

## It just takes a minute...

BY DENINE KONWINSKI  
Co-EDITOR

Deep down inside you know it's about that time.

The instructor walks in, and you wonder if you should cringe. He warns, "You'll need a number two pencil for this." And now you know it's time . . . Teacher Evaluations.

For some reason, other than that they're a little long, a little monotonous, and a little boring, most students seem to despise penciling in a few little boxes. They are positive the evaluations are useless.

Believe it or not, I've seen proof that they can be useful.

When I attended Western Michigan University, I had a biology professor who was horrible. She was severely disorganized, thoroughly confused as to what was going on around her, and a little off center as a whole. She missed the first day of classes because she forgot.

University grading scales are difficult, but to get an 'A' in her class, you were required to do extra credit, and then, you only got the grade if she thought you should. Getting perfect scores on exams and doing extra credit didn't guarantee an 'A' in the course.

Needless to say, she no longer holds a position in the biology department at WMU, and this is in part due to those dreaded 'teacher evaluations.' It took numerous individual complaints to bring the severity of the situation to the attention of those who had the power to do something about it, but the thing that really did her in was the evaluations. The majority of all her classes had a problem with her, and it paid off to take that time to fill in those boxes. If nothing else, at least the future students were spared a lot of frustration and wasting a few (yeah, right) dollars.

I'm not saying that you should go into class and tear apart your least favorite instructor to try and get him canned. I'm simply trying to tell you people to quit complaining and make what you can of what you don't like and what you can't change.



Are landfills the culprits they're put up to be?

## Pampers don't plug up dumps after all

BY JEN GOODBURNE  
Co-EDITOR

Recycling: is it a marketing trend, a guilt trip, or a serious effort to care for the environment? Whatever the reason, I doubt I could find anyone who would tell me it's a bad thing.

The media has painted us a bleak picture. We're told the landfills have all closed because they've been filled to the limit with baby diapers, plastics, and fast food packaging — none of which is biodegradable. It won't rot away like paper and bad food.

It's true that landfill space has been getting more scarce. Contamination has closed some; others have just been filled up. The obvious route is to find an alternative means of garbage disposal, but that hasn't happened yet. So until it does, we do the next best thing.

We recycle. We buy products that contain post-consumer recycled materials. We avoid restaurants that use styrofoam, and keep our eyes glued to Dow-Corning while they try to make plastic that will decompose.

The National Audubon Society, at a meeting in 1989, asked average people what per-

centage of landfills consisted of fast food packaging and baby diapers. The answers, which are consistent with more recent studies, ranged from 45 to 70 percent.

It's easy enough to believe that many Americans eat at fast food restaurants at least once a week. And it's true that there are plenty of babies throughout the country. But, I just can't see how anyone would guess that 70% of a landfill could be filled with used Pampers and Big Mac wrappers.

In 1973, the Garbage Project — a group of researchers from the University of Arizona — found that 14 tons of garbage disposed of over a five year period contained an average of less than two percent disposable baby diapers and fast food packaging.

The group also discovered that 40% of an average landfill consists of paper.

Here at ACC, Greg Hurd of the Graphic Arts Department got involved in recycling last year. The department managed to save hundreds of pounds of paper.

Now, Alpena's leading recycler, BFI, refuses to take the paper. According to a source at BFI, the market has dropped out for the type of pa-

per the Graphic Arts department has saved.

It looks like the Graphic Arts paper will end up in a landfill.

"The only thing left is to throw it away," said Hurd. "That's probably what we'll end up doing. It's regrettable."

Does this sound like as big a crime as putting hundreds of tons of styrofoam in a landfill? No?

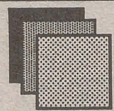
You may think that since paper is biodegradable, it will decompose in a landfill. The truth is, nothing will decompose in a landfill — the contents are sealed from the sun, rain, and bacteria which allow for decomposition to occur.

Remember the Garbage Project from Arizona? They're not scientists or specialists with degrees in Trash and Litter; they're archaeologists.

The group searched through and documented landfills in Arizona for historical reasons.

Our landfills have turned out to be unintentional time capsules. So be careful what you put in the trash — it could end up in a grad student's thesis somewhere down the road.

(Facts and figures taken from Smithsonian magazine.)



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