

The Cluster

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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 them without distortion.

Respect To Colors

In recent weeks the civilian students of Mercer have become extremely careless in their attitude toward the national emblem. This has been true both in the morning raising of the flag and in the evening retreat ceremonies. The students should realize that proper respect to the flag is an outward display of an inner patriotic feeling and, as such, should be considered very important. Enough cannot be said to stress this fact upon all Americans.

The procedure to follow is very simple. Men who are wearing hats should take them off, cover their hearts and stand at attention facing the flag. Men without hats should simply stand at attention in the direction of the flag. Women should put their right hands over their hearts and face the flag at attention. It is the sincere hope of the CLUSTER that everyone on the campus will display proper respect to the flag from now on.

Concert Series

During the winter trimester of 1943-1944, a series of three musical concerts was held at Mercer University. The purpose of this series was to promote the cultural development of Mercer men and women. The concerts began well enough with the charming and talented lyric soprano Florence Manning, who delighted her audience with a very pleasing program, well selected and performed. After her appearance, music lovers on the campus began to have hopes that the artists would all prove to be of a high caliber. But the second performer appeared and all such hopes were removed. The lady who sang in that concert was a very nice person, but she had no business singing in public. The same thing was true of the third artist who came to the campus to sing. By the time this performance was over, even the thought of hearing another, such program was almost unbearable to Mercerians.

This venture into the realm of music was far from a success, but there is a logical explanation for its failure. It was due directly to the inferior type of artists who participated in the series. If Mercer would bring a group of talented musicians to the campus, she could easily have a very successful series.

We have made a study of the Mercer facilities which could be used for a group of concerts. The chapel stage is fairly large, has excellent lighting effects and a new set of the finest sound equipment. The seating capacity of the chapel is approximately 750. Macon buses provide an easy means of transportation to Mercer for city people who are interested in concert music. With this in mind, we can easily see that Mercer is possessed of adequate facilities for putting on a series of high ranking musical concerts.

In order to make the proposed concerts a success, Mercer must employ publicity to the limit in order to get the fullest support from her students and Macon people. Students could be given tickets at the rate of about \$1.50 a performance, an amount which could be made a part of the student activity fee. Macon people interested in attending could be charged approximately \$2.50 per concert. If 500 students and 250 Macon people came to the programs, a gross intake of \$1375 could be realized. We feel quite certain that very outstanding artists could be secured with this amount of money.

The accomplishment of an undertaking of this sort would not be a very difficult task, if it were properly managed. We are certain that there are 250 citizens interested in cultural music in a city that has swollen to a population of about 100,000 since the outbreak of war. Now is the time for action to be taken so that famous men and women of the musical world can be brought to Mercer this winter to add more prestige to her. With sufficient planning, Mercer could have concerts of which she could be deeply proud.

Harrison Pens A Short Note To Bob Banks

[The following letter was sent to the CLUSTER by Joe Harrison, a former V-12 sailor at Mercer, who wrote the column "Madder Music," which appeared last winter in the CLUSTER.—Editor.]

Dear Bob Banks:

You know I'm always good for a few thousand words. I would have written this last night, but the lingering fragrance of gardenias and the stardust around my ankles was too much.

As well as I can remember this is the first time I have pecked at a typewriter since I left Mercer . . . oh well, except for two articles I sent to "The Pathfinder" and one to "Physical Culture Magazine." But I know my old friend Bob Banks won't send me a rejection slip . . .

Suppose I tell you where I've been since I left this land of plenty. In the first place, I went through Midshipmen's School in Plattsburg, New York, a sort of provincial's Siberia. They have two seasons there—winter and July . . . I left the twenty-seventh of June. The only colorful thing that happened at this Brothel for Bluejackets was a variety show we staged. It ran two shows a night for three nights. The rehearsals were wonderful. They got me out of two mess details, a stable detail (the army took everything when it left except those stinkin' horses) and a mid watch. In this show I sang a little (gravel-voiced, of course), played a little, boogied a little, and succeeded in being my usual gay, thyroid, corny self . . . Well, I had a good time. After each performance the erstwhile Mickey Rooney fans, the Jailbait Janes, would come running backstage and we would go through the usual autograph routine . . . but I would finally make them take mine. The real reason for my success was that they introduced me as straight from an eight-month run at the "Victory Amuse-U."

At Plattsburg, Wade and I ran into a very close friend of Bill Saroyan. At all times he kept in his possession every word Saroyan had written. We sat around and read Saroyan and burned candles. After much meditation and contemplation the impossible happened; we received our commissions. This must be total war! The navy is desperate! . . . "at the bottom of the barrel," so to speak.

After midshipmen's school I went on a wonderful leave. It would be impossible to describe here, so I'll tell you about going to Recognition School, NTS, OSU, Columbus, Ohio. You know, instantaneous identification of aircraft and ships. Man, what a course! After two weeks there my eyes looked as though they were sewed in with red thread . . . and it wasn't caused altogether by the all-night liberty. It's terrible when you feel yourself going blind. However, everything was taken care of just before I left. They issued me a "Seeing Eye" dog. This is a wonderful dog. Before I got him he belonged to a South American diplomat. You should see him dance the rumba to "Anchors Aweigh," with an anchor-shaped bone in his mouth.

Well, Bob, somebody just invited me down to the gym for a workout. That is too much. I am leaving.

As you know, I am going to sea, so when you think of me, burn a candle to me in some great cathedral—burn it at both ends, of course. Total.
 JOE

The FORUM

Fisher Craft, Editor

The V-12 Unit Has Made What Changes To Mercer?

The coming of the Naval V-12 program to Mercer has brought many changes to the campus. Certainly the influx of students from other parts of the country has made Mercer a more cosmopolitan school. Ideas brought by the naval students from other colleges will surely leave their imprint here.

The opinions expressed on this subject are those of people who were at Mercer before the arrival of the naval students.

Dr. John Dixon

Dr. John Dixon, vice president of Mercer, thinks that the naval program has contributed several things. "The concepts and impressions that the naval program has created will become a permanent part of Mercer. The sailors are better housekeepers than the average student, a thing which not only teaches them orderliness, but provides better care of school property. The naval V-12 program has placed a new emphasis on the basic college subjects, English, history, and particularly physics and mathematics.

"It has raised the question as to whether the maximum load of studies in the past has been heavy enough. The increased loads carried by the sailors will probably influence Mercer's post war plans, though the needs of the returning servicemen will be the chief consideration. Mercer might learn a lesson from the frank and blunt way in which men who are not qualified and who do not take advantage of their opportunities are removed from the program."

Larry Schwartz

Larry Schwartz, Mercer junior, believes that the navy has contributed to the school spirit of Mercer. "Before the navy came to Mercer this school had students principally from the southern states. When the navy arrived there were boys from all over the United States. These boys brought different accents, different ideas and many ways that have improved the life on the campus. Many of these boys went to colleges in their own home state. They probably had a good school spirit and a more rounded college

life than Mercer. When they came here they brought to us a renewed interest in school spirit.

"On the sport side, the navy has introduced a good physical training program, and the different sports have brought the sailors and civilians closer together. When the inter-collegiate sport, basketball, was in progress last year, the navy supported this team more than the civilians did. What do we want to do, just sit back and let the navy support our team and the civilians go to the picture show or sleep through it while it is going on?"

"The navy has made a definite improvement in Mercer, and it deserves a great deal of credit."

Miss Byrd Horton

Miss Byrd Horton, Mercer senior, feels that the naval program has carried Mercer over a crucial period in its history. "It seems to me, a student who completed her freshman year at a civilian Mercer, that the Naval V-12 program came to Mercer in a time of need. Many of the students were leaving for the armed services and for work that seemed in the crucial moment more vital than college studies. The morale of the Mercer students seemed to be at a very low level during the winter quarter of 1943.

"The fraternities would necessarily be off the campus now if it were not for the 'sailor brothers.' The classes have been filled since the summer of 1943 with navy men, whose determined and interested attitude toward their school work has raised the standard of grades. When the war is over and the navy leaves, Mercer will go back to her old way of life, but the sailors will be missed, and perhaps the navy in itself will have made it possible for Mercer to live again."

Fourteen Months

Ex Cluster Editor Thinks Back Over His Days At Old Mercer U.

By TOM PARKER

The modified taxi came to a watery halt in front of a superannuated building. It was July of 1943.

"Hey, Mac, what's the matter with you? I wanted Mercer University—not the ole ladies' shack. Are youse polluted or somethin'?"

"This IS Mercer, friend," the driver replied, "and for fifty cents hard cash, I'll be delighted to let yosef get well acquainted, suh."

"Well—what youse know? Shoiman must've missed it; or maybe he jest couldn't jive the jernit. Anyways, there's one ting—if I ever wanted to give the world an enema, I'd know where to start, eh Mac? Pretty funny, get it? Well, here's your four bits, anyway."

The taxi drove off. The newcomer "came aboard," although at the time he thought he was just walking in. At any rate, five stripes of navy sat watch.

"Well, how are youse, sarg? Where do I park this sack of carbon and start carvin' this jernit . . . ?"

And so the V-12 was off to a punchy start at Mercer U. This was obviously fourteen months ago. Time changes everything. We know better now, so we act like "officers and gentlemen" (by act of Congress), but we've had one helluva adventure learning it all. For example . . .

First month was awful—second, worse. Thought the world was "ag'in" us. Lots of runnin' around like a burnt hen. Our confusion was mutual. Brown uniforms pointin' at white things and sayin', "you wear these"—we did. As a matter of fact, one fellow wore a jumper for ten days which fitted well around the knees 'fore he got enough nerve to swap.

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