

Editorial: Football, Community, and Changes on Campus



Paul LaFollette, Editor

students already provide too much rowdy interference in residents' day to day existence. The increased traffic, parking problems, and exaggerated bad behavior that football engenders would only make this worse. Our neighbors deserve better from us.

Second, there is the matter of the game itself. Football is an intrinsically violent game. It has much more to do with that nasty new owl than with the scholarship and temperate discussion symbolized by the old one. Which is to say that it has never been a sport that fits well with the mission of an institution of higher learning.

Furthermore, we now know that it contributes, in at least some cases, to permanent brain damage. Worse still, we do not know how to protect against that damage. The latest studies indicate that much of the damage is done by sub-concussive collisions. We don't know how to quantify these, nor how to assess which are damaging and which are not. This means that, at the moment, we cannot even pretend to protect our athletes.

Football has never been my favorite sport. I much prefer baseball, but I used to enjoy watching it from time to time. I am no longer willing to do so. I cannot justify being



New Owl Statue

It is always interesting, when returning to campus in the fall, to see what changes have been made over the summer. This year, the most disappointing change was the replacement of Beniamino Bufano's sedate reddish owl by a fierce angry owl, ready to tear something apart and eat it.

The most disappointing non-change was that we are still discussing the possibility of building a football stadium here in North Philadelphia. This is an idea that should have been abandoned long since, and that for at least two reasons.

First, the mere discussion of this project has damaged an already tenuous relationship with our neighbors. To actually build it would have terrible consequences for those who live near our campus. Our



Beniamino Bufano's "Red Owl"

entertained by players, at least some of whom are, even as I watch, doing permanent damage to their brains. And we who are Temple University cannot justify this either. We who spend our lives teaching students to use their brains well and wisely have no business supporting this "sport" that destroys its athletes in slow motion.

Dropping football would bring some advantages. It would save substantial money, which could, in part, be used to support kinder, gentler sports. It could make it easier to comply with Title IX. But these are not the compelling reasons for getting rid of it. It is simply no longer ethical to encourage this sport.

So, let us work towards getting out of the business of football. We can start by declining to attend the games. We can explain to our colleagues and our students why we feel that watching this kind of entertainment is unconscionable. We can oppose this stadium with all the energy we can bring to bear. And while we are at it, how about getting rid of that dreadful new owl as well.