

A few UAF jerks spoil Fairbanks' push for a positive spirit

FAIRBANKS — A new and positive spirit has gripped University of Alaska-Fairbanks basketball fans. But for a dozen or so vocal fans, the new era is just an excuse for the same old trash.

There is no polite word for the oral effluent that gushed from a batch of obnoxious fans at the Seawolf-Nanook games this weekend.

When University of Alaska-Anchorage's German-born center Hansi Gnad first played in Patty Gymnasium



**roger
brigham**

in my time

in December of 1983, fans called him a Nazi. All night long.

When UAA guard Gerald Brown played here last season, fans called him 'Nigger.' All night long.

Friday night Gnad played in Patty Center again. Fans called him a Nazi again. "Heil Hitler," they yelled through a megaphone next to the sideline. You didn't have to strain your ears to hear it. If you missed it once, it was sure to be repeated. All night long.

Gnad handled it well. He seethed, but he also crushed the Nanooks on the boards, shot well and passed with powerful grace.

"Real nice fans, huh?" said Gnad.

This is not an indictment of all UAF fans. Hey, I even laughed when hockey fans distributed T-shirts urging that the Nanooks go forth and multiply with the Seawolves.

I hope and believe that the new coaches for the UAF men's and women's teams are going to breathe new life into the basketball programs. Before the game I happily wrote down the slogans visible in the gym. "Welcome to Mr. Roderick's Neighborhood." "See Our

Stuff." "The Goudge and Runge Show." "The New Era."

I liked the painted faces. I liked the strip-tease satire and pie-eating contests at halftime. I liked the fans cheering for their young team.

But there is no need or place for bigotry.

UAF Athletic Director Ed Lawrence said the students spewing forth the verbal garbage were members of a dorm group and that school officials had told them to knock it off. Maybe so, but they kept doing it. All night

long.

UAF officials said that they will crack down on the verbal abuse. That's good; it's just a shame the bigotry has been tolerated this long.

The week began by the nation celebrating Martin Luther King's birthday. It ended with this ethnocentric, racist display.

There is "A New Era" at UAF. There's no place for racism in it.

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