plain region is usually uninhabitable and, if drilling were to occur, wildlife protection programs would be implemented to ensure the animals’ safety. Evidence suggests that these wildlife programs would enable the animals in the region to flourish even more than they would without such programs – or drilling. In Prudhoe Bay, a site almost identical to the Coastal Plain region, the caribou population has grown in size since drilling began.

Moreover, pipelines would have almost no additional impact because existing pipelines would be used to minimize new lines that would be built.

Additionally, as much as we’d love to change our consumerist, gas-guzzling culture, people are still going to buy oil from someone else if not us. By halting drilling on our land, we deflect the drilling to other countries. We should want to channel as much drilling to our country as we can because we can afford massive environmental protection programs to accompany the pipelines; drilling here will be cleaner, safer, and more environmentally friendly than anywhere else.

Most Americans support drilling in the area by a sweeping 61 percent according to a survey by Wirthlin Worldwide – that’s more than Bush’s margin in the last presidential election. Most people living in the region support drilling. Alaskans, including Inuit tribes, support drilling in the Costal Plain region by an overwhelming 75 percent, with good reason.

Drilling here will be cleaner, safer, and more environmentally friendly than anywhere else.

The Wharton Econometric Forecasting Associates (WEFA) found that drilling in the area could create as many as 736,000 new domestic jobs in the United States.

And something else that our nation shouldn’t overlook is the threat that foreign oil poses to our national security (though I hate to use that rightist phrase). In 2003 we imported 63 percent of our oil, a figure that’s expected to rapidly climb in the coming years. Most of these imports are from the Middle East – not exactly a part of the world we should be depending on given the current political climate there. Even a slight reduction in the global market would have devastating repercussions. In the event of a price jump, those in lower socioeconomic classes would be hit the hardest, a situation our country is certainly not prepared to accommodate.

The reality is that we will have to switch our fuel base sometime soon. And this transition won’t be cheap. The costs of retrofitting an entire energy system are incomprehensible, but the longer a period we have to make this transition, the better. Asking everyone who owns a car to pay to retrofit their vehicles is like proposing a flat tax on the nation. Those who would be hurt the most would be those who can least afford it.

As the country that is best able to diminish the potential negative effects of an oil crash, we have a duty to the rest of the world. Part of this duty involves taking on the environmental burden of our current oil dependency. This burden requires acting as part of the solution – even if this means helping the world ride the oil wave just a bit longer to make the inevitable sink hurt less.

Pay our officers

For the time and effort you put into your campus job, you are paid – no one would expect anything less. But there are three Carleton students who dedicate themselves to far more than ten hours each week improving student life: The President, Vice-President and Treasurer of the Carleton Student Association (CSA) – and for their services they receive only our gratitude. Just as any student ought to be compensated for their work, the CSA officers should be paid for their time and devotion to student life.

The objection to paying the officers that first comes to mind is the matter of motivations for running office. Perhaps paying the officers would encourage individuals to run for office not because of an honest desire to serve, but for the money. Serving as an officer requires gaining the approval of the student body in an election. It requires proving to your fellow students that you are the best person for the job. The election process should eliminate those candidates who might be attracted solely by the money. Furthermore, should...
Hiring process obfuscates
Math department’s refusal to justify itself

AARON WEINER/opinion

I
n our last issue, I promised to discov-
er exactly what went wrong with the
Math Department’s hiring process for their tenure track position. To that
end, I spoke with the head of the depart-
ment, Dr. Sam Patterson. Unfortunately,
I am now more confused about the seem-
ingly unjustifiable hiring decision than I
was two weeks ago.

In September of last year, the depart-
ment placed an announcement advertis-
ing a tenure track math faculty position
on the Carleton web page and published it in several journals of mathematics.
The second line of that solicitation for
applicants stated that, in the hiring
decision, “evidence of teaching excellence
is essential.” Patterson confirmed this
emphasis, “Any professor we hire must
be a teacher first and foremost.”

The hiring process began in December
when the math faculty narrowed down 200+ applicants to 30. Throughout the
month of January, four finalists were
chosen from those 30. Each of those four
came to Carleton, spoke to the faculty
and students, and met with the Dean of
the College, Shelby Boardman. Then, the
full, associate, and assistant math and
CS professors met in order to decide who
to hire; this year they chose Eric Egge,
Carleton Class of 1994.

During their meeting, the Math/CS
professors review the applications sent
to them, discuss their own impressions
of the candidates, read the students’
responses to the presentations and, most
peculiarly, receive major input from the
Dean of the College. Patterson explained
that “the Dean has very important
input” because the Dean has “an opinion
about what’s good for the department...
and the community [here at Carleton].”
If part of the Dean’s job is to gauge a
candidate’s level of comfort with the
community and the community’s level
of comfort with a candidate, one would
expect that the Dean would always rec-
commend a Carleton alumnus or alumna
over any other candidate. This seems to
be what happened.

When asked about Egge, Patter-
son balked on explaining the decision,
insisting several times that, “I am not
going to talk about any of the individual
candidates we looked at.” Regarding the
decision made to hire Egge, he said, “The
department made the right decision, I
know that... I want to explain that deci-
sion without going into specifics about
any of the final four [candidates].” Pat-
terson claimed that Egge was, across the
board, the right choice, even though he
earlier admitted that, “No single candi-
date is an ace in every category.”

The Department of Mathematics and
Computer Science claims to have made
the right decision. Yet the head of the
department is unwilling to justify that
decision to either the general student
body or to students within the major.
Patterson further refused to discuss
Egge’s qualifications, “I’m not going to
talk about that,” he said. Never in his
explanation for the decision did Profes-
sor Patterson ever support with evidence
either the hiring of Egge or the “decision
not to hire” Tina Garrett.

Concerning visiting professors, as
Garrett is, there is usually a two year
maximum contract: “If someone is here
longer than that... there are often diffi-
culties... keeping it short makes sure the
visiting professors know that they are
not [a permanent] part of the commu-

ity,” Patterson explained. Yet Garrett
was asked to stay for an additional two
years after her initial contract expired.

The hiring decision takes place be-
hind closed doors. The sole input stu-
dents are given is to review the presenta-
tions delivered by the candidates. The
department claims that this is to protect
the confidentiality of not just the candi-
dates, but also the Carleton faculty mak-
ing the decision. Even though the math
department appears to have disregarded
its own hiring criteria and guidelines,
Professor Patterson expects students
to, “Just trust that we [the department]
made the right decision.”

Such blind faith is not only impossi-
ble, it runs contrary to the values our in-
stitution embodies. No Carleton student
would accept assertions without evidence
or justification in class; to ask that we
do so outside of class with something
as important as the hiring of professors is
nothing short of irresponsible.
between; we don’t need a list of political contributions to prove it.

But the question I pose to you today is the following: What if there was a professor on that list who gave money to a conservative cause, and we’d have never guessed it without seeing his name there? What did you think when you read the headline to this article? Were you more tempted to read it than if “GOP” been replaced with “DNC”? But more importantly, what would you think about that math, or history, or French professor knowing that he’s a conservative, a staunch enough one to put his money where his mouth isn’t?

We have a few conservative economists and political scientists, but most think it’s important that their economic and political views (i.e., their academic specialties) be represented on our faculty. We look at them in classes and think, “Yes, they are conservatives teaching scientific material in a carefully non-partisan manner, but it’s good that their interpretations are here.” Yet, when we look at other professors, politics is far from anyone’s focus. I don’t know any art professor who wants students to sit in class wondering how he voted last year.

But would we ignore his politics if he supported President Bush in 2004? Would it sway our recommendations if he comes up for tenure review? Would it influence our opinions of his art? If he said, “Yes, I’m a Republican but I’d rather not discuss politics,” would we respect his request to be left alone? We wouldn’t badger a liberal bio prof to talk politics, would we? What would we think if he admitted to being pro-life?

These are all questions that I think we should consider seriously. They strike at the heart of our assumptions regarding academic freedom, the openness of our community, and what we expect from our professors. Political identity should not matter in our perceptions of a professor’s character or professional ability. And those professors with whom I’ve spoken about this unanimously agree.

Yet, I have read stories about conservative academics being discriminated against by hiring committees and no one at Carleton responded the same way to the headline of this article as when they saw the list of liberal contributions. I would have strongly opposed the publication of that list a month ago if indeed there were an unknown conservative on it. I only hope that soon I may retract such an opinion.

MPIRG fee remains unjustified

The MPIRG refusable/refundable fee has been renewed once again. The issue was placed on the ballot during CSA elections, and the majority of Carleton students voting on the issue voiced their support for continuing the $7.50 fee for another academic year. We students proved once again that, as long as a group claims to advance left-leaning causes, accountability need not be required.

No other campus organization – nor any other organization for that matter – can raise funds on campus through a similar refusable/refundable fee. Why does MPIRG receive special treatment, then? Partly because they have a contract with the College, and partly because we allow it. According to the contract, the refusable/refundable fee must be put to a vote before the beginning of every academic year. As long as the majority of students voting endorse the fee, the fee will remain. This naturally begs the question – what makes MPIRG so special, and why do they deserve something that is available to no other group?

Their intentions appear defensible enough. Human rights, free and clean elections, better democracy – all are worthy causes. But good intentions do not a good organization make. MPIRG’s reporting of their activities to the Carleton community has been sketchy at best, and their website offers few details as to their accomplishments this past year. With so many groups working toward admirable goals, each of which could put my $7.50 to good use, we should not support any organization that cannot be held accountable. If MPIRG cannot account for how it spends the money it raises through the refusable/refundable fee, then it should not be allowed to collect the fee.

The bigger problem goes beyond accountability – what gives MPIRG the right to collect this fee in the first place? If they raised funds on campus through requesting voluntary dona-

Wells Harrell

Wells Harrell
Revolutionary conservatism
A NEW TREND IN YOUTH CULTURE?

JAMES MAGNUSON (opinion)

I occasionally frequent conservative student message boards, and an argument currently raging concerns immigration. I was, with difficulty, trying to persuade a member of the board that the Minuteman project was foolish and unjust and that immigration should be increased concurrent with a decrease in the size of the welfare state. It was a great time. However, it dawned on me that this somewhat misguided person believed himself to be part of an almost revolutionary movement – bringing the U.S. back to the people.

Many people think that the conservative movement today is the rebellious one, raging against the comfortable liberal elites. It might sound absurd on the face of it. There’s a Republican in the White House, isn’t there? Republican and conservative are synonymous, aren’t they? And we know that this President is liberal and an entertainment industry which is overwhelmingly liberal and an entertainment industry which is absolutely liberal. I think it’s because of this orthodoxy that there are more conservative students than ever before. I could be pessimistic and say that it’s just American youth rejecting their immediate authorities as they have been doing for quite some time and the immediate authorities happen to be liberal. Or, because I want to believe, perhaps young people are rejecting the dying ideas of liberalism and coming towards the light.

The young and misled are encouraged by the old and sentimental into trying to hold onto their notion of the ’60s as a great accomplishment. If you doubt it, read Rolling Stone (though not for too long, unless you really have a stomach for meaningless tripe). It’s full of effusive praise of the rebellious ’60s and those who “dare” to speak out against the “system.” Green Day talks about a society controlled by the media, which is why morons like Green Day continue to have any relevance.

Today, in this shifting culture, there is a rebellion going on. Perhaps it’s small scale, but there’s no disputing the evidence. More students now call themselves conservatives than have in quite some time. And this is all in the face of a media that, despite some notable exceptions, tends to be quite liberal, a teaching profession which is overwhelmingly liberal and an entertainment industry which is absolutely liberal. I think it’s because of this orthodoxy that there are more conservative students than ever before. I could be pessimistic and say that it’s just American youth rejecting their immediate authorities as they have been doing for quite some time and the immediate authorities happen to be liberal. Or, because I want to believe, perhaps young people are rejecting the dying ideas of liberalism and coming towards the light.

Filibuster laudable, not laughable

PETER FRITZ (opinion)

The Carletonian staff editorial on 4/22/05 entitled “Filibuster? Filibusted” was an abuse of the position that the paper holds in the campus community. Instead of adequately researching the “Keep Talking” filibuster, their editorial staff chose to print a misleading opinion.

The editors acknowledged from the outset that they based their opinion on spotty information. In fact, the sole basis for their opinion appeared to be a few passing glances at the filibuster tent. The authors justify this dereliction of journalistic duty by reminding us that they are “a fourth-week-workload-deluged junior and a planning-her-comps-talk senior.”

The Carletonian editors claimed that the filibuster had no impact, but the facts tell a much different story. Approximately 91 Carls participated in the filibuster and only ten of these participants were active members of the Carleton Democrats. As of May 3, over 640 people had signed the “Keep Talking” petition to preserve the filibuster. Further, the event caught the attention of the College Democrats of America and MoveOn.org. The President of the CDA made a lengthy campus appearance, and members of MoveOn’s mailing list received an email on April 25 detailing the filibuster event with commentary, pictures and quotes.

The filibuster also had significant educational value that the editors overlooked. If they had bothered asking questions of the participants, like so many others had done, they would have learned more about the importance of preserving the filibuster in the U.S. Senate. The filibuster encouraged members of the campus community to ask questions that they may never have thought to ask, and it spurred activism and raised issue awareness like only a creative event can.

Journalists should always base their writing on facts and evidence, never mere speculation and conjecture. Editors have a duty to adequately understand a situation before reporting an opinion on it. Don’t student efforts aimed at raising awareness of important issues deserve more than a blithe brush-off? I’m glad that the Carletonian eventually decided to finally give the filibuster the coverage it deserved. Perhaps if they had done their homework earlier, they wouldn’t have smugly dismissed the entire project in an editorial that was a waste of the paper on which it was written. It was Earth Week, after all.

Peter Fritz
Knee-jerk liberalism

Coca-Cola “decision” exemplifies action without consideration

It’s been just over a year now since the decision was made by the CSA Senate to remove the Coca-Cola vending machines from campus. Citing the claims from a representative of Killer Coke, the student body packed Great Space last spring baying for the blood of the Coca-Cola Company. Killer Coke (www.killercoke.org) claims that since 1989, Coca-Cola has been responsible for eight deaths of employees at four of their bottling plants in Colombia. It was Killer Coke’s contention that the Coca-Cola company, based in Atlanta, GA, not only condoned these murders, but had an active hand in their planning and execution.

And Carleton ate it up.

The CSA Senate meeting last winter seemed reminiscent of the Spanish Inquisition. Students as inquisitors took turns condemning the Coca-Cola Company, barely pausing in their self-righteous diatribes long enough to breathe. Eight deaths, the last of which was in 2002, of employees at bottling plants was enough for the students at this school to kick the local Coca-Cola bottling company off our campus. Students, and Killer Coke, claimed that the numbers speak for themselves. They said this because there has been no documentation to show that any employees of the Coca-Cola bottling distributors (let alone employees of the Coca-Cola Company) were involved in any aspect of the murders.

Do the numbers actually indicate what Killer Coke and Carleton said they did? The following excerpt is from the Investors Responsibility Research Center Inc.’s Social Issues Reporter, September 2001: “At least 130 union members [in Colombia] were killed during 2000. In 2001, an average of 11 have been killed each month to date. During the past 10 years, a total of 1526 have been shot dead. Union membership in Colombia has dropped precipitously in recent years: SINALTRAINAL’s membership was 5800 five years ago; today it is 2400. The country’s paramilitaries... take responsibility for most of the assassinations.”

Despite the alarming trend in Colombia as a nation which suggests Coca-Cola’s local bottlers are far from alone in their struggles against the paramilitaries, despite a complete lack of causal, or even compelling correlative, evidence; despite the precautions taken in Colombia for union leaders (reported to us by Coca-Cola’s VP of Latin American Retail to include armored transports and cellular phones among many others), Carleton students were willing to take up the banner of the Columbian union member, as long as it didn’t take more than a night of their time.

All of this is evidence of an alarming trend in the activism at Carleton. The student body seems to be willing to be misled so long as their liberal sensibilities are preserved. From “killer” Coke to the tabling in Sayles, all the student body seems to need is something to be outraged about for a few days at a time. You demand something to protest; you ask to be lied to. And it is all done so that you can feel better about “changing the world” in some positive way. The only result of the decision made last spring is that now the only place to get a bottle of Diet Coke is the snack bar. That’s sure to solve the problems in Colombia.

If you actually care about an issue, that’s fantastic. But pretending to care for 24 hours doesn’t mean that you’ve made the world a better place. The Carleton student body needs to think before it acts.

You need to pause, consider the evidence, form an opinion, and then stand by it unless persuaded otherwise by more evidence. Over-the-top emotional responses without justification are never going to help anyone. It’s time you realized that.

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Pretending to care for 24 hours doesn’t mean you’ve made the world a better place.

The company also notes that its bottlers are independent companies, and while Coca-Cola has no right to become involved in the bottlers’ employee relations, it expects them to abide by the applicable laws in the countries in which they operate. The Coca-Cola Company and each of the two bottlers are in the midst of conducting separate investigations into the claims of the case. In conversations with IRRC, representatives of the company said that they were concerned about the Colombian atrocities, but that they could not comment further on the allegations while the lawsuit was pending. —SOCIAL ISSUES REPORTER
Not all of us are the same

ANDREW “NOT AARON” WEINER/feature

In the past few months I have noticed a very disturbing and disrespectful attitude that is exhibited by the vast majority of Carleton liberals. I am referring to their tendency to assume that conservatives lack all capacity for independent thought or agency and can be completely described by sorting them into a few simple categories of beliefs to which they strictly adhere. Liberals are thus able to treat every member of a given category as identically foolish and are able conveniently ignore any well-reasoned argument that an individual member may attempt to put forward. In order to demonstrate the egregiousness of such a practice, I will recount my own horrifying experience as a victim of this wickedness.

It is painful for me to contemplate, but I now realize that the moment I arrived at Carleton, a sizeable portion of my personal identity was robbed and replaced with a liberal-imposed categorization. The sad truth is, I am an unwilling member of the group they call “conservatives in the class of 2006 whose last name is Weiner and whose first name begins with the letter A.” Now admittedly, this label is fairly accurate. I am indeed a conservative. I am a member of the class of 2006. My last name is Weiner and my first name begins with the letter “A.” However, and this is the important part, this label does not describe me completely. I am an individual! I have my own beliefs! I have six letters in my first name, only one of which is “A!” And I have a middle name! And I am pretty sure my middle name is different from the middle name of any other conservative in the class of 2006 whose last name is Weiner and whose first name begins with the letter “A!” (editors’ note: Upon further research, we have confirmed that it is, in fact, different.)

But liberals just don’t care. Their conception of me as a mere member of a homogenous group is so strong, that on numerous occasions they have actually mistaken me for some other member of my group. For example, there have been several times when some other conservative in the class of 2006 whose last name is Weiner and whose first name begins with the letter A has written an article in The Observer, and all of my liberal acquaintances have politely complimented “me” on “my” article.

How ironic! In their perfunctory attempt to seem tolerant of conservative viewpoints, they fail to distinguish between conservative individuals. This is a repulsive example of disrespect, but it gets worse. Even the liberal administrators of our college are guilty of this behavior.

Case in point: last week I received in my mailbox a check from the college. The description read “Food/Transportation.” Not recalling any food I had eaten or transportation I had used that would have been worthy of reimbursement from the College, and being the honest conservative that I am, I inquired at the business office to find that the check had been issued for a Mock Trial team trip. This is strange, I told them, because I do not, nor have I ever, participated in Mock Trial. The reason I had received the check, it turns out, is that they had “confused” me with another conservative in the class of 2006 whose last name is Weiner and whose first name begins with the letter “A.”

When I left the Business Office after all of this was sorted out, they did not apologize for their mistake nor did they thank me for returning the money.

It is more than I dare hope that liberals reading this article will realize the error in their ways and reform their attitudes. I can only hope that in the years to come, as the polar ice caps melt, the liberal-packed coasts of the United States are suddenly and violently consumed by the sea.

Coca-cola “activism” continued from pp. 1
counterPOINT

DOES THE REBEL FLAG REPRESENT BIGOTRY?

NO

ANNA DUCHON/opinion

Patriotism is admirable and embracing your racial identity is praiseworthy. But, sadly, celebrating southern heritage is being considered a moral crime by many.

Flying the confederate flag has been labeled a statement of racism, but most who support this symbol of the South are instead speaking to their sense of regional identity – an identity that goes far beyond slavery, the Civil War, and Jim Crow. The flag represents the history of a people which includes the roots of a rich culture that has influenced our entire nation. Though the flag was the masthead of a nation whose stance on slavery was repulsive, claiming it universally represents white supremacy is misguided.

Certainly, Southern history includes stains, but no history is free of shame. If it is a moral crime to fly the flag because the Confederacy supported a slave-system, it must also be immoral to fly the U.S. flag because our history includes deception, murder of Native Americans, and support of slavery.

Even assuming that the flag represents only the Confederate States of America during the Civil War, it doesn’t simply stand for racism. The Civil War itself was more about economics and politics than about slavery. Abraham Lincoln’s primary concern certainly was not emancipation.

But in the years following the war, the flag of Dixie has come to stand for much more. It’s now a symbol of Southern pride, not of an attempted rebellion. It’s the banner of a group who has accepted an identity, who has embraced the legacy of those who came before them, and who now journeys forward with pride.

YES

ANDREW NAVRATIL/opinion

A symbol of southern heritage? Only if that heritage is slavery, discrimination, and racial hatred. The infamous rebel flag, with its red field, blue cross, and white stars may have represented the Confederacy during the civil war, but more recently it has become a symbol of racism.

The Civil War that tore apart our nation was fundamentally about political and economic differences between Washington and the southern States. But the root of those differences was slaveholding; slavery drove the greater part of the southern economy. At a significant level, the war was about race and the flag represents the slavery over which it was fought.

Unfortunately, the deep-seeded racism behind the flag did not end at Appomattox. The Ku Klux Klan adopted the flag as its banner while plaguing the nation with acts of racist violence. Considering that the State of Georgia adopted the Confederate battle flag into its state flag in 1956 – during the height of the civil rights movement, just two years after the landmark decision Brown v. Board of Education – it is disingenuous to claim that the banner represents “southern heritage.”

Regardless, the reason most southerners support the flag – assuming they actually do – is irrelevant. The fact remains that the flag is stained with connotations of slavery and racism. It is an outdated symbol of a series of unfortunate chapters in American history. If the deep wounds left by the Civil War and the era of Jim Crow are to heal, the flag of Dixie must be forgotten. Then, perhaps, we as a nation can continue down the road towards acceptance of difference and diversity.

Officers overdue compensation

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such a candidate manage to get elected, the Senate always has the tool of impeachment at its disposal.

Offering monetary compensation will certainly attract more candidates. Because of the nature of an officer position – particularly the time required – students with campus jobs may find it impossible to do well academically, hold that job, have a social life, and serve as an officer.

In this way, paying the officers lowers a socioeconomic barrier to serving, as it could effectively take the place of a campus job. The playing field would be expanded, and qualified candidates could run without sacrificing academics or financial security.

Additionally, the officers are in a unique position that makes them essential to student life on campus.

The Treasurer and Vice-President ensure individuals and student organizations have the monetary resources to function. The President represents the student body to both on and off campus. The roles of the officers places them on a different level from other Senators and student leaders.

Paying the officers is a logical and pragmatic step. The services the officers provide greatly benefit the student body; securing funding for a student project and communicating with the President of the College is just as valuable a job as answering calls in the SCIC.

The students at the library circulation desk are paid. So why not our elected representatives? Furthermore, paying the officers may encourage more dedication and devotion to the job. When it comes down to crunch time, the promise of money might be just enough to encourage going the extra mile – the extra mile for students.

I spend about eight hours per week on my campus jobs. I receive compensation because the work I do is valuable to the college and the community. But I know three individuals – the officers of the CSA – whose work is equally valuable. Yet they receive nothing.

Now is the time for us to recognize the great value of what our officers do: recognize by paying them just like any other campus job.
In defense of discrimination

JEREMY SAIRSINGH/staff

About a year ago, while waiting to go through a security checkpoint at the Frankfurt airport, an altercation broke out between a passenger and one of the airport security officials. The passenger had a dark complexion, and his accent suggested that he was either American, or had spent a great deal of time in the United States. It became apparent that this passenger was outraged because, according to the airline, he had been “randomly selected for additional screening.” After sifting through his long slur of obscenities, I realized that this individual was accusing the security staff of being racist. Though I was worried that the argument might escalate, and make me more delayed than I already was, the situation calmed down quickly after a couple of very large men brandishing very large guns made their presence known to the disgruntled passenger.

I did not think much of the event until it was my turn to take my shoes off. When I showed my boarding card and US passport to the official checking documents, she scrutinized my face, and, in a thick German accent, informed me that I had been “randomly selected for additional screening.” I was not quite certain what she meant by random, but my intuition told me that my being selected for additional screening had much less to do with any magic numbers written on my boarding pass than with the fact that my father is from Trinidad and that I inherited his dark features. Such experiences have become a routine for me over the past four years. It is almost a given that I will have to spend more time going through security lines. While it is something of an annoyance to go through delays and uncomfortable searches, I really do not mind being singled out for my skin color.

My experience with institutional racial discrimination is not limited to airlines. I lived in Russia from 1993-2004. During the past several years, terrorism has become an increasing inconvenience in Russia, especially in its capital. In middle school, terrorists bombed my favorite arcade. Just last year a suicide bomber blew herself up on a metro line that I used several times a week.

Over time, I have had to accept the reality that I look a lot more like a Chechen terrorist than the average Russian. This translated into being stopped by police weekly for document checks, having to open up my backpack for security officials in the subways, and of course, the annual full-body pat-down before entering Red Square on New Year’s Eve. There were always humorous instances as well, such as spending 10 minutes convincing Kalashnikov-carrying police officers that my guitar distortion pedal does not have a “detonate” button.

Now, all these things were incredibly inconvenient. From missing trains to feeling marginally violated, none of it was fun. But I still respect security officers and police officials who singled me out for having darker skin. In Moscow, it was a matter of statistics. Based on the events of the past few years in Russia, people with dark skin are much more likely than people with white skin to blow up planes, seize theaters and elementary schools, take hundred of innocent civilians hostage, and set of random bombs in large crowds.

The closest example that people in the United States can relate to is airline security. Based on the careful language used by the TSA, I get the impression that the government wants people to feel like decisions to perform more thorough searches on certain passengers has absolutely nothing to do with skin color or appearance. Is it necessary for security officials to sugarcoat what they are doing? Should anyone be seriously offended by being selected for additional security checks based on their skin color? I do not think so. Ensuring public safety involves creating profiles of potentially dangerous persons. Obviously this is not foolproof. Though bombs can be planted on unwitting individuals, and not many TSA officers would have thought John Walker Lindh to be a Taliban sympathizer, there are still conceivable times when it is alright to investigate a person more thoroughly.

Some might say I am lacking in dignity, but if it is a choice between losing a bit of self-dignity, and losing a bodily appendage, I would prefer to keep my head, arms, and legs exactly where they are.