

## The ground is not a trash can!

Do you find a stinky mosaic of brilliant plastic an attractive alternative to a fragrant stretch of verdant grass?

Do you enjoy the sight of refuse sprinkled randomly, or hey, even arranged in patterns?

I think it's pretty safe to assume that most everyone finds

a lush, clean green lawn or a pristine sweep of hard cement underfoot preferable to a carpet of bubble gum wrappers, soda cans, and used cancer sticks.

First of all, I consider silent footsteps much more stately than a constant crinch-crunch, and secondly, if I'm in a littered environment and I DON'T hear that crinch-crunch, I'm doubly annoyed because I know that I've stepped in a pool of melted Bubblicious which, magnet-like, is attracting a collection of vile debris onto the sole of my shoe.

The auditory annoyance, however, is absolutely nothing compared to the pain of an oozing eyesore. Trash is NOT pretty to look at in a garbage can, let alone spread randomly on the ground! There are a few modern artists who might disagree with me on that point but I'd say the general population would back my opinion.

Just to make absolutely, 100 percent sure that I wasn't deluded in saying most of us dislike a rug of rubbish underfoot, I went out and polled 25 students. The question was simple and straightforward: Do you think litter uglifies campus?

Twenty-five out of 25 looked at me as though I were a little mentally impaired for asking such an obvious question. I could have divided their answers into three categories: a)

Oh, yes; b) Definitely; and c) Of course!

This unanimous response left me with a looming question: If people prefer a clean campus to a dirty one and in the bigger picture, a clean world to a dirty one, then WHY do so many of them leave paper or plastic trails in their wakes?

What better way to find out than to ask? Private Stephanie, the litter detective, decided to do a little research.

Casually, I leaned against the wall of the CBC, perusing some homework...or so it seemed. In reality, I was scrutinizing my fellow students, patiently watching to see who would drop the first Coke can or candy wrapper. I didn't have long to wait.

A certain male student who shall remain anonymous decided that the ground would be a great trash can for his empty Dorito bag. I zoomed in for the kill. Casually retrieving the crunchy ground decoration I followed the litterbug for a couple of minutes before stopping him. I didn't need a magnifying glass to see his trail.

My approach was quite friendly.

"Hi, I write for *The Rebel Yell* and I'm doing an article on campus litter. Could I get your opinion?" He was only too pleased to help out.

"Litter is disgusting. It really (ticks) me off that people don't respect our campus enough to keep it clean." Oh boy. Hook, line and sinker went right down his esophagus. Hard pressed not to giggle, I produced the Dorito wrapper from my bag.

"If you hate pollution so much then how come you pollute?" Mr. Hypocrite turned several shades darker and

opened his mouth like a gasping fish. After sputtering for a second he spit out,

"That was pretty messed up of you!" and stalked away. That's funny, I thought HE was the jerk in this scenario!

I repeated my little routine four more times. Three out of the four times the culprit rigorously denounced litter in response to my first question. When confronted with their own BS, two out of those three told me (in somewhat colorful terms) how rude I was. Note: historically, that's always been the reward for pursuing the truth.

Only one had the grace to blush, laugh and say, "So, I suck. You know, I did that unconsciously -- I really do hate litter, I just wasn't thinking."

The last instance was a little more interesting because I encountered a diehard litterbug who backed up his actions with some pretty twisted logic.

"I think litter is great," he answered my first question. "I try to do it as much as possible. I think government should stop welfare and pay all the homeless people to clean up the streets. Until pollution gets bad enough that will never happen, so I'm hurrying the process and trying to create a new job market." He then plucked the Butterfinger wrapper from my hand and tossed it on the ground. "Nice to meet you and good luck with the article!"

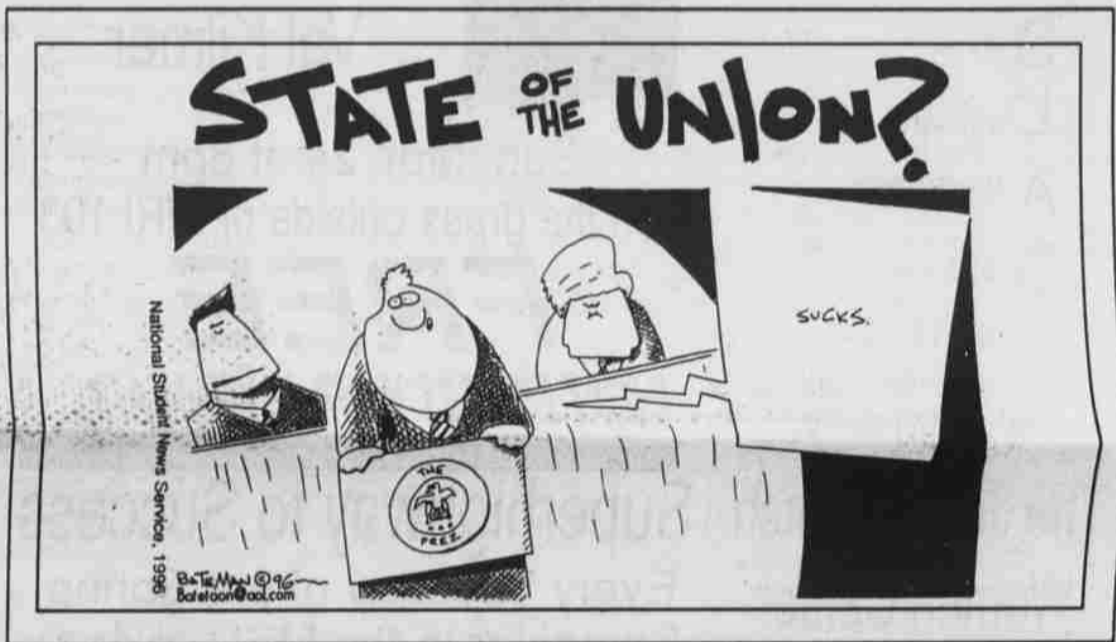
This time I was the one who resembled a suffocating trout. On a more serious note, I

think a lot of people are unconscious hypocrites. That is, they genuinely dislike litter and would like to live in a clean environment, but they themselves litter habitually without really considering their actions.

It's easy to think that one more piece of trash won't make a difference. On the contrary, a piece of trash is like a vote: each one counts and when you add them all together they can change the world.

So be more conscious of the difference between the ground and a garbage can. One is flat, green, gray or brown, and perfect for lying on. The other is cylindrical, metal, and full of smelly refuse. Is it that hard to discern?

—Stephanie Riedy is an Opinion writer for *The Rebel Yell*.



### Letters to the editor

#### Uncaring is unfair

To the editor:

I was pleased to read in your editorial of March 12 that *The Rebel Yell* supports the notion of molding UNLV into a premier urban university. It will take the support of everyone—students, faculty, staff, regents, legislators, alumni, donors, and the public at large—to make this a reality.

But the main thrust of the editorial was to suggest that President Harter is out of touch with the student body, citing evidence that students were not invited to her inauguration in October, nor to the campus-wide planning forum on March 7. This information was incorrect.

In the case of the inaugural, two students, John Pida and Steve Hagen of CSUN, were members of the committee that planned the inaugural events. Hagen included information about the inaugural celebration on the OSI page in three issues of *The Rebel Yell*. He also sent fliers on the event to all student organizations

and to the residence halls. The event was also announced in the commercial media.

In the case of the planning forum on March 7, the President's office faxed and mailed an announcement of the event to *The Rebel Yell*, in time for publication, and mailed essentially the same information to CSUN, the Graduate Student Association, and the Faculty Senate. An announcement also appeared on the front page of the March 4 *Update*. Each of these made it clear that the entire campus community was welcome. This would seem to constitute a reasonable invitation to students, faculty, and staff alike.

The editorial went on to say that Dr. Harter is "doing little to remedy" what *The Rebel Yell* perceives as a lack of contact with students. Following is a list of some of President Harter's interactions with students.

- Has visited several classes in the College of Education and Greenspun School.

- Sponsored Honors Program student discussion and reception.

- Meets periodically with Student Ambassadors.

- Hosts student advisory group breakfasts and luncheon periodically.

- Mentors two students as part of the Mentoring Pro-

gram.

- Attended several students' music events and met with them afterward.

- Dined with Residence Hall students; another dinner and tour of the residence halls is planned for this month.

- Participated in the multicultural event honoring Muhammad Ali.

- Includes student leadership in the campus planning process and two retreats.

- Talks with students at the Career Day reception, legislative breakfast, and similar events.

- Regularly attends home athletic events and special ceremonies honoring athletic and academic accomplishments.

Dr. Harter is involved with students and committed to implementing changes at UNLV that will improve all students' experiences at the university, in and out of the classroom. As you can see by the above list, the President's contacts with students are many and varied. To characterize her as out of touch or — much worse—uncaring is unfair.

Sincerely,  
Tom Flagg  
Director of UNLV News and Public Information

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