

VIKING NEWS STAFF EDITORIAL:*Tragedies create need to stand together*

Seemingly senseless tragedy occurred again this past week. We seem to live in a world in which no one cares about their neighbors until it is too late.

One of the deadliest school shootings in the history of America occurred April 20, 1999. Since that time, there has been so much school violence it seems as though we are impervious to its chilling effects. The only thing that seems to catch our attention is more deadly violence. April 16, 2007, the deadliest school shooting in American history occurred at Virginia Tech. At campuses across the nation, everyone became a “Hokie.” People came together to show their support for the devastated campus community left adrift

in a world of fear, grief and overwhelming terror.

Flash forward to Feb. 14, 2008. In Northern Illinois, another gunman takes the lives of six people, and injured dozens more. Where were the vigils? Where the support? Our own college did not even acknowledge the tragedy. Is this what we have become? A world without feeling, without reaction unless the tragedy is “bigger”? God forbid the day when a human life is no longer valued, and we mindlessly gloss over tragedy.

Last week, also, a campus shooting took place closer to home—at Seton Hall University, where a 22-year-old man shot himself to death.

We should stand together

in support of those affected by the shootings. More important, we should not lose sight of the value of human life. Take an interest in the people and the world around you. Be a part of someone else’s life, and consider their needs before your own. You never know what tragedy you could help avoid with a little compassion, and, yes,

common courtesy.

Finally, using words from the president of Northern Illinois University, John Peters, “We need to take care of...each other, reaching out to those among us who are struggling.”

Show someone you care!
Do not continue the violence!
Change the world with one small act of kindness!

Students turned out in snow

On Feb 12, OCC literally left students out in the cold. The administration showed once again that it does not understand the concept of communication.

During the afternoon hours, it began to snow. As time wore on, the conditions changed to a mix of sleet, rain and freezing

rain. A decision was made to shut down the campus. The problem was few people were told.

As of 5 p.m., there was no announcement on the OCC Web site. Several students indicated they had just called the college before traveling to the campus

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PENNA PERSPECTIVE

Administrative snub not unusual

SUZANNE PENNA

News
Editor

In recent news, it was reported the college is in violation of CAFRA laws. When attempting to become informed about the issue, this writer tried to contact both sides of the issue. The New Jersey State Department of Environmental Protection quickly returned my phone calls, explaining its version of the facts. I also contacted Ken Olsen, director of facilities engineering and planning; Richard Parrish, vice president of planning and administration, and Jon Larson, president.

Olsen said he could not answer my specific question, and he directed me to call both Parrish and Larson.

Parrish responded to my phone call via an e-mail stating that since the matter had not been settled, he could not go into detail.

Larson, on the other hand, never even responded.

How can a newspaper be expected to obtain information if the officials of the college will not respond with facts pertinent to the situation?

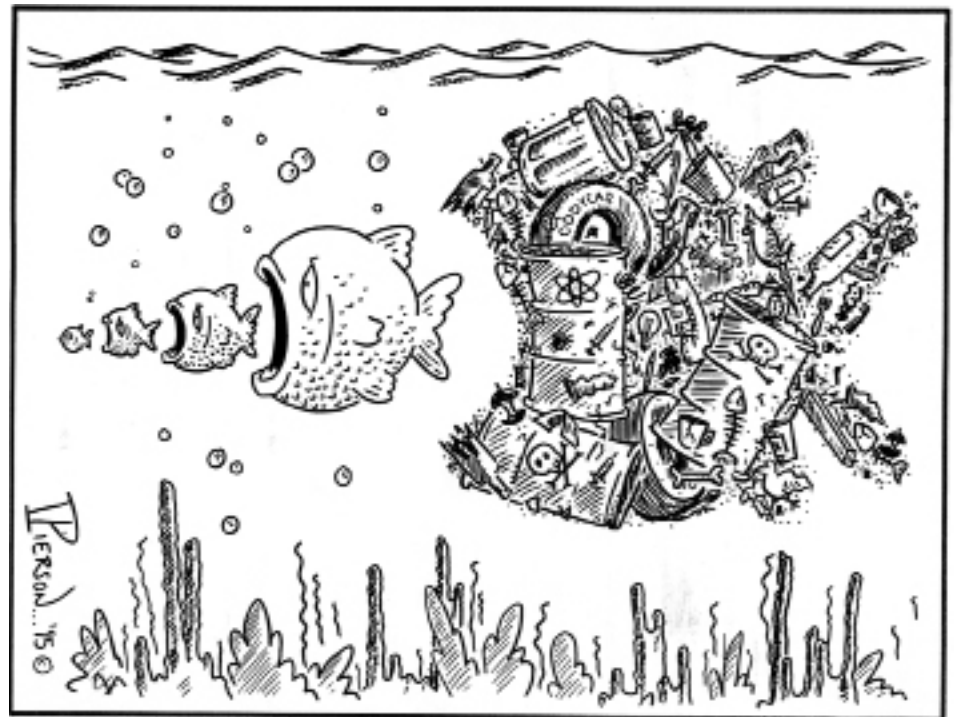
Larson had no problem speaking to another reporter, Don Bennett of the Asbury Park Press. In the article Bennett wrote, one of the claims of Larson was the college thought we

were exempt from CAFRA laws. In the CAFRA rules it makes note “educational facilities” are exempt. On face value, it would appear the college has every right to believe it would be exempt; after all, we are an educational facility. BUT those same regulations clearly define what an educational facility is.

In N.J.A.C. 7:7-1.3, it states, “‘Educational facility’ means an elementary or secondary school.” How administrators could have overlooked this definition is beyond my comprehension. Perhaps they tend to just overlook things they do not like, in the same manner they overlook the student newspaper. While I appreciate the idea our college was never told it is under CAFRA laws, one would think with all the fluctuating laws regarding the environment, we would at least review the rules and regulations from time to time.

The other issue that developed during this story was the classification of OCC in the N.J. Department of Community Affairs redevelopment plan. OCC plans to expand to have a four-year college

see **UNINFORMED**, page 7

**LETTERS****OLSEN SAYS HE DID NOT SAY ‘SIMPLE MISTAKE’**

In regard to the Feb. 7 Viking News story by Meghan Schaffer titled “Lot halted for CAFRA violation,” I would like to clarify I did not say the college “made a simple mistake” in not obtaining a CAFRA permit from the DEP before parking-lot construction began. Otherwise, the story is accurate.

The college has, to my knowledge and understanding, always been exempt from regulation under the CAFRA law. When the parking lot was being planned many months ago,

CAFRA permitting was never on the table for discussion. We were continuing to operate as we have over the course of the college’s history as an educational facility—exempt from CAFRA. That exemption has now come into question.

This is a complex issue, so it is understandable a misunderstanding of our discussion during the interview may have occurred. I enjoyed meeting with Ms. Schaffer and, except for this one misunderstanding, it is a great article.

KEN OLSEN
Director of Facilities Engineering
and Operations

LETTER POLICY:

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