Editorial: Peaceful protest?

In this issue of The Rider News, an article is appearing about a recent anti-war protest held in New York City on Feb. 16, which some Rider students and faculty attended. In this time of turmoil, it is good to see that someone is standing up and speaking their mind rather than succumbing to stagnating apathy.

However, there were some quotes in the story that might tend to detract from the cause of the people who attended the march. The march did not receive a permit from the city because the path of the march went past the U.N. building. The permit was denied because of security issues and the current orange alert terror status.

A Rider professor commented on this as being “a horrible example of not allowing people to exercise their first amendment rights.” It is actually an example of first amendment rights taking back burner spot in the interest of public safety. Things are dangerous now and any public or government building is a potential target for terrorist attack.

The first amendment specifies the right to peaceful protest. During the march in New York, a mounted NYPD officer was pulled from his horse and beaten. Hundreds of protesters were arrested for varied reasons including disorderly conduct in addition to five felony arrests. This does not appear to be a peaceful protest.

When taking up signs and sandwich boards, joining protesters and demonstrators worldwide in an effort to avoid an extremely destructive war, doing things like beating police officers and complicating a city’s efforts to keep the public safe does not aid the cause, it hinders it.

Actions such as these will give war advocates ammunition to discredit or ignore anti-war protesters.

Police might have also overstepped their bounds, as they maced several protestors and injured others with their horses. We, as Americans, have so many battles to fight in the world, and right here at home, that we can’t afford to degenerate to these petty squabbles. Important things are at stake: our economy, our security, and the lives of countless innocents.

Demonstrators must recognize the need to keep protests civil and non-violent and to respect the need to insure the safety of all involved. Police have to realize that these demonstrations are painfully necessary and must be treated with the respect they deserve.

If we are going to avoid this war, all we have to work together and allow each other’s voices to be heard. But hearing those voices isn’t enough. We have to listen to everyone and attempt to understand every point of view. Putting blinders on to outside circumstances and other opinions is just as dangerous as not saying anything at all.

One-sided opinions that do not allow for modification or change of view are stagnant and useless in the grand scheme of things. Cooperation and compromise are the only avenues toward peace. We must also remember not to take most of what is said as far as pro-war or anti-war personally. When we take things personally, we are actually avoiding the problems at hand and do not get any closer to any goal.

This weekly editorial expresses the majority opinion of The Rider News editorial board and is written by the Opinion editor.

Letter To The Editor: Dispelling double standards


Yes, double standards are woefully abundant in our society. Hopefully, The Vagina Monologues did more toward dispelling some of those than promoting more. While the production and accompanying promotional activities may have been a bit too “in your face” for some, for others it provided an opportunity at the least to give the same word recognition to “vagina” that the word “penis” has in our society.

Yes, the candy images of the vagina may have taken a few by surprise and, no, there were no protests at the candy-making event that attracted both men and women. It is mere conjecture, not a reality, to suggest that women would protest a penis candy-making event.

The vagina image is present in many art forms, including Judy Chicago’s highly acclaimed “Dinner Party,” to be installed permanently in the Brooklyn Museum of Art. Such images, like the vagina candy made recently are intended to celebrate the vagina, not denigrate it as the “x-rated” label the editorial suggests.

The fact that The Rider News is writing about vaginas is a big step toward removing a double standard. Just being able to comfortably say the word “vagina” at all without substituting a euphemism is a big step all by itself. Thank you for contributing toward a positive change.

Dorothy Warner
Rider Staff Member

Quote Of The Week:

“War is much too serious a matter to be entrusted to the military.”

— French proverb