

The Mercer Cluster

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Honor

We hear complaint from Small Talker Harry Goldgar that Blue Key's campaign for the honor system has been ineffective, vague and out of step with the Mercer viewpoint. If we could convince ourselves that Small Talker Goldgar's remarks made sense, or represented the group he claimed, we would be silent. In brief, however, we say H. G. is nuts.

Without further foolishness, then, The Cluster will continue to support the honor system which it so heartily endorses.

It seems to us that Blue Key is doing all right. All the opponents of law and order, and a noisy outfit it is, base their case on the same argument. And that argument is a fallacy.

These sons of Belial, who can make a lie sound plausible, would have us believe that one can't know what is right unless one is told. In other words: You can't be independent. You can't be original or creative. You can't be a free moral agent—which means you can't be a true Democrat, a true American, a true Christian.

Instead, these opponents of the honor system dish up a chain gang menu for all—without exception. No one can do anything except under the compulsion of some hidden, external motivation that makes him do what he does, and deprives him of credit or blame for all his deeds—good or evil. Whether he goes to class, to church, to the ballot box, or over to Greater Wesleyan, he goes because he feels he has to. His action is smothered under a hidden, irresponsible anonymity—and The Cluster hates anonymity.

As for ourselves, we like to choose our own courses in college, manage our business, court our own girl, sign our own articles—extra-curricular included. We can, you know, and, in fact, we do. (For a fuller explanation of the inalienable rights involved, see us in our office—by appointment.)

What we demand for ourselves, we claim, even so, for every student at Mercer. We claim, in simple justice, complete freedom to do what's right, without a big-sticked M. P. making us behave. Yet, this alone would not be sufficient. Better still, we expect to act honorably without ostentation and sound effects. We know our lines, we know our cues, we want no over-zealous prompting.

We can understand the purely selfish benefit of studying our own textbooks and passing our own quizzes without going on any sort of mental relief. So can you, and so can any human. Our interest, however, goes a little further. We rather hope no one will tear up a feather bed in the kitchen in Sherwood hall. It also pains us to see the campus littered with bathroom confetti. Count on us to help prevent such distractions and nuisances. This is what the honor system means to us.

Frankly, we hope to see both the mental and moral defectives, and others who debase themselves by pandering to their deficiencies, promptly eliminated from the Mercer campus. Such people belong in institutions, but not in educational institutions. On this subject we feel strongly. We might state the case more bluntly, but we do not choose to do so.

Honor is a cardinal virtue, but without test it is an empty virtue.—J. C.

Dishing the Dirt

By BETTE CO-ED

I hate to tell you, studes, but there's not enough dirt in this week's column to put under one little fingernail. There may be some, there must be some, but it certainly hasn't gotten in this shell-like ear. So I'll tell you what, studes! Let's you put any extra particles of dust you find floating around on just any old sheet of paper and put it on the file in the Cluster office. Thanks. Well, now for the dirt.

Toni Reese, Mercer's own Scarlett O'Hara, has gone quite Russian lately in a pair of boots Bill gave her for Christmas. Wouldn't he feel silly if she "kicked" him with them?

And then there's the case of Rube Davis. Surprised in the act of reading Chaucer, he exclaimed intellectually, "Ain't Shakespeare wonderful?" Well anyhow you have to give him credit for trying.

It has been called to my attention that Jack Rushing, one of the tea-drinking Phi Delta Thetas, is eligible for the N. B. K. list (N. B. K. standing for Never Been Kissed, in case you didn't know.) Now as I understand it, Jack is really the man-about-town type and should long ago have passed the kissing stage. But maybe his mother never told him; "Listen, Jack, you are supposed to do the kissing; not the girl; unless, of course, she's a Wesleyan girl. So stop just sitting

around waiting. Do something!" Poor Russell Daley wanders around with two frat pins and can't get rid of either of them. And meanwhile, "Nape" sits around with the lovelight shining in those beautiful cow eyes and murmurs something like "Tom Heaton looks just exactly like Rhett Butler." And the only sweet nothings she can get out of him are "Say, listen bulb nose, when are you going to pay me that fifty cents you owe me?" So there you see life's bitterest side. Sometimes I think there ain't no justice.

Scoop! We really believe Chip Peabody is finally "that way," about a certain Evelyn at Stephens "Finishing School," but it seems the young lady has the idea that this well-known ladies' man is merely playing with her affections. Chip, quite naturally, is not happy. It looks like the old, old story of the boy who cried "Wolf" just once too often, and when the real thing happened, wasn't believed. Too bad, Chip!

Cupid's Latest Couplets
 Meri Christian and Albert Walker.

Mary Lucy Hatrick and Harry Dean.

Earline Younginer, Beverly Mobley, and Sam Croasley.

So there you have it, girls and boys. Hope we have more next time, and maybe we will if they just remove the quarantine at Wesleyan.

In the Crucible

By FRED SHEARER

Thanks to Halliburton and Hollingsworth who swung the Crucible's pen so dexterously while yours truly was indisposed with influenza.

FLU

Gosh! that's awful stuff, that flu. Having been subjugated to its excruciating torments, one cannot refrain from raising a voice of protest. While bed-ridden, I had a lot of time to meditate and ponder philosophically. The chief problem which I tackled was to determine whether Noah carried a pair of flu germs into the Ark with him, and if he did, why, in heaven's name did he do it? Of course, our diluvial hero may have had the flu and thus preserved the micro-organismic beasts. After all, the weather was pretty damp along that time.

But regardless of what accounts for the presence of influenza, I don't believe that its existence is justifiable. It doesn't fit into any logical cosmic order. Incidentally, the cause (most likely a filterable virus) is unknown. The ancients ascribed it to a faulty body humor. But it seems that a bad humor is more the effect than cause. And who was it who said that a pun is the lowest form of humor?

HEAT

Along with the theme of flu, colds, humors, dampness and the like may arise a discussion of the heat problem in the dormitories. The condition of our rooms after 9:30 or 10 o'clock at night may be the cause of our rheums. Whoever fires the furnace is obviously under the impression that the temperature of winter nights increases steadily after dark to the extent that by 10 o'clock the air outside is equivalent to that of any summer afternoon. The Crucible wishes to inform said person that such is not the case. Latest reports show that the temperature grows steadily colder after dark.

WAR, PEACE AND HONOR

Just a word about honor. It is high time that students were performing their duties without compulsion and the watchful eyes of overseers. The honor system advocates that the student be trusted to perform these duties without resorting to dishonest methods.

But honor is a personality trait which one possesses regardless of the existence of systems. This trait cannot be manufactured by a sudden transition to an honor system imposed from without. It must arise spontaneously from within the student's own propensity to academic honesty.

What is the explanation of the lack of this propensity on the part of so many students who are honest in every phase of activity save that of the classroom? The answer is that they actually do not consider themselves dishonest when they put something over on the professor. The reason for this is the feeling that "all's fair in love and war."

There is a war being waged, in the minds of some students, between them and the faculty. To them, the faculty are the aggressors forcing them to perform unsavory tasks. The student wins his "victories" by a strategy of retreating into dishonesty and hoodwinking the faculty into believing that he has performed the task when he actually evaded it.

Why so many students labor under this misconception of the purpose of faculty and examinations I do not know. It may be their fault; on the other hand, the nature of the present academic system may be to blame. But one matter is certain: all must be quiet on the classroom front, and war must cease before the Utopia of honor can be attained.

Harry Goldgar's

SMALL TALK

(The opinions expressed by the writer of Small Talk are his own and do not necessarily agree with the editorial policy of The Cluster.)

IMBROGLIO The political imbroglio—that factor which, single-handedly, keeps Mercer upperclassmen coming back to school—is almost here again. Certain undercurrents, vague in the fall, are becoming well-defined; and certain propositions, rumor and hypothesis in the fall, have by this time become certainties.

These statements, though I expect some contradiction, I can make with assurance: (1) The whole mad turmoil of office-swapping campaign-planning, alignment-checking, two-timing, double-crossing and back-biting which constitutes Mercer politics will be in full sway at least a full month earlier this year than in the past few years. (Whoopie!) (2) The leading fraternity of one of the two major coalitions has already definitely earmarked \$100 of its exchequer under the sinisterly significant label, "Spring Politics." (3) There will be NO change in political alignments from the status of last spring.



GOLDGAR

PANACEA The flu epidemic on the campus (and indeed, it has reached epidemic proportions, in spite of the administration's strange silence on the subject) has, fortunately, been one of light attacks in most cases.

This is indeed fortunate for that awesome man-of-science, Dr. Ralph Newton, for if all the cases were of very serious genre, maybe (just maybe) his famous white prescription wouldn't work.

And what we would do without Dr. Newton's white prescription, for all ills, from pneumonia to simple ringworm, one hesitates to contemplate. What I'm wondering is, why he doesn't get it patented, and sell it over drug-store counters in big pharmaceutical-looking bottles. The label might read something like this:

"Dr. Newton's White Prescription: For all ills of man, beast, or insect, and also useful as rat poison. Good when taken internally for flu, pneumonia, measles, smallpox, whooping cough, constipation, appendicitis, streptococcal throat, boils, and hangover. A remedy when used externally for athlete's foot, eczema, pimples, blackheads, lumbago, rheumatism, muscular aches and pains, sinus difficulties, headache and neuralgia. Does the work of calomel, but has no calomel in it; and brings on the glorious feeling of well-being that comes with the best herb tonics. Dose: two tablespoonfuls every half-hour. Alcohol: 86 proof."

And funny thing about it is—it works!

CODIFICATION Don't you think it is rather inconsistent to advocate an "honor system"—and not be able to explain what the practical details of your system are; to print vague, rambling statements every week in the campus newspaper elucidating admirably the need for an "honor system"—but never come across with any actual points of the proposed plan?

Now, I am in favor of introduction of an honor system at Mercer, and am prepared, if anyone is interested, to list in cogent black-and-white the several practicable points of my plan. But why all the mystery about YOUR plan, Messrs. Blue-Key? We need a change in the present status quo—okay—but what are the changes you suggest? Does it include compulsory informing on other students noticed cheating? Does it include any steps toward elimination of the tragic-comic mess of student politics? Does it include instructors leaving the classroom during examinations? Or what, heavens sake, does it include? Until I know what your plan is, I cannot possibly know whether I like it or not, since there are all kinds of college honor systems, and yours may be diametrically opposed to mine. Maybe, Messrs. Blue-Key, come to think of it, your ideals of honor itself are opposed to mine; I wouldn't be surprised.

So how about letting me know something? How about less airy, quasi-philosophic, meaningless, claptrap, self-backslapping, cycloid-patter about your wonderful "honor system"—and a few more concrete statements as to what you want to do? Probably we will be in agreement; but I would just like to know.