

**30<sup>th</sup> Athens NEWS**  
 ANNIVERSARY 1977-2007  
 Athens County's Only Locally Owned Newspaper



*Liz Maule* REALTY  
 www.LizMauleRealty.com Experienced, Patient, Fun!

Search Archives  
 10 results  
 Stories  
 Search

**News**

**CLICK HERE to Place Your FREE Classified Ads!**  
**The Athens NEWS My Classifieds**  
 The power of classified advertising at your fingertips...

- Home
- News
  - News Articles
  - Entertainment
  - Letters & Opinion
  - Features
  - Special Sections
  - Obituaries
  - Archives
  - Ohio News

**Multimedia**

**Street Team**

**RSS Feed XML**

**Athens Co. Visitors Guide**

**Athens Co. Lodging & Accommodations**

**Classifieds**

- Notices
- Employment
- Rentals
- Real Estate
- Supplies
- Merchandise
- Attractions & Recreation
- Vehicles
- Submit Classifieds
- Classifieds Staff
- Classified Rates

**Advertising**

- Advertising Staff
- Display Media Kit (PDF)

**Post editor says paper will back up staffer accused of racist column**

**By Nick Claussen**  
 Athens NEWS Associate Editor  
 Monday, September 17th, 2007

Post a comment || Email this article

The Ohio University Latino Student Union (LSU) is circulating petitions asking the student-run newspaper, The Post, to fire one of its columnists because of a recent column.

Velma Lopez, a member of the LSU said Friday that she was offended by the column by Chris Yonker that she considers "blatantly racist." She and others in the LSU are calling on The Post to fire Yonker and issue a public statement in response to the column.

Matt Zapotosky, editor in chief of The Post, said Sunday that the newspaper will not fire Yonker and that readers are missing the point of a humor column that was not anti-immigrant.

The column, which ran Sept. 7, discusses how America is like a "big party" and how the Europeans first stopped in North America to "see how their long-lost cousins were doing." The column jokes about how the party has grown over the years, talks about how America had to check IDs at the door and now there were a few problems such as noise violations.

In perhaps the most inflammatory passage, the column talks about immigrants from Mexico and problems caused by having too many people at "the party":

"We have tried everything to keep these crashers out but they keep sneaking in," Yonkers writes. "They tunnel under our walls, travel in makeshift rafts across the waters and use fake IDs to get in.

"And once they are in, these party crashers are bringing down the party. Jobs that once belonged to loyal, hardworking Americans now belong to this scum... (T)he party may not be strong enough to support the discarded American workers. They are already clogging up the corners, asking for handouts.

*Soul of Athens*  
 SPIRITUALITY >  
 ENVIRONMENT >  
 CREATIVITY >  
 YOUTH >

**ATTENTION WOMEN:**  
 Make your opinion known.  
 Take the 2007 Women's Survey  
 and you could win prizes!

Unique, Complete, & Offbeat  
 Athens Co. Visitors Guide

Athens County Annual Manual

**HALLOWEEN 2006 PHOTOS**

**PLUS HALLOWEEN COSTUMES**

**THE HISTORY OF HALLOWEEN**

**Resources**[Links](#)[Submissions](#)[FAQ](#)**Contact us**[About Us](#)[Letter to the editor](#)[Webmaster](#)[Contact us](#)

"The only solution is to stop letting people into our party," Yonkers writes.

THE LSU TOOK OFFENSE to language used in the column and to some of the points the column made, and sent letters to local media outlets complaining about the column last week.

The letter from the Lopez and the LSU (printed in the opinion section of today's Athens NEWS) calls the column a "racially derogatory editorial that attacks hemispheric immigrants by referring to them as 'scum,' 'cheap mariachi-playing maestros' and 'crashers' of the 'American' house party."

The letter maintains that the column is full of factual inaccuracies, makes light of the genocide of Native Americans and is full of hate language that violates the OU Student Code of Conduct.

Lopez said Friday that the LSU is passing petitions on campus asking for Yonker to be fired or to resign from The Post. She did not know how many people had signed the petitions at that point.

"I have personally gotten a ton of responses," Lopez said. She added that professors have been talking about the column in classes, and she has talked to numerous students about it.

"It's created a pretty big deal," Lopez said.

When she first started reading the column, she thought that it was supposed be a joke, Lopez remembered.

"The further along that I read, I realized that he was serious," she said. Lopez considered the language in the column to be "blatantly racist" and was very offended by it, she said.

Zapotosky said Sunday that he knew the column would generate debate because racism is such a hot-button issue nationally, but he does not see the problems that the LSU sees.

"My take on the column was that it was supposed to be humorous and not anti-immigrant," he said. Asked about the comment from Lopez that the column used racist language, Zapotosky said he respectfully disagrees.

"I just felt like the column was a humor column more than anything," he said. The picture that was shown next to the column even shows Yonker wearing a flag as a cape while standing on a chair, Zapotosky noted.

"I don't think that he was trying to be racist or anything, just very exaggerated," he said. "Obviously, that didn't come across if people are this upset."

The newspaper does not plan to issue a statement or ask Yonker to explain the column, Zapotosky said. Nor is the newspaper going to fire Yonker, he added.



Order a copy of the Unique, Complete, & Offbeat Athens Co. Visitor's Guide



NOLA's Arc  
On the second anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, we're all looking for easy answers, barometers of recovery, and people to blame -- too bad....  
Boston Phoenix

Beware of 'Liar's Loans'  
A significant majority of homeowners paying off high-interest loans are minorities....  
Jackson Free Press

Calm & Collected in Germany  
Terrorist plot in cool-headed Germany shows that hysteria at borders does not pave road to security....  
NOW Magazine

Pot-Growing Operations  
Trash Los Padres National Forest  
Why isn't anyone cleaning it up?...  
Monterey County Weekly

More News from  
AltWeeklies.com



2007

bestof

If the reaction to the column is strong and The Post receives petitions with numerous signatures, it may consider issuing a statement, according to Zapotosky.

All of the newspaper's columnists are given the range to talk freely in their columns, he said. He added that while some of Yonker's subtle humor may not have come across, he's still glad that readers are responding to the column.

"I'm sort of glad that it promotes dialogue like this," Zapotosky said.

Yonker could not be reached for comment.

The entire column can be read at  
<http://thepost.baker.ohiou.edu/Articles/Opinion/2007/09/07/21054/>

[Login to Post Comment](#) || [Email this article](#)

## User Comments:

Sep 17 2007 3:55:33pm

**weasel wrote:**

C'mon , why does everyone take it all so seriously?? Let's do away with all humor, sarcasm and wit... gee , I wonder what Mark Twain or Will Rogers would say about this... oh never mind, they weren't allowed to express their brand of humor....

© The Athens NEWS  
14 N. Court St  
Athens, OH 45701  
740.594.8219