

When the shoelaces snap, put away the saffron robes

I cop-out on one out of every three columns. Sometimes because what's written there hits too close to some personal bones. Other times because they just don't make much sense.

michael zangari

The latter columns make it into the paper more often than not, and are mistaken by the powers that be as exercises in metaphysics. Actually they are exercises in self-indulgence, but don't tell the copy desk. They've taken to wearing saffron robes on Wednesday afternoons, and I'd hate to see them go back to studded leather.

This week I'm copping out again. The column I originally wrote isn't the one you're reading. The only difference at this turn of the screw is that I decided to admit that this is a "flatuation" column. Something to get me over the bloodletting I'd like to do, but can't.

It's nothing new.

Objective reporting

The primordial ooze this column climbed out of was some muck called "journalese". That is the mythical language that, said with a little judgment, you could almost objectively report an event. The problems were obvious. Who's judgment?

My first lesson in ethics came four years ago when I wasn't allowed to print the backstage goings on at a major rock concert. The general editorial policy at that time was "it's only rock 'n' roll, but we like it." No sex, no drugs, and as far as I could tell, no reality. This would repeat itself over the years—knock down drag out fights over the

use of language considered to be obscene, (and then watching the disputed words getting used in headlines) gritting my teeth during chortles over sexist pandering, and finally screaming about the in-group indulgence that passed for "image."

My own indulgences bubbled over one day when writing up a straight press release on the university radio station. I called KRNU "Lincoln's own tower of Babble" and realized that this wasn't purely objective.

Self-indulgent being

I said "screw it. Put my name on it," and lo, a column was born. The original idea was that I was a biased and terribly self-indulgent being. As long as that was the case, it might as well be up front. It seemed reasonable to me, and editorially, it was an easy way out. Since that time the major philosophy around here has been "leave him alone, he's got rabies" or more specifically, "humor him." It's been a long, sweet honeymoon ever since.

I liked what Charles Bukowski called "ordinary madness." He said that it wasn't the major tragedies in life that caused a person to go crazy, but the constant series of small tragedies—like a shoelace breaking—that caused a man to die inside.

I wanted each column to be like a broken shoelace, something small and personal. Something, I hoped, out of the scope of what the paper could possibly cover. I wanted to throw away the illusion of non-biased reporting and focus in on a specific community of college students, and chronicle the ups and downs from a personal view. To focus on the specific individual instead of the total picture. The alternate personal reality.

Column breakdown

Originally it was an experiment. Lately it's been a nightmare. The "alternate personal reality" has seen two suicides, three rapes, and more breakdowns of one kind or another in the past two years than I care to mention. One of the breakdowns has been this column.

I'm beginning to see the other side of the coin. Too much personal bias. I can't stand by with a pencil and pad and take notes while a friend bleeds. My inability to write about or deal with several issues, has been chronicled in a long series of fantasies that have been fun to write, but costly in the vein of what I would like to do.

This manifests itself in 60-line diatribes on the way my stomach rumbles, and instructive columns on how to toss your cookies.

Meanwhile in the background I can hear the distinctive sound of another friend's shoelace snapping and I can't really find the words to talk about the issues it encompasses.

I'm beginning to think it's time for the pros to step in.



letters to the editor

Continued from Page 4

I lied about not defending him... It is also rather redundant to stress the cheating of the Greeks. The regents are conservative. What else is new on campus? Professor Erlandson's attendance policy is based upon his desire for an interested, attentive class.

History, like Philosophy, is virtually useless to the "hiring institutions" you have dedicated your life to, but I'm sure you have no qualms about mercilessly boring those students who are forced into your classes by the

Arts and Sciences Group Requirements (Useless Department Subsidizing Program).

Sure, I'm being harsh, but there are overwhelming problems in the grading structure around here, and you lashed out against a different interpretation without any idea of what you were talking about.

Granted Mr. Prentiss efficiently used the tools of his trade (quoting incorrectly, quoting out of context, careless interviewing, careless research and the manipulation of facts for humorous and/or journalistic purposes).

I have an idea. Before you write your retraction and apology, talk to Doug. Talk to a few of his students. Talk to me. Sit in on some of his classes. I'm sure he will forgive you. But be forewarned. If you persist in producing columnous amounts of uninformed, mindless and biased garbage, the university will probably tenure you.

Jeff Klopping
Mathematics Major
Philosophy Minor

Stop excusing your life away.

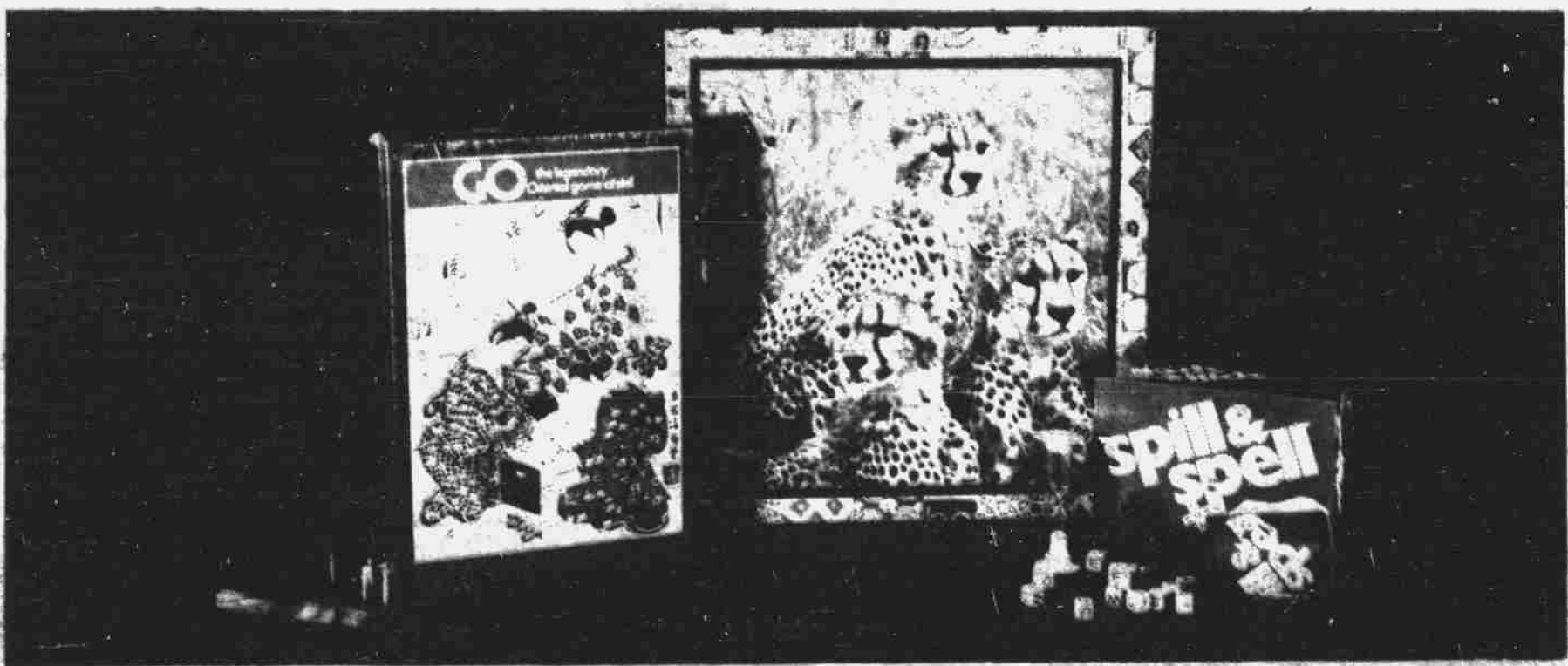
Everyone has an excuse for not seeing their doctor about colorectal cancer. However, every year 82,000 men and women die of colorectal cancer in this country alone. Two out of three of these people might be saved by early detection and treatment. Two out of three.

So what is your excuse? Today you have a new, simple, practical way of providing your doctor with a stool specimen on which he can perform the gualac test. This can detect signs of colorectal cancer in its early stages before symptoms appear. While two out of three people can be saved. Ask your doctor about a gualac test, and stop excusing your life away.

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