

The Observer Viewpoint Policy
Last Revision: Jan. 17, 2010

Anyone is welcome to submit Letters to the Editor, quotes, cartoons, comic strips and poems to the Viewpoint Department of The Observer. Items submitted by members of the Notre Dame and Saint Mary's community will be given preference for publication.

The opinions expressed in the Viewpoint section are not necessarily those of The Observer. Regular columnists, those whose columns appear on a regular basis; guest columnists, those whose columns do not appear on a regular basis; Letters to the Editor; poems, comic strips, cartoons and quotes are commentaries.

Unsigned editorials represent the opinion of the majority of the Editor-in-Chief, the Managing Editor, Assistant Managing Editors and Department Editors.

All commentaries submitted to The Observer must include the name and phone number of the author. Letters to the Editor may not exceed 350 words and columns may not exceed 800 words. Exceptions are made at the discretion of the Viewpoint Editor. The Viewpoint Editor may shorten any Letter or column regardless of length or deem it worth of print in its entirety.

All material submitted to the Viewpoint Department, including columns, poems, Letters to the Editor, comic strips and cartoons, becomes property of The Observer. Any further use of these commentaries without the written consent of The Observer is prohibited. Not-for-profit organizations, those organizations which have a reciprocal usage agreement and those organizations of which The Observer is a member may be granted permission to publish commentaries with the permission of the Editor-in-Chief or the permission of the Managing Editor and the Viewpoint Editor.

The Viewpoint Department reserves the right to edit all commentaries. The Observer has no obligation to print submitted commentaries. Such works will not be printed if they are libelous, unintelligible or irrelevant. The Observer will not publish commentaries deemed offensive, discriminatory, hateful or in any way considered by the editors to contradict the values of The Observer, the University of Notre Dame or Saint Mary's College.

Relevance will be determined with respect to interest of a particular issue on a local, national or world level, extension of existing issues on the Viewpoint pages and/or role in fostering spirited and intelligent discussion.

Commentaries submitted as Letters to the Editor may not exceed three in number from the same individual or organization within the same academic semester. There is no limit to the number of times an individual or organization may have their commentaries appear in print as columnists.

All commentaries printed in the Viewpoint section must be verified before publication. It is not guaranteed that authors of columns, Letters to the Editor, quotes, comic strips, cartoons and poems will be notified before their work is printed in The Observer.

Only those individuals authorized to speak as representatives for a group will be allowed to use the organization's name. In such cases, the primary author(s) or the commentary is (are) the individual(s), and the commentary is, in effect, co-signed by the organization.

Commentaries that appear in the Viewpoint section may not have been printed previously in other newspapers, magazines or publications. In exceptions, the author of the previously printed material must give legal, written consent. Work from organizations of which The Observer is a member, quotations used for commentaries, "Quote of the Day" and syndicated columns are excluded from this procedure.

Paid employees of The Observer are not permitted to have their commentaries appear in the Viewpoint section as Letters to the Editor. Regular columnists and members of the Viewpoint staff are also not eligible to have their commentaries appear in the Viewpoint section as Letters to the Editor. The status of such individuals is determined by the Viewpoint Editor.

The Observer reserves the right to remove comments on The Observer's Web site if the editors deem them offensive, lewd, obscene or in poor taste in any fashion. The Observer also reserves the right to disable comments on some or all of the Web site content in reaction to an abuse of the comment function.

Cartoons and comic strips are considered part of the Viewpoint section. Cartoons and comic strips will be approved by the nightly Viewpoint Editor, the nightly Sports Editor and both nightly Managing Editors. The editors reserve the right to refuse to run any cartoon or comic strip that the editors deem offensive, discriminatory, hateful or in any way considered by the editors to contradict the values of The Observer, the University of Notre Dame or Saint Mary's College.

Any questions or concerns regarding The Observer Viewpoint policies should be directed to the Viewpoint Editor.