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'Politically Correct Knights' go on patrol again

WASHINGTON — Do you know what the Modern Language Association (MLA) is? It is an association of university scholars that patrols standards of scholarship in Academia, particularly in comparative literature. It is one of the reasons that American universities are so intellectually uninteresting. And it is a practitioner of the kind of intolerance and bigotry that now threatens college campuses. It is another of the Ku Klux Klans that ride across college campuses enforcing right thinking, thinking that is PC or "politically correct."

The Knights of the MLA are now plighting their sacred honor to knocking off one Carol Iannone, a literary critic who disagrees with them. She is particularly abhorrent to the Knights because she holds an adjunct teaching position at the Gallatin Division of New York University from which she poisons young minds by spreading a love of good literature. But now the Knights think they have her. Lynne Che-

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ney, the president's immensely capable chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), has nominated her to a position on the Endowment's 26-member council that meets quarterly to advise on NEH grants. The Knights and other enforcers of PC could not drive Miss Iannone off campus for her teaching, so they will use the occasion of her government appointment to blacken her reputation and destroy her career.

This is called Borking a person. If the forces of PC cannot nail an independent-minded conservative scholar while he is on campus, wait until he is appointed to government office to slander him and then bring in political pressure to oust him from professional life. In fact one of the leading players in the lynch mob that nailed Judge Robert Bork — People for the American

Way — has joined in the hate campaign against Miss Iannone. In her writing, Miss Iannone has derided the politicization of literature. She sees feminist ideology as an offense against art and opposes racial or ideological judgments of literature. Thus the hate campaign contends with neither logic nor evidence that she is hostile to women and to minorities — two categories that obviously include her. The Knights of the MLA have actually supported the charge that Miss Iannone's work is comparable to that of such Nazi tools as the late Paul de Man.

Finally they scorn her for not having her work published in any of their learned journals or read at their learned national conventions. At last year's MLA Conventions you could have slept soundly or heard papers read on such topics as "The Detective as Pervert," "The Polygenesis of Long Vowels in North Italian Dialects: An Autosegmental Analysis," "The Lesbian Phallus:

Or, Does Heterosexuality Exist?," and "Self-Consuming Fictions: The Dialectics of Cannibalism in Recent Caribbean Narratives." And if one were to bring his personal physician, "Telling It Slant: Personal Narrative and the Reality of Leprosy" or "Assume the Position: Pluralist Ideology and Gynocriticism."

Of course, Miss Iannone is to be congratulated for not in any way conforming with the esotery of these nitwits. They and other enforcers of noxious orthodoxies have been the bane of American intellectual life since the 1960s, making it one of the least vibrant and diverse intellectual cultures in the world. Eastern Europe under Stalinists was more adventuresome. And the bigotry and intolerance of the American intellectual are not confined to the left. The Right has its fraternal organizations of second-rate minds too.

been sputtering in defense of a minor clique of conservative intellectuals (self-styled paleoconservatives) whose complaint is that they are rarely considered for foundation grants or the kind of government nomination granted Miss Iannone. Buchanan's eggheads are as intolerant as the Knights of the MLA and as foolish — the Knights' bizarre enthusiasms bespeak infantile revolution, the Buchananites' bespeak infantile reaction. Both groups champion the perverse. They ignore simple competence. They drive diversity from their presence. Neither would have the humanities accessible to the average taxpayer. To them an idea has to be bizarre to be relished. That is why both must oppose Miss Iannone's appointment. The Knights of the MLA define themselves by hating what is normal about Western Culture; their conservative equivalents do the same, but they exist only on the outer fringes of the right.

For weeks now Patrick Buchanan has King Features Syndicate

The Herald-Times

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Around the state

Jokes about Quayle starting to be serious

Until recently the jokes about Vice President Dan Quayle being a heart-beat away from the presidency were amusing. But then President Bush ended up in the hospital for treatment of an irregular heart rhythm.

Suddenly, the jokes didn't seem quite so funny. The nation had to consider seriously the thought that Quayle could actually become president.

government running after June 30.

But redistricting is No. 2. Actually, for some legislators, there is more concern about the new districts that will reflect census changes than over the budget negotiations. Their own seats are involved in redistricting, after all.

The public, too, ought to be more concerned about how districts are drawn. The fairness of future elections, the choices for representation that will be available and the clout your area will have in the choices are involved.

Bill, even among those who support

