

'R-J' sends wrong message

Last month the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* decided to pull the comic strip "For Better or Worse" when artist Lynn Johnston began a storyline involving a 17-year-old character who was coming to grips with his homosexuality.

According to Editor Thomas Mitchell, the strip was pulled because it was condoning homosexuality almost to the point of advocacy. The paper repeatedly showed its lack of respect by incorrectly referring to the strip as "For Better or For Worse."

Then on Sunday, columnist Rafael Tammariello lectured readers condescendingly on the inapplicability of the First Amendment's freedom of the press clause in this matter.

Tammariello, dutifully defending the decision of his superior, made the assertion that claims of censorship on the part of the *R-J* were foolish—made only by the ignorant products of a failed education system.

But Tammariello's legalistic discourse ignores the readers' real concerns.

He further muddies the waters by drawing comparisons to this decision with the *R-J*'s refusal to print the racist, hate-filled letters it receives regularly from a Colorado resident.

Except for the excerpts Tammariello's column enlightens us with, those letters are never printed. The comic strip—which generally appears Sundays in the *Review-Journal*—is a regular part of the newspaper.

The lengths the *R-J* needed to take to draw a comparison between some fringe hate-monger and a comic strip character's natural growing pains, reveal the paper's weak justification for silencing Johnston.

The inference is that the two are both examples of bad taste—equally prurient.

What the *R-J* did by eliminating the strip because of the topic, was censor. True, the artist—and the *R-J*'s readers, for that matter—has no right to use the paper's press, but the paper does not appear to be granting its agents free speech.

People look to newspapers as bastions of free speech and free thought, a source for differing views. The *Review-Journal*, this community's largest newspaper—and the largest paper in the country that chose to censor this strip—has let its readers down.

The objectionable matter in all of this is this newspaper's view that one's sexual preference may need to be hidden from the general populace. The message this gives to youngsters dealing with similarly troubled thoughts is: Don't let anyone know; keep it hidden—Stay in the closet.

The above is the opinion of The Rebel Yell. All other inclusions on the opinion page reflect the opinions of the author or artist indicated and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Rebel Yell staff.



Academics is more than just the grade

BY DEBRA BASS

We have come to the end of another academic year. It's time to either move up, move on, or move out. Academics does not mean cramming all night during finals week. It means taking part in our educational system and how its administered.

Only 309 university-conscious students bothered to vote in the general election, and although this grouping is not exactly representative enough to draw a conclusion, I was shocked by the answers to the ballot question on academic advisers. Even at a school as apathetic as UNLV, it's hard to believe that one out of five students have never consulted with their academic adviser and couldn't even pick him or her out of a line-up. It's no wonder that on average it takes five years to sustain a four-year degree at UNLV.

Taking a full load each semester won't suffice. They have to be the right courses in the right order or you just may be wasting time and money. Advisers know these things. Even if you buy the undergraduate catalog, write out a chart and stick to it, it won't hurt to check in from time to time and make sure you are on the right track. Requirements change and if you don't establish a rapport, you may miss out on an opportunity to skip that science class or take something else instead of English. They know all the tricks. Why not take advantage of them? But don't expect to go knocking at their door the day of registration and to get an appointment.

Debra Bass is opinion page editor of The Rebel Yell

Student Spotlight

Did you vote in the Student Government elections held last Thursday?



James Taylor
senior
education

I didn't know there was an election. Candidates should do more long-term campaigning instead of handing out flyers at the voting booths. I don't like to vote for candidates that I know nothing about. They should get to know what their fellow students really want, not just what they think they want.



Franchone Fraser
senior
communication studies

What election? I didn't know there was an election! Even if I knew that there was an election, I probably wouldn't have voted. I don't know any of the candidates.



Cameron Draper
freshman
undeclared

I did not know about the election or the candidates. Had I known about it, I would have voted.



Collette Lain
senior
elementary education

I'm not involved in the "student life," therefore I don't care about the student elections.



Audrey Garcia
freshman
pre-professional biology

I didn't know there was an election, and if I did, I wouldn't know what for.