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Staff photo by Lowrance

Tommy Storey, president of SGA, presents gift from student body to Dean Burts who has accepted a position with Davidson College.

## Quo Vadis

MAIORELLO

Well, now that Commander Shepard has gone on his jaunt into space and returned, amid much fanfare and hoop-la, the United States can claim to have beaten Russia at its own game—the propaganda game. Ever since the Russians launched Sputnik I in October, 1957, they have crowed to the world about the magnificence of Soviet scientific accomplishments and ridiculed (with some justification) the American attempts propaganda has had a great effect on American to catch up in the race for space. And the Soviet prestige, or rather the lack of American prestige.

But despite the spectacular achievements of Soviet sputniks and Luniks and the most recent Soviet hero, Major Gagarin, the truth is that the United States is actually contributing far more to scientific knowledge and understanding of the mysteries of space flight than is Russia. The Soviets have of course, been there first with the most, and may continue there for some time.

The main difference in the space efforts of the two powers thus far had been that the Soviet concentrated on larger payloads and more powerful rockets, while the United States has emphasized the gleaning of data through its superiority in micro-instruments. And while we have probably been more successful in our efforts than the Soviets in theirs, people all over the world are more impressed by a five-ton satellite than by a ninety-pound satellite, even though the smaller one may have more effective instruments for recording and transmitting data from space.

But what good has our scientific dedication done us? We kept losing ground (at least in the eyes of the public). So apparently the answer lies, not in developing scientifically perfect devices, but in giving better publicity to the ones we now have. For example, take our Explorer XI—a satellite containing a space telescope which will be used to map the distribution of gamma rays from cosmic sources in space. Explorer XI will

continue to transmit this invaluable information for about three years. But almost nobody is even aware of this astounding feat, because the Russians sent a man into orbit three times around the world and brought him safely back without gaining any new knowledge, except that it could be done. But then we dimmed Major Gagarin's deed by sending a man into a sub-orbital flight which actually was far less of a scientific accomplishment than the flight of Gagarin. But by giving it the proper publicity before and after the flight the United States had, while not actually catching up in the space race, at least showed that there still is a race.

This leads to the disquieting suspicion that in order for one nation to win the space race it must do less than the other but make a bigger play on the propaganda circuit. This is not a new idea, either, for in 1956 Dr. Von Braun suggested a sub-orbital flight which could have pre-dated Gagarin by a year. The idea was shelved by space officials as a "stunt." But certainly it could not have been a bigger stunt than the one-half million dollar circus just ended at Cape Canaveral. And yet, while we learned less from this stunt than from any of our previous shots, we gained more on the diplomatic front than a dozen scientific successes would have done.

Where all this will end is hard to say. The next Soviet feat may be to send a ten-ton rocket to the moon and back, whereupon we may launch a non-sub-orbital rocket into the Florida skies amidst the loud beating of the publicity drum and thereby once again eclipse the Russians' deeds. The culmination of this may be when our rocketry center is moved from Huntsville to Madison Avenue, and the Soviets in spite of blasting the Kremlin into orbit will admit defeat when we shoot the entire Ed Sullivan show into a well-publicized sub-orbital flight over the Caribbean.

## Granger Ricks

## Swinger of Burches

After listening to the last remarks of a student, whose mind had been recently emancipated from all the prejudices of his childhood, I took my leave rather boredly and started upstairs to bed. I was bored because I had heard nothing for the past week but talk of the John Burch society, the heresy trials, and the newly formed NAACP. Besides, the nagging toothache that had been my companion for the last couple of days had decided that I should see a dentist; it stood screaming at me.

The next morning I was awakened simultaneously by both my tormentors of the previous week. The tooth, by this time, was jaring my whole body, and an enthusiastic student stood over me reading excitedly about Mercer from an article in the local newspaper. All the irritating words were there: John Burch, The Patriot, heresy, Christianity department, dragon-tail twister. I spat out a few words of abuse at the reader, which were ignored, and staggered painfully out of my room to find a dentist.

I noticed nothing as I was ushered into the dentist's office, except the strong odor of iodine that hung about the aged dentist. I wondered if he had been drinking it.

"Come in young man," he said in a loud overly friendly tone with a sadistic cackle. "You gotta toothache?" I started to say no, that I had merely dropped in to solicit his membership in the John Burch society, but my nerve failed. I shivered and answered yes.

"Which one is it?" After sitting down in the chair, I indicated one of my lower left jawteeth, the one with the silver of which I was proudest. He thumped it and said, "That's gotta come out."

He reached for the needle, and it was only after he had perforated my gum with hundreds of minute holes that I noticed his hands were shaking.

As we sat around waiting for my jaw to die, he began to inquire into my personal life.

"You go to school, sonny?"

"Yes Mr.," I replied, "More or less."

"Where's that?"

"Mercer," I boasted, not pausing to think. He pounced on the name like a wild beast.

"Mercer! Are you mixed up in any of that stuff that's going on out there?" Fear rose in my heart, and tortured recollections of recent conversations passed through my mind.

"You mean all those new sidewalks they're building out there," I threw out, but not very hopefully.

"No! he shouted, "All that stuff the paper's full of." I began to feel nauseated. "About all them communistic professors that formed that club to attack that patriotic young fellow, who wrote that thing about John Burch."

Gagging I told him that I was not a member of the professor's communistic club, but that I was in an organization that had planned to bring these faculty members before a tribunal justice. He made no comment about this at the time, but began to dance excitedly around the chair in which I was sitting and continued his piercing jabber.

"I know that Bill Glover," he said, shaking his fist. "I used to belong to his church until he had me kicked out. I don't know any of the rest, do you? How about this Brewster fellow, Swinger of Burches, I believe that's what he's called!"

I answered that I indeed knew the Swinger of Burches, but that most of the students preferred to call him by his initials, SOB.

"How about my tooth now, Doc," I asked.

"Oh yes," he said, bringing his war dance to an end. "How does your face feel?"

"Like ginger ale," I replied.

He reached for his instruments, propped open my mouth, grasped my tooth with his pliers, and began to tug.

The pain was intense. Mentally I began to insult his mother in theological terms. The pain swelled and heightened in intensity. My mind spun around in an ever-shortening circle until it crashed against the story center.

As I regained consciousness, I was aware of a burning boring sensation in the place where my beloved molar had stood, and the infernal continued questionings of the sadist.

"When do these professors come up for trial," he demanded. I told him that we had planned the middle of May, but that we had to call it off because we didn't have enough money to go through with it.

On hearing this, he reached in his moneybox and pulled out a ten spot, and pressed it into my hand. I began to feel better.

"over there?"

"Listen," he said, as I arose to go, "do the still teach those false doctrines about Christ?"

"No," I reassured him, "They never mention his name."

As I was leaving, the pretty little nurse, who went unnoticed by me as I entered, squeezed my hand, and laughed impishly. It was worth it all.

## We Called Him Friend

Dean Richard C. Burts received a clock radio, a three clause resolution of appreciation from the student body and a twenty-five minute "review" of a day in his life at Mercer. The program was delightfully entertaining, the clock radio in good working order and the student resolution improved by the suggestion of a member of the English department, but somehow we are left with the strained awareness of our inability to handle the situation of Dean Burts' departure from Mercer.

How do you pay tribute to a man who has been Dean of Men and Dean of Students and who has through it all retained an incredible amount of student respect and affection.

We seldom analyze why we like a professor or an official of the university. Rather, such a one is simply despised or ignored or liked. In our unfairness we are concerned with the ability of a man to reconcile his knowledge and capacities to our wayward stabs in the intellectual community and to reconcile his ideas of society to our demands for an artificial world where we can squeeze in all the activities and practices which we brought from high school and shall take to Milledgeville. Above all, we demand that such a person possess the rare quality of being able to support a professor who we are sure is dead wrong or to require that we come to summer school, 1961, when we had planned to graduate June, 1961—yet to sustain his decision with a soft grace of concern. Such a man, even if he is dean, is sometimes called a friend of the student body.

The student body is an unpredictable, passive, somewhat cynical group with a few isolated, over-enthusiastic members. We have to be so to retain respect of our contemporaries and a negative sort of sanity that alone can take us through four years at a university. We label deans and professors because we can play the authoritarian when we bestow labels. Professors and deans have all the records and the final decisions but we bestow the labels.

We have given him a chapel program, a clock radio and a resolution but most of all we have given him a label. We would have him carry it with a deep sense of awareness when he leaves us to go to Davidson. We have given resolutions before and we will prepare chapel programs honoring other men; we will give the change in our pockets for other gifts, but our special label we confer with discretion. We have called him "friend" because he is a remarkable blend of the remarkable with the remarkable.

## LETTERS

May 9, 1961

Dear Seniors:

I wish to make a final appeal to you to support our class Gift Fund. As you know from my letter, we hope to be able to give Mercer a substantial sum when we meet for our 25th anniversary in 1986. The present thought is in terms of \$25,000.

Our contributions will be invested in a life insurance policy. For every \$150.00 we invest we will have \$10,000 worth of insurance. You can see that we can certainly go beyond the \$25,000 mark if there is enough cooperation on the part of the entire class.

At the time of this writing I have received \$300.00 in pledges. This sum has been offered by a total of 37 seniors. It is evident that there is little cooperation on the part of many since our class has 238 members. Since there is no minimum, I urge each senior to participate regardless of amount. It will be very meaningful to you in years to come.

This is our last chance to function as a class. Let's make an admirable showing—to be copied by classes to come.

L. E. Brown