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SPECTATOR

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General Opinion

"Under the Big Top"? Are you kidding me?

Go to FD? I'd rather have a vasectomy in a third world hospital from a doctor operating with a rusty can opener. The reason for my discontent? This year's theme: "Under the Big Top." I don't think I know anyone who has ever had fun at a circus. Moreover, how can you possibly decorate the gym to look like a circus? Have Dean "Buddy" Atkins walking the tight rope between fraternity payoffs and sorority housing? Have the Career Development & Placement Office predict your future job? The English Department test of strength: "How many books can you carry from the book store to your house?" President Elrod locked in a cage without a whip or

chair trying to extract donations from snarling alumni? The staff of *The Southern Collegian* performing as sideshow clowns?

As far back as I can remember the circus has meant two things to me: mental scars and upset stomachs. Clowns, bearded ladies, sword swallowing gypsies, deformed midgets and the Andalusian trapeze artist who hung herself have all left their mark on me. Popcorn, pretzels, cotton candy, polish sausage, and the overwhelming scent of hay, camel spit, and elephant dung always succeeded in nauseating me each time I went to the circus. The total score after a day at the circus you ask? My date and I left the circus

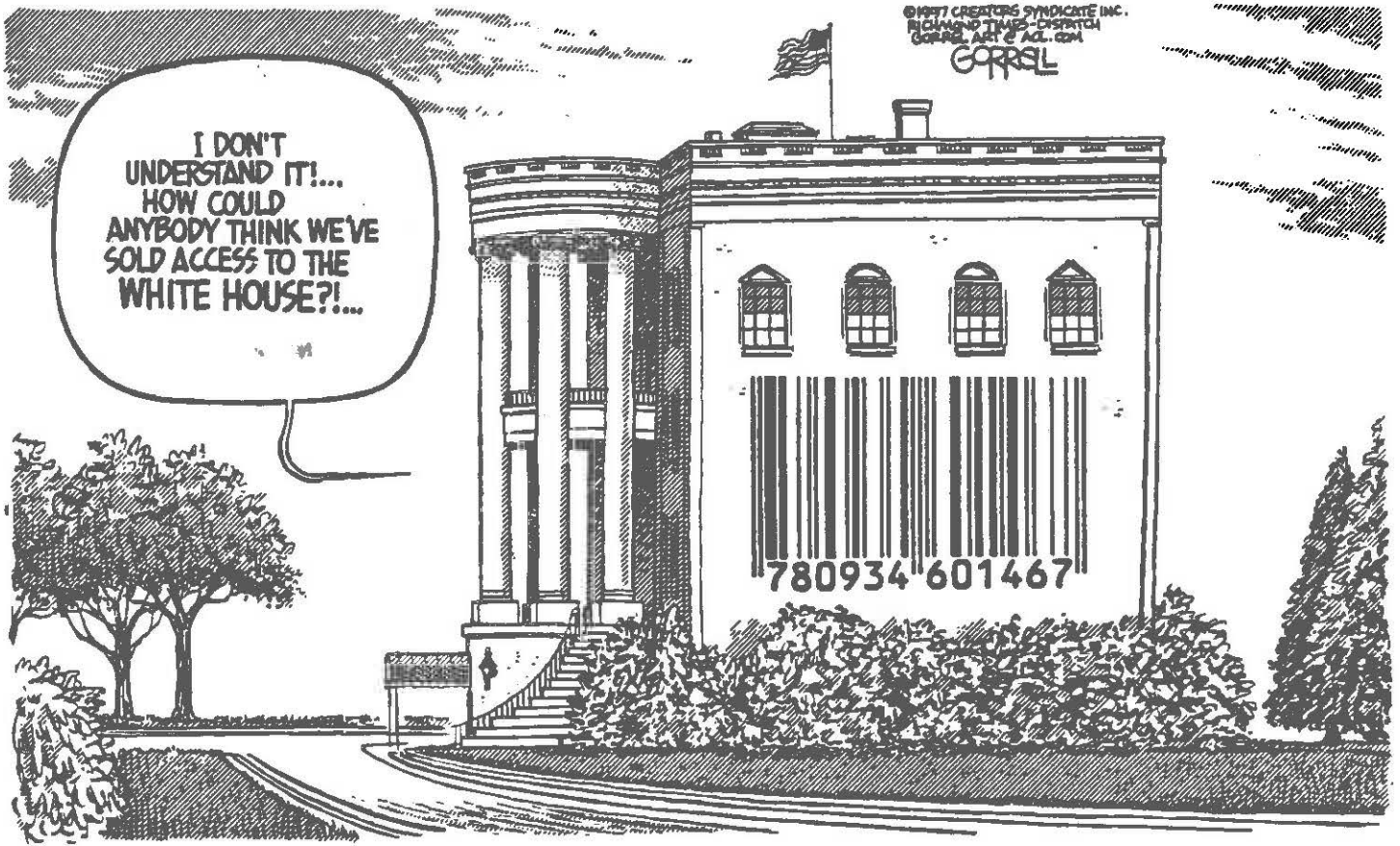
after four taxing hours, disgusted, vomiting, and \$20 poorer. Needless to say, a hook-up failed to transpire. If this is your dream FD experience, however, then by all means ignore nay-sayers like myself and attend the ball. If this sounds more like a Wes Craven creation, please read on. It is my opinion that the FD Steering Committee should allow us to re-select the theme. I've taken the liberty of coming up with some possible ideas that should be more pleasant than "Under the Big Top." How about: "Christmas in Cambodia," "Spring Break at Ground Zero," "A Weekend in Watts," "Evening at a Westbank Streetside Cafe," or "Springtime in Rwanda?" These FD themes offer infinite possibilities for fun, unlike the current theme. Would you rather take your date to dine on corn dogs and pink lemonade or canine shish-kabob and rice tea? What is a better tux option, a circus top hat or a Yasar Arafat endorsed head band? Even the illicit drug options are better with this new theme. Do you want to take Rogaine to grow one of those curly mustaches you've always wanted or see what the effects of a Uranium₂₃₈ cocktail are? For entertainment would you rather ride a fifty foot ferris wheel or pimp in a six-four while keeping it real and hitting the switches, pumping DJ Quick? Please petition, make signs, construct mail bombs (as Brother Malcolm said, "By any means necessary") to get the steering committee to change this year's FD theme!

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Top 10 FD Dates for the "Under the Big Top" Theme:

10. Pee Wee "Hand on my Big Top" Herman
9. The bearded girl in your Tues./Thurs. class
8. Former President Jimmy "Mr. Peanut" Carter
7. A real B.V. gypsy.
6. R.D. "Wild Dog Trainer" Clark
5. Greg "Sword Swallowing" Lugainis
4. Joe Camel
3. Michael "The Enigma" Jackson
2. Barnum and Bailey (although we understand they will be part of the G&L entourage)
1. Anna Nicole "Six Million Dollar Buxom" Smith

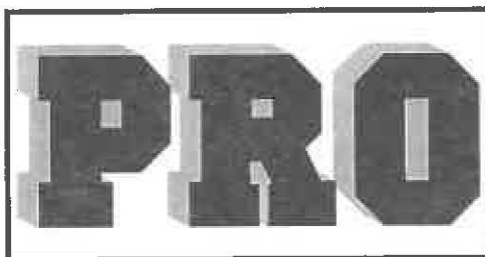
General Opinion

ISSUE:

SHOULD *THE TRIDENT* KEEP THE PRO vs. CON FEATURE?

Every week I find myself in a terrible debacle. Whether it's "Frank's vs. Salerno's," "Girlfriends vs. Random Hookups," "Co-op vs. Bistro 2000" or "Baker vs. Gillam," I always know with a 95 percent degree of confidence that I can turn to the *Trident* for some reassuring, respectful and accurate advice. Sure, I could form an opinion of my own, but why bother? At W&L, conformity is paramount for indi-

viduals. I mean, what would happen to my social life if I wore Patagonia™ instead of The North Face™, or if (God



forbid) I drove a Jeep instead of a Ford Explorer? The *Trident* helps alleviate my concerns about what's hot and what's not. If it weren't for the

Trident, I'd be too afraid to go out, and I would probably just stay in the library--well, maybe I'd watch *Friends* sometimes, but I still wouldn't know what to do. Thanks to the *Trident's* insights, I will never have to make a decision for myself. Thankfully, the *Trident* always focuses on the most pressing issues that are crucial to my social existence here at W&L.

The *Trident* should not keep the "Pro vs. Con" column. Unlike the author for the pro side, I possess the ability to form my own opinions on frivolous topics. In both my personal and professional life I am not overly challenged by such deep quandaries as "Frank's vs. Salerno's." People who come to W&L initially have the instincts to make good decisions. Why should we

dull these senses? Although there isn't really a plethora of hot campus issues at Washington and Lee, there is no need to



create meaningless controversies. Another ridiculous aspect of the "Pro vs. Con" column is

the absurdly obvious nature of the debate. For example, "Real World vs. Road Rules." Is this really even a contest? Any fool who prefers "Road Rules" doesn't even deserve the right to defend his/her position. Or is this mindless drivel The *Trident's* attempt to be funny? Either way, *The Trident* should do their readers and themselves a favor by scrapping the "Pro vs. Con" feature.

THE TOP TEN REASONS CLONING IS A DEFINITE PLUS FOR W & L

10. 'NUFF SAID. 'NUFF SAID?
10. 'NUFF SAID, WE SAID.
9. WHAT COULD BE BETTER THAN ONE BAKER--THREE, WITH SIDEBURNS!
9. MÉNAGE-À-TROIS FOR ALL!!!!
8. THIS WAY, SAE'S CAN ALL BE FROM ALABAMA, KR'S CAN ALL COME FROM TEXAS AND THE INTERNATIONAL HOUSE CAN ALL COME FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES.
8. TWICE AS MANY TEMPTRESSES FROM ICELAND (BJORK PART II).
7. SOUTH PHILLY SLIM'S!
7. TWICE AS MANY PEOPLE TO PROVIDE A HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT FOR G&L MEMBER(S).
6. WITH WASHINGTON AND LEE ADMITTING TWICE THE STUDENTS, DEAN MANNING CAN REMEMBER EVERYONE'S CLONE'S NAMES AS WELL.
6. READERSHIP OF *THE W&L SPECTATOR* INCREASES EXPONENTIALLY.
5. WITH EVERY FRESHMAN HAVING A CLONE, THE ADMINISTRATION CAN FINALLY JUSTIFY GRINES AND WOODS CREEK.
5. TWICE AS MANY FRIDAYS! FOR THE FRIDAYS! COMMITTEE.
4. THE HILL CAN REVEL IN THE FACT THAT WHILE ONE PLEDGE IS BEING HAZED, ITS CLONE CAN BE STUDYING.
4. HOLLINS².
3. W&L STUDENTS STILL OUTNUMBERED BY THE LEHINGTON BIKE COPS, POLICE FORCE, SWAT TEAM AND ALCOHOL SEAL TEAM.
3. THE NUMBER OF SPECTATORS VIEWING AN ENTIRE GENERAL'S FOOTBALL GAME DOUBLES (TO 1 2).
2. GHO WILL BECOME THE BISTRO 4000.
2. NORTH FACE, INC. GOES PUBLIC DUE TO DOUBLED SALES.
1. TWICE AS MANY DATE-LESS W&L WOMEN.
1. EAST LEH WILL HAVE TO CARRY TWICE THE POOR.

Campus Issues

Strengthening the W&L Community Through True Diversity

BY MATT GRAVES

Coming out of high school, I could have chosen almost any school in the country. Most of the schools that I applied to paid for me to come to see their school, and amongst these schools was Washington and Lee. I give you this information not to brag, but rather to lay the groundwork for the question I have been asked the most over the last three years: why in the world did I come to Washington and Lee? I would be remiss if I did not say that two of the main

factors were the scholarship I was awarded and the education that I thought I would receive (which to this day I feel is one of the best in the country). However, there was one incident during my visitation that eased some of my skepticism about entering college as a minority. I was one of the unlucky scholarship candidates that had an interview early in the morning, so at a relatively early hour I decided to leave the party my host had taken me to and went back to my host's

room. Just as I was going into my host's room, a student from across the hall came out of his room. He immediately introduced himself and we engaged in the common "prospective" talk. He asked me where I was sleeping, and I told him on the floor. When he found out that I was sleeping on the floor, he insisted on giving me his sleeping bag. He told me to leave the sleeping bag outside of his room in the morning and left. I was immediately impressed by the sense of community and trust that was present on the hall. The student from across the hall and I were part of that community and were dealing with each other as such, regardless of color. This ran in sharp contrast to other campuses I had visited where students of different color would not even eat together and spent most of their time resenting each other.

When I came to W&L, however, I found that the campus-wide community was not as strong as I thought. In my opinion, a significant portion of people at this school are content to interact only with people from their own state, region or race. In fact, under different management this very journal had articles that promulgated stu-

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dent homogeneity. To me, this concept is the antithesis of what the college experience should be. College is ideally the place where you test your beliefs and values against those of people from differing backgrounds, and it should be the place where you learn to interact with people who come from different cultures.

Many people ask me how can we get more minority students to come to W&L. I answer that we should make the campus more attractive to qualified minority students by rejuvenating the inclusive community that should be inherent to W&L. The bulwark of our community is honor. Not only does the system provide us with many benefits, but it also serves as a catalyst in creating a sense of trust and camaraderie amongst the freshman class. In a school such as this, it should be easy to cultivate interaction and even friendship between people of different backgrounds. Yet instead of doing this, many people choose to take the easy way out. It is easy to associate with people exactly like you. You understand these people. They have values similar to yours and probably similar backgrounds. It can be challenging to reach an understanding with people from different cultures. I know that in many of my conversations on this campus I have wondered if the people I am talking to are from the same

country that I am. It is only through conversations such as these, however, that we can begin to surmount the barriers which the American experience has erected around our cultures. To foster this type of interaction, I recommend instituting more programs that would draw students of different backgrounds together. Such activities could be as academically oriented as forums to discuss current events, or they could be socially oriented activities. The best way to implement these programs would be to form a committee comprised of representatives from every major campus group and selected

members of the administration and charge them with the task of coming up with a cohesive strategy for strengthening the W&L community by making it both more active and inclusive.

In light of the Spike Lee fiasco, I feel it necessary to comment on how racial issues can easily become distorted in a community. The fact that there were no African-American students at the dinner for Spike Lee is not the problem, but rather a symptom of it. The fundamental problem is that there are not enough minority students at this school to enable committees, leadership councils

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and clubs to be naturally diverse. For the most part I do not believe that racism in any way prevents minority students from being elected or appointed to leadership positions or committees. I have no empirical evidence to support this belief. I can only cite the fact that I do not feel that I have ever been discriminated against in the various elections I have been in or in any of the positions on campus that I have interviewed for, and I see other minorities getting appointed and elected. We simply do not have enough minorities at Washington and Lee to

make our councils and clubs naturally diverse. I would have been appalled had the administration, Contact or any other group at this campus broke normal procedures to falsely "diversify" the Spike Lee dinner. Members of the W&L student body and administration should not be in the business of deceiving any of the guests to our community about the lack of diversity at this campus. It should be our mark of shame that when two large campus organizations, such as Contact and The Film Society, host a dinner, there are no African-

Americans. This shame should serve as motivation to drive the entire W&L community to try to make our campus more diverse.

As much as this issue angered me, however, I am much more concerned about the precedent that it may set. I have no problem saying that the issue of diversity was demagogued by certain individuals in this situation. I concede that I was not directly involved in this conflict, but I feel that I have a fair understanding of what transpired from reading the articles about it and from listening to participants' accounts. This situation was the classic train wreck case, where two sides recklessly charge one another. This type of scenario has become indicative of our society. The issue was turned into "us" against "them," rather than "let's sit down and talk about this." The issue polarized the groups, with no course of action left besides the scene that embarrassed the entire W&L community. In the end, both sides were left feeling bitter and resentful towards the other side. It only takes a couple of confrontations such as this to leave us with two permanent factions constantly fighting over every campus issue. This situa-



tion could have been handled better. I must point to the experiences of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to exemplify my point. Civil disobedience, such as boycotts and picketing, were always the last resort. Before that there were always attempts made, at least by Dr. King's side, to reach a conclusion satisfactory to all sides through compromise or mediation. Where was that in this situation? The ostensibly deliberative meetings between the two parties were just occasions for both sides to shout ultimatums at one another. Should both sides not have attempted to come up with a compromise, such as having a reception for Mr. Lee at the Chavis House before dinner? If such a solution is inappropriate, then I am sure that at a school like W&L, where the students pride themselves on civility, a compromise could have been reached. We must learn from this disastrous situation, in order to prevent the same mistake from occurring again.

Eventually, whether the community condones it or not, more minority students will come to W&L. As the pool of talented minority students increases, minority representation will rise at all campuses. The question becomes, what do we want our school to look like as it becomes more diverse? When we return for our reunions five, ten or twenty years from now, do we want to return to a campus

that is divided along racial lines, where the only interracial activity that occurs is the interaction forced upon each group in the classroom? Or, do we want to return to a campus that has one inclusive community that requires only one thing from all of its participants: honor?

The future is in our hands. Those of us that are at W&L have the privilege of choosing, for it is not too late to opt for the latter, but soon it will be. Although I disagreed with parts of his speech, I agree with Glenn Miller when he commented that we can see our school's future in the history of other schools. Do we want to be like the segregated schools arising across the country, where animos-

ity and ignorance fuel the engine of hate that runs these schools, or do we want to be one inclusive community that can serve as "a college on the hill?" Can we be a school that can show a nihilistic country suffering from the diseases of racism, ignorance and hate that we can all live together? The choice is ours, and I hope that when I come back for my twentieth reunion I can be proud of the steps that we took to strengthen W&L, rather than explain to future students why we let the unique W&L community degenerate into a campus of subcultures, indistinguishable from any other school across the country.



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Campus Issues

The State of the Honor System

BY GLENN MILLER

In September, the Executive Committee appointed nine students to sit on the White Book Review Committee. Assembled once every three years, the WBRC exhaustively examines all facets of the Honor System and makes recommendations for its improvement. Specifically, the committee is charged with three tasks: to ascertain and report on the opinions of the W&L community on all aspects of the Honor System; to thoroughly examine the philosophical and procedural elements of the White Book; and to make proposals to the E.C. for any changes that would improve the Honor System and maintain its vitality.

The WBRC submitted its report to the E.C. on March 1. The recommended changes included in the report are currently under debate. In the next issue, the *W&L Spectator* hopes to report on the changes that get adopted as well as the ones that are denied. To familiarize our readership with the White Book Review Committee's undertaking, we have compiled excerpts from the introductory material of the

WBRC's report. Adam Branson, the chairman of the WBRC, is the primary author of the following material and it is reprinted with his permission.

• Adam Branson attended a conference last year that explored the problems and issues facing honor bodies on college campuses across the nation. It was reassuring to learn that Washington and Lee's system remains arguably the strongest and most re-

spected honor institution in the land: *"At the National Conference on Ethics in America, it became obvious that W&L has one of the most uncompromising Honor Systems in the country due to its Single Sanction. It is held in high regard, thanks in large part to the fact that it is administered entirely by students. At other institutions with honor councils, students are charged with the task of determining guilt or innocence,*

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but defer to faculty with respect to sanctioning. W&L's Honor System was heralded by many for its refusal to codify concepts such as honor and integrity. It was further complimented for its flexibility in application from one student generation to another and its ability to foster a community of trust."

• The WBRC spent countless hours exploring the Honor System. It made a conscious effort to consider possible changes from all possible angles, without prejudice or favoritism. While many of the changes were marginal, such as small emendations to the language of the White



Book, none of the changes were trivial:

"The WBRC explored many issues this year. Some issues, like Honor System investigations, were debated heavily and took a great deal of time.

Other issues, like questions relating to the jurisdiction of the Executive Committee and the statute of limitations surrounding potential honor violations, were resolved quickly and with little debate. Nonetheless, all issues were fully thought out. The WBRC tried to examine every aspect of the

Honor System and every proposed change to the Honor System in painstaking detail and from all sides. It was not uncommon for a controversial issue to be raised and debated in one meeting and subsequently revis-

ited in later meetings. Of the changes proposed, most noticeable include: restructuring the Investigative Team, amending the structure and format of the procedures governing the Executive Committee Hearing and the Student Body Hearing, and increasing the number of guilty votes

necessary to find a student guilty of an honor violation. Other proposals worthy of recognition relate to reinforcing the scope of the Honor System, increasing the accountability of the adjudication process, and increasing awareness of each student's responsibility

to the Honor System. Much time and thought was invested in changing the language and organization of the White Book to make it more intelligible and comprehensive."

• The WBRC discovered

that the enduring quality Washington and Lee's Honor System stems, in large part, from the philosophical tenets that undergird the system. In short, the Honor System at W&L remains a prevalent institution on this campus because the community believes in it.

• *"The Honor System remains philosophically sound. We found that all those within*

the W&L community hold the Honor System in highest regard. . . . Our proposals for changes reinforce the concepts endeared by the W&L community, serve to galvanize further support for the system from outside the community, and address potential issues that could prove problematic or detrimental to the Honor System in the future."

Interested in working for the SPECTATOR?

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The staff of the *W&L Spectator* wishes to encourage all students to participate in the upcoming elections on Monday, March 24. The Honor System can only maintain its viability through the active involvement of the student body.



Campus Issues

And the Results are in: Some Interesting Responses to the Honor System Survey

BY ADAM BRANSON

The White Book Review Committee administered a survey to the student body and faculty to discern their opinions on various aspects of the Honor System. Adam Branson, chairman of the committee, has provided us with a synopsis of some of the more salient results from the survey. Anyone desiring a more comprehensive analysis of the survey results should contact Branson.

Unfortunately, the survey endeavor was hindered by a low response rate. The WBRC received a paltry 664 student responses (34%) and 90 faculty responses (36%) to the Honor

System Survey. A higher response rate would have enabled the WBRC to formulate a more concise, comprehensive, report on the Honor System. The low response rate is disheartening, for it suggests that students do not value the tradition of honor enough to endure the inconvenience of completing a brief survey. Seeing as several faculty are already willing to comment on student self-governance (as witnessed in the debate over the Student-Faculty Hazing Board, the new Student Judicial Council, and proposed changes to the Student Faculty

Hearing Board), it is surprising that they are not willing to articulate their questions and concerns surrounding the Honor System. Nevertheless, I want to extend my thanks to all individuals who took the time to complete and return a survey.

A positive statistic of note was the continued support for the Single Sanction. It is frequently alleged that the faculty is able to ram through reforms that are unpalatable to the student body such as the sophomore housing requirement. It is reassuring, therefore, to learn that the faculty, in the aggregate, does not object to the Single Sanction. In fact, 75% of faculty responses favored the sole punishment while only 70% of students shared this belief. One has to wonder, however, whether the 30% who do not support the Single Sanction are willing to turn people in?

On the subject of reporting potential violations, 72% of students felt that the Honor System should apply in non-academic situations. At the same time, 73% of respondents reported that the Honor System is not given the same attention in non-academic situations as it receives in academic ones. I remind everyone that to preserve the integrity of the system and to promote student self-governance, it is up to us to

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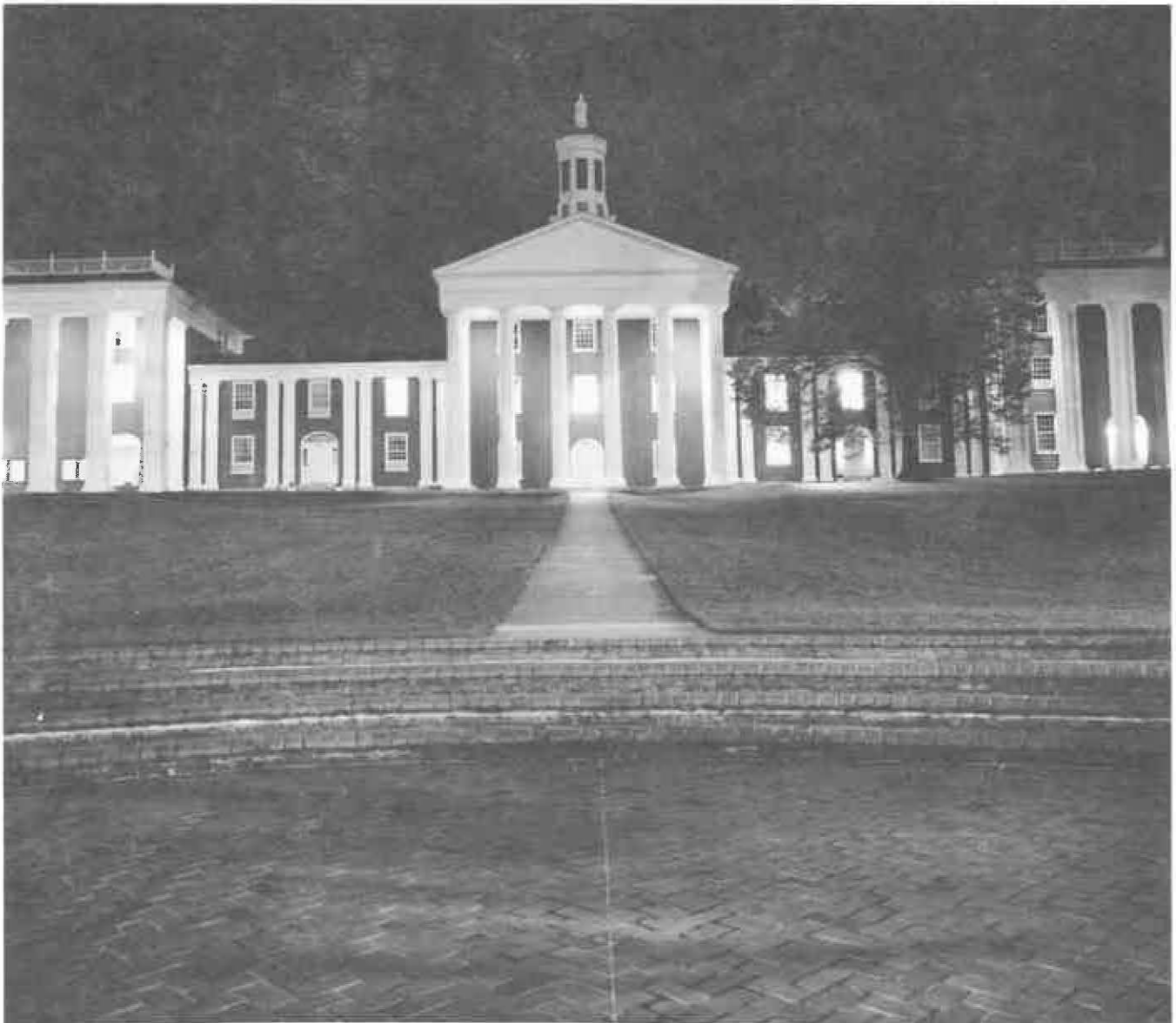
report potential violations, whether or not they may have been perpetrated by our friends or acquaintances. Contrary to popular opinion, the EC doesn't have scouts scattered across campus waiting to catch someone acting dishonorably. The EC can only investigate charges brought to its attention.

The committee was shocked by the response to the question: Do you know of unreported Honor Violations? Thirty-two percent of

students and 29% of faculty answered yes. Though we recognize that every individual may have a different perception of what constitutes an Honor Violation (some may deem underage drinking and sexual assaults to be violations) and that respondents might know of the same incident, the committee still found this statistic to be too high.

In closing, I want to say that in order to protect student autonomy, everyone

must be willing to trust those elected to office each year. I ask those faculty who have reservations about student adjudication of the Honor System to trust the student body. Elections for the EC and SJC shouldn't hinge on popularity. Votes should be cast for individuals who possess knowledge of the system and who can adjudicate matters fairly and thoughtfully. With that in mind, I encourage everyone to vote on Monday, March 24.



Campus Issues

The Need for Reciprocity in an Honorable Community

BY MARCUS RAYNER

Walk on campus with your ears open and you can hear small cracks in the Honor System occurring in the daily affairs of the University community. "I'm sorry, but I need proof that you paid your fine before I can allow you to register," one student hears at the Registrar's office. A library worker tells another student that keeping a book that has been recalled by another student is an honor violation. Well,

it is not in my opinion, and a student guilty of being inconsiderate is suddenly losing sleep over it. Cracks like this can become holes, and the Honor System at Washington and Lee cannot tolerate breaches in its integrity.


The examples above are true, nameless instances where the Honor System was forgotten, or, in the second case, abused. These infractions surely are not deliberate

attacks on the Honor System, but slight, seemingly inconsequential lapses in trust which threaten to undermine the health of the system. Unfortunately, these lapses occur with disturbing frequency and threaten the trust that exists between students, faculty and staff at Washington and Lee.

The White Book states that "a student's word is accepted and respected both on campus and in the community."

While this is an ideal, students at W&L should expect to be trusted, and in return act in a way worthy of trust. The Honor System cannot successfully exist among students only, but must be enforced and upheld by faculty, administration, and staff as well. To be sure, most employees of Washington and Lee support fully the Honor System and its principles. In the course of daily interaction, however, it often becomes apparent that some individuals, despite a resolute faith in

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the system, fail to practice the very acts of trust that bestow meaning to the ideals of the White Book.

Those employees of the University who do not support the Honor System or are indifferent to it should question the reasons for their presence here. If these individuals can be won over, then students must do it by example. If they cannot, then perhaps they should leave. They are a threat to a sacred and rare institution, because while students become obligated to the system upon matriculating to Washington and Lee, no authoritative regulatory system exists to

monitor employee conduct or loyalty to the Honor System. Such a measure is certainly impractical and inappropriate, but its absence calls attention to the responsibility students hold to nurture the faculty and staff's endorsement of the system.

It is the student body's duty to support and strengthen the system, for once it is ignored, it will not be repairable. The Honor System works because students trust others and are trusted by others. But are they really? Stories like those above demand stronger vigilance by students over the behavior of University employees. For the

sake of the system, students should demand trust from all members of the W&L community and continue to earn the right to have it. A student who feels that his or her word is not accepted on campus does not feel trusted. Destroy the trust, and you destroy the system.

Marcus Rayner is Secretary of the Student Body. The opinions presented here are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Executive Committee of the Student Body.

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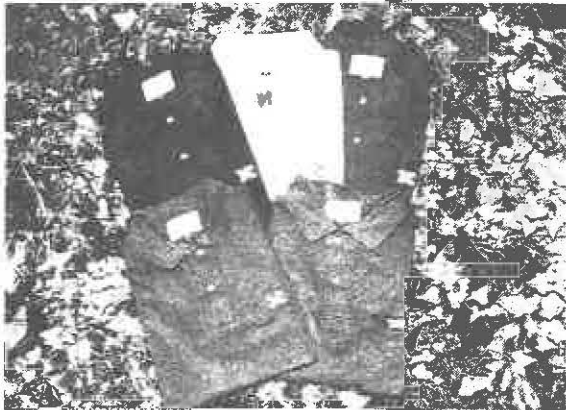
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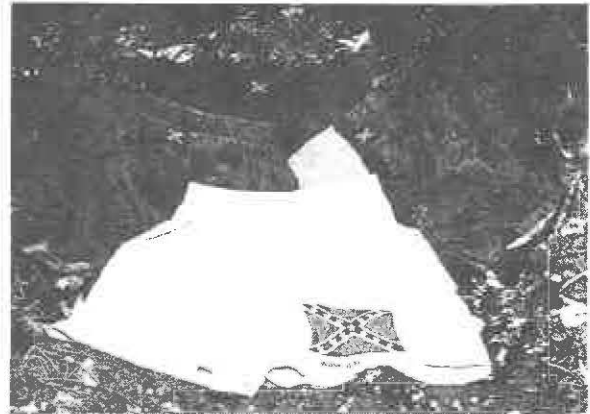
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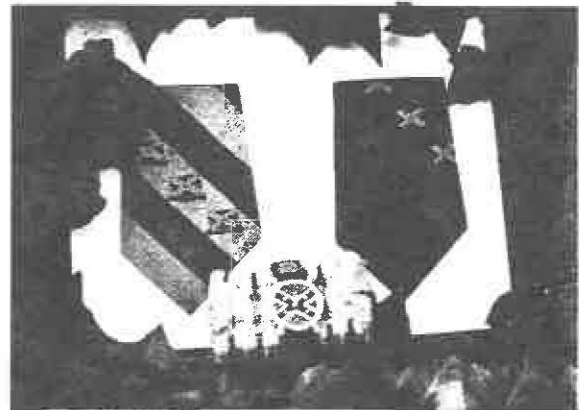
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