

The Mercer Cluster

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EDITORIAL

Culturally Barren Ground

We see no reason for constant and aimless criticism of Mercer—the way the school is run, the athletic department, academic requirements, or any of the other phases of college life. But when we think Mercer or its officials are making mistakes—either of omission or commission—we intend to say so editorially.

Intellectual development of the Mercer student is the most neglected of any accredited college registrant in the United States. And the result is truly a mistake of omission for which Mercer students have to suffer. Academic requirements have reached the stage where class attendance, prompt attention to class assignments and chapel attendance are all that is necessary.

No real effort is made to bring lecturers to the campus, or to encourage participation in the cultural side of Macon life. Yet, feeble attempts towards bringing speakers to the campus have shown that students would support such projects. Consider the case of Prof. Carleton Brown, the NYU Chaucerian authority. Lacking a platform style and more of a scholar than a speaker, he still managed to draw a sizeable crowd in Willingham chapel. The prospects for a lecturer who is both scholar and speaker are excellent.

The excuse for the absence of such visiting speakers on the campus probably is the old reliable: lack of money. We believe that students would be willing to hear such speakers, if the money was collected in a painless way. None of us here are rich, but all of us are guilty of throwing away a certain amount of money. The tuition could be hiked to include a lecture fee and a ticket to the community concert.

College is, after all, something more than class attendance on one hand or a round of social activities on the other. Not all education is picked up from books or in classrooms. Knowledge which stays with us longer and has more value is probably acquired unknowingly.—J. C.

It's Your Funeral

Examinations are just around the corner for all of us. There can be no better time than the present to make a true honor system work. Which doesn't mean that the student has to neglect his own exams in an effort to catch some rogue cheating. On the contrary, since we do not have any semblance of an honor code, we would not advocate reporting on a student if he came to exams with a collapsible Encyclopedia Britannica up his or her sleeve.

Since we have no honor code, every student can decide to place this quarter's exams strictly on an honor without code basis. Which leaves it up to the inner, individual self. If you want to cheat and can beat the prof at his policeman's game, go ahead. If you want to pull a parrott act and give the teacher back on exams nothing more than what he imparted to you, go ahead.

If you think that all your courses are just games of chance in which you try to see how little you can do and still not get caught, go ahead.

You're the sucker and it's your funeral.—J. C.

AROUND the SQUARE

With MARGARET ZEIGLER

We Detect a Similarity

In the office a hustling few not yet showing symptoms of spring fever were avidly absorbing the contents of the Feb. 28 issue of The Gamecock, student publication of the University of South Carolina. The same foul smell that Mercer is cursed with these balmy months seems to have descended on our sister institution—referring to campus politics.

To quote a Mercerian quoting from a letter to the editor of The Gamecock:

"To what can one attribute the . . . cute tricks and cheap artifices of the campus politicians? . . . Rather than take an intelligent interest in politics, the students allow themselves to be led by the nose . . . Into politics we breed a spirit of . . . Machiavellian intrigue, log-rolling and horse swapping, and the glorification of ye olde double-cross."

Maybe it's all in fun, as one earnest and political-minded senior told me.

The Spirit of the Institution

"Of course I'm slunking," he said matter-of-factly. "I always am at this time of the quarter. But a few days before finals I'll do some high voltage cramming and get on top again."

Two-thirds of the Junior Year--pfft!

Just one more quarter to this year, but the past two are crowded with unforgettable incidents:

During a lecture by a popular instructor who just can't resist discussing politics (national), said instructor made a statement that hit a petite dark-haired, green-eyed, jitterbugging junior as a definitely questionable observation.

"Nonsense!" she exclaimed heartily, much to the amusement of the class and mystification of the professor.

In another rather informal class, a certain editor made a practice of sitting Buddha-like in his hard, uncomfortable chair. Once, in a very, very slack moment, a co-ed was heard to sigh audibly for a cigaret. The Buddha gravely proffered his tin of roll-your-own and a neat little package of fag tissues.

What? Oh, yeah. She took it. And the startling discovery that the blonde Deacon of the Old Southern Order has tendencies to make faintly ungentleman-like remarks.

Lemuel Libel Finds Love Endures Throughout Exams

Even though finals and the always-hoped-for Spring quarter are staring us in the face some of the stewdents persist in letting their hearts lightly turn to thoughts of love, mush, goo, or what have you.

Cluster money-manager-purely-on-a-friendly-basis Evelyn Neel seems to be in the lead among Cupid's Couplets. She and that esquireish shyster, Quenton Plunkett, went on a 13-hour date last week. We also understand that he's taking her to Charleston to meet his brother who, incidentally, is married to the sister of Plunkett's homecoming date. (I refer to fidgety, sighish, Hoveyou-ish Charlotte Sewell.)

And speaking of trips, petite, innocent and demure Alice Wright is going to Louisville, Ky., to visit ex-Mercerian Tuck Callaway. What do you suppose Billy Thames thinks about this?

The campus now realizes that B. B. Buckshot-stick-'em-up movie goer, reader of western magazines Bailey Florence thinks enough of the oft discussed Sarah Harnesberger to take her home for the week-end to visit his family. Incidentally, who has your fraternity pin, Bailey? Or should we say fraternity pins? Congratulations to Army-Navy Ann Millican. She seems to be

timing her maneuvers just perfectly these days, with Navy flier Felder Barfield having just taken off, and Fort Benning officer Bob Jones just arriving. Too bad she can't have Anne Walthall's Marine.

What is Lee Wood's fatal fascination these days? Dot Kilgore's eyes rest longingly on his pin while adolescent Rosalie Jones spends many happy hours running errands for him. (PS: Rosalie you are in college now. Is that bear absolutely necessary?)

Rollicking, frolicking Fields Varner has been chosen to head the Phi Mu formal with President Leanita Blount, March 28. Doesn't this nearly kill you, John Couric? And just to think she asked him weeks ago.

Until next quarter when I'll begin speculating on who will share the spotlight with Pan-Hel Prexy Malcolm Thomas at the Little Commencement light fantastic tripping, I'll have to say so long.

IN THE CRUCIBLE

By FRED SHEARER

IT WILL not be long before Mercer students will be wearing dissipated faces with sagging muscles, reddened eyes, bags under the eyes; dissipated faces which will be indicative that the Sabre Toothed Monster is getting his full revenge.

It is interesting to note, in passing, that although the final exam is used as a basis for failing a student, it cannot in every case be used as a basis for passing him. We refer to the 16 cuts rule.

If a student can pass the final exam, why shouldn't he be given credit for the course, regardless of the number of classes he has

attended. If he can pass the exam without attending any classes, so much the better. He knows the course according to the university's own criterion. Why shouldn't he receive credit for the course?

MANY CO-EDS are complaining that the campus is deficient in illumination at night. They say that they are afraid to enter the campus via the front because of the absence of lighting.

They are also afraid to walk from the girls' dormitory across the campus to the library for the same reason.

We hope that steps to remedy this problem will be taken immediately.

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.)

ITINERANTS Progress always makes Mercersians a little uneasy, if not directly antipathetic. Just cause? I think so, maybe, when it drives us out of the accustomed classrooms we've been sleeping in for years and years.

A priori cause of today's outburst is the sight we've all experienced the past week, of classes meekly following a bemused instructor to a different room, because his is in repair, or because the hammering upstairs disturbs his train of thought. Like tribes of desert nomads, a half-dozen or so of such bewildered groups may be seen every hour nowadays, searching for a place to camp and court Morpheus. One never knows, any more, whether his next hour's ensconcement will be a shiny new chair-with-writing-arm or a primary-school desk, vintage 1858.

This kind of thing is very conducive to getting misplaced somewhere in the moving around, several students report. Any time now, the whole campus may just fold up its tents like the Arabs, and as silently steal away.

BOCK (The following is reprinted from this column of February 23, 1940, and holds good today, the only difference this year being a matter of seven cents so far):

"Last Thursday . . . a strange and thrilling cry rang o'er our campus. Starting as a quiet exchange of rumor between a couple of students, it spread like wildfire and gained volume perceptibly hour to hour, until, late in the afternoon, it took on the proportions and excitement you might expect only from a declaration of war.

"Bock is back!" resounded throughout the dormitories. 'Bock is back!'—the exultant cry rang through the co-op welkin. Then the concerted rush downtown—to find every refuge crowded with revelers, anxious hands reaching for the glorious nectar.

"Experts exchanged comment: 'It's a little darker this year, don't you think?' 'Somewhat earlier than usual too, I believe.' 'Only one brand out so far?' 'Yes, but there'll be more—it's impossible to saturate the bock market!'"

DEMOCRACY Couple of politically-minded co-eds were parked in front of Chichester's yesterday when I happened by. Found them reviewing past elections, and wishing there were some way to make balloting absolutely secret, that an individual voter's ballot could be inviolate to all eyes.

About this time of year many legends circulate as to fraternity disbarments, etc., which resulted from a person's not-so-straight ticket being discovered by exacerbated brethren. I think most of these stories are apocryphal. It is true, however, as the girls remarked, that those things get around somehow.

To this column undemocratic balloting is only symptomatic of a more significant trend: dirty elections. If they get no dirtier, certainly they get no cleaner. A strictly accountable election committee functioning not only at the polls but on the campus also, might be the answer, in conculcating none of the fun of student politics while at the same time counteracting totalitarian methods. What say?

CLIMAX Climax of the honor system discussion which has waxed and waned and waxed again in most cycloid manner for the past few months is about at hand.

A group of seniors, some Blue Keys and others not, hit bed-rock on the matter in a session at Steal-away hall (co-op) only this morning. Virtually all Mercersians agree, even with some misgivings among a few, on the admirable practicality of the B-K plan. However, should rules mentioning specific offenses like cheating, lying, stealing, drinking, and so on ad nauseam be added to the proposal, or not? This is the real crux of the honor system argument, and unfortunately one on which the campus appears about evenly separated.

After reviewing all issues, I shall (in case anyone is interested) vote for the proposed honor system, for I feel that, imperfect as it is, it fills a crying need in our college community.



GOLDGAR