

## Living With Passion: Seize the day

Is a life without passion one worth living? I find myself wondering this when I encounter people who say they hate their jobs, who have settled into loving someone because it is safe or who have given up their forward momentum in favor of what feels comfortable.

Just last week I had the pleasure of attending the Matchbox 20 concert. I also had the misfortune of catching the opening act. Fountains of Wayne (those guys in love with "Stacey's Mom") played a range of its songs with the obvious attitude; "If you like this, cool; if you don't, that's cool, too." The crowd reciprocated this with complete indifference. They seemed to treat the performance as they might some other

concert formality, like dealing with Ticketmaster or paying for overpriced merchandise; it was something no one could do anything about.

Compare this with the surge of energy that exploded in the room as soon as Rob Thomas set foot on the stage and Fountains of Wayne's mistake became obvious; it lacked passion.

Matchbox 20 played its songs with such great fervor, confidence and sheer enjoyment that its unmistakable passion could not have been anything but infectious.

That passion is the same thing that evokes the feeling I get when people laugh from their bellies or when I see two people reunite in an airport. It is

the feeling I get that makes me want to describe things as "outrageously wonderful" or "fantabulous." I miss passion in everyday life and truly wish more people acted with it in their hearts.

Unfortunately, I must admit that this passion might also be the same zeal that leads terrorists to plot destruction or that cause a student to think that a gun is an appropriate way to solve an argument. Passion's effect is so strong that it can impair judgment. Yet this passion gone awry often sparks a fire inside the souls of the afflicted parties. Every home, car and lapel donned an American flag in the months following the Sept. 11 attack. Stores found it impossible to keep flags on their shelves.

Where has that passion gone?

I make an ardent plea for its presence in every aspect of life. Listen raptly. Learn eagerly. Love recklessly. Read with fascination. Work with dedication. Live life with abandon. Our choices do not mean as much as the actions that carry them through.

Here's to making every moment an outrageously wonderful one.



Alexandra Alazio

## Letter to the Editor: Don't blame Security

Dear Editor,

In response to Erica DellaBonta's letter in the Oct. 24 edition of *The Rider News*, I'd just like to say that despite what she may feel, she most definitely does NOT speak for me or for most of my friends for that matter.

While Erica does make a good point, the letter does absolutely nothing but bash Security. I don't know about you Erica, but when I step foot onto a college campus, especially this one, there is a feeling of safety.

No one expects to have a weapon brought onto campus, most certainly not a gun. The people organizing the event did everything right. They started with

Security, involving them in how things were handled. There were four officers in close proximity to the event. Do you honestly think that all they were there to do was to make sure no one had a gun? Up until Oct. 17 I'm sure none of them even considered the possibility of a firearm being brought onto campus and definitely not to a party held at our very own Bart Luedeke Center (BLC).

All I've been hearing is "Security didn't do this, Security didn't do that." How about what Security DID do? I personally heard the shots from my residence hall and, as a New Jersey State Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), ran to the BLC to help out. When I got to the BLC and into the Cavalla Room there were already two armed Lawrenceville

Police Department Officers walking around and clearing people out of the room. There were three First Responders and one EMT attending to Vesna Dzombic. I was directed to help the other gunshot victim.

When I got to him, Security and another EMT were already in the process of bandaging his wounds. But you're right, I can really see where Security was lacking here. They definitely didn't do anything right (I hope you can sense my sarcasm, because I'm laying it on thick). There are some things that definitely need to be changed, but don't point the finger at Security.

Tyler Curran  
Freshman

## Letter to the Editor: We're still safe

Dear Editor:

I was just looking at the coverage of the Oct. 17 shooting in this week's issue of *The Rider News* and I must say that it was pretty comprehensive. I would like to start out by saying that I am saddened by this but I, unlike most of my peers, do not see this as an unsafe campus.

While I was not there that night, I am confident in the fact that all parties involved in planning this event took every measure necessary. If more measures were going to be implemented, then what would you have? You would have metal detectors and x-ray machines everywhere and then we would be no different than a school in the inner-city. We need a better guest policy, but we do not need that.

If you look back at history, you'll see that no matter how much you plan for something or how many security procedures you have in place, the unthinkable can always happen. The nation learned this on Sept. 11, 2001, and we the Rider community learned that again on Oct. 17, 2003.

O.K., so we will end up with some tighter rules and regulations regarding guests and campus events but to see this as a punishment is far from the truth. It is not a punishment at all. It is a way for us to try and prevent this from ever happening again.

So what do we do? First, we follow the lead of the young woman who was wounded and not let this stand in our way. I have to admit that I admire the

fact that she sustained an injury that has ended her basketball career and yet she's refusing to give up, but rather get her education. Does anyone realize how tough that is? Most people would give up but she isn't. We need more people like that in this world.

It will be hard for us to do this, but we must. We will not forget quickly, but we should, if anything, pick up the pieces and move on with a stronger sense of unity.

Above all, we have to have confidence in the fact that something will be done. Remember, we were taught at an early age that no bad act ever goes unpunished. Ten years ago, a man was acquitted for this sort of thing. This probably won't happen today with the stiffer laws in our post-Sept. 11 world, but in any case, the shooter will always have this on his conscience.

As for the security implications, I have (and I hope others will follow) confidence that there will be tougher rules and regulations put in. So far, I applaud the quick movements of the administration in its new security plans and I believe that the school will work hard on making these new measures not only fair, but also effective.

This incident hurt more than the two people shot and those who were there; it hurt us all. While we have a right to be angry and ask questions, we also have to realize that we have to let the healing begin.

Marie Brophy  
Senior

## Letter to the Editor: Pledge problems

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the Oct. 17 column regarding the Pledge of Allegiance. The article questions why this has suddenly become a problem, along with a string of other arguments regarding religion such as prayer in schools and the Ten Commandments being displayed in public buildings. The answer is that these issues have always been there, but has not received the amount of attention they are receiving today.

If you're looking for what caused the spark to ignite these present controversies, you need only to look at the election of President George W. Bush and his "faith-based initiative" policies.

Atheists, Pagans and others opposed to a union between Church and state have always endured things such as "under God" in the Pledge and "in God we trust" on their money, most likely because they had faith that our government would not take away their First Amendment rights.

However, since Bush has come into office, numerous religious fundamentalists like Rev. Phelps have spoken out against us. If "under God" can be added to the pledge as it was in 1954, would it not be reasonable to ask them to add today, "and Goddess?" The article states that we should "look away, cover your ears or go someplace else." We should not have to.

In case you've forgotten, this is our country too. The religious beliefs of one group should not be forced upon us everywhere we turn. The phrase should be general so it can apply to everyone, including those not of a majority religion, or take it out all together.

It's obvious society is changing. We no longer believe that African-Americans are inferior, women can't hold a job and homosexuality is a psychological disorder. So why believe that everyone believes in God or that monotheism is the only religious belief out there?

These may seem like small issues to most of you, but look at the bigger picture. The number of hate crimes against so-called "enemies of the Church" has soared in recent years. All over the country people have suffered discrimination and hatred as a result of the promotion of religion within our government. Just last year I received nasty phone calls telling me I was a "devil-worshiper" because it is popular belief that Paganism is synonymous with Satanism.

In reality there is no relationship whatsoever. We need to stand up and fight ignorance and fear because it only leads to hate. Taking out offensive language such as "under God" from the pledge is a small step towards a greater goal.

Laura Bejgrowicz  
President of Sacred Circle Ministry