Editorial:  
Don’t speak

We, as Americans and as students, often like to say and think that we are free to say or express anything we want because we are guaranteed freedom of speech. This is a shadow of the truth. Yes, we can criticize public officials, and yes we can speak out against the government without being cattle-prodded and thrown in prison and that is a wonderful liberty to have. However, some people take these ideas too far and actually believe that an American can say whatever comes into their mind in any forum.

You can, certainly, and you won’t be arrested for it, normally, but, as with everything, the exceptions to the general rule are numerous and hopelessly gray. Take the case of Amiri Baraka, the poet laureate of New Jersey, who will speak at Rider at the end of this semester. He was asked to step down from his position of poet laureate because something he wrote was interpreted by some to be anti-Semitic.

Even if there are no legal repercussions of speaking what’s on your mind, there are social consequences that are unavoidable. People want to be perceived a certain way and they want to be associated with people that won’t damage the image they are trying to project. Not many people would like to be viewed as an anti-Semite and most people will do anything they can to distance themselves from someone who is perceived that way. Multiply that by a hundred for politicians.

How can you blame someone for thinking in that way? People today are desperately afraid of appearing racist or discriminatory, especially people in any position of authority or power. 

Therein lies the problem. There are so many different types of people with so many different perspectives and ideas about what is right and wrong that no one can please anyone. No matter what one says, it can be perceived by someone to be offensive or prejudice or hateful.

This confusion is everywhere and is particularly predominant in entertainment where Eminem is accused by many to be a homophobe and a homoterrorist and where Marilyn Manson causes violence and devil worship. Most times, people who object to what someone else is saying do it in a very American way. They exercise their right to free speech and peaceful protest. They rally and yell and hold signs. That’s wonderful. That’s right the way to go about it. It can, however, cause some very negative consequences such as censorship.

When differences of opinion are handled within a community a compromise or an understanding or, at least, an agreement to disagree can be reached. When the government steps in to censor and to imprison people for hate speech, or as a writer to relinquish his position, then serious problems occur. That is when our right to free speech is truly violated. There is no right or wrong when it comes to opinions, but with the law, there must be a right or wrong.

These problems will exist everywhere and we, as the future leaders of the world”, will have to deal with them. We must deal with them in the right way.

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

Letters to the Editor: The Rider News welcomes letters on all subjects of interest to the campus community. Letters must be typed and include the name, address, phone number and signature of the author for verification. Send to The Rider News via e-mail (ridernews@rider.edu), campus mail, or hand deliver to Centennial House. All letters must be received by midnight Monday preceding publication. The Rider News reserves the right to edit all letters for space and clarity.

The Joy Of Love:  
What is the joy of love?

It has been said that the luckiest man who walks on this earth is the one who finds true love. This sentiment is nothing new to us; it has been saturated into our beings through movies, books, television and those loathsome Hallmark cards. But just what is true love? How is it different from “normal” love?

These questions will serve as the basis for this column in the future. For now, let me just stick to the basics. I claim no expertise in this great and all-consuming mystery called love. I, like you, am but a mere mortal...far from perfect.

This column is written primarily for homosexual men with girlfriends, but, for those who may read this that are not in that category, perhaps this may help you recognize love when you see it or at least understand what a heterosexual man thinks while in love.

One thing you should know is that true love transcends all expectations and all genders. It is wonderful, yes, but as with everything else in life, it is not always fun or easy.

True love is not subject to time tables or the proverbial “if.” It is there all the time, whether the one you love is or not.

True love makes your life not wholly your own. There is no longer a “you” and “she,” there is only a “we.”

This is not to say that you lose yourself entirely, rather, you understand that what affects you will affect her, and vice versa.

So take care of yourselves. Do not put yourself in harm’s way or take anything for granted. Because, when it comes to true love, one mortal life can never be enough. Do not spoil it by cutting it short or spending that time making your loved-one worry. You only have a short time together on this earth. Remember to use it well.

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