Editorial: Spring cleaning

After what seemed like a brutal, never-ending winter, spring has finally sprung. As the campus begins to bloom, many students have begun to filter out onto the campus greens to get their own taste of the beautiful outdoors.

Looking at our school in January and then again in April, anyone is bound to notice the striking transformation our campus has undergone as the weather changed. Students no longer have to trudge through the mud on their way to class and can enjoy a relaxing meal under the sun at the new dining hall patio.

It is this time of year that the campus really comes to life. Students emerge from their rooms, where it seems as though they have been hibernating in all season long, to play volleyball, a game of catch or to just sit outside. But an increased amount of outdoor activity requires an increased amount of responsibility.

It is important that all students take the time to clean up after enjoying the outdoors. The residential quad is a popular hang-out on nice days, but by sundown looks less than appealing. Also, the student parking lot, which is not a particularly pretty sight to begin with, only looks worse with garbage spilled all over it. While there are student organizations working to help clean up the grounds, the biggest impact can be made by every individual student simply doing their own part.

It is funny that students can walk all the way from Conover to Poyda, drive to Philadelphia or New York City, walk back from the frat houses at two in the morning, but still feel it requires too much effort to carry a piece of trash to the nearest receptacle.

This sudden burst of warm weather, combined with the closing of another academic year, brings bundles of prospective students here to inspect the campus as a possible future home. At this time, more than ever, the campus community should be trying to help keep the area clean. Many high school students base their college decision on campus appearance and parents, especially, are not likely to be thrilled about sending their children off to a school that has empty beer cans scattered all over the ground.

Last Friday, high school seniors and potential Rider students frequented our campus, being led on tours. Clearly, empty beer cans and cigarette butts did not help in swaying them to attend here next year. It is probably easy to think, "who cares whether or not they come?" But in a school that lives in the shadow of Princeton right down the road, trash does not increase our university’s prestige.

This is not meant to be a lecture. This is a plea. Go the extra mile. When you see a stray flyer laying on the ground, pick it up. After smoking a cigarette, throw the butt in an ashtray, instead of on the sidewalk. Beneath the excess trash there is a beautiful Campus Waiting for a breath of fresh spring air. It does not take much to make a difference and, at the risk of using a cliché, every community member just needs to do his or her own part. And simply seeing somebody litter and thinking, "at least I don’t do that" or "that’s messed up," is not going to help the situation. The point is, take the effort to physically do something.

Enjoy the outdoors and all of the beauty that our campus has to offer. But while doing so, remember not to take it for granted and to help preserve this little slice of heaven for the next batch of Rider students to enjoy.

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

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 the Monday preceding publication. The Rider News reserves the right to edit all letters for space and clarity.

Quote of the Week:

“A bore is a man who, when you ask him how he is, tells you.”

~Bert Leston Taylor

Mind and Body: Let the dogs do the healing

Therapy Dogs International (TDI) will be bringing nine dogs to Rider University on April 22, 2003 and the Counseling Center will be sponsoring “Doggie Day Afternoon” outside of Daly’s Dining Hall. Dogs have many uses (i.e. leading the blind, aiding search and rescue efforts and assisting law enforcement) and recently, a connection between the bond people and dogs share and people’s emotional well being has been found.

According to TDI, there is a great deal of literature that supports the power of animals in increasing emotional well being, promoting healing and improving individuals’ overall quality of life. Interestingly, some studies show that simply holding or petting an animal will lower blood pressure, release stress and anxiety and decrease feelings of loneliness. Other articles suggest that interaction with dogs can increase motivation and improve body image (animals provide unconditional acceptance), and help individuals develop trust.

Stress and anxiety are especially common issues on college and university campuses. A recent study at UCLA pointed to freshmen, citing that 30.2 percent of freshmen surveyed reported feeling stressed and “frequently overwhelmed” by everything they have to do. Add to this the fears, anxieties and worries about the war with Iraq and the ever-present threat of terrorism, it is no wonder individuals feel as they do.

So take a break from your stress or simply come out if you miss your pet! Take a little time on Tuesday, April 22, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. to reduce stress and anxiety or just be reminded of your “best friend” at home.