

# Letters to the Editor

## UNLV museum criticized

Dear Editor,

There's a perverse sadism on the campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. It is the practice of feeding live animals to other live animals at the Marjorie Barrick Museum of Natural History. This disgusting spectacle occurs when visitors, including children, are present in the museum.

A few weeks ago, I visited the museum for the first time. While viewing a chuckwalla, an herbivore of the lizard family, I was engaged in a conversation with a museum employee about the ethics of keeping live animals penned-up in a display case. Later, when I inquired about the chuckwalla's habits, I was engaged in a strange conversation with a different employee whose argument digressed to the subject of "mutant in fruit flies induced by human beings."

About a week ago, I passed through the museum again. It was about 10 a.m. on a weekday, and other visitors were already on the premises. Suddenly, my attention was directed to a display case where something sickening was occurring. I

was shocked to see that a live mouse, the flesh of which had been stripped from its back, was being pursued by a large venomous lizard known as a gila monster. The mouse had no more chance to escape its horrible death than I had to rescue it.

Immediate inquiries on my part elicited rationalizations which ranged from "it is authorized," or "that's what starving lizards eat," to "it is a microcosm of nature." Consider the absurdity of any one of these excuses such as the fact that using a glass-covered enclosure with a heat lamp and relocated rocks has no relationship whatsoever to nature. Furthermore, in nature, animals pursued as prey have a chance to escape.

Please lend your voice in protest to release all of the live creatures at the museum back into the wild by calling or writing Robert Maxson, president of UNLV. Contact with your immediate political representative in Carson City could also be helpful in eliminating the cruelty being implemented as public policy at the Marjorie Barrick Museum of Natural History.

Robert Ivori  
History,  
doctoral candidate

## Student feedback needed

Dear Editor,

I was very concerned when I read the article entitled "International health services receives poor diagnosis" by Melanie Platt in Thursday's *Rebel Yell*. She brings up many problems that do indeed exist at UNLV, including the high cost of health insurance with restricted coverage, and waiting for an appointment at the Student Health Center. However, all of the information about how students can get involved to help effect changes.

The cost of health insurance is high, the coverage is limited, and international students are required to purchase health insurance in order to study in the United States. However, the coverage does include both inpatient and outpatient mental health services. Hospitalization for a mental illness is treated the same as hospitalization for a physical illness. Outpatient counseling is covered for up to \$50 per session for 10 sessions and does include treatment of chemical addiction. In addition, psychological counsel-

ing services are available to UNLV students at no charge by two centers on campus: the Psychological Counseling Center located in the library (895-3627) and the Client Services Center located in the education building (895-3106).

The health insurance policy is decided upon yearly by a committee that is open to students as well as faculty and staff. Patty Avila-Porter in the Student Health Center (895-3370) is chair of that committee.

The Student Health Center strives to provide the best services with the resources it has. To facilitate student feedback, the Student Health Center has a Student Health Advisory Committee, a group of students who make recommendations to the Health Center about how to improve their services.

Laura Hammond, Ph. D.  
Director of Psychological  
Counseling  
UNLV Psychological  
Counseling Center

## In defense of America's teachers

To the editor:

Jay Sapovits' article, "Teachers want money, forget educating," is the epitome of American thought. The article assumes that teachers spend too much time looking out for No. 1. The fact is they're people just like you and me, trying to survive in a sink-or-swim society.

A ludicrous statement made by Sapovits stated, "people go into teaching when they realize there are no other options." I believe most teachers teach because they love it, not because they were forced into it by circumstances. Who would spend a lot of time, effort, and money to pick a career that pays low and is considered mediocre, unless they loved it? Most of Europe and Japan honors and considers teachers professionals, which

probably shows in their incomes.

It's true that teachers only work two-thirds of the year as Mr. Sapovits stated. Also just as true, but forgotten, is the fact that teachers grade hundreds of papers at night while making lesson plans, are involved with many extra-curricular activities at school, and help students before and after school. Nine to five it ain't!

It may be the safest non-government job as Mr. Sapovits claims, but two years ago, teaching in an inner-city school was considered the most stressful job also. With gangs and one in 25 students carrying guns, how safe could anyone feel?

Starting salaries may vary but they range from \$16,000 to about \$24,000. After working from 16 to 20 years with a

masters, a teacher may receive the highest salary which is around \$45,000. Many people graduating with a masters going into other jobs, start out at the salary a teacher can only wait for.

How is it that we can gladly pour \$1 billion a day into an over populated and unused military, and we deride those teachers who want a five percent pay increase? I agree that the educational system is a disgrace and something should be done about it. I have no solutions or suggestions to offer, and apparently neither did Mr. Sapovits. I can only say to him that if his father and sister are really teachers, then maybe he should try to learn something from them, instead of blaming them for being crybabies.

Christopher Wax  
Freshman  
Undeclared

To the Editor,

The "Saps" article on 9/16 addresses two different subjects in education: the lack of money needed for schools to operate, and the lack of money to compensate teachers properly for their services. So which issue did he want to address?

Neither it would seem. Instead he decided to carry out a poorly planned character assassination of all who teach and would like to receive compensation for it.

He calls teachers "crybabies," insinuates those who want to be paid to teach are not willing to teach and says that those who teach "spend about 180 days in session," implying that teachers

work phenomenally less than those who "go into the real world and take chances."

Since he meant to mislead readers, allow me to correct him on a few issues...

First of all "Sap", while you intellectually stated that one year consists of 365 days (very clever), you neglected to mention that out of 365 days, most Americans work 260 days: that means Monday through Friday; and if you subtract 10 days for an average two week vacation and 13 for most assorted holidays that workers get, the total becomes 237 days that that most Americans work.

Second, I'm curious as to how you became educated if

teachers don't teach. Certainly you weren't born writing poorly thought out arguments and carrying out character assassinations.

Incidentally, do you include your father and sister (who teach) among those who want money but won't teach for it?

As for the "cry baby" comment, do you know what *ad hominem* arguments are Jay?

These are only three of several poorly constructed insults he hurled at my profession. I hope next time he plans a more careful and calculated attempt. This time, he missed.

Kenneth Fitzpatrick  
Education Major

To the Editor,

I just finished reading the ignorant, stupid, and asinine "perspective" editorial by Jay Sapovits. Does this fool have any idea what he's talking about?

No. To maintain our civilization our people must learn. Teachers have worked very hard to be in a position to facilitate that learning. Teachers become teachers so they can make a difference in the world and (unlike paperclip twiddling Wall Street bond traders) contribute to society.

Money does not educate children, but it buys the build-

ing where they learn, the books they read, the paper upon which they write, and sometimes their transportation to and from school.

Teachers do indeed need to be paid more, not because they are valuable to our way of life, but because so many are leaving for a more lucrative "real world" jobs.

Why not cut educating funding?

Perhaps because it's the single most important expenditure government makes.

In closing, I not only found the inane comments of Mr. Sapovits to be totally wrong

and indicative of the worst kind of ignorance, but take them as a personal insult as well. Should I ever meet Mr. Sapovits, he shall require a bandage for his broken nose, a steak for his blackend eye, and quite possibly a truss.

Wesley M. Allison  
Education Major

*Editor's Note: The Rebel Yell staff does not condone the edict of "might makes right" upon taking a "personal insult." Please, in future letters to the editor, omit all threats of violence.*

To the Editor,

I was just reading your article entitled "Teachers want money, forget educating." I have to say that I agree with you for the most part about buying school supplies, and that there are careers out there that pay a lot more, but your assumption that anyone who goes into teaching does so because "they get scared that they'll have to go into the real

world and take a chance in life" is way off base.

Some of us are going into teaching because we want to expose future generations to a subject area that opens our minds and allowed us to experience new horizons. I don't think that teachers should strike over raises, but I do think they should get just compensation for a job that in many schools has turned into one of a prison

guard because the school's environment is more like a prison than a classroom. If going to work everyday and fearing getting shot or stabbed because you are trying to teach in a sometimes inhumane environment isn't enough of a real world for you, then I'd hate to see what is.

Robert T. Spirito  
English Major