

MSU Plaza named in honor of Pida

by Michelle Daniels

"The Board of Regents and Dr. Maxson should be congratulated," said Senior Assistant Athletic Director Christina Kunzer in reaction to the Valerie Pida Student Plaza announcement on Friday, Feb. 15.

The new plaza in front of the Moyer Student Union has been dedicated to Valerie Pida, the locally known cheerleader at UNLV, President Maxson said at the Board of Regents meeting.

The Valerie Pida Student Plaza will soon have palm trees and benches so fellow students can gather. During semester break renovation was completed with the new inlaid brick.

"Valerie has been an inspiration to all UNLV students during her long illness," Maxson said. "Of course she is known to all Las Vegans as one of the most energetic cheerleaders."

"It's the greatest!" Kunzer stated. "I'm so happy for her, and she can't believe it."

For over 10 years, Pida, 23 has been struggling with a disease which attacks the lymph system, called Hodgkin's disease. She has had many hospital visits and chemotherapy, as well as a bone marrow transplant.

"I'm so touched and there's so many feelings inside. I can't believe you've honored me with such a gift," Pida told the board Friday, according to the Review Journal.

Pida said she is glad other people have been inspired by her story, but said, "I never thought of myself as any more special than the next person."

Kunzer reaffirmed the statement by adding, "Valerie doesn't flaunt it (her illness)."

Friday Pida said she is feeling better because of new medication and has gained back some of the weight she had lost.

Pida is a senior majoring in marketing and is taking classes this semester at UNLV.

This is the first time a student has been honored on a campus fixture.

Council wants to take loans away from unruly demonstrators

(CPS)—The city council in Medford, Mass., has called on Congress to make gulf war protesters give up their student loans if they are arrested and convicted for illegally demonstrating.

Council member Fran Giordano introduced the resolution, which the council passed 5-2 Jan. 22. It was soon after protesters had blocked traffic in downtown Boston, and tried to obstruct operations at Westover Air Force Base in Chicopee.

"The Bill of Rights doesn't guarantee you the right to block driveways or lie down in traffic," Giordano said.

Giordano said economics also spurred him to sponsor the resolution.

The state faces an \$850 million budget deficit this year and is slashing aid to cities and towns. Money is tight, and demonstrations cost cities much-needed funds, he said.

Medford itself, home to Tufts University, has seen few war-related demonstrations.

We've not had any connection with" the resolution, said Tufts spokesperson Rosemarie Van Camp.

But about 50 peace activists, students and war veterans

crowded into the council's meeting Feb. 5 to ask the council to rescind the resolution.

"Some of the demonstrators are infringing upon someone else's rights," Giordano said. "It's costing taxpayers thousand and thousands of dollars. I want to protect everyone's rights."

The resolution, which Giordano admitted is "more or less a symbolic gesture on our part," has been forwarded to the Massachusetts Congressional delegation, one of the most liberal in the nation. It is up to them to decide whether to bring it up to the rest of Congress.

Cheers' Woody joins the war debate

(CPS)—Actor Woody Harrelson, who plays Woody on the sitcom "Cheers," has jumped into the war debate.

In a letter sent to 50 student newspapers, Harrelson asked collegians to "make your voices heard" in opposition to the U.S.'s role in the war against Iraq.

"I write to you, the youth of America, because you are still learning and your brains have not yet atrophied. If we join together all things are possible, even the cessation of war through genuine diplomacy. If you have questions, ask them."

It was the second letter that Harrelson, who attended Hanover College in Indiana from 1979-83, has written to student papers about the war.

In the first correspondence, the actor called on students to question the U.S. government's motives for starting a war.

Through his publicist, Harrelson said he picked college papers because he figured they would be more apt to print the letter.

"Realistically, students may question their own opinions on the Gulf situation, but may not change

them. The intent is to reinforce the fact that knowledge is key and any one person can truly make a difference," he said.

Harrelson is the second "celebrity" to approach college papers with his views on the war. On Jan. 12, President Bush sent a letter to colleges all over the country asking students for their support in his stand against Saddam Hussein, saying "The facts are clear. The choice unambiguous. Right vs. wrong."

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photo by Chuck Martin

Elementary, Jr. high and high school students from throughout Southern Nevada competed last weekend in a bridge building contest promoted by the engineering complex.



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