

The Ring-tum Phi

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY'S WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

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Students rock vote, W&L stays home

Though many W&L student voters chose to stay away from voting booths, general turnout was high

By Polly Doig
NEWS EDITOR

Last Tuesday's elections brought more than a few surprises: a former professional wrestler assumed the title of Governor in Minnesota, incumbent Sen. Al D'Amato of New York was finally unseated, and the "Lost Generation" turned out in record numbers.

According to an election night poll conducted by the National Student Campaign for Voter Registration (NSCVR), about 60 percent of American students turned out to exercise their right to vote.

"Students have smashed the slacker myth," NSCVR president Ivan Frishberg said. "Counter to the conventional wisdom, students are registered and voting in greater numbers than the population as a whole."

The poll found that 72 percent of students are registered to vote, compared to 63.8 percent of the general population. An estimated 48 percent of these voted in this year's election, compared to 36.6 percent of the general population during the 1994 midterm election.

These numbers are unusually high for an age group that has been known for its apathy and low participation in elections.

At Washington and Lee University, however, national student voting trends did not seem to hold much water. In very unofficial "polls" taken by professors in class, only a handful of people had voted.

"We're a national school, and I think that kind of hurts us," said Young Democrats President Jason Hahn. "Students come from all over the country, but are not permitted to vote here, so they have to vote by absentee ballot at home."

Admittedly, contacting the county board of elections at home and filling out an absentee ballot can be less than thrilling, and numbers suffer because of this.

When various professors asked their classes who had voted, very few hands went up.

"Just a few students raised their hands," Professor of Politics William Connelly said. "A number hadn't gotten absentee ballots in time or hadn't sent away for them... A lot of people have other priorities, and college stu-

dents certainly fall within that range."

Although this election was touted as the nation's response to the Congress' handling of the Clinton impeachment proceedings, Republicans did not receive the strong endorsement or disapproval expected.

The NSCVR poll reported that 81 percent of student voters said their votes were not affected by the events involving President Clinton and Monica Lewinsky.

Instead, student voters nationwide said that education and student aid were their most important issues. Seventy-four percent felt that candidates "somewhat adequately" or "adequately" addressed their issues.

In terms of party affiliation, students appeared closely divided. Among those surveyed, 37 percent were registered Democrats, 33 percent were Republicans, 14 percent were independent, and 16 percent classified themselves as other.

"I think it's your duty to vote, and I wish that all students would vote," Connelly said. However, "It does not altogether surprise me that voter participation may have been low."

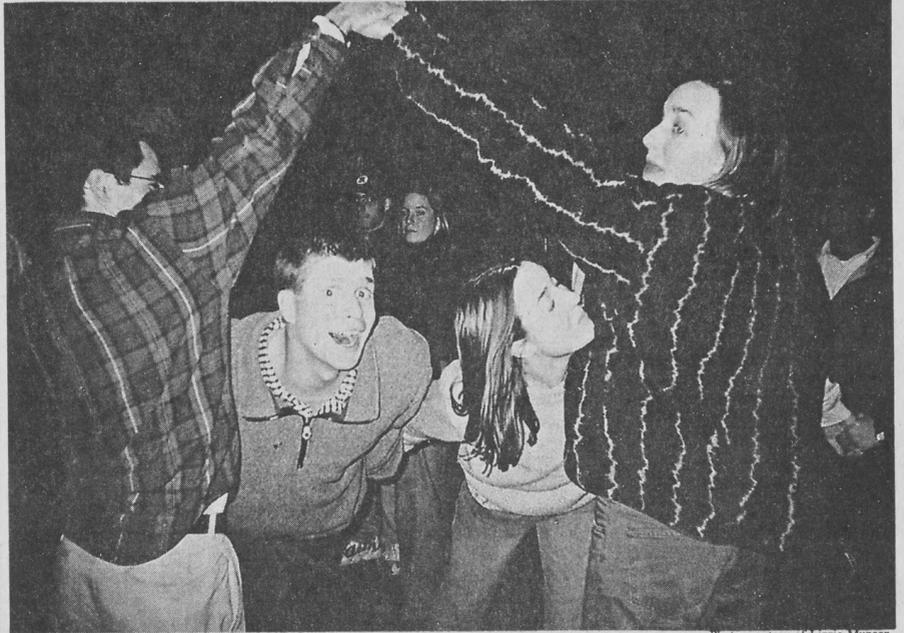


Photo courtesy of Lizzie Munson

Habitat For Humanity's annual Barndance gave students such as senior Richard Burrice and junior Megan Mazour (center) a chance to dance the night away for a worthy cause.

Habitat's Barndance expands Project Horizon

By Polly Doig
NEWS EDITOR

For the third year in a row, Habitat for Humanity and the Catholic Campus Ministry joined forces to hold their annual Barndance to benefit Project Horizon.

This time, the event raised more than \$1,400 through ticket sales and donations.

"This year was definitely the best year, both turnout wise and in how much we made," Habitat President David Sugerman said. "The money was raised for Project Horizon. Even though we've already raised the money for the shelter, this was for them to use at their discretion."

The Barndance was held at Rockbridge Vineyards, about a half an hour away in Raphine. W&L alumnus Shep Rouse is the owner and volun-

teered his barn for use.

Entertainment was provided by Burr Datz, the Catholic Campus Minister, whose band Wildgrass played for free.

Kappa Sigma, Kappa Kappa Gamma, Phi Kappa Psi and Kappa Alpha Theta all sponsored the event, and each made a contribution of at least \$200.

"It's one of those things that sounds corny, no one wants to come, but when you get Greek organizations to pledge their support, especially sororities, then you know you'll have people there," Sugerman said. Sugerman estimates that about 250 people attended, including students from both Washington and Lee and Virginia Military Institute.

"Habitat ran shuttles so that we could safely get people to and from the event since it was BYOB,"

Sugerman said. Brian Richardson, W&L professor of journalism, also chauffeured students throughout the evening.

Habitat plans to begin construction on Project Horizon's shelter for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault early next term. The shelter will be constructed March 11-21 with the help of VMI and the Timber Framers Guild of America.

"Through our hard work we helped raise \$35,000 for the shelter and will now direct our focus toward raising the same amount for a completely student-sponsored house," Sugerman said.

For those interested in getting involved in Habitat For Humanity, meetings are on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. in Room 114 in the University Center. Fundraising workshops are held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday.

Online registration works well, more or less

By Charlotte Graham
STAFF WRITER

Although students began to register last Friday, you would not know it from looking at the Washington and Lee campus. The usual flutter of students bouncing all over campus was absent as the University Registrar went to an online system for registration.

"It's working more smoothly than anyone dreamed," philosophy professor Lad Sessions said on the registrar's discussion web page, "and the only question is why we didn't do this years ago."

But some people are more reluctant to the change. Senior George Urban wrote a lengthy letter to University Registrar Scott Dittman expressing the frustrations of some members of the senior class.

"I have seen more unhappy students today than during any other registration in my four years," Urban said in the letter.

Starting times were one source of frustration. Students with early start times could fill classes before students with late times could even begin.

"This inequity of opportunity is a serious problem in the minds of many," Urban said.

Start times were assigned accord-

ing to class schedules, so that no one would have to miss class to register, Dittman explained. The starting time also punished students who did not preregister, because they received later start times.

The start time is necessary because if everyone registered at the same time, it would crash the system.

"We are going to average out the start times to 50 percent over the next four terms," Dittman said.

But seniors will not be on campus for four terms.

"We only have one more registration," senior Beth Arthur said. "Are the people that had late times for this term going to get early times for spring term?"

Even with an early time for spring term, the balance is not the same because there are fewer classes in a student's schedule, she said.

"The first time through we're learning a lot about this," Dittman said. "But I think the basic structure of it is fine."

The W&L system is different from many other electronic registering systems because it allows students to sign up for a class, but not for a time slot.

"Our priorities are for the teachers and students," Dittman said. "We want it to be fair to the entire campus."

The need for the system became apparent during last fall's registration,

when more than half the freshman class was camping out to get a class.

"We designed it so students could stand in four lines at once," Dittman said.

Jeffrey Knudson, network and systems analyst, and John Hellmuth, systems analyst, actually put the program together. Knudson, who began working for W&L last year, knows HTML, a graphical web language, and PERL, a logic programming language, while Hellmuth works with Augusta, the administration's system.

The programmers designed the program to comply with the requests of the Web Registration Development Subcommittee, which consists of two students, five faculty members and several members of the staff.

The registrar tried online registration in 1987, but it was unsuccessful. A lot of pieces had to fit together on this project in order for it to work, according to Dittman.

"You have to go with what works," Dittman said. "We are going to bend the tool to it to do what we want it to do. If it doesn't, we won't use it."

Dittman encourages students to give feedback on the new system at an online forum that he established. There is a link to the forum on the Registrar's homepage at <http://www.wlu.edu/~registrar/>.

Frosh set new GPA record

Class of 2002 continues recent 'cream of crop' tradition

By Eszter Pados
STAFF WRITER

Washington and Lee University once again admitted the "cream of the crop." On average, this year's freshmen's midterm grades were even higher than last year's.

Last year, the overall average was 2.788. This year, freshmen scored higher, settling at a 2.851 overall average.

According to Mark Dalhouse, Dean of Freshmen at W&L, the scores were fairly evenly distributed among freshmen. There were some 4.0s, as well as scores "at the other extreme" of the scale, he said.

Dalhouse said that the biggest challenge for freshmen is the academic standards of this university. Most students here have successful academic backgrounds, and receive their first bad grade in college. This can be shocking and discouraging, Dalhouse said.

"The same thing happened to me my freshman year in college," Dalhouse said. "My midterm grades were horrible!"

Dalhouse said that it is hard to predict what will happen to the grades next term with rush and pledgeship programs coming up.

"We have 400 individual students," he said. "It depends on each indi-

vidual" how these and other activities will affect his or her academic performance.

According to Dalhouse, some freshmen had a hard start. Dalhouse said that he believes that nine out of 10 kids who got bad midterms will work harder, and improve their grades by the end of this term.

Midterm grades are designed to give students a measure of how they are doing and adjust study habits if necessary, Dalhouse said. They are not designed to scare freshmen.

Overall, Dalhouse is proud. "I feel gratified that midterm grades are so high," Dalhouse said. "I'm very proud of [the freshmen]."

Bambi cruises Colonnade

By Charlotte Graham
STAFF WRITER

Students are not walking on the grass, but apparently deer are. They have visited the Front Lawn several times and the area near Doremus Gymnasium, probably in search of food.

"A doe and two fawns were in front of the Lee House about midnight," said senior Nate Tencza, who saw the deer about two weeks ago. "They ran across the Front Lawn toward VMI."

Senior Drew Higgs was with Tencza and saw the deer also. "They didn't even cross the brick path to Lee Chapel," he said. "They just jumped right over it."

Tencza saw the deer twice on the Front Lawn and once near Doremus Gym.

Physical Plant personnel have seen deer only in the back part of campus near the law school and Woods Creek. The presence of the deer has not been a problem, Randolph Hare, Associate Director of Physical Plant said. "As far as flower beds and mulched areas are concerned, we've not seen a problem," Hare said.

When the grass dies this year, deer will start to eat bark and twigs, though they normally eat leaves and acorns.

The deer may also be on campus now because the middle of October to the end of November is their mating season.

"This is the time of year when they are really active because it is their breeding season," Helmick said. "They are traveling because the males are chasing the females, and the females are running away."

But Hare said that so far the high number of deer has not been a problem. "If they become a problem, we would probably contact the animal control department and seek guidance," he said.

Both campus security and the Physical Plant warn people who are

driving in the back part of campus to be especially cautious.

If you freeze deer in your highlights, you should flash your lights to break their gaze, suggested Nick Tatar, Outing Club field coordinator.

Jessica Helm, a junior, can attest to the danger of a late night encounter with a deer. She received an estimated \$2,050 worth of damages when she hit a deer after leaving Zollman's Pavilion on Oct. 30. She hit the deer as she was coming around a curve.

"One was jumping down an embankment and I swerved to try to avoid him. I skidded off the road, but still hit the back of him," she said.

Director of Security Mike Young advises students to call a law enforcement officer if they are involved in an accident involving a deer.

Other than hurting your car, deer are not dangerous animals. "They are very shy animals," Helmick said. "If you lunge at them they are going to run away from you."

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Photo by Mike Crittendon/Photo Editor

Junior Hillary Everest bought the last three Widespread Panic tickets, which sold out after two days.

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The Ring-tum Phi OPINION

NOVEMBER 9, 1998

Vote Shrub (Little Bush) for President 2000

When the shocking (and sickening) resurgence of the Democratic Party and the demise of Newt Gingrich finally sank into my pachydermic heart, I got to thinking about possible solutions.

Poison Pen
Mike Agnello '02

In a very short interval, I had one: my governor, George W. Bush, better known to fellow Texas Republicans as "W" or "Shrub."

The party needs a new leader with the savvy, personality, know-how and dedication of Gingrich minus the mouth. Shrub is the perfect man to pull the party together. He is a Washington outsider, far removed from the ignominious scandal in Washington and the often inappropriate partisan response that sickened the general public.

He is blessed with his father's old-line Yankee Republican ideology and a uniquely pragmatic Texan character and personality that many people can appreciate.

He might bring about a Republi-

can revolution by bringing in minority groups; he can comfortably conduct an interview in Spanish and supports bilingual education, provided proof of higher test scores result. He is a fervent Christian, but

avoids the Christian lobby and refuses to moralize and impose his faith on others.

Bush admits imperfection, saying that "when I was young and irresponsible, I was young and irresponsible." He admits to being a hard drinker at one time, though he has not taken a drink in 12 years. Telling the truth unsoftened and not covering it up or lying about it — what an interesting concept!

I know what all you whiny, candy-ass skeptics are saying: "He's only

where he is because of his name." With the exception of "I did not have a relationship with that woman," a more untrue statement has never been uttered.

The family name and connections certainly have not hurt him, but his own ambition has kept him on top.

Under his ever-watchful eye, Texas has enjoyed the lowest unemployment rate, the largest economic growth and the lowest crime rate in years. Shrub himself sums it up best when he says, "I'm not the [presidential front-runner] because of my name, I'm the [front-runner] because I'm the governor of the great state of Texas and I have a famous mother!"

So I appeal to all voters, Republican and Democrat, to cast your vote in the year 2000 in a responsible and practical manner — vote Shrub 2000. I mean, who else are you going to vote for, Dick Gephardt?

"When I was young and irresponsible, I was young and irresponsible."

—George W. Bush

Republicans face difficult future

So, Newt is out. Who will be in? That is a question plaguing political watchers around the nation. For those of you who may not spend your Friday evenings watching C-span and CNN Headline News, Newt Gingrich officially relinquished his Speaker of the House position.

Just Plain Right
Jean Rowan '01

Effective at the end of the term in January, the House will be under new leadership. Gingrich will also be leaving Congress altogether, leaving an open spot for Georgia Representative.

Following the elections this past Tuesday and the failure of the Republicans to capitalize on the Democratic shortcomings (Clinton), there has been much talk amongst other Republicans that new leadership is needed.

It is clear that Gingrich has been an effective leader. He managed to lead the incredibly successful Republican Revolution of 1994 when the Republicans regained control of Con-

gress for the first time in more than 40 years. He has given the party unity and was the force behind a specific and well-organized party platform.

The Republicans knew what they wanted and Gingrich's leadership provided the structure for getting their legislation passed. Gingrich did the right thing for the party and the nation in stepping down.

His power was significantly reduced and he realized that remaining in office would hurt not only his own political career but would also hurt the Republican Party. Who knows what he will do now, and who knows who the Republicans will choose, but it will certainly be a different Congress this term.

There are also some convincing rumors that Dick Army in the Sen-

ate will be Majority Leader no more. And how will this affect the impeachment hearings? I don't think I would be going too far out on a limb to say that Bill Clinton is a happy camper this weekend. His job security is so much greater following these elections.

Oh well, maybe this means a new Speaker will be elected and even the liberals will love him or her, then the President will see how good a leader can really be, realize the error of his ways, resign from office, somehow re-

move Al "The Bore" Gore, the American people will demand a respectable leader (Gingrich maybe?), a new administration will take over, everyone will stop complaining about the government, and the world will become a happy place in which we all just get along.

That is a reasonable and likely flow, right? It could happen, couldn't it?

"So, Newt is out. Who will be in?"

TALKback: What did you think of online registration?



"It's a helluva lot better than camping out in front of a teacher's classroom. It took forever, but it's great."
—Micah Tolman '02



"It was convenient because I could do it from my room. It was kind of frustrating because it was slow."
—Hillary Lockner '02



"It's a lot easier on the old bones."
—Robert Marmorstein '01



"It's better than sleeping out for classes."
—Liz Borges '01



Group for sexual assault victims meets
A confidential support group sponsored by the University Counseling Service will begin meeting weekly for Washington and Lee women who have experienced sexual assault or abuse at any time in their lives. Each member will sign an agreement of confidentiality. Please call Carol Calkins, the Counseling Service secretary, or the University Health Service at x8401 to learn of times and locations.

Bacon's guitar sizzles in Lee Chapel
Classic guitarist Guy Bacon will perform a recital in Lee Chapel next Tuesday at 7:30 p.m.
Grandson of American composer Ernst Bacon and son of classical guitarist Joseph Bacon, Guy comes from a long established family tradition of quality music making. His recital in Lee Chapel will feature works by Bach, Sor, Mareno-Torroba and Britten. There is no charge for the concert, which is sponsored by Catholic Campus Ministry.

Eating problems support group meets
A confidential support group sponsored by the University Counseling Service will begin meeting weekly for women who are dealing with binge eating, binge/purge eating or very restricted eating.
If you are facing any of these problems in your daily life, you are invited to join this confidential group. Each member will sign an agreement of confidentiality at the first meeting.
Please call Carol Calkins, the Counseling Service secretary, or the University Health Service at x8401 to learn of times and locations.

Hodges speaks on accountability
Louis W. Hodges, the Knight Professor of Journalism at Washington and Lee University, will present a talk on "Journalism Accountability and Emerging Strategies by Plaintiffs," on Friday at 4:30 p.m. in Room 327 in the Williams School.
The respondent to his presentation is Brian C. Murchison, professor of law at W&L, who will provide a legal framework on this issue.
This lecture is part of W&L's 26th Annual Institute on the Ethics of Journalism, sponsored by the Knight Program. The public is invited to attend.

Alumnus reads poems in Northern
The Glasgow Endowment Committee will sponsor a reading by Washington and Lee alumnus Christian Wiman on Wednesday at 4 p.m. in Northern Auditorium.
Wiman will read from his recently published collection of poems, "The Long Home" (Story Line Press), which won the 1998 Nicholas Roerich Poetry Prize.
Born and raised in West Texas, Wiman received his B.A. in English from W&L in 1988 and is currently the Jones Lecturer in Poetry at Stanford University, where he was a Wallace Stegner Fellow. His poems and critical essays have appeared in "The Threepenny Review," "Poetry," "The Sewanee Review," "Shenandoah" and "TriQuarterly."
Wiman has lived in England, Mexico, Guatemala and the Czech Republic. He held a Dobie-Paisano Fellowship at the University of Texas at Austin and a Ruth Lilly Fellowship from the Modern Poetry Association.

Affirmative action admissions argued
The final round of the Washington and Lee School of Law's 19th annual John W. Davis Moot Court Competition will be held in the Moot Courtroom on Thursday at 4 p.m. The public is invited to attend.

Ode to web registration

It's the day of sophomore registration. I walked up to my first class today thinking, I kinda miss the old registration. As much as we complained about it, at least we knew it worked. What if this doesn't work?

Coffee Talk
Heather McDonald '01

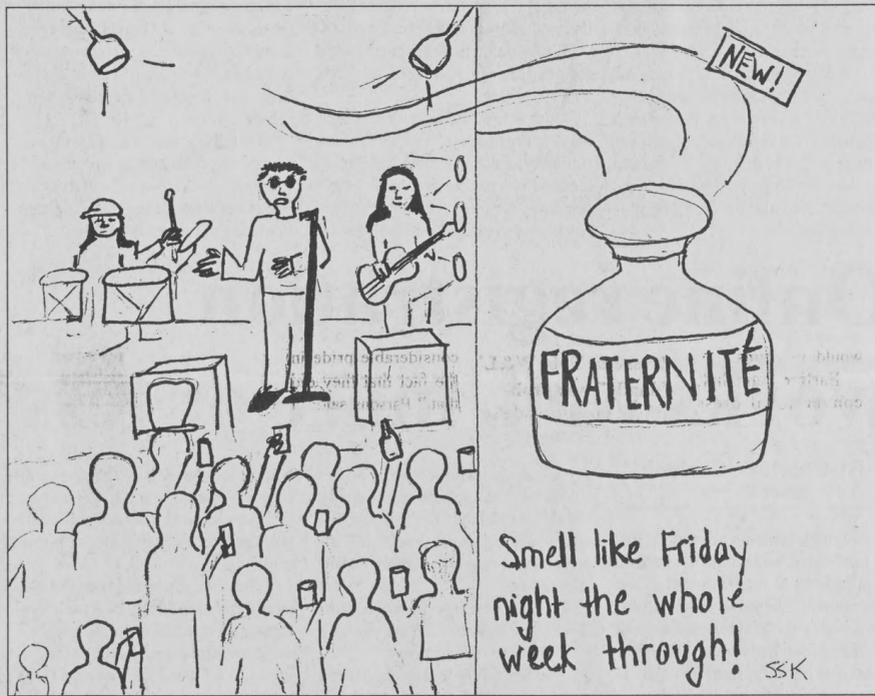
What if the system crashes? What if I can't get my classes? I was randomly assigned a mediocre time — at least I could sleep out last year and be guaranteed at least one class...

I get back a little before 1 p.m., my login time for registration. Okay, I'm a bit nervous. The clock turns one and I type in my passwords. I point and click and point and click for the classes I want, and then press "go to next step." I wait a few minutes for the system to respond, as I begin to fear the worst.

No sore back from sleeping on the floor of Newcomb or sharing a J-School couch or a drafty science center. None of the "Hey, I was in line first! What happened to the list started last night?" No running between Payne, the C-School and Tucker. In under 13 minutes... I AM FINISHED WITH WINTER TERM REGISTRATION. I stare at my computer screen in wonderous, pious awe. IT WORKED!

Perhaps next time I won't be so lucky. Perhaps I'll be in the last time slot and I'll get royally screwed for majors... But right now, I don't think that's going to be the case.

To Mr. Dittman, University Computing and to all of those who were involved in this gigantic step forward for W&L, I say thank you a hundred times over. You have made my life that much easier.



The Ring-tum Phi

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TIED TO
Tradition

by Elianna Marziani
 STAFF WRITER

"There's not a lot of diversity in the way people dress [at W&L]," freshman Laura Sigismund said.

This comment is considered a major understatement to many visitors to the W&L campus, who all remark about how all the students here look the same.

The very fact that everyone talks about the way all W&L students dress "preppy" makes one wonder: Has it always been this way? Everyone knows how the student body looks now, but how has W&L fashion developed over the years?

From the beginning of the University until the mid-1960s, "conventional dress" was the norm for campus fashion.

Frank Parsons, Coordinator for Facilities Planning and a 1954 graduate of W&L, explained that "conventional dress equated wearing a dress shirt and a tie and a jacket, or in some cases, the guys in the law school would wear suits."

Earlier than that, conventional dress was a three-piece suit. By the 1960s, conventional dress referred to a coat and tie. This traditional dress code was very important on campus.

"It was taken for granted. It was enforced by the Student Assimilation Committee by fines," Professor J. Davis Futch said.

The Student Assimilation Committee was a group devoted to enforcing traditions at W&L—from conventional dress to the speaking tradition.

They took their job seriously and did a good job of it, as evidenced by Professor J. Holt Merchant's ('61) remark: "We all looked remarkably alike."

He then categorized the items that made up a W&L student's daily attire in the late 1950s and early 1960s. "It was loafers with athletic socks and khaki pants, but t-shirt and down shirts — they were usually white then — and coats and ties, frequently with blue blazers."

Sound familiar? Story has it that the khaki pants came in style as a result of WWII. Men came back home from the war and wore their khaki army pants with a jacket, thus creating a new outfit for post-war America and a new style that remains popular to this day at W&L. Just look at the guys going in and out of Lee Chapel.



Photo courtesy of "Come Cheer"

W&L students have traditionally been considered stylish dressers. This W&L "dandy" was probably a member of the class of 1919 and proves that the coat and tie are as much a part of the campus as the white columns and green grass.

Until 1965, freshmen were also required to wear beanies. They were required to wear these traditional caps from the start of school until the end of the first term in mid-January, unless the football team won its homecoming game.

Sound like a fashion statement you would NOT make? If a freshman were caught without his beanie on, he was punished by having to wear a yellow beanie in place of the regular one. A yellow beanie also served as punishment for walking on the grass.

If a student were caught without his coat, the Student Assimilation Committee fined him. Such punishments for improper dress abounded.

These punishments were usually unnecessary, however, because the students dressed according to convention. It was expected of them, and they followed it unquestioningly for the most part.

"W&L students always came off as sort of dandies and took considerable pride in the fact that they did that," Parsons said. "I liked wearing a coat and tie." Students dressed like young professionals and seemed to enjoy it.

As everything does with time, this attitude changed. "It went away during the student rebellions of the '60s," Merchant said.

This deterioration of conventional dress began in 1965 or 1966.

"It's funny how it began," Parsons said. "First it was socks. Socks began to disappear." These sockless men still wore coats and ties, amazingly enough.

Then they began to carry their coats over their shoulders, and eventually they would bring their coats to class only to leave them hanging outside the door all day.

As if that weren't enough, they began loosening their ties and unbuttoning their shirts. Things began to deteriorate rapidly from there.

Dean Laurent Boetsch, who attended W&L from '65 to '69, stated it most aptly: "I was here when fashion changed dramatically."

Futch described how the fashion changed. "A student body president was elected around 1966 who was opposed to conventional dress, so he sent the Assimilation Committee running off into the sunset."

With the disintegration of the Assimilation Committee, no one really enforced the conventional dress code on the students.

"One of the things I think has been strongest at W&L over the years is the acceptance that these student traditions are student traditions," Parsons said. Thus, "because [conventional dress] was a student tradition, nothing was done" when the students began dressing down.

And dress down they did. "People looked like walking

garbage dumps," Merchant said. "It was very fashionable to wear rags, especially if you had a lot of money."

Futch agreed, describing a young man he knew who, "though already a tycoon in the making, indulged in the whim of deliberate sloppy dress, and, in warm weather, very skimpy dress."

Futch went on to give what he perceives as the reason for this change in the students' preferred way of dressing. "It was because student radicalism was in vogue on big campuses in the Northeast. Our students played the game of monkey see, monkey do," he said. "Those four years of '69 to '73

were the period when an extremely rapid and disturbing change took place."

The change was disturbing to administrators at the time too. Frank Gilliam, Dean of the College at the time, did not see the deterioration of conventional dress itself as much of a problem as the precedent that it set for the breaking of traditions.

He worried that the honor system might disappear in this great upheaval going on in the school. Fortunately, that did not happen. The conventional dress did disappear for a while, however.

Boetsch said that under the system of conventional dress, "you would

dress up conventional dress or dress down conventional dress. By the late '60s, it was just dress down."

When Professor Brian Richardson ('73) arrived as a freshman in 1969, "there were a few freaks running around without a coat and tie, but they were real anomalies."

After 1970, however, radical changes began taking place on campus.

Parsons explained that the students in this period were rebelling against the military industrial establishment. Members of that establishment wore coats and ties, so students determined they would not.

Richardson included as popular styles of the time the buckskin look: suede moccasins, suede fringe jackets, embroidery and beads; the blue collar look: denim work shirts, workman's boots and even construction hats; and the general sloppy look: jeans with patches, some of which had bumper sticker slogans on them, and abundant facial and head hair. Dreadlocks and afros for men of all races were quite popular, as well.

"Fashion at W&L hasn't developed that much," agreed freshman Blair Manning. "The guys still wear ties to tailgate and stick to tradition. But I like it. I like the tradition. I think it's one thing that makes the school attractive."

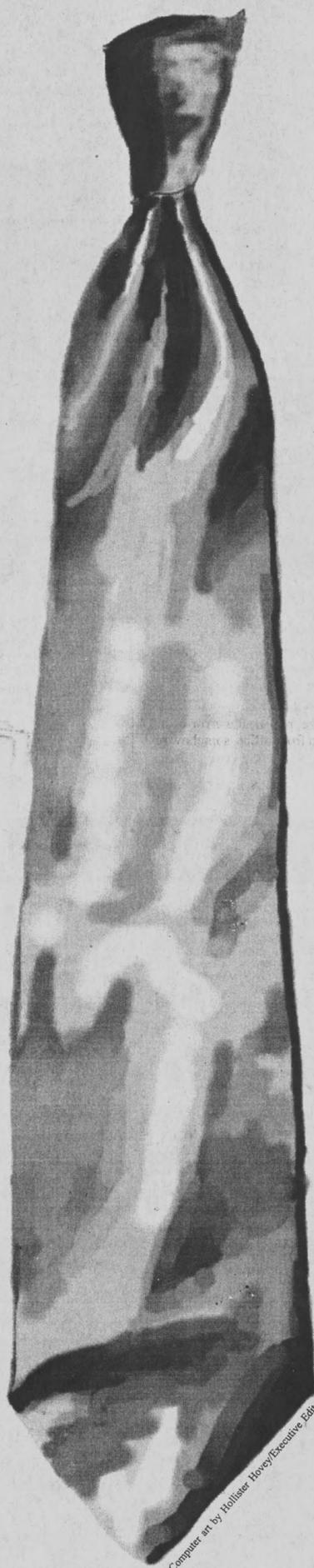
Dressing up for tailgating? "I think it makes it more fun," she said. "It's almost a way of showing your spirit and showing you care."

Dean Boetsch agreed that dressing up for the game was a great tradition and asserted that "many visitors go to the homecoming football game only to see the fashion!"

Everyone at W&L does seem to dress alike and dress up all the time, whether it be for class, for tailgating or for a concert at Lee Chapel.

"I think everyone pretty much dresses the same, but I think everyone looks nice for the most part," junior Tyler Bates remarked. "I think [dressing up] is fun, actually."

Dean Boetsch added that while it does seem like all W&L students dress alike, all students at every college



Computer art by Hollister Hovey/Executive Editor



Phi File Photo

T-shirts and shorts at a football game? Not at W&L. Dressing up for tailgating and the big game is a W&L tradition that always makes those Saturdays during football season so much fun.

Walking around campus these days, one does not encounter too many students with dreadlocks, construction hats or suede moccasins. This may cause one to wonder what inspired the change back to more traditional dress, and when it occurred.

After the 1970s, dress gradually became more "normal." Pants began shrinking down to normal size, and hair grew less abundantly. Some young men even began going back to coats and ties in the late '70s.

"I understand that by the mid-'80s, however, it was [still] kind of an animal house around here," Richardson said.

Merchant offered a theory as to the reason for the final change of fashion at W&L. "The first co-eds came in '84, and things really turned around. The guys didn't want to look like imbeciles in front of the young women in class."

Parsons agreed, citing the example of a young man who grumbled about the arrival of coeducation on campus, because "he had to be a little cleaner, a little more presentable now that he had young women around."

Since the 1980s, W&L students have been known for their neat, clean-cut style of dressing.

"I think we have the best looking student body in the country," Boetsch declared.

Richardson agreed, saying that especially "most of the women are careful about the way they dress all the time." He added, "If it's just because of who they are, their pride, that's fine."

Parsons believes that W&L has gone back to a system of conventional dress. "Even though they don't dress in coats and ties, everyone looks pretty good. I think we have conventional dress right now."

dress alike; he merely alleges that at W&L, students' way of dressing alike is dressing nicely.

Fashion at W&L has gone through many changes over the centuries. Yet, throughout all these changes, the concepts of tradition have emerged victorious.

Every time a W&L woman wears a sundress to a tailgate, every time a W&L man wears his khakis and blue blazer to a Lee



Photo by Emily Barnes/Photo Editor

Seniors Cory Mettee and Elizabeth Meloy prove that dressing up can be great but that sometimes it's just fun to be comfortable!

Chapel event, and every time a student takes off his baseball cap when entering a classroom, one sees that convention and tradition are still very much a part of the W&L community.

*Historical photographs are courtesy of the commemorative book "Come Cheer for Washington and Lee: The University at 250 Years."

Dressing your best when confined to Lex

by Erica Prosser
FEATURES EDITOR

Some things about the Washington and Lee University fashion scene never change.

Wearing khaki pants with blue blazers and dressing up for class and football games are just two such fashion traditions.

But where do W&L students find their togs? Do they shop here in town, or do they go elsewhere to assemble that personal statement?

"I never buy clothes in Lexington," senior Sarah McCrone said. "My sister goes to Longwood College in Farmville, VA, and goes to my home in Richmond almost every weekend. She and my mom buy me clothes when they go shopping."

Sarah said that she goes home to find new clothes in her closet from those shopping excursions. If she ab-

solutely has to buy something herself, she goes to Roanoke to do it.

Other students were of a similar mind.

"I don't shop in Lexington," junior Meredith Welch said. "I get the hell outta dodge and go to Roanoke or just wait until I get back home."

Senior Suzanne Scott favors Eddie Bauer, either the store or the catalog.

"Their clothes are reasonably priced, comfortable, and hold up well," she said. Her favorite item of clothing is a pair of button-fly jeans she got there two months ago.

An anonymous senior girl prefers to do her shopping at Lerner's or the Gap because of the selection and the reasonable sizes.

"[The clothes] are not made for

people with no hips," she said. She too, never shops for clothing in Lexington.

So maybe some of the women of W&L find better options elsewhere.

What about the men?

Junior Steven Klotz admitted that his favorite piece of clothing is a W&L baseball cap he purchased at the W&L Bookstore and "lost on multiple occasions."

"I don't currently own one [a W&L baseball cap], but I think it's high time I get another from the Bookstore," he said.

Beyond that, he thinks very rarely about clothes and doesn't shop for new clothes in Lexington.

Junior William Kanner also avoids

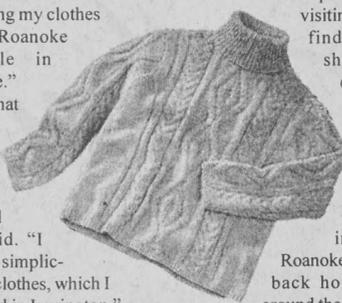
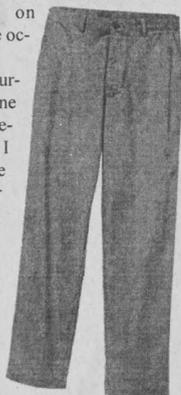
shopping in Lex.

"I have not found a place around here," Kanner said. "However, I have not looked too hard either. I have been doing my clothes shopping in Roanoke and a little in Charlottesville."

"I think that is because in Roanoke there is a mall, so it is all there and easy," he said. "I guess I prefer simplicity in finding clothes, which I have not found in Lexington."

The fact that these students don't shop in downtown Lexington doesn't mean that the local shops aren't worth visiting.

When you find a clothing shop that you consistently like, though, you'll want to go back, even if that shop is in a mall in Roanoke, in a catalog, back home or right around the corner.



1749 1999

Do you think Washington and Lee has plenty of formals now? Beginning in the early 1900s W&L gathered four times every year for formals, also known as sets.

The Fancy Dress Ball consisted of one formal dance and a second themed costume ball.

In 1953, the ball was televised live on NBC's Dance Party. In the spring, there were two formals and numerous fraternity lawn parties.

The last set of the year was Finals, when seniors gave their farewell to the W&L social scene. It was also a special occasion for an all-male school. The women did not have chaperones!



Photo courtesy of "Come Cheer"

Just because Washington and Lee did not admit women into its academic ranks until 1984 does not mean that they were not around. W&L has always been surrounded by many private woman's colleges including Mary Baldwin College, Hollins University, and Randolph-Macon Woman's College. These stylish W&L men are shown here with the "fair daughters" from neighboring schools.

These students show that no matter what the W&L student wears, from khakis to jeans, he always looks stylish. Pictured are Wes Hoke '00, Leonard Rorrer '99, Susan Groves '01, Pat Renton '01 and Evan Beale '01.



Photo by Emily Barnes/Photo Editor

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Volleyball captures ODACs

For the second straight year, the Generals dominated the conference. Now the team has to wonder whether the NCAAs will recognize their dominance with a bid to the tournament.

by Steele Cooper
STAFF WRITER

Washington and Lee entered Friday's ODAC Tournament at Bridgewater College as the first seed and reigning champions. On the heels of the powerful combination of freshmen and veteran talent, the Generals captured their second straight ODAC Tournament Championship.

Friday, the Generals won their opening match against Hollins College to advance to the semifinals (15-2, 15-4, 15-11). Saturday, W&L defeated fourth-seeded Roanoke College in the semifinals (15-13, 15-7, 15-8) and third-seeded Eastern Mennonite University in the finals (9-15, 15-13, 17-15, 15-9).

Leading the offense for the Generals once again against Roanoke was freshman Lindsay Ruckert. Ruckert totaled 14 kills, seven blocks, and 14 digs. On Saturday, Ruckert totaled 21 kills and five blocks in leading W&L to victory against EMU. Ruckert was named tournament MVP, and all-conference rookie of the year. "It was all really exciting. It felt great knowing that I had made a contribution to this team," Ruckert said.

Fellow freshmen Lee Charbonnet and Ricka Hildebrand were also strong offensive forces for the Generals. Charbonnet had 12 kills, four aces, and 13

digs against Roanoke. Hildebrand posted nine kills and two blocks against Hollins, and 15 kills, four blocks, and 13 digs against Eastern Mennonite on her way to earning all-tournament team honors.

"It was the perfect ending to the season," Hildebrand said. "It's hard being the team to beat because they all come out really fired up to beat you, but we didn't let them."

Junior outside hitter Nancy Reinhart posted five kills and nine digs against Hollins on Friday. Reinhart was named to the all-conference second team.

Sophomore Pam Saulsbury led the setting for W&L during the tournament. Against Roanoke, Saulsbury totaled 27 assists, and against EMU she posted 55 assists. Her total of 55 assists against EMU is the second

highest for a setter in school history.

These three wins extended the Generals' consecutive winning streak to 16, a new school record. W&L has not dropped a match since September 26.

The top six teams in the Southern Region will advance to the NCAA tournament, and the Generals are currently ranked eighth. The final rankings, however, have not been posted. W&L must now wait to see if it receives a bid for the NCAA tournament. If so, it will be yet another school first to come from the 1998 season.

"It was the perfect ending to the season."

—Ricka Hildebrand

Emory & Henry does it again

by Brendan Harrington
SPORTS EDITOR

It's hard enough for Washington and Lee Football to deal with losing to Emory and Henry the past 16 seasons, but it becomes even harder when you take into account some of the ways in which the team has lost. Case in point: Saturday afternoon at Wilson Field. The Generals led 20-6 with 6:08 left in the fourth quarter before Emory and Henry (9-0, 5-0 ODAC) scored 17 unanswered points to pull off an amazing come-from-behind victory to remain undefeated.

"We had a great effort out there today," head coach Frank Miriello said. "Our kids really played hard, but we need a victory against Emory and Henry, not a moral victory."

Saturday marked the 16th straight time that the Wasps have defeated the Generals who last lost to W&L 21-15 on Sept. 18, 1982. The Generals (3-6, 1-4 ODAC) have had a history of heartbreaking losses to E&H during the streak, including last season's game at Emory which saw the Generals commit four turnovers in the final quarter to blow a 17-6 fourth quarter lead.

"Obviously it's very disappointing," senior tight end David Ritchey said after appearing in his final game at Wilson Field. "I feel like we outplayed them, we deserved to win. It was a 100% effort by everyone on this team."

The Generals led 20-6 with 6:08 left in the fourth quarter and faced fourth and 11 from their own two-yard line. Fearing a blocked punt in the end zone, Miriello decided to have punter Doug Williams walk it out of the back of the end zone and take the intentional safety, making the score 20-8.

Emory and Henry got the ball on their own 20-yard line with 5:54 remaining and quickly drove into Generals' territory, where junior quarterback Tom Crigger threw a 41-yard touchdown pass to junior wide receiver David Miller to make the score 20-15 with 3:28 remaining.

The Generals picked up one first down before they were forced to punt and the Wasps got the ball back on their

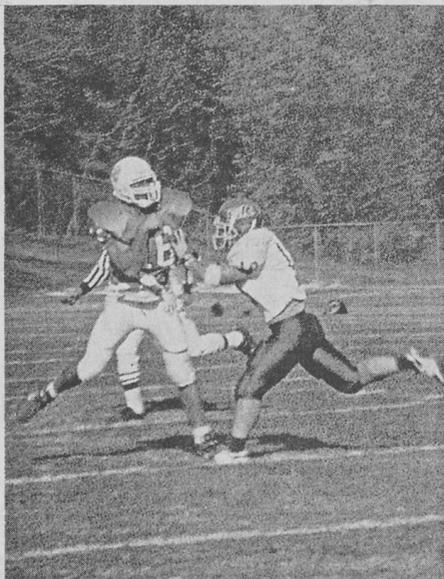


Photo by Scott Cameron/Photo Editor

All alone: Senior Christian Batcheller gets tackled on Saturday vs. Emory and Henry.

own 20-yard line with 1:36 left in the fourth quarter and two time-outs. The Wasps advanced the ball all the way to the Generals 34-yard line on a couple of big pass plays, but faced fourth and 10 with 40 seconds left in the game.

On the fourth down play, Crigger saw a streaking Miller open on the near sideline and aired it out. Crigger caught the ball on the two-yard line and fell into the end zone for the touchdown. The Wasps added the two-point conversion to make the score 23-20.

The Generals got the ball back one last time but Senior Christian Batcheller was intercepted and the Wasps held on for the victory.

"I'm really too shocked to put into words how I feel and how the team feels about this loss," Batcheller said following the game. "In one regard it's good to feel like you can play one of the best teams in the country, but to not come through with the win is tremendously depressing."

The Generals used six Emory and Henry turnovers to jump out to the 14-point lead as the defense bent but didn't break against Oliver Jordan and the Wasps' high power running game.

"The defense is what put us in position to win the game," Ritchey said. "To stop their running game the way we did was amazing."

The Generals broke a 6-6 tie with 10:40 left in the final quarter when Batcheller threw a 32-yard touchdown pass to Ritchey to give the Generals a 13-6 lead. Ritchey finished the game with five catches for 86 yards and a touchdown to lead all receivers.

"I'm very disappointed in the loss, but I'm proud of how I played and how the team played, the way we came together, and gave it everything we had," Ritchey said.

The Generals scored again 26 seconds later when E&H quarterback Matt Olexy was drilled by W&L safety John McAllister, forcing a fumble that sophomore defensive back Will Baker recovered and ran back 21 yards for the touchdown to make it 20-6 with 10:14 left in the game. Baker added tackles and an interception to go along with his fumble recovery and touchdown.

Offensively for the Generals, Batcheller finished the day 19-29 for 207 yards, one touchdown and one interception while junior tailback Marc Watson finished with 96 yards on 20 carries.

"We always get up for E&H and play up to their level," Batcheller added. "We need to win a few games earlier in the season to get our confidence up, and maybe then we'll start pulling out games like this in the end."

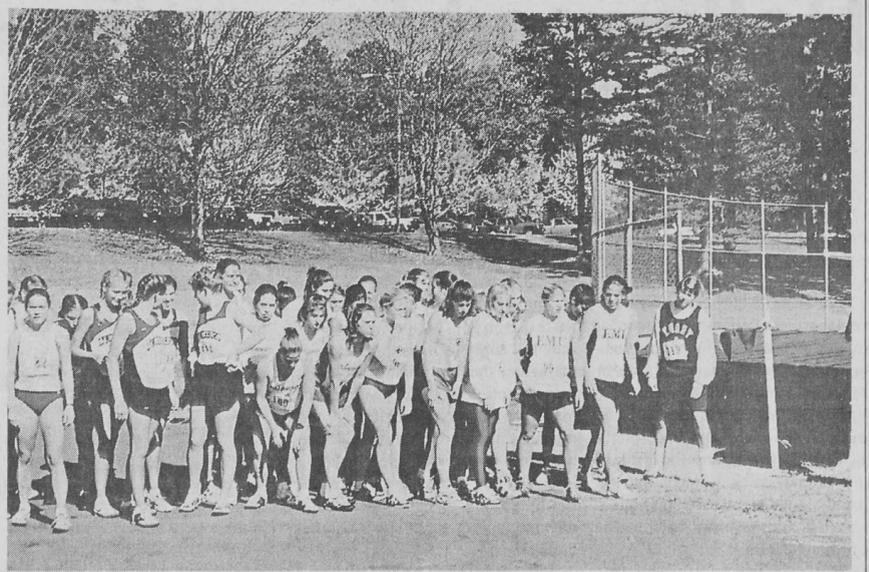


Photo by Emily Barnes/Photo Editor

On your marks, get set . . . The women's cross country team line up Saturday at Hampden-Sydney to compete in the ODAC championships. Both the women's and men's teams competed, earning second and fifth places, respectively. On the women's side, sophomore Wendy Case was named first team all-ODAC, and freshman Gretchen Tencza and sophomore Jessica Parrillo were named second team all-ODAC. For the men, Darrik Alford was named first team all-ODAC and Rob Naftel and Ken Jackman were named second team all-ODAC.

Men's soccer ends in heartbreak

by Tod Williams
STAFF WRITER

The men's soccer team finished its season on Tuesday with a streak that most teams would be proud of — only two losses in its last 12 games.

Unfortunately, that statistic doesn't tell the whole story. The two losses came at the worst time, the last two games of the season.

The Generals dropped a 1-2 decision in double overtime to quarterfinal ODAC playoff opponent Hampden-Sydney at Liberty Hall Fields.

The tourney's fourth-ranked Generals took the lead early in the game, at 23:05, when senior forward Sam Chase found the back of the net with a header off a corner kick. Washington and Lee then carried the 1-0 lead for the majority of the game, until only 5:24 remained in regulation play.

When the Tigers' sophomore defender Trip Jendron scored at 5:24 off a corner kick, he tied the score at 1-1, and eventually sent the game into sudden-death overtime.

After 27:01 of scoreless overtime play, freshman defender Josh Dickens scored off a header from fellow freshman Rob Comegys. The game-winning goal was Dickens third on the season and his second in the last two games.

Tiger keeper Mike Bizon made a season high eight saves in the game, including two crucial saves that thwarted the Generals' chance for the win. With under a minute left in regulation, junior Jamie Parker's shot was narrowly knocked aside by a diving Bizon. Fifteen seconds later, Bizon also pulled the ball out after it had only partially crossed the

goal line, according to the referees, thus disbaring a possible General win.

Hampden-Sydney finished with a 14-3 advantage in corner kicks over the Generals.

Chase, who finished his career as a General with 117 total points, a new W&L record, said that the team was definitely surprised with the loss. "They were a good team, but we were favored, and we did dominate play for about 85 minutes," he said.

"We had some unbelievable opportunities, but it was the kind of good game you expect in the ODAC," Chase said. "We would've liked the chance to have played for the championship, but I'm proud of the team."

Chase called the team a tight-knit group, and said the thing he would take most away from the season was how the team was "always on the same level — never too high or too low." He continued to say he was proud of the team's improvement over the last four years.

"When I got here, we were a below average team, now we're not only among the top in the ODAC but in the South as well," Chase said.

"We were in line for a national bid for the first time in the team's history, as far as I know," he said. "I'm proud of all we've accomplished here."

In the Generals 1-0 win over the Tigers at Hampden-Sydney less than a month ago, Chase was the game's lone scorer on the day.

Historically, the Generals have dominated in the series. W&L has knocked Hampden-Sydney out of the ODAC tournament in each of the last five meetings in the past 10 years.

Karin Treese's magical feet

by Frances Groberg
SPORTS EDITOR

Senior Karin Treese has certainly left her mark here at Washington and Lee. Most people know that she's a great player. Most know that she holds the record for most career goals here, with 72. What most people don't know is that she broke the record her sophomore year.

There are a few things that make Treese such a standout, both on and off the field. "She just loves soccer. It oozes out of every pore," head soccer coach Jan Hathorn said. "She has a 'put it in the goal out of my way' attitude. It's a mindset that really stands out."

Treese began playing soccer at age six, when she and friend Peter Quin played out in the backyard. She names Quin, who plays men's soccer at Johns Hopkins University, as one of her influences. "I was on his teams in the rec league until they made me play on the girls' teams," Treese said.

Treese continued to play throughout her school career, meeting her mentor and coach Chuck Nichols in high school. "I look up to him very much. He taught me a lot," she said. Throughout this time, she was refining her skills and learning about the workings of the game.

"When her field sense and skills come together, it's like there's no one else out there. She has incredible control and touch," Hathorn said.

When asked if she had considered playing in a Division I program, Treese admitted that it had been a dream of hers since she was small. "I thought I'd be more happy here, and I have been. I chose W&L for the school, and the soccer program came with it."

Yet as incredible as Treese is individually, it is what she brings to the team effort that really makes her a standout. "She doesn't ask of anyone what she wouldn't do herself," sophomore Shana Levine said. "If she's on the field with you, you're a better player than when she's on the sideline."

Indeed, Treese's role as one of three captains has enabled her to lead in the way she feels most comfortable, by example. "She's what every player wants to be," junior Ginny Jernigan exclaimed. "She is highly respected, yet so modest and unselfish that her brilliance never takes away from the team, but builds it up."

Hathorn believes that Treese's initiative drives her suc-

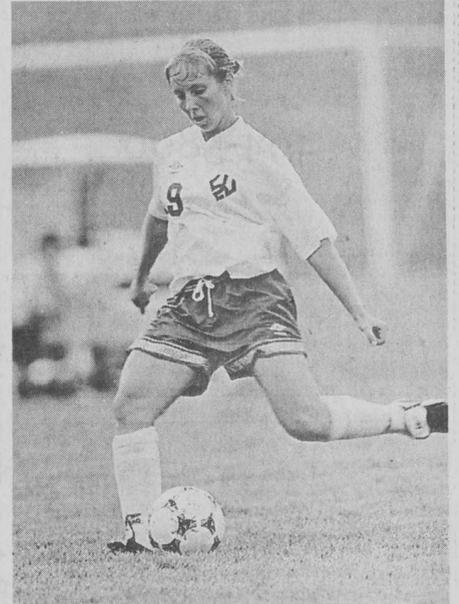


Photo courtesy of Karin Treese

Senior Karin Treese: an asset to the program

cess. "I didn't teach her anything she didn't already know. Over the years, she's improved her foot speed, defined her role on the team, and made herself what we needed. She'll do whatever it takes."

Treese led the 1998 Generals to a very successful season. The team ended the season with an overall record of 11-3, capturing the regular season ODAC title. Unfortunately, the Generals could not overcome Roanoke College, and lost 2-1 in the semifinals of the ODAC tournament. Still, Treese was extremely optimistic.

"It was the best season talent-wise since I've been here. The soccer program has improved for the better in the last four years, and it will just keep improving," she said.

Treese does not see her soccer career ending at W&L. "I'll always be active in the game whether it'll be playing in the backyard with my kids or coaching on a regular basis. I can't imagine my life without soccer."

Hathorn had the highest praises for Treese. "Every once in a while you get an exceptional player in your program. It has been a privilege to know and work with her, and she has left W&L soccer better than when she arrived."

W&L's long, choking history against E&H

No team has ever plagued the Generals like Emory and Henry. The Wasps have beaten the Generals 16 straight times and leads the overall series 22-6. But it's not just the losses that define the Generals' 16-game losing streak against Emory and Henry, it's the way they've lost those games. Here is a quick look at just a few of those heartbreaking losses.

Sept. 8, 1990 — E&H 22, W&L 21

W&L trailed the Wasps 14-6 early in the fourth quarter before the Generals stormed back to take a 21-14 lead in the final minutes of the game. Like this year, the Generals decided to take an intentional safety when facing a punt from their own end zone, cutting the W&L lead to 21-16 with 37 seconds left to play. Emory and Henry got the ball back following the safety and on the last play of the game, wide receiver Pat Walker somehow got away from three Generals defensive backs in the end zone and caught a 26-yard game-winning touchdown as time expired.
Nov. 9, 1996 — E&H 43, W&L 27

The Generals stormed out to an early 14-0 lead with the help of some trick plays before the wheels came off in the second quarter. E&H scored 29 consecutive points in the second and third quarters to cruise to an easy 43-27 victory over the Generals.
Nov. 8, 1997 — W&L 17, E&H 27

The Generals took a 17-6 lead into the fourth quarter after J.T. Malatesta caught a 78-yard touchdown pass from Christian Batcheller late in third quarter. In the fourth quarter, the Generals committed four turnovers, which led to 21 points by the Wasps, who held on for the 10-point victory.

Hollywood lays "Siege" on theater near you

by Brian Prisco
PHI MOVIE GUY

1 2 3 4 5

(Wait until it comes out on video)

"The Siege" is the latest Hollywood attempt at pissing off militant factions. An Arabic fanatical group starts exploding New York City hotspots in effort to get their "wrongfully imprisoned" leader back from the U.S. government, which denies his capture. The FBI is pitted against the military when martial law is declared, and the CIA seems to be playing everyone's side. It should have just been called "Crimson New York."

"The Siege" features a dynamic cast that is probably its only hope for drawing any semblance of a crowd. Denzel Washington ("Courage Under Fire," "Crimson Tide") is back at it again, playing his typical character: the civil servant who gives impassioned speeches and looks good posing with a gun and covered in blood. It'd be easy to criticize Washington for being so carbon copied if not for one small factor: the man is really damn good at it. He shines as the boy scout trying to uphold American ideals against a crazed military high-ranking officer bent on following orders and getting justice.

However, instead of Gene Hackman, we have Bruce Willis ("Fifth Element," "Die Hard") as General Devereaux, a crazed military high-ranking officer bent on following orders and getting justice. Willis plays against Washington extremely well. His performance isn't extraordinary; it's just typical Willis. He gets the job done, and he does it efficiently.

Annette Bening ("The American

President," "Mars Attacks!") acts as the CIA spook, playing everyone against everyone else. She manages to complete the little triangle of talent quite nicely. It's not as easy to buy her performance as a government operative as it is with Willis and Washington, but her acting is strong enough to make you not care.

The story is pretty much cut and paste. Bomb goes off, people get mad; they kill some bad guys; bomb goes off again; they get mad; people get scared; riots ensue. When you have a movie about terrorism, they pretty much hit all the clichés and hit them hard-core. You don't expect anything less. The key is having talented and fun-to-watch actors and a competent directing angle. I think we've found the problem.

Edward "please Denzel I need you in my movie" Zwick directed this movie and also helped co-write the script. He worked with Washington in "Glory" and "Courage Under Fire," and — let's face it — the man cannot make a movie without Washington. Zwick's sort of been on downslide since his first movie, and he's not picking up. Fortunately, he started off on such a high note that he hasn't quite reached the Mel Brooks range of "Dracula: Dead and Loving It." Yet.

Zwick moves the action in the movie like driving a taxi across a typical New York street. It's patchy and full of holes; it moves far too slowly while maintaining what is supposed to be a speedy plot pace, only to stop for occasional points of interest. The actors are far too talented to be working with such piss poor materials. It's like bowling with a Faberge egg.

The movie received some harsh criticism

from Arab protestors about its unfair depiction of Arabs and their religion. This is one point for which Zwick deserves no nasty comments. If anything, this movie makes people more sympathetic toward Arabs. Hey, let's face it, there are some Arabs who are fanatical enough to walk into a crowded symphony hall with a metric ton of C-4 strapped to their asses and kill hundreds in the name of their

cause. This movie makes you feel bad for the Arabs who aren't doing these things and the unfair, racist treatment they receive. Some of the characters are blamed because they are Arabic, not because they did anything wrong.

This movie is frightening because it makes you wonder: what if it were me? What if it weren't an Arab, but a black person, or a Southern person, or a Christian? That is the message the

movie gets across. It could be anybody next, so stop pointing fingers. It doesn't single out the Arab cause or the factions. It says there are crazy people everywhere, it just so happens that this time they are Arabs. Next time it could be you.

However, in making that stunning point, it fails to run smoothly. The movie manages to open and close strongly, but the rest of it just sort of

jumbles around. It's thoroughly enjoyable, well worth watching the acting of Willis, Washington and Bening, and it has an important message. It's just not worth shelling out seven bucks to see it in a movie theater. When it comes out on video, be there.

Or hell, rent "Crimson Tide." You'll get the same effect and hey, it's on a boat!

In defense of political apathy

by Kevin McManemin
FIT TO BE TIED

I didn't vote in the recent elections, (I might have lost my license as a lazy, jaded twenty-something stereotype) but let me tell you about someone who did.

A recent article in *The Roanoke Times* reported that an old lady showed up at the polls last Tuesday to do her civic duty and vote for president for the first time in her life.

This might have been one of those heartwarming, touchy-feely, flag-waving "yay for America" kind of stories if it wasn't for one simple fact: the president wasn't up for election this year.

That little incident casts some nasty clouds over this church picnic we call democracy. Our beloved system is based on the ideal of the conscientious, informed voter. Hey Founding Fathers, have you boys been to Wal-Mart lately? Cuz let me tell you, it ain't exactly a brain trust out there.

The problem isn't that there's too much apathy in this country. The problem is that there isn't nearly enough.

The problem is that people like that dim-witted old lady have had their

heads pumped full of this ridiculous high school civics class claptrap about our responsibility — nay — our duty to vote. They're subjecting us to their half-assed attempts at citizenship, making poorly-formed decisions based entirely on an interesting mix of media soundbites and their own personal prejudices. We should not be encouraging Americans to get out and vote. We should be locking the voting booths.

The 62 percent of Americans who abstained from voting in this election

(and about 80 percent of my generation) are maligned by those who largely misunderstand the doctrine of apathy. Let me try and elucidate the apathetic mind set (or lack thereof).

First of all, we realize that our individual vote doesn't matter. Yeah yeah, I'm aware of how bad it is in theory for everyone to think this way, but on the individual level, it's always true. Your vote really doesn't matter. Major elections are not won or lost by one vote. So, if you can have the same impact going out and voting or sitting at home playing video games, what's the problem here?

Secondly, many people don't vote because they have no real choice. Lately the eternal battle between the Dems and Repubs has been about as hotly contested as a game between the New Jersey Nets and the Dallas Mavericks. No matter who wins, they're both still losers.

All political races are the same — two smiley white guys with bland names like "Bob" or "Dan" talking about how much they care about me and how my life would be better if I vote for them. Yeah. Sign me up.

Finally, and most importantly, apathy is just easier. It's much easier to live happily in this world if you don't think about it so much.

Currently we're wasting far too much of our national energy on

worrying and we're giving ourselves a huge collective ulcer.

The source of all this tension is the mass media, which feel the need to frame every issue in black and white, as two polar opposite sides competing against one another. The ideologues, demagogues and media hogs have broken our country into more pieces than the Rolling Stones' hotel room.

The problem isn't that no one cares; the problem is that everyone cares about everything, and no one is willing to change their opinions. Americans today have more unwarranted self-assured attitude than a "Ricki Lake" guest.

For voters, pundits, politicians and smarmy columnists like me, the problem remains the same: no one wants to admit they may be wrong.

Well I'll be the first columnist to go on record and admit that I don't know a damn thing about anything. I am no smarter than anyone else, with the possible exceptions of Bill Belamy, the cast of "Friends" and the state of Tennessee.

So stop speaking of apathy as a challenge to overcome and do your part to improve our national mental health by doing absolutely nothing. It's time we all started caring about apathy.

Or not. Like, whatever, dude.

Off the Wire

fictitiously compiled by Kevin McManemin

Libertarians boast big wins in '98 elections

The long-suffering Libertarian party netted some impressive numbers in the recent election, getting as much as 1.5 percent of the vote in some gubernatorial races and 1.7 percent in many Congressional contests.

The Libertarians took control of several key offices around the country: including one of the County Freeholder seats of Burke County, South Dakota; the City Comptroller seat for East Adelsburg, Missouri; and Assistant Sewage Manager of Dorset, Oregon.

The press has already dubbed the recent elections "The Libertarian Revolution" due to their impressive showing.

"We hope to prove that a third party can govern every bit as ineptly as the Democrats and Republicans," a Libertarian party spokesman said.

Smallpox, polio announce comeback plans

London — Decades after their careers were ended by lifesaving vaccines, the epidemics smallpox and polio announced plans to make a comeback with a special world tour.

In a press conference held earlier today, the epidemics reported being "very excited" by the prospect of returning to the global disease scene. They've been working on several new symptoms which they plan to highlight on the world tour, along with some of their classic symptoms.

The epidemics also responded to persistent rumors that they wouldn't be able to hack it in a world dominated with über-pandemics like AIDS and E. Bola. "I was wiping out entire villages before AIDS was even a boil on a gay monkey's butt," smallpox said.

Revlon to release potent beauty product

Paris — Touting its latest products as "the greatest advance in the history of the feminine search for beauty," Revlon released its new line of make-ups and perfumes amidst a media frenzy. "This product can make even the most homely, plain, unattractive, sunken-chested, pimple-faced, bald, gangrenous, wart-encrusted, foul smelling, downright hideous woman appear desirable and appealing to the average man," a Revlon spokesman said, later adding "but enough about my wife."

The secret ingredient? Alcohol.

The fumes in scents like "Eau de Beam" and "Essence de Budweiser" travel through the nasal cavity and into the brain where they block a man's sense of common decency while simultaneously inflating his libido. Studies have proven that this patented "dual standard-lowering" technology increases the chance of male pants-droppage by almost 85 percent.

Revlon's newest spokesmodels, Roseanne Barr and Whoopi Goldberg, ended the press conference with a chilling threat. "Buy this @!#\$%&' product or I'll bring my sitcom back on the air," Roseanne said.



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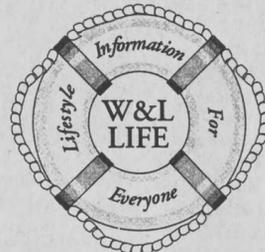


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