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VOLUME 6, ISSUE 3

MAY 1995

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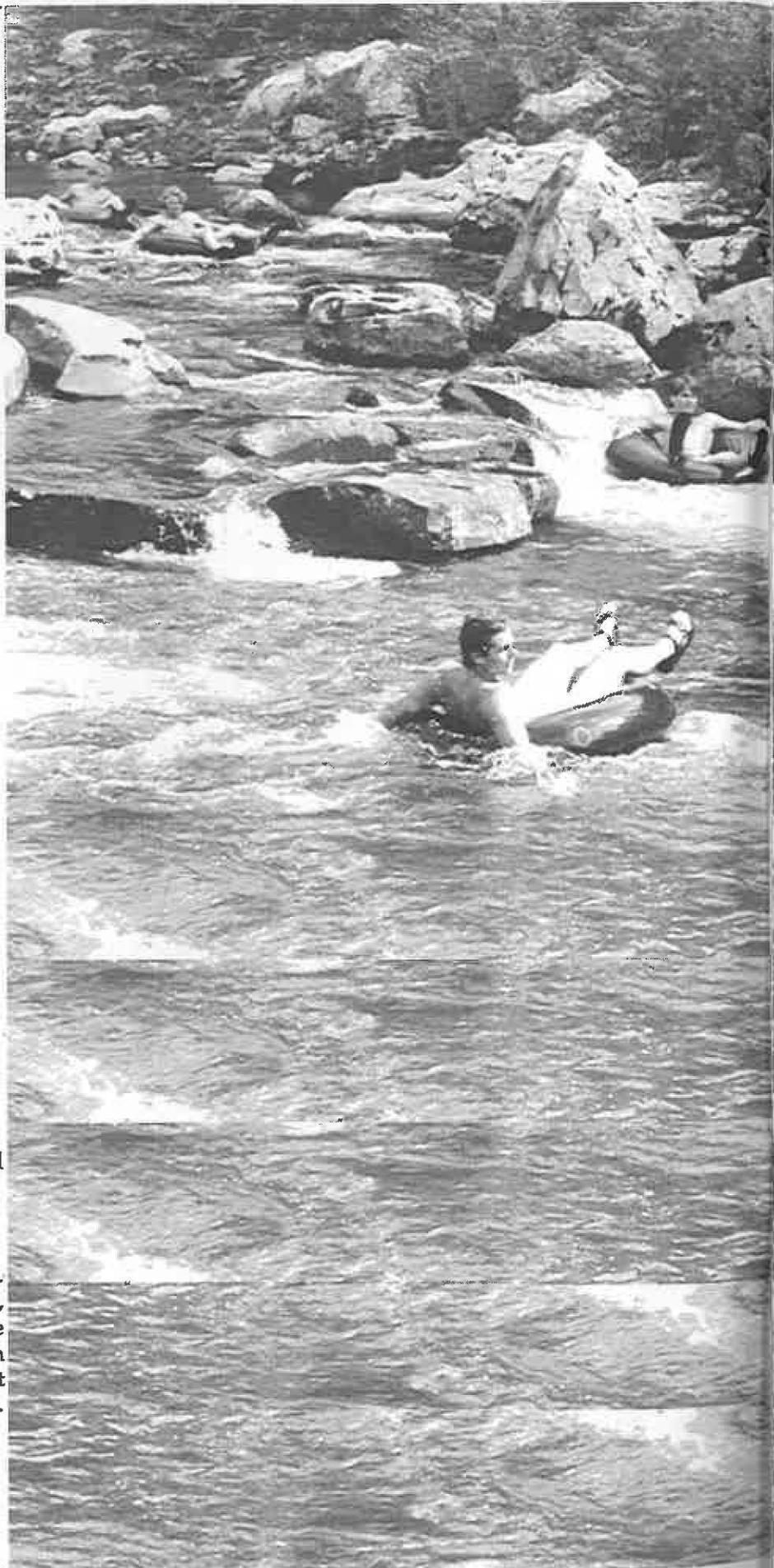
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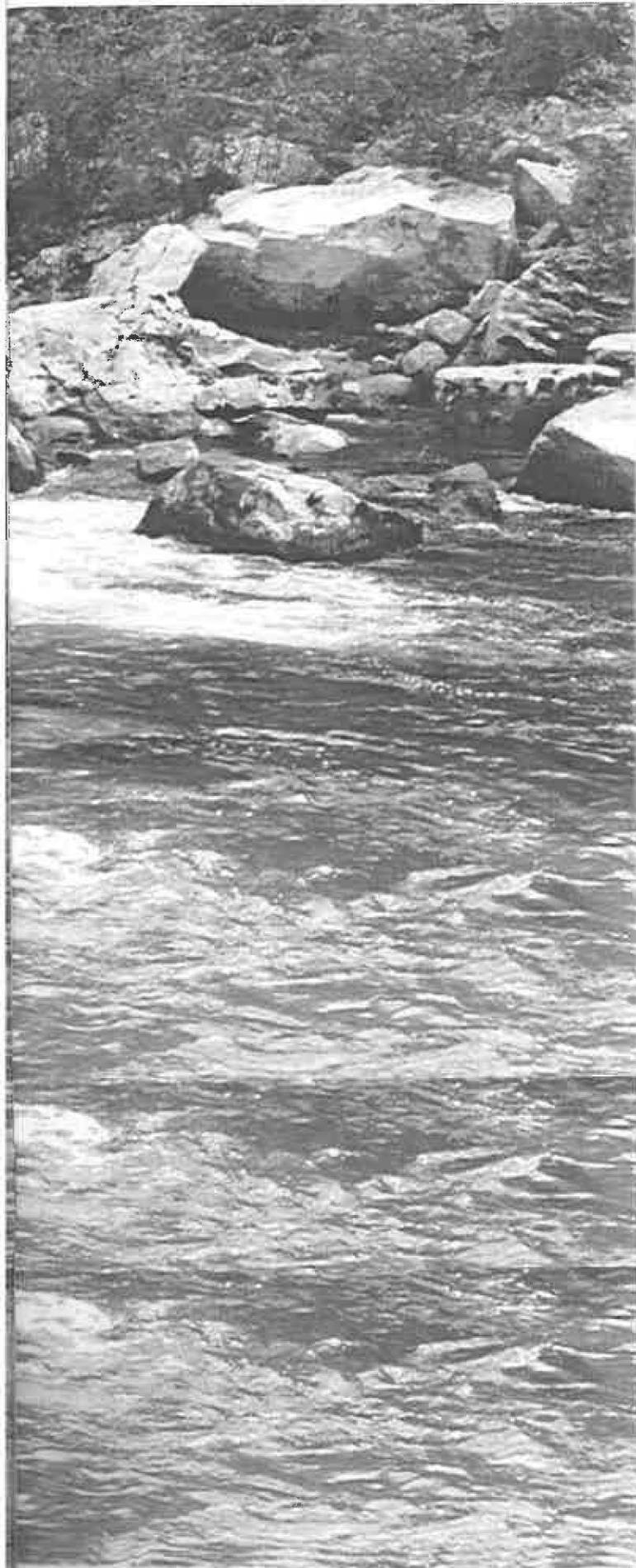
Letters to the Editor

Washington and Lee Spectator

Post Office Box 320

Lexington, VA 24450





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An Open Letter to the Faculty of Washington and Lee University

Taken from the wlu general discussion group on Liberty.

April 27, 1995

In October of 1994, the Alumni Fraternity Council established an ad hoc committee to monitor the debate between faculty and students, and provide input when necessary, regarding the timing of the fraternity rush process. At its January meeting, the AFC discussed the effects of moving the rush period from the Fall to Winter term, as well as moving rush to a different period within the Fall term. The group could not conclude that either plan had a significant advantage over the existing schedule for rush and agreed instead to review, and most likely support, any changes agreed upon by both faculty and students.

The Committee has been watching with interest the ongoing discussions, hoping that the parties involved could find a consensus position on the subject. This has not occurred. In fact, it is not clear that the parties have yet agreed upon just what the problem is: the position of the fraternity rush calendar in the school year, or the length and rigors of the pledge period. It seems premature and ill-advised to apply remedies without first agreeing on the problem.

It is the Committee's belief that improvements should be made to the pledge period where specific, tangible problems are clearly defined. This approach has been proposed by the IFC and endorsed by the faculty. The results of these targeted changes should be critically evaluated before any additional changes to the process are contemplated or applied. This seems to be the only rational way to implement evolutionary revisions to a core process that was overwhelmingly

reviewed as a success by all parties in the Fall of 1994. It is the Committee's belief that additional changes should only be made if and when it is determined that additional problems exist.

The faculty has listed among its rationale the negative academic impact of Fall rush on incoming freshmen, while remaining silent as to the impact of a Winter rush on sophomores, juniors and seniors. Concerns have been raised about class unity, as if any lack of cohesion within a class can be laid solely at the feet of the Fall rush process. The faculty desires more time for the freshmen to learn about fraternities and the University before pledging a house, ignoring the fact that students may wait to pledge, depledge, or move from one house to another at any time. The primary arguments, while compelling, are not overwhelmingly persuasive to the Committee upon review.

The Committee understands the global concerns of the faculty and supports it in its difficult role as the guardian of academic integrity and student welfare at Washington and Lee. However, the Committee wishes for a more critical review of any contemplated modifications and that an erudite approach to their implementation be taken. If these requests are not heeded, any changes that are made are unlikely to lessen the inherent conflicts between the fraternity rush and pledge processes, and purely academic endeavors.

Respectively Submitted,

Andy Dewing

Ad Hoc Committee of

Fraternity Rush,

Alumni Fraternity Council

Top Ten Theme Dorms

10. Hot, Sexy, and Safer Condominium
9. The Unplugged House
8. The Coffee House
7. "Just Say No" House
6. Alternative Lifestyle House
5. Southern Guilt Syndrome
4. Spectator Lodge
3. Dr. Futch Tribute Society
2. Michelle Richardson's Fun House
1. The OJ Big House



An Inside Look At W&L's Professional Committee Members

The *Spectator* informed its readers for several years of the administration's attempt, through the Confidential Review Committee (CRC), to infect the Washington and Lee Community with political correctness. As you might remember, this committee had the duty of hearing cases involving offensive speech, sexual harassment, etc. Fortunately, the *Spectator* and the students exposed this liberal board and forced the administration to change its policy. Though the CRC died, its legacies did not. Now, several years later, we report on where the members of the CRC and its replacement, the Student-Faculty Hearing Board, are within our school. In addition, we examine president-elect, John Elrod's failure to distance himself from the Wilson Administration with his recent appointments.

Recently, the *Spectator* compiled a list of faculty committees which are directly involved in student governance. The list includes the Advisory Committee since Dean Howison deemed this "the most important faculty committee" because it represents the "the knowledge and views of the faculty" (Faculty Handbook) on issues related to appointments and the selection of a new President. The Student Affairs Committee which has spearheaded sophomore housing, winter rush, and the overbearing punishments received by Delta Tau

Delta and FIJI was also considered. Moreover, we examined the aforementioned CRC/Student-Faculty Hearing Board, Freshman Admissions, and Student Health Committee (see page eight). In addition, we analyzed the Coed Committee and the Dean of the College Search Committee. We conducted our study to see if 1)

If the faculty truly desires change, I suggest it start with its own committees.

There was a correlation between membership on one committee and membership on a second committee, particularly the Coed Report Committee and the new Search Committee; 2) Checked the frequency with which faculty names appear on all the committees; 3) Estimated years of service on across all committees; and 4) Saw how the members of the CRC are serving our community today. Data was obtained from the Washington and Lee catalogues since the 1989-1990 school year.

The records indicate that sixty-nine faculty members have served on these various committees along with several deans who are members by office. The typical professor served on 1.5 committees for an average duration of 2.9 years. Interestingly, a small handful of names, six to be exact, reoccurred

with an amazing frequency. In fact, the number of committees on which these individuals served and the committee years which they worked were so out of line with the averages, even accounting for two statistically acceptable deviations, that we decided to take a closer look. We also examined any other data which bordered the outer edges of our qualifications for closer inquiry.

Having narrowed our search list, we then placed the data with the six individuals. Not surprisingly, two of the six, Professors West-Settle and Margand, had been appointed members of the bygone Confidential Review Committee. Naturally, given their politically correct service of the past, both these individuals were appointed to serve on the Coed Report Committee. Furthermore, these individuals were also serving on the Advisory Committee at the time of the Coed report which would cause one to question the Coed Committee's independence from the administration and its pre-supposed conclusions. We also examined the other names connected with the old CRC/Student Faculty Hearing Board and found that two others, professors Simpson and B. J. Brown, also found themselves appointed to the Coed Committee.

Other individuals whose names emerge from the data include Professors Alty, Williams, Koberstein, and Oliver. All of these

individuals served on the Coed Report Committee whose report many students, faculty, and Committee members discounted as being biased from the start. Like West-Settle and Margand, Williams was also a member of the Advisory Committee at the time of the Coed study. Many of these same professors have also spent time on the Student Affairs Committee and the Student Health Committee which are increasingly searching to change the complexion of

Washington and Lee.

Finally, we compared the membership of the Coed Report Committee to the membership on the Search Committee appointed by President-elect Elrod. Unfortunately, the correlation between membership on the Search Committee to membership on the CRC and the Coed Committee is phenomenally high. Moreover, Elrod's first effort as president reminds us unfortunately of a typical Wilson committee. Once again, the

names Alty, Simpson, West-Settle, and Williams appear, despite their role in putting together the much disputed Coed Report which Elrod called "a valuable asset". One will also notice that by including Professor Barbara Brown one finds three CRC members among the eleven names on the Search Committee.

Despite what one thinks of the performance of these individuals and their respective committees, one thing is clear: too few faculty members are spending too much time in key positions. This may be the result of an apathetic majority or the proactive nature of the few, but certainly it represents a problem which the new administration should address. Bread left untouched soon becomes stale. If faculty are to vote on issues such as winter rush, be involved in the discussion of sophomore housing, then they ought to have hands-on experience with student governance. Moreover, the administration at a University such as ours should not have to rely on re-appointing 40% of the same faculty members to every special committee. Likewise, faculty members should not be allowed to go a decade without serving the University in some other way. Surely our faculty must contain a multitude of able, intelligent individuals. Faculty members, as part of their job, should be required to serve on general student governing committees on a rotating basis. Furthermore, special committees should not resemble each other too closely. If the faculty truly desires change, I suggest it start with its own committees.



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Reflections on Four Years of Greek Life

In my four short years at Washington and Lee, I have seen many changes in Greek life. I first went through a three-week fall rush. As a sophomore I lived in an unrennovated house. The

experience was disgusting at times, but mostly fun; my fraternity ate on benches and plank picnic tables. Since Fraternity Renaissance, we eat in finished chairs and sturdy tables. The physical appearance has changed for the better. My

fraternity's kitchen can now pass a health inspector's test, and maybe even Jim Boyd's test as well.

I have noticed some changes that are not for the better. Sophomore housing, winter rush, and an increasing scrutiny of student organizations by people who are not students are among the problems facing W&L students today. As the gulf between what students expect from the University and what administrators and faculty want from the University widens, student dissatisfaction grows.

It may be true that the administration and faculty are not trying to get fraternities out of Washington and Lee, but they are certainly taking the Washington and Lee out of fraternities. Our fraternities' physical existence may not be threatened, but the traditional character of them is being threatened. The more houses are regulated and controlled by the University, the closer they come to being dormitories and eating clubs.

We must take steps to ensure that when we walk into our fraternity houses on Alumni Weekend 2010, we find a system we recognize. The fraternity system can only remain strong by critical self-

It may be true that the administration and faculty are not trying to get fraternities out of Washington and Lee, but they are certainly taking the Washington and Lee out of fraternities.

evaluation. It is preferable to have the fraternities identify and solve their problems on their own terms than to have unacceptable solutions forced on them by someone else.

Three areas that the fraternity system might address are alcohol, pledgship, and rush.

Fraternities provide the majority of Washington and Lee's social life. For this reason, Greek organizations are under greater scrutiny than any other groups on campus. The drinking habits of Washington and Lee students are not much different from those of students at other colleges; however, if the University decides that our school has

a "drinking problem," the first finger will always be pointed at fraternities. Learning to drink responsibly is part of college life. There is no need for an ID-checking



security guard at the door of fraternity parties, most members of the University community do behave responsibly. Fraternity members can and should guard against intrusion of University rules and regulation at their social events. Fraternities should continue to encourage a BYOB policy at parties and continue to stop providing alcohol at parties. The responsibility of providing alcohol should fall upon individuals rather than fraternities. If individuals at a fraternity party are responsible for obtaining their own alcohol, nobody can blame a house for the drinking habits of individual guests.

Another area that fraternities might try to address is pledgship. A long, drawn out pledgship does not benefit pledges or fraternities in the long run. Faculty and administrators have a hard time seeing all of

the positive aspects of fraternities because the Hill is so concerned with the fact that freshmen are pledges most of the year. Fall pledgship is an excellent solution to this problem. Of course, the only way to have fall pledgship is to have fall rush. If fraternities show the faculty how well fall pledgship can work, perhaps students will have one more piece of evidence in our favor the next time the University evaluates the fraternity rush system.

Winter rush will cause more problems than it will solve, and I adamantly oppose it. Unfortunately, we do not have

much of a choice. For our Greek system to survive winter rush, every Greek chapter at Washington and Lee must come together as teammates rather than competitors. With a little bit of work, fraternities might even make it work to their advantage. With a little bit of work and creative thinking, our fraternity system can remain strong amidst changing times.

The fraternities at Washington and Lee should make



every attempt to keep the administration and other faculty from ruling our lives. Gripping about the way things are changing will not suffice. Every week, the *Phi* and the *Trident* publish articles about student unrest regarding loss of autonomy, but simply talking about the issues are not going to solve any problems. Fraternity members need to start voicing their opinions directly to Dean Howison, Dean Atkins, and other faculty members. Without more input from students, the administration, and faculty members will probably continue to point this university in the direction they see as best with little regard to

student beliefs.

Winter rush is an excellent example of this problem. Fraternity members met with representatives to exchange ideas concerning winter rush. The fraternity members made clear their opposition to winter rush, and the professors questioned the current system. The meeting was very civil and seemed to be very helpful to both the faculty and students, but unfortunately, it was the only one Greeks had. The next thing students knew, Winter Rush was a certainty, and fraternities had no chance to rebut.

In the future, more interaction between students and faculty must take place. I do not intend for this to be another administration-bashing article, but I believe that the Hill needs to offer a more open-minded ear to student opinions. At the same time, though, fraternity men need to

make their voices heard before it is too late.

To be perfectly honest, I am relieved that I am graduating in three weeks because I do not want to deal with the fraternity versus administration battle anymore. Nor do I want to take part in winter rush. I do hope that in the future, students and administrators can work together more than they have in the past few years. Otherwise, I could easily see this place becoming just another indistinguishable liberal arts school.

Kevin Batteh, Bryan King
Former IFC President and Secretary

One Down, Fifteen to Go

On May 2, 1995, the Alcohol Review Committee released its recommendations to help curb drinking by Washington & Lee students. Once again, the administration has used one of its many committees to continue its anti-fraternity stance, calling for the use of student funds to provide entertainment for a small minority at the University that wants an alternative to the entertainment provided by fraternities.

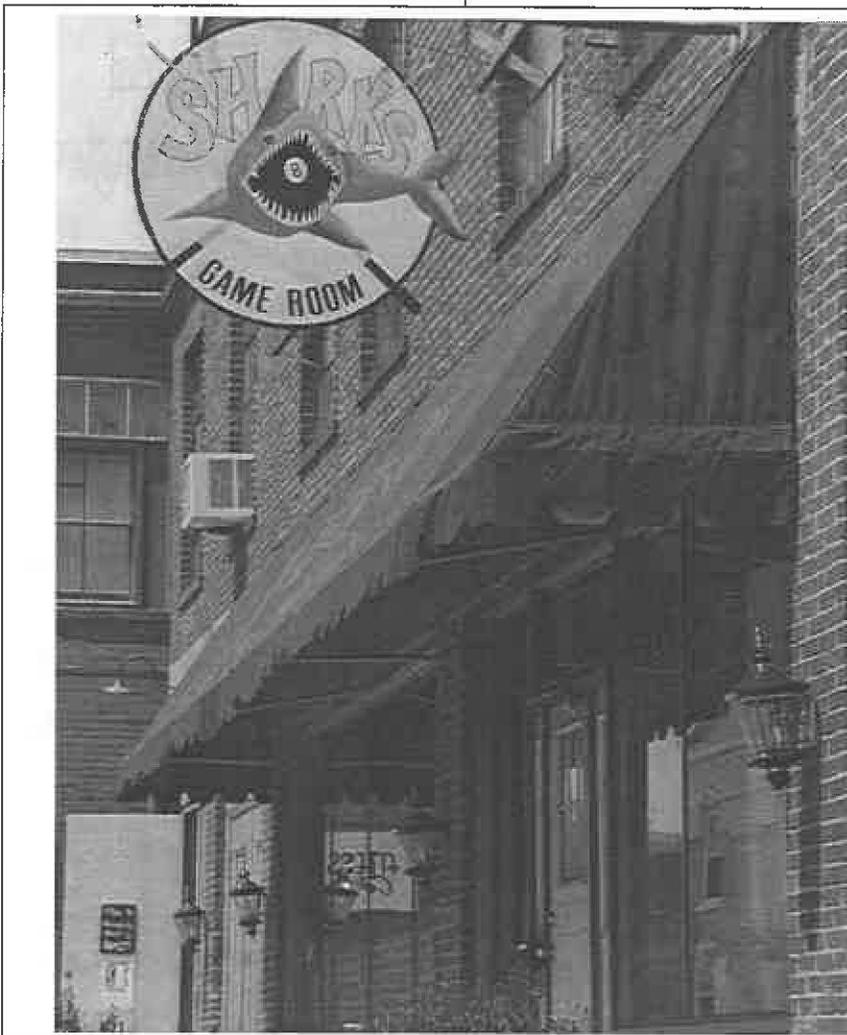
The recommendations by the Alcohol Review Committee assume that fraternities are the root of the perceived alcohol problem. They are not only additional examples of how the school is trying to de-emphasize the role that fraternities play in the lives of students, but also are perfect illustrations of how the faculty is pursuing its own agenda regardless of student opinion.

The first committee proposal calls for the General's Headquarters (GHQ) to once again be used as a "student pub." It clearly states in the report that "this setting would provide a neutral, non-fraternity environment." In addition, the committee hopes to encourage more participation in events planned by W&L's Dean of Fun, Michelle Richardson and would run in conjunction with other events planned by her. Those of age would be allowed to purchase four beers each night, and needless to say, minors are strictly prohibited from drinking. The

student pub would also be "exclusively for Washington and Lee students," eliminating any contact with the outside community.

Another proposal by the Committee's report is the use of the Delt house as a "Wellness House and/or an Interim Student Center." The report specifically states that this is a "non-Greek alternative...[that] could serve as an alternative setting for some of Michelle Richardson's programming." The Wellness

house would be used to encourage healthy lifestyles; "For example, a policy could be written that to live in the house students must not drink, smoke, or use drugs." Although this appears to be a very benign and well-intended program, an ulterior motive may be found. This may just be W&L's first attempt at theme housing and eating clubs, more appropriate uses for the school's fraternity houses in this politically correct era. One down, fifteen to go.



For this interim student center, the committee hopes to purchase a pool table, video games, and other forms of entertainment for the basement of the Wellness house to entertain students who do not want to attend fraternity parties. All this will be purchased with student funds, including those of students who are already paying expensive fraternity dues. Thus, the independent students would have access to a house that is better equipped than any other fraternity house on campus, yet the fraternities are forced to pay individually for all of their own activities. The

message is clear: Greek members must pay for their entertainment, but non-Greeks can enjoy activities paid for by the entire student body, as well as those events paid for by fraternities and sororities.

This is not simply a Greek, non-Greek issue but is an issue that illustrates a much deeper problem.

The committee also recommended another proposal implementing midnight basketball in the gym on Wednesday nights. The report expects that the midnight basketball games could increase interaction between

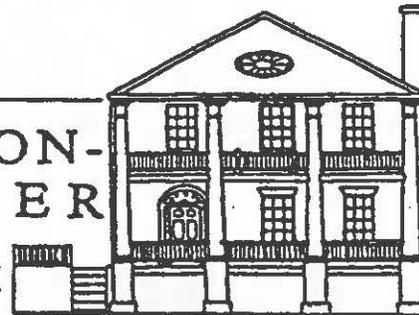
faculty and students, as well as "decrease students' alcohol consumption by providing an alternative activity to parties." There are several ridiculous assumptions to this argument. Will having an available basketball court really decrease student alcohol consumption, and how many professors want to play basketball at midnight on Wednesday night? Many of the students that are using the gym are fraternity members who would be more likely to use the gym on all the other weeknights except Wednesday, but it is all too obvious that this is an attempt by the faculty to once again challenge fraternities which have traditionally held parties on Wednesday nights.

The report also calls for a W&L Night at Sharks, the billiard hall and video arcade on Nelson Street. Of course, no alcohol will be served, but students may get a free game of pool. This will probably not work in the long run because it simply is not what students want. However, the administration will likely use the failure of this and other events to point to the need for a new student center to provide an even better tool for de-emphasizing fraternities.

It is appropriate for the administration to provide opportunities for the independent students to have fun without having to go to fraternity parties. However, it is dishonest to use funds from all the student body, the majority of which pay Greek dues, to subsidize these various schemes just to entertain a small

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minority of the students who refuse to take any initiative on their own. The fact remains that a large majority of the student body is Greek, but there are still numerous opportunities for non-Greek students to have fun.

Whether there is a W&L night or not, Sharks is still open for students to play pool, and they should be encouraged to find ways to entertain themselves without forcing others to pay

for it. There are now many concerts, contests, and other activities in the GHQ and at the Pavilion open to all students, and most fraternity parties are open to the entire student body. The Student Activities Board has achieved an unprecedented level of success this year; in fact, Buddy Atkins and other deans have complained that students have stayed too long at recent GHQ events.

Apparently, the real goal of student activity planning is not to entertain students how they want to have fun but how the Hill demands that they have fun. Members of Greek organizations pay high dues for their entertainment and freely entertain the rest of the W&L community. It is simply unfair to take the majority of students' money to provide entertainment that they neither want nor need in order to provide alternatives for a small, vocal minority who will not find options for themselves. This is not simply a Greek, non-Greek issue but is an issue that illustrates a much deeper problem. Many of the faculty and administration of the University have a significantly

different vision and agenda for the school that the majority of students, and those in charge have found a group of students and the money they need to further their own agendas. Forget majority rules; there is no democracy here.

The administration will likely use the failure of this and other events to point to the need for a new student center to provide an even better tool for de-emphasizing fraternities.

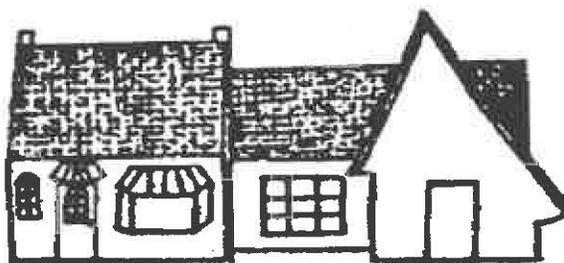
There are many students who are suggesting reasonable entertainment alternatives (See "Keeping the Students in Student Activities" in the March issue of

the *W&L Spectator*), and who knows better how to have fun than college students? The Hill must realize that it cannot force students to have fun. If students want an entertainment option badly enough, they will find a way to get it. Students must learn to find ways to entertain themselves on their own and to handle alcohol in social situations. By holding students hands and keeping them from

exercising initiative, the Hill is only denying students the opportunity to learn two important lessons they will need to know for the rest of their lives.

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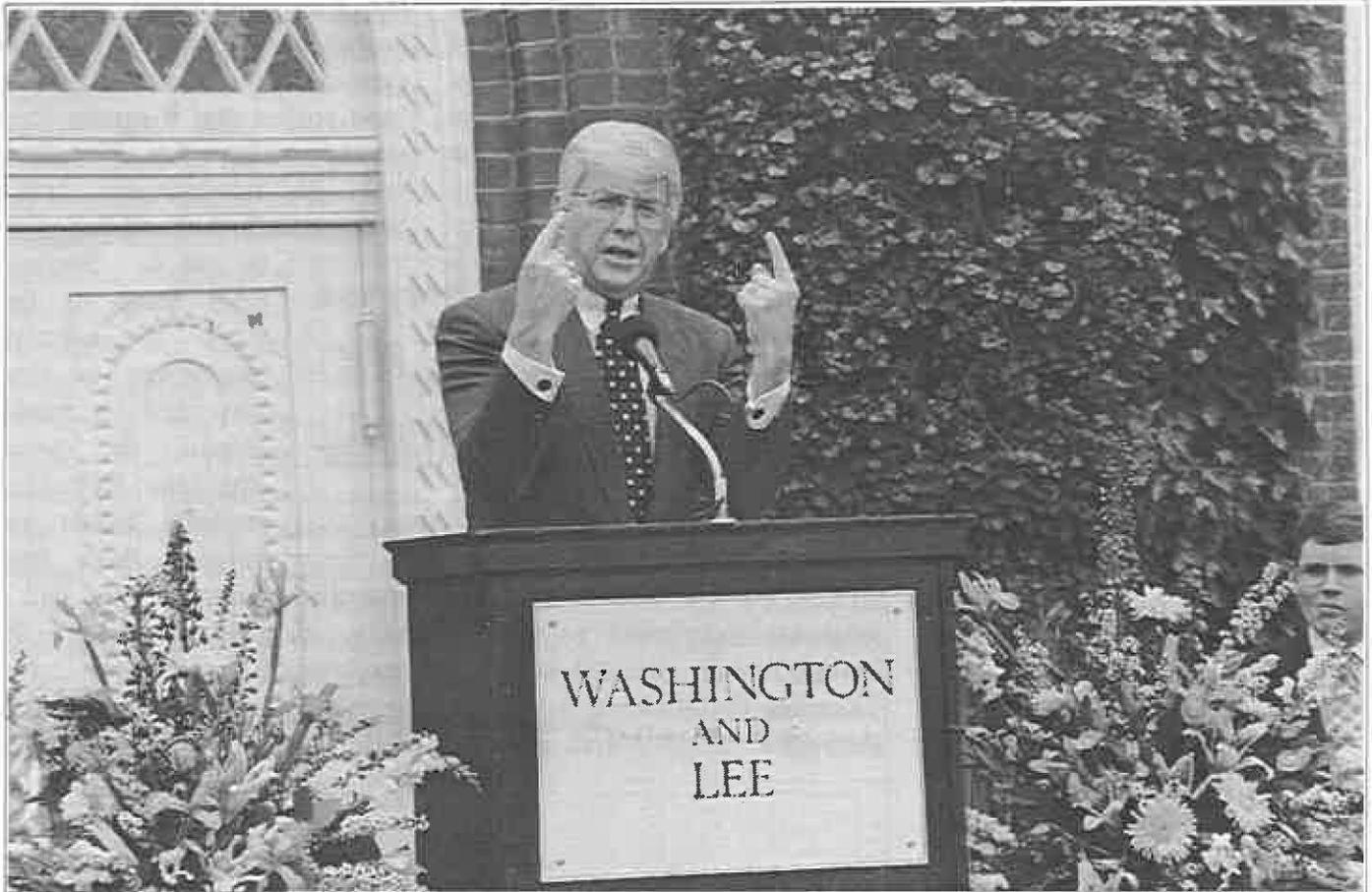


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An Argument for a Homogeneous Student Body

Many things come to mind when reflecting upon the Washington and Lee student body. In my four years, I still cannot get over the number of changes, both large and small, that have swept the institution. A general lack of respect or even awareness of the school's history and the speaking tradition are commonly touted as changes that have taken place in recent years. However, in the mad rush to make the student body more diverse, we have lost something else: a companionship and camaraderie that arise from homogeneity.

To say this is to invite a flood of criticism. Being against diversity is not viewed favorably. Today the word homogeneity carries a stigma and a connotation that conjure images of boring, identical people. This is not what I mean. Rather, I refer to a similarity which allows people to relate to one another. These traits allow people to become friends and associates. In the time that I have been at Washington and Lee, I have seen how seven classes interact amongst themselves and the decline of coalescent classes is clear.

The Class of 1995, while containing the statistical diversity the Hill strives to achieve, possesses qualities that have made many life-long friends out of us all. It is not restricted to a fraternity, a region, a major, or even where we lived in the dorms during our freshman year. This attitude is seen clearly in social settings. Just

a look at Fancy Dress and Zollman's shows how seniors who have not spoken with each other in months socialize and have a good time. This characteristic which exists among previous class is rapidly deteriorating among the younger ones.

Freshmen and Sophomores, and Juniors to some extent seem content hanging out with fraternity brothers, roommates, and people on their halls. This factionalization has contributed to what many dorm counselors can tell you is a lack of respect for each other, fights, and much in-class disharmony. Many of these things, however, cannot be proven by statistics and numbers, the focus of many in the Gilliam Admissions House.

It seems that in the Admissions Department's zeal to get a "diverse student body" and appease the *U.S. News and World Report* gods, it has sacrificed a unique trait of W&L. Unfamiliarity among students is certainly expected at bigger schools, but not at a school in which it is common to see most of your class every week simply by walking about the campus. A school of the size of W&L in a town as small as Lexington should not have these drawbacks of a major university.

A view of alumni yields an even clearer description of this homogeneity. One only has to go to D.C., Atlanta, Birmingham, or of any other city with a significant number of alumni and see them together. Former Washington and Lee students share a common bond

that is not found on the sheepskin. Nor is it found in being from the North or South, being Greek or Independent, or any other classification. It is owed to a homogeneity of Washington and Lee students. Many alumni confidently know that another grad has shared similar experiences, in a similar environment, and a belief in similar principles. Younger students cannot fathom this idea. They wish only to come to a Top Twenty school, get their degree and leave -- never to come back. Sadly, the Admissions Department seems content to let them do so.

There is no quick fix to this problem. Sophomore housing, the Dean of Fun, and a Student Center are all just ways to avoid the real issue at hand. Forcing people to be together does not necessarily make them like one another. Ask anyone who has had a bad roommate. The problem lies with the people themselves. People that are too diverse naturally split into factions. At a school with 30,000 undergraduates, this might not be such a problem. No matter how diverse one may be, chances are that you would find many similar people at a school that large. But not here.

Washington and Lee's homogeneity has been under attack by multiculturalists from outside and within. They cite those things about W&L that are different from other schools and seek to change them. The unfortunate thing is that some students believe them, resulting in a unique experience

being lost on the new generations of students. These students are being unfairly cheated out of what could possibly be the most unique aspect of spending four years at this school. Although the world we live in is a very diverse one, that alone is not reason enough to embark upon diversity for its own sake and use it as the ultimate litmus test for selecting students.

As I prepare to leave Washington & Lee, I have mixed feelings. I am sorry to be ending what I consider to be the most rewarding experience of my life,

never once regretting my decision to attend. On the other hand, however, I join with many of my fellow seniors who claim that we are leaving at "just the right time." Washington and Lee's goals and student body are rapidly changing from the characteristics that first drew me here. If presented with the decision today of what college to attend, I do not know whether I would chose differently -- but I would certainly give it more thought than I did four years ago.

The Myth of Diversity

Diversity is an idea that many people throw around in mindless chatter. At Washington and Lee it is not difficult to find people who complain that the University is too closed-minded and parochial. They cite the Southern mindset and racial composition of the student body as peculiarities that need to be changed. They believe that the school must diversify itself at all costs. It seems to raise an obvious question, but why? Looking at the big picture, diversity would actually bring about that which it seeks to avoid.

Before discussing this, however, the importance of diversity to so many people must be addressed. Many contend that as people are thrown together with others of a different background, they will gradually learn tolerance and acceptance. This idea is false. If a person is prejudiced against another a person for any reason, more of him will not help solve the problem. He will only continue to avoid them no matter how many of a given group there are around him. If this reasoning were true, South African whites would be the least racist people in the world! In spite of this flawed logic, many still fervently promote forced diversity as a laudable goal. The problem is that they fail to see what real diversity means.

Microdiversity is the type in which a single college or university would seek to have a student body that reflected the population-at-large. Asian-Americans, African-Americans, Native-Americans, and every other hyphenated-American would have a proportional ratio of

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students. This is the policy most refer to when they speak of diversity. However, there is another kind.

Macrodiversity, on the other hand, seeks to look at the big picture. If all schools were to practice microdiversity to its fullest extent, every college would be more or less the same. This would affect even predominantly black and women's schools, such as Howard University and Hollins College. Such a situation would cut down on the range of options that are available to high-school seniors. Many liberals stop short of suggesting this -- or somehow try to unfairly exclude these institutions from their agendas.

Macrodiversity already exists. There are Southern colleges, black colleges, and single sex colleges. These institutions

seek a specific type of student who would thrive better at one school than at a more diverse one. These schools must continue on their course to allow that man or woman a place in which he or she can receive the best education possible. This, after all, is the purpose of a college -- not promoting notions of social justice. In this context, a school like Washington and Lee should not be ashamed but proud of the studentd that attend it. It is a University that seeks to attract men and women of honor, Southern tradition, friendliness, intelligence, and ambition.

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The Secrets of W&L Society

With the recent approval of Winter Rush by the faculty, class unity has become a major issue on campus. The faculty hopes that by preventing freshmen from joining fraternities for a semester, there will be greater class unity. They seem to envision some happy band of students staying together all four years because of the critical formative first semester at Washington & Lee that bonded them all together. A brief look at the history of fraternities, clubs, and other organizations at W&L will quickly show that this vision can never come to fruition. Instead, just like high school, students form cliques and groups

by choosing to spend time with some people, while choosing to reject others. This is basic human nature that cannot be eliminated by a mere structural change in fraternity rush.

Many fraternities that exist today at Washington & Lee began before Robert E. Lee was ever president of the University. They existed despite the fact that the university strictly prohibited fraternities and immediately expelled any student who belonged to a fraternity at W & L. Thus, fraternities began as secret societies, holding meetings and

ceremonies in shacks and barns out in the country. More daring groups would meet in their dorm rooms, and the Betas even met in the office of the mayor of Lexington. Fraternities added a social side to the literary societies that were so popular at the time.

During that time, rush was



an ongoing process whereby members would invite a guy they liked to visit a meeting. There, they would explain to the "rushee" what the fraternity was about and ask him to join. Rush was not a set period of time but rather a year-long event of slowly bringing members into the fraternity. Fraternity men always had to be careful not to grab someone who was already in a fraternity or to grab a snitch who would report the fraternity to the administration.

It was not until after the Civil War and the ascendancy of Lee to the presidency of the University

that he tolerated fraternities at Washington & Lee. Lee figured it was not a good idea to have a bunch of young men fresh from a war and living in a militarily occupied land to be actively participating in secret societies. Therefore, Lee reasoned that the best way to control fraternities was to make them open.

This led to a rapid increase in the number of fraternities at Washington & Lee.

Fraternities added a social aspect to the literary societies, state clubs, city clubs, and activity clubs that emerged over the years at W & L. In 1880, the first and oldest secret society was formed at Washington & Lee.

Young men yearned for the excitement of secrecy that was by then removed from the fraternities. Thus, students created Sigma as a social club bringing together men of different fraternities in one organization.

Sigma turned out to be a huge success, and other groups emerged on campus that were both secret and social in nature. The "13" Club, the White Friars, the Liberty Hall Society, Pi Alpha Nu, the Cadaver Society, and the Mongolian Minks all flourished in the twentieth century. Today, only Sigma, the Mongolian Minks, and

the Cadaver Society are still in known existence. Sigma and the Mongolian Minks are not as secretive as before, but the Cadaver Society is perhaps the greatest secret ever kept at Washington & Lee, a place known for its leaks of information.

Very little is known about the Cadaver Society, and few speak knowingly about it. It probably began as a pre-med society, though it is now rumored that it is open to all students. Students are probably picked because of their future potential to be large monetary donors to the university. If this is the case, the Cadavers do a good job of picking new members as their donations to the university have been quite substantial in the past. Anyone who has walked to the freshman parking lot or to football and lacrosse games knows about the footbridge donated by the Cadaver Society.

Today, Sigma and the Mongolian Minks continue to flourish after the demise of the other secret societies during the 1960s and 1970s. Sigma once had a hut for meetings but the hut was recently torn down to make way for the new science center. They are currently looking for land to build a new one in the near future. Both Minks and Sigma remain today as groups that bring together members of different fraternities in an exclusive social club.

While these secret societies

flourished, fraternities came to dominate the social and political scene at Washington & Lee. From the turn of the century to the late 1960s, membership in a particular fraternity defined the individual. The fraternities in Red Square (the same ones then as today) totally dominated the political and social scene. They controlled the Executive Committee, the dance boards, and the most important positions in student government.

During that time, Washington & Lee was the social

Many potential leaders of this University were overlooked and left out because they did not belong to the right fraternity. As a result, many of these alumni have not been very active with the University. Others have put aside their differences and become very active alumni for the University as well as major contributors. Today, the strict domination of any one fraternity over the political machinery of W & L is gone, but there is no doubt cliques still remain.



center of the South, and the four dances held over the year were major events, each with its own planning board. To serve on one of these boards, you had to have the right connections and be in the right fraternity. Serving on any one of the dance boards or on the Executive Committee was just as big an honor then as it is today.

The elitist nature of selection for the various boards and the close ties it had with one's fraternity affiliation often tended to garner strong resentment among members of the non-Red Square fraternities.

Even before the ascendancy of Lee to the presidency of W & L cliques and exclusive organizations have existed at Washington & Lee. Lee saw the benefits of encouraging separate communities and organizations within the W & L community by diversifying the curriculum,

encouraging students to live off-campus, and tolerating fraternities. Lee decided to make W & L a diverse university with many groups and interests rather than a tightly unified small college.

In 1914, the administration tried to encourage class unity by bringing various campus leaders from different organizations together in ODK. In this honor society, they hoped the leaders could come together and become close friends, thus unifying the groups and cliques under them. Today, though it is a true honor to

be invited into ODK, it does little to promote class unity and does more to act as an honor society like Phi Beta Kappa.

The fact remains that W&L students like the diversity and independence of the various groups on campus. W&L is unique in that a student can isolate himself or herself in the country if he or she needs to or go spend time with other students from a totally different group. W&L is small enough to permit this while allowing the students to have their own private space when the need arises. Therefore, the administration must rely on the individual communities to come together if they choose on their own free will.

Recent admission policy has

tried to bring to the university a more diverse student body. No act by the administration can force people to like other people if they do not want to. Class unity can only come from within; it cannot be forced upon people. The administration should make every effort to encourage every student to get involved with the social and political aspects of the university, but they can never hope for W&L to be a community of students who disregard fraternities, sororities, secret societies, and other organizations just to be unified.

The *Spectator* would like to thank Professor Taylor Sanders and Professor Holt Merchant for their help with this article.



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Strike the Tent

When I was a senior in high school visiting the Washington and Lee campus, I believed that this was some sort of Southern utopia, a place where well-rounded students worked hard four days a week and played hard the other three; a place where students lived in eighteenth century houses, on tops of mountains, and along white-water rivers; a place where tradition and honor remained despite the world around it. Although W&L did not completely live up to my expectations, I nevertheless fell in love with the place.

Now, four years later when I make my last attempt to save what I feel makes Washington and Lee this unique place, I find myself with the difficult task of trying to codify a large number of intangible concepts. The W&L experience is a very unique one, so unique that it cannot really be measured by a poll in the *U. S. News and World Report* nor can it be fully understood by someone who has not experienced it. Not only is the W&L experience very difficult to describe, but also it is very hard to defend from those who do not understand it, many of whom are part of the school's faculty and administration who have tried to catapult the University into the top ten schools in the country without regard to the cost.

When describing W&L to other students, I describe our school as the only small school in the country with a social life, and it is this social life that attracts students who want more out of their college experiences than simply a good degree. This social life is highly correlated with the strength of the fraternity system and the nature of the students. If it were not for the fraternities, Lexington would indeed be a sleepy little town. More important than the fraternities,

however, are the students.

Washington and Lee has traditionally attracted well-rounded students, students who for the most part are preppy, socially mature, and conservative Southerners who come from white, Anglo-Saxon backgrounds, a very unpopular combination in these multicultural times. W&L students have not simply spent their lives between the classroom and the library but turned this sleepy town into one of the social centers of the South. These characteristics are not found in the admissions literature but are passed down by word of mouth. W&L has traditionally drawn from certain high schools around the South: Highland Park, MUS, Mountain Brook, Westminster, and others; and popular, successful students from those schools have attracted similar younger students for generations. However, in its search for a higher rank in the *U. S. News and World Report*, W&L has abandoned its search for the well-rounded student in search of a well-rounded student body with students who know less about the W&L experience before they come and have no respect for it once they are here. No matter what the administration does to the school, it is the students who will save the school. If the students respect the traditions and essence of the school, the true W&L will survive. However, the same people who control the school also control the admissions, and by admitting students who do not respect this school's heritage, they are destroying W&L's last defense.

I studied the poem "Ulysses" by Alfred Lord Tennyson in high school and again at W&L, and it has become a large part of my philosophy of life, a philosophy that led me to Washington and Lee. My favorite lines in the poem are "I am part of all

that I have met;/ Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough/ Gleams that untraveled world whose margin fades/ Forever and forever when I move./ How dull it is to pause, to make an end,/ To rust unburnished, not to shine in use." Tennyson's words help one understand what makes Washington and Lee such a wonderful school. At W&L a student is part of all that he has met here: the traditions of Lee, the Honor System, the hospitality of the South, the Speaking Tradition, student autonomy, and the Greek system. All of these are facets of the W&L experience which become part of the student, a part that he carries with him for the rest of his life.

To be not unmindful of the future requires a firm foundation in the past. The true W&L can not simply be learned; it must be experienced. To insure that the school remains the school that we have all known and loved, it is imperative that those who have experienced it take an active role. I urge W&L students and alumni to take active roles in helping preserve our school because many in the faculty and administration have already illustrated their lack of understanding and appreciation of W&L. "Though we are not now that strength which in old days moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are - one equal temper of heroic hearts, made weak by time and fate, but strong in will to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield." The W&L experience must survive so that our children can have the same experience.

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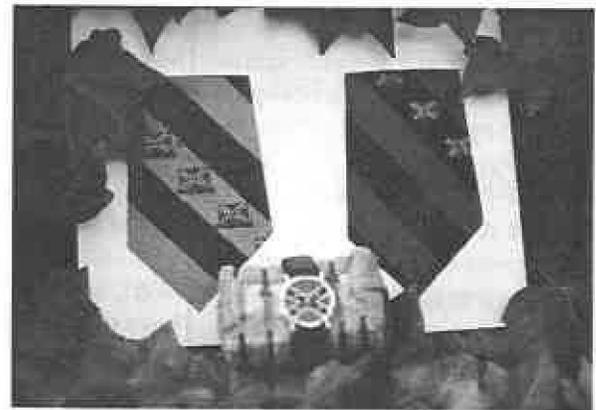
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