

The Mercer Cluster

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Dictator Methods

We wish to outline a few of the things that Mercer has ordered.

- 1) Mercer has prohibited any form of dancing on the campus.
- 2) Mercer has prohibited any type of card-playing in the student Co-op, or fraternity suites.
- 3) Mercer has made rulings to the effect that no girls shall smoke in the student Co-op.
- 4) Mercer has removed the record playing machine from the student Co-op.

We have made this partial list without any attempt to say whether the items are right or wrong. It is not so much what has been done, as the manner in which it has been done. Each and every one of these regulations was made without consulting the student body. The students were never given the opportunity to express their views. Is this a fair method of procedure in a democracy?

It might be stated that students knew of these regulations before they entered Mercer and did not need to enroll. However, we wish to bring to light the fact that there are over three hundred men, including V-12 and V-5, who are not on the campus by their own free will. What sort of an impression is Mercer trying to create among these men?

Many of these men had never even heard of Mercer before they were given their orders to report here. After having stayed here, how many of them will wish to return after the war, in order to complete their schooling at Mercer? How many of them will recommend Mercer as a good school? From our own personal interviews, the percentage is extremely low. What is the trouble? Do you not agree that Mercer should be building up good-will now, so that she may prosper in peace time? Is she succeeding in such an endeavor as long as she is creating ill will among these service men? We may also state, without fear of being contradicted, that a great many of the co-eds are not at all satisfied with the manner in which Mercer is being operated.

However, to be perfectly frank, we wish to say that some of the students are pleased with the manner in which Mercer is being run. But we are concerned with the great majority of students. They are the ones who should govern the school, by the American democratic ideal of majority rule.

We have been told that the Mercer faculty and administration is not to blame for these conditions. We have been told that it is the Georgia Baptists who are behind them. We do not wish to argue that point, but whoever you may be, wherever you are, you who are behind these movements, listen to these words:

When religion is forced upon one, it ceases to be religion. Religion is something that should come from within. True, we should have spiritual guidance—but it should be in the form of a helping hand, not in the form of a forcing hand. We say that Mercer has been trying to force religion upon us. She has been trying to cram it down our throats by these dictator-like methods. Yes, we say dictator-like because never have the students been given an opportunity to vote for what they wanted. These students are old enough to know what they want. Mercer is supposed to be training them for life, but how can she give them a complete preparation without giving them an opportunity to manage their own affairs?

Does Mercer plan on ruling her students with an iron hand while they are in school and then throw them out into life without any background in self-government?

At the present time Mercer is only defeating her own purpose by these methods. She is causing a great deal of resentment among her students. The best possible solution is an active, real student government in which each and every student is given an opportunity to express his views. Let the students themselves determine such rulings as we have previously mentioned. Or is Mercer afraid to accept this challenge?

In Other Words

By Mike Warr

ROMANCE ON THE BUS—

It was three o'clock in the afternoon, and the Bellevue bus was crowded (as usual). But the time of day and the crowd made not the slightest difference to one love-sick couple.

She was sitting next to the window—at an angle. The soldier was sitting at the same angle with his feet in the aisle and his head on her soft shoulder. Her arm was draped around his neck not very gracefully. Left turns made everything very cozy indeed. And from time to time the T-model corporal would turn his head and bite her hand gently, as she giggled gleefully.

These soldiers really make the most of their furloughs! They lose no time.

ROMANCE WITH ONE FOOT IN THE GRAVE—

A few days ago there was an article in the paper about a sprightly old negro who took unto himself a new wife. He gave his age as a mere 113. The object of his affections said she was 52. He practically robbed the cradle!

It was the second venture of the colored brother on the sea of matrimony. He had previously been married for 60 years, and is the proud papa of 16 children. His second mate's name is—of all things—Icey Bride!

POCKET CHANGE VS. NATIONAL DEBT—

According to reports from the Treasury Department, each citizen of these United States carries around an average of \$150 in his trousers. After taking a look at my billfold, I am sure that I must be far below the average. It means also that somebody else must be carrying around \$299.98.

This might sound like American citizens are standing at the end of the rainbow with the pot o' gold in hand. But Mr. Per Capita, however, is not in such good shape after all. It so happens that his share of the public debt is \$1,203.71, which means that he must acquire more pocket change some place.

HYSTERICAL HITLER—

I imagine Adolf finds it quite difficult to sleep nights. The Berlin bombing disturbs him no little, as he seeks a rendezvous with the sand-man. But the most disturbing thing in the life of the former paper-hanger is the rapidly approaching armies of Joe Stalin.

The fuhrer is hoping that British and American armies will get him first, I am sure. For we shall simply move him over to the luxurious castle at Dootn, formerly occupied by the Kaiser. But if Uncle Joe gets him, look out! And that is why I think Mr. Hitler is having nightmares about now.

Madder Music

By Joe Harrison

Not once in this column have I entered into a single domestic quarrel, although from time to time much pressure has been brought to bear on me to quarrel about many things—from "Why don't we have dances at Mercer?" to "Why do we get 'blended' instead of whole milk?" Even now I do not intend to mention a single instance, namely, the removal of the Nickelodeon from the Co-op, but instead, I want to try to find the reasons for the apparently unhealthy mental attitudes of a certain pharisaical minority group which has brought about many "reforms" on the campus in the last six months. I am reluctant to do this, for the obvious reason that one should always be reluctant to make enemies, but on the other hand, since I have complete freedom of subject matter, I should consider myself dishonest if I were to try to evade or avoid the subject which is foremost in my mind at this writing.

I cannot fathom how men who, aspiring to follow in the footsteps of Christ, Christ the noble, the honorable, the magnanimous; Christ the doer of good deeds; the man who never once allowed Himself to be victim to a trifling thought or ungenerous act, can be so mawkishly petty in their interpretations of His work and message. There was only one person on whom Christ was relentless in His righteous wrath—the petty, self-satisfied, race-prejudiced Pharisees. Not once did He say a mean or unkind thing, even, about the people who, through fear or weakness, left Him, one after another—His family, the multitude, even His disciples. But there was no matching His indignation when He turned on the self-righteous.

Christ didn't ever seem to have time for wrathful work against the unbelievers. He was too busy doing "plus" miracles to bother about "minus" miracles, even at the insistence of His disciples, who often implored Him to work miracles of vengeance on His enemies. Christ, by the very nature of His work—His love for the multitude, the weak, the lowly, the common man; His belief in the basic equality of men—was the enemy of many, but He knew no enemies.

Amos convinced his people that there was only ONE God. Later, Moses added to this that this God was a JUST God. But Christ made the most profound revelation to the Christian peoples—that God is LOVE. Jesus said that the lowliest could look to Him, face to face, eye to eye, for strength and guidance; that He was the spiritual father of all mankind.

It is true that Christ worked feverishly for three years to teach His disciples His revolutionary principles and ideals, and that He died, uncertain whether they understood Him or not. But now, with the story of His life and their lives in much detail before us, His methods should be obvious, especially to those who, presumably, have made a detailed study of His life, and intend to teach others about Him.

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Strictly From Hunger

By Floyd Wade

America's taste for humor is as varied as there are comedians. Following the trend set by my colleagues last week, I am letting this week's column write itself. Bob Benchley was the instigator, and it was lifted from one of his books titled *My Ten Years In a Quandary*, and *How They Grew*. For those of you who do not like it, I recommend Abbott and Costello, or the collected poems of Archibald MacLeish.

"One of the eight things which are supposed to be wrong with the present generation of adults (not including the mere fact of being in the present generation of adults, which is no small handicap in itself) is that we didn't learn about the science of physics when we were young. Well, it might as well be that as anything.

"All of this is being remedied in the coming generation, thanks to the model laboratories where children are being taught to do little tricks which involve the principle of light refraction and the coefficient of linear expansion. The best of it is that they don't know that they are being taught anything. They just think they're playing with eggs and matches.

"Here is a list of problems which any kiddie in the modern laboratory can do. It is printed in the paper under the heading: 'Mr. Grown-Up, Can You Do These Things?' Well, 'Mr. Grown-Up' isn't my name, in the first place. And I can do these things, in the second. I may mess things up a little, but I'll get them done somehow. No child of six is going to get ahead of me.

"1. Can you place a shelled, hard-boiled egg in the mouth of a milk bottle, and, without touching it, cause it to plop into the bottle?

"Sure I can. I haven't figured it out yet, but I'll do it if I have to use a robin's egg. (Ha-ha—you hadn't thought of that, had you, Mr. Six-Year-Old?)

"2. Tell why a stick, placed in water at an angle, appears to be bent at the surface.

"What makes you think it does? (That's telling 'em, eh, Fat Lady?)

"3. Produce a series of sounds like chimes with a piece of string and a teaspoon.

"Hit the teaspoon repeatedly with the piece of string until it does give off a series of sounds like chimes. This is just a matter of perseverance. It may take quite a while, but before long you'll kid yourself into thinking you hear chimes, whether you do or not. What's so great about chimes, anyway?

"4. Make innumerable images of one object with two mirrors.

"That's easy.

"5. Tell why a balloon, only partly inflated, will apparently fill up when held tightly over the top of a milk bottle filled with steam.

"Because it does fill up. You didn't expect me to fall backward at that one, did you?

"6. Make a lighted candle seem to be burning inside a glass of water.

"Place the candle inside the glass of water and light it.

"Well, that cleans up Mr. Grown-Up's part of the examination. Now we'll ask Mr. Six-Year-Old some questions.

"1. A man leaves his home in the morning to go to work. An hour later he is found back in his own bed with a nasty scalp wound. His clothes are folded neatly over a chair. He is unable to talk, but a colored man, who is in bed with him, also with a bad scalp wound, says that he doesn't know who his buddy is, having never seen him before. The police arrest the housekeeper. Why?

"Answer: Because she was a notorious counterfeiter.

"2. How does an author work when he has been put in a straight-jacket by relatives?

"This question is answered by Germer C. Arsh, author of *Brimmer Grows a Goatee and Other Sonnets*, to be published in the fall by the Aesopagus Press. 'I just lie there and think very hard,' he says, 'and pretty soon the book is written by my sister.'

CLUSTER POLICY

"We are the sum of all the moments of our lives . . ."—Thomas Wolfe

It shall be the policy of the Mercer Cluster to record these moments honestly, focusing upon them without distortion.