

The Mercer Cluster

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

Recent events have prompted me to ask myself a question—a question that I would like to put in the form of a challenge to the Student Body, indeed to Mercer University. That question is "What am I doing for the American War effort?" It is hoped that Mercer University can give a more encouraging answer to that question than my initial answer was.

What can I do? I do not know. I'm only a student—an AMERICAN student, so I must discover a way to contribute to the future of our Country. I am seeking a way in which to give non-militant support to our effort in Viet Nam.

If you are adventurous, leave me a note in Box 1229. If you are cynical, smile your hopeless little smile and go your merry way. Forget this letter if you have forgotten your heritage. This Country is yours—so is the challenge.

Joe Sitton

Dear Editor:

If Cleanliness is next to Godliness, then all the dishes in the cop are going to hell. Don't you think they should be saved?

—Al Muller

Dear Editor:

The recent proposal to impose a deferred rush system on Mercer's fraternities and sororities, though supported by the Cluster's present editorial policy, does not seem to me to be the best sort of idea.

I presume that, like so many other university propositions, this idea has as one of its purposes, the improving of student study habits. If this is so, I don't believe that it will accomplish its end since all it does is remove from the freshman pledge (or rather, prospective pledge) the presence of an upperclassman telling him to study and the incentive to make good enough grades for initiation. Freshmen being freshmen, and having been such from time immemorial, will party as much and raise as much (if not more) hell during their freshman year if not allowed to rush until spring as they do under the present system.

Deferred rush would, I should think, put quite a financial burden on the fraternities and sororities, as they would be deprived for two quarters of the pledge fees and other such sources of revenue which now play a large role in supporting the Mercer Greek system.

It would also, I believe, provide quite a problem with the relations between freshmen and upperclassmen who belong to Greek organizations. Would it be a deferred rush or a two-quarter-long one? There is too much likelihood that the university would be forced to damage the cohesion of the student body by laying down a multitude of impossible rules forbidding freshmen to visit fraternity lodges, Shorter Hall, Greek parties, fraternity dining tables, etc.

In the interest of Mercer University of which I, like everyone else here, am a part, I hope that the idea of holding deferred rush is abandoned.

—Bill Dayton

Dear Miss Harrison:

Congratulations on your election as Cluster editor. Please allow me to express my complete support and sympathy with your position. Then, if I may, I should like to express much disappointment and dissatisfaction with the campaign whereby you were elected.

First, the resignation of your predecessor and the reasons (as I understand them) for this, should raise serious questions in the mind of any Mercer student regarding his right to elect fellow students to represent him and the right of students so elected to represent their fellows. In line with this I question the amount

and nature of pressure permissible for any one to put on any student for any reason.

There was much about the way that Miss Denton ran her paper that I disagreed with, but much that I agreed with, too. Most of all, I defend her right to disagree with me or anybody else. She often told me or others the pages of the Cluster were open to anyone to disagree with her or anybody else. She said it was the students' paper. I think the same policy should have held for her right to disagree. I wonder now just whose paper it is.

Second, I agree with Mr. Lewis in his article of the Cluster editor. I know I personally don't know—or really care enough to decide whether you or someone else should run the paper. I think the editor should be chosen by those who are qualified to make that choice and who will be working for and under them: the staff.

The ludicrousness of our present system is best seen in the caliber of some who expressed intentions to run for the office. Third, the "vote white" campaign—which was utterly useless—was one of the blackest marks on the name of Mercer University. Furthermore, the fact that it was intended as reverse psy-

chology to elect a candidate who did not qualify on one hand and had neither the time nor intention to handle the job on the other makes it an even dirtier trick. It was the first event even remotely of this nature in Mercer's three years of integration, and it is certainly to be hoped that it is the last. The inconsiderate, irresponsible, bigoted characters of those responsible for the signs clearly showed themselves in the campaign. Thank you for allowing me to express my opinion.

Name withheld

HELP!

We Need It

There is a tremendous shortage of typists for Thursday night work. There is a dire need for proofreaders for Monday night work. There is an acute shortage of people who like to deal with money.

Please Sacrifice Yourself
To At Least One
Of These Positions.

Be in on it before it happens!
contact: Mercer Cluster P.O. 29

DIANA DENTON



The Albatross Again

There is a moment of darkness. A deep hush pervades the room. Somewhere in the silence a candle glimmers dimly. And somehow in that aura a burden is lifted from one bent shoulder and placed on another—one still high with youth and hope and faith.

The Albatross is gone.

It is long been the custom for Cluster editors to write a farewell column leaving to their successors "the Albatross"—since Ralph Bass coined that word for *The Cluster* many an editorial ago. I have worn the old bird around my neck for what was probably the shortest "sentence" in history, barely long enough to accustom myself to the stench, to be exact, but already I know what an almost intolerable load it can be. I have lost five years being "shot" of it this mere three weeks.

It is for these reasons that I propose a solemn ceremony to accompany the transfer. I see a rite not dissimilar to the feudal knighting service whereby the villain swore fealty to his lord and received the heavy blow of the mailed fist tokening the honor of the position thus assumed, its responsibilities, the disciplines and sacrifices of ten required.

I see the ceremony not only as a welcome to Sandy Harrison, Editor, but as a farewell to the Sandy Harrison I have known. For no one who ever enters that office ever leaves it the same.

I say hello to a girl who is learning to give ten hours a day to a project that somehow never turns out right. I greet a friend who will give that time in love, building in love, chastising in love—pointing out errors in a deep and affectionate faith in an institution and faith that it will make corrections and become a better school more worthy of that love—a gift that will be given back to her as unacceptable unless she learns first to accept things as they are. I ache for a girl who must learn to walk on eggshells, who must decide that is good and honest and the brave enough to dare to fight for it—no matter what. I pity a woman who has signed away her right to her own world, who is now of no dimension, who is neither fish nor fowl, student or official, who is elected by one force, represents many, tries to be controlled by none save her own integrity, must answer to all. I will serve a minion who is required to be as perfect as a super-human machine and to accept whatever may come in return.

God guide your steps, Sandy, I know where you must tread. And unfortunately, no one can go that way for you. You're beginning to find it out for yourself. No matter how many of us may have gone before—the road is still there for you and your Albatross.

But I think you can make it. I have complete confidence in you both; I commend the students of Mercer in selecting you as half of that pair. You were a big help to me when I had the bird.

Nor were the problems I've mentioned quite all. There is, of course, the staff that doesn't work... Somehow, the editor of the paper is the only one on campus who never has a test, so when everyone else must study: It's your bird!

Then there are many other niceties I don't dare discuss here. I flatter myself that the problems you face are perhaps not as bad as when the carcass was strung around my neck, and I'll be here trying to help you over some of the lumps.

You will be a different person. When you're through, there will be scars not even you can see, but there will be new strengths too. Strengths that come from giving the very best you have and asking nothing in return. Strengths that come only when you have exhausted every known strength that you have. Goodness that comes from continuing to love even when faith seems no longer possible. To my staff and friends, who made those eight weeks possible, to the people who believed in me: I thank you. To the printer and to the past for technical help, aid and assistance: I am humbly grateful. To our advertisers and to Nancy Barrett and her staff who pounded the pavement for them: *The Cluster* owes its existence. To the University which gave me an opportunity and the administration which was always there in crises, for its understanding and consideration: I am appropriately appreciative.

Finally, I appeal for campus cooperation—especially to you Greeks. It was my misguided ambition to make this your—our—newspaper, and for eight weeks I sincerely and earnestly tried.

It's your bird now, Miss Harrison! Yours and Mercer's! Someone once said you have to love *The Cluster* to even type for it. You do. You have to love *The Cluster* and the University—I hope you can continue to do both.

SANDY HARRISON

From Bearer Upon Receipt

"Slowly, slowly, raised she up,
And slowly, slowly left..."

And now on me, the Albatross hangs heavy. So very heavy. Be this bird is going to learn to fly. Improvements should already be noticeable from this week's edition.

The cantankerous Cluster is broadening its coverage by including "The Larger View", a synopsis of weekly world events. From personal experience I know how often students read newspapers (other than this one) and watch T.V. news; consequently, we are rehashing the most important items for your weekly consumption. Realizing the news to be a week old in some cases, still we feel that belated knowledge is better than none at all.

Another first is the law page. A project longed for by my predecessor, it finally materialized in the efforts of Reeves Lewis and Sid Moon that are exemplified on the page herein. This too will be a weekly institution.

Greeks are showing spirit in their response to the Social Set column reinstated on their behalf. Friendly competition between groups much hoped for.

Apathy dwindles—slowly—but it does! The column of Letters to the Editor is yours. Utilize it. This week's shows unbelievable student response; keep it up! Faculty opinion is also definitely solicited.

Disagreement with me or any editorial or any campus practice is a fair game for letters. The Cluster represents your viewpoints, not just those of the staff.

Idea of other dimensions that you should like to see inaugurated the Cluster eagerly and ravenously awaits. Ideas for editorials, already written editorials (subject to editing), new features, greater coverage of campus activities—in general or in specifics—all of these must come from you. It's your bird too. Let's see it soar.

Resolutions Don't Pay For College Operations

The Georgia Baptist Convention meeting the middle of this month will have before it a report from its education commission recommending that Baptist colleges reject federal grants.

At four public hearings in September, the majority of the 400 persons attending was opposed to accepting federal grants. The commission's report reflects this opposition.

At the same time, the commission admits serious financial problems face the colleges and it recognizes that "increased financial support is required to operate the six Georgia Baptist colleges as accredited institutions."

So the commission is calling on the convention and through it, Baptists and friends throughout the state to provide capital improvement through increased gifts.

There is a vast difference between voting against accepting federal grants and doing what is necessary to make such grants unnecessary. The one is easy, the other, oh, so difficult.

Many are willing to wave off "outside" assistance and declare "we'll do it ourselves," but unfortunately the crowd melts away when the pledge cards are passed out. Then the colleges are left to struggle along, desperately trying to provide a quality education but barred by high-sounding, well-meaning resolutions from finding the financial means to do so.

We agree with those who see nothing wrong with Mercer University or any other private educational institution receiving government assistance to help it carry out its secular educational role.

On the other hand, if a religious denomination or a private group wishes to make government aid unnecessary and back up its words with deeds, then we say "More power to you. You have practiced what you preach."

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