

STANDING ON PRINCIPLE

I found "The Kid Who Didn't Stand" (Fall 2007) particularly poignant to read just before Christmas. As a Unitarian-Universalist myself (one of those "secular humanists" people are always complaining about), I sometimes find myself squirming a bit when family or friends complain that the holiday traditions are being spoiled because we are not allowed to say "Merry Christmas" any more, and similar sentiments. So it was good to be reminded of the Supreme Court decision in *Abington School District v. Schempp* and to read how it came about.

Your accompanying editorial, "Sorry, Wrong Religion," was refreshing in its blunt assessment of the need to remember the Constitutional principle involved, and the current threats to this principle. As suggested by the statistics in your editorial, it is altogether too easy, even for those of us with a liberal education, to forget the potential discomfort of those who do not share the majority viewpoint if we are comfortable with the majority view ourselves.

DAVID BRYANT, E66

DEDHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

Thanks so much for your commentary "Sorry, Wrong Religion" and the article about Ellery Schempp, A62, "The Kid Who Didn't Stand." The First Amendment is so important.

BILL LANDRY, A71

LAKE TAHOE, NEVADA

STUDENTS LIKE ME

In response to "Meet the Class of 2011" ("Jumbolaya," Fall 2007), I applaud Tufts' success in attracting bright minds and original, strong voices. There is much to be proud of in this class, and I'm honored to be associated with such excellence.

But at the same time, I'm puzzled. I recently received a letter from Lee Coffin, dean of undergraduate admissions, introducing this same Class of 2011. While well intentioned, the descriptions of the accomplishments and collective background of this

body of students came across as pretentious, both in the extensive list of achievements and in the absurdity of what the admissions committee deemed noteworthy. Students who like to socialize in the nude? Students who see the color of their nail polish as a "metaphor for the impossibility of perfection"? Is this really what it takes to gain entrance into a serious institution of higher learning today?

The Class of 2011 is clearly full of brains, confidence, diversity, offbeat characters, and lofty goals. These are admirable qualities, but amidst all this standing out and "specialness," I have to wonder: Where are the ordinary people like me? The late bloomers who play the piano and belong to the Spanish club

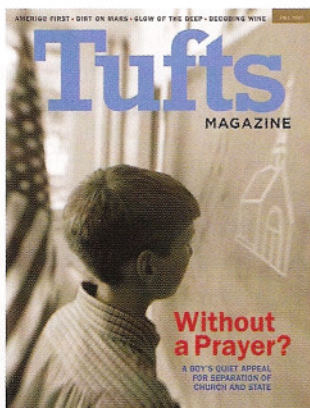
and get voted "Most Shy"? And in reading about accomplishment after accomplishment and how everyone is so busy being different, I couldn't help but notice that what seemed to be missing was heart and soul. These kids purport to care about the world, but I wonder if they'll be so engrossed in getting ahead and pursuing global altruism and being "individual" that they'll forget to care about each other.

I have a hard time recognizing my own 17-year-old self in this class profile. That's a shame, since I'm certain that people who "fit in" more than they stand out can still bring pride to Tufts, humbly achieving success by every possible measure.

MONIQUE (TORNER) DONAHUE, J92

LAKE MARY, FLORIDA

Lee Coffin, dean of undergraduate admissions, responds: Of course Tufts welcomes applications from shy people who play the piano and belong to the Spanish club, and such students are included in the Class of 2011. As always, "heart and soul" are indeed qualities we prize in our applicants. When considering a pool in which 12 students sought each seat in the first-year class, it's simply human nature to promote the accomplishments of those who stood out, with no disrespect intended to those who "fit in."



HOW GREEN ARE YOUR GREENS?

As a pediatrician with an interest in nutrition and obesity prevention, I was particularly interested in "The Best Things Since Sliced Bread" (Fall 2007). While I agree that the food items suggested make nutritious food more available and convenient, the article did not take into consideration the environmental cost of some of the items.

"Clean greens" (pre-washed salad greens), while extremely convenient, use an incredible amount of energy to keep them refrigerated from the moment they are picked and then transported from California to places like New England. It can sometimes be a hard decision when grocery shopping, but hopefully people will think about these issues when purchasing convenient, healthy foods.

JULIE MEYERS, M.D., J78, M83

PAWTUCKET, RHODE ISLAND

Marla Rhodes, N96, is quoted as saying, "Presliced apple dippers infuriate me. Why are we using excess throwaway packaging to give these to children when they can hold an apple in their hand and take a bite? Smaller, kid-sized apples that actually have taste will do the trick."

The presliced apple product, developed and patented in cooperation with the USDA, is called NatureSeal, and I have worked with it since its inception. Two studies on sliced versus whole apples found that the consumption of apples by schoolchildren increased between 62 percent and 80 percent when they were offered the fruit sliced. In another survey of school food service directors, 92 percent said they believed students would choose a sliced apple over a whole apple, perhaps because loose teeth, missing teeth, and braces make it difficult for children to bite into a whole apple.

Unfortunately, offering fresh produce to children does not mean they will consume it. Fresh-cut produce is a vital part of what is now an international fight against childhood obesity and its associated health issues.

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