

W&L Spectator

October 1998
Volume 9, Issue 1

BYOB, (etymology: Greek)

- v., 1. Bring your own beer;
2. Leave my beer alone





WASHINGTON AND LEE
SPECTATOR

October 1998
Volume 9, Issue 1

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Continuing the Tradition.....

EDITORS FORUM

Dear readers,

To many, *The Washington and Lee Spectator* has left much to be desired in recent years.

Puerile commentary, pejorative language, and tasteless humor have all contributed to the erosion of this publication's credibility. Careless prose, hasty editing and sophomoric subject matter have only added to its problems.

Last year's staff made a concerted effort to enhance this publication's image and appearance. These efforts were applauded by the *Spectator's* loyal readership, which includes nearly 1000 alumni. Nonetheless, much of the magazine's potential remains unrealized.

As co-editors-in-chief this year, we are committed to publishing four quality issues of the *Spectator*. We will go to great lengths to attract well-written, interesting, and insightful articles. Efforts will also be made to improve the quality of our photography and art work and to introduce greater variety to the magazine's layout.

Our fundamental goal is to create a legitimate and open forum for debate on issues that affect this university while staying true to the legacy and ideals of both Robert E. Lee and George Washington. To that end, you can expect to find thoughtful submissions by faculty, students, and administrators. Evidence of our efforts can be found in this issue: Dr. John M. Gunn, Professor Emeritus of Economics, was kind enough to put together a thought-provoking essay entitled "Five Fallacies of Undergraduate Thinking." Our next issue will examine the intellectual vitality of the student body, and we will invite further input from professors.

We also plan to improve the quality of humor in the *Spectator*, ensuring that while the comedic features are funny, they are not maliciously insulting. It would be unfair for faculty and student contributors to find their submissions juxtaposed with ribald jokes. This is not to

say that our humor will be prudish. It is only to say that the humor will be tasteful.

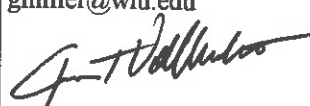
The changes that we are instituting are not intended to alter in any way the philosophy or purpose of the *Spectator*. We will continue to be faithful to its mission of providing a forum for thoughtful, provocative, and humorous commentary on Washington and Lee life. We will continue to defend student autonomy, the Honor System, the Greek system, and other institutions on this campus that are indispensable to W&L's unique character. And we will continue to bemoan changes and policies that are not in the best interest of this great university.

Lastly, we would like to invite talented and competent students to join our staff, especially in the field of production support (layout, computer support, etc.). We are especially interested in recruiting underclassmen students who might be interested in carrying on the proud tradition of the *Spectator*. If you are interested in joining the staff, submitting an article, or if you simply would like to comment on our efforts this year, please contact us at our e-mail addresses listed below.

Welcome to this year's *Washington and Lee Spectator*. Enjoy it. We laughed, we cried, and we had a damn good time putting this issue together.

Cordially,


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¹ Actual GPA may vary

A Community of Committees *By Matt Graves, '98*

CAMPUS ISSUES

A directory of the student groups on campus over the last four years would include, but not be limited to, the EC, SJC, IFC, FLC, SLC, ARC, SHC, SCC, SFHB, SAB, SHB,

SFEC, SAMs, Contact, Panhellenic, PRIDE, Fridays!, the Cold Check Committee, the Library Committee and Life. Of course, these are just a few of the myriad committees and councils on campus. With minimal investigation, one could double the names of committees and councils on this list. The main problem with this enumeration is not its length, but rather the fact that most people on campus probably do not have the faintest idea as to the duties and goals of these various bodies.

Our collective ignorance of the purposes of the various committees on campus became painfully obvious as I read a recent article ("SJC stakes own turf," *The Ring Tum Phi*, October 13, 1997) which

compared the scope of the newly formed judicial body to that of the Executive Committee. The article repeatedly implied that the EC's jurisdiction extended solely to matters of "lying, cheating and stealing." Anyone who has read the White Book (which, incidentally, is something that we all have pledged that we did during our first month here), should know that lying, cheating, and stealing are cited only as "clear examples of breaches of the Honor System." They are in no way presented as an exhaustive list of honor violations, which would have the pernicious effect of codifying our system. The truth of the matter is that a student can report anything from vandalism to fighting to the

EC as a possible honor violation. As the White Book reads, "Every member of the Washington and Lee community has the prerogative to call to the Executive Committee's attention matters that he or she considers dishonorable." It is then up to the EC to decide whether the act raises an issue of trust or honor and whether it should be pursued as a possible honor violation. Specifically, the White Book states, "Violations of University Policy or any other regulations may be referred to the appropriate judicial committees at the Executive Committee's discretion. No instance of dishonorable conduct is limited to the jurisdiction of such committees or automatically excluded from the scope of the Honor System."

It is unclear whether the SJC actually believes it has "extended the concept of honor" as the article states, or whether the *Ring Tum Phi* author simply mis-



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represented the SJC's position. In any event, the ambiguity as regards the Honor System's scope is itself evidence that students do not pay enough attention to the documents, such as the White Book and Blue Book, that delineate the roles of the various campus groups.

The central question becomes this: how do we make sure that students understand the roles of the various committees on campus? I think the first answer is that we must acknowledge that not all committees are of equal importance. Without a doubt, the EC is the most important committee on campus. Not only does it uphold the Honor System, but it is also responsible for creating the student activities budget and overseeing the activities of all those who receive budget money. Everyone should understand the rules and intentions of this committee and study the White Book.

Admittedly, the SJC is of vital importance in maintaining the integrity of our community. Its goal of promoting individual responsibility in matters of student conduct is indeed laudable. However, in seeking to promote the objectives of this organization I would advise against mimicking the procedures of the EC. Holding mandatory informational sessions in Lee Chapel and posting notices of action around the campus detracts from the importance of the EC procedures, makes the SJC look like a scaled-down version of the EC, and generally adds to the campus confusion about committee jurisdiction and goals.

Finally we must acknowledge that committees are not the ultimate solution. For a school that is supposedly a bastion of conservative principles, we have a very liberal attitude towards committees. Whenever we have any type of problem on campus, our first reaction is to form a committee and fund it. I served on the Alcohol Review Committee in my freshman and sophomore years. After

nearly a year of meetings, our only tangible accomplishment was sponsorship of one "midnight basketball tournament." After serving on various committees at this school and talking with many people who have served on other committees, it has become painfully obvious that many committees, no matter how well-intentioned, do not accomplish much. We could cut down on campus confusion about the roles of committees and councils on campus by disbanding many of them and shifting their responsibilities to other committees that are better suited, better funded, and better organized to handle these issues. I do not have the space or the desire to step on people's toes in this article, but I do believe that disbanding and consolidating is a plausible way of achieving the same objectives with fewer committees. And where there are fewer, there is a greater chance of people

knowing the responsibilities of the ones that are active.

During my time at Washington and Lee, it has become apparent to me that we have a committee for almost every problem facing the community. In some cases, these are of importance to the long-term stability of the community. However, these committees are surrounded by so many others that it becomes almost impossible to keep the alphabet soup straight. We must concentrate on increasing the student body's knowledge of the EC and then work on the SJC and other integral student committees. This task would ultimately be made easier by cutting and consolidating committees, and making sure that each one is carving out its own niche rather than attempting to duplicate or overlap with the practices of the countless others.

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Conservative or Apathetic?

By James Angelos, '98

CAMPUS ISSUES

In his short story "The Devil," Leo Tolstoy writes:

It is generally supposed that Conservatives are usually old people, and that those in

favor of change are the young. That is not quite correct. Usually Conservatives are young people: those who want to live but who do not think about how to live, and have not time to think, and therefore take as a model for themselves a way of life that they have seen.

Compared with its peer liberal arts colleges around the nation, Washington and Lee University is considered conservative in nature. Most students accept this and many take pride in it. A ma-

majority of W&L students would identify themselves as conservatives not only politically, but also in a certain social manner. Simply put, students at Washington and Lee University are not of the type to rock the boat. This is not necessarily a negative characteristic unless, of course, the boat needs rocking.

It is safe to assume that Washington and Lee students are generally less environmentally active, less tolerant, and less politically involved than students at other liberal arts institutions. Moreover there is on our campus a problem with alcohol abuse, a tacit acceptance of hazing, and a certain lack of regard for the intrinsic value of intellectual achievement. Many students are more concerned with earning a particular sorority or fraternity affiliation than with attaining wisdom through the whole-hearted pursuit of a liberal arts education. These

are all failings that warrant attention from both students and administrators. However, all too often, these vices are dismissed and attributed to the conservative ethos of the school. It is not uncommon to hear that "Washington and Lee moves slowly because it is a conser-

"...is the Washington and Lee species of conservatism the result of a refusal to think for oneself?"

vative school." In this case conservatism becomes a scapegoat; it is used to conceal a certain apathy students have developed toward social involvement and higher, more intellectual, concerns.

Many of us will follow the classical W&L pattern: upon arriving in Lexington we will immediately and indiscriminately adopt the W&L mentality, choose to major in the C-School, find employment as an investment banker, get rich, marry, and move to the suburbs, only to have the cycle repeated by our kids. During this progression, how many of us will ever genuinely ask if we are living a good life? True to Tolstoy's observation, young Washington and Lee conservatives may simply be accepting a life handed to them. Inherent in this, is there not a certain repudiation of free thought and introspection? We've all heard the famous words

of Socrates: *The unexamined life is not worth living.* I hope that the tendency to live an unexamined life isn't promoted by the passivity and conformity (call it conservatism if you will) that prevails during the Washington and Lee years.

Do the majority of Washington and Lee students identify themselves as conservatives out of a conscious decision to espouse conservative ideals? Or, as Tolstoy suggests, is the Washington and Lee species of

conservatism the result of a refusal to think for oneself? Have we really thought hard about our ideological positions, or are we simply accepting a lifestyle bequeathed

to us by past generations of Washington and Lee students? Is Washington and Lee conservative, or is it a haven for the close-minded?

Tolstoy's observation reminds us that we need to question and contemplate the merits of all ways of life. We should not accept a certain way of life simply because, in the words of Bruce Hornsby, "that's just the way it is." As students attending such a prestigious liberal arts institution, we should choose to use our college experience as an opportunity to think freely. To dismiss the lethargy and myopia we may have at Washington and Lee on the basis of "conservatism" is a form of self-deception. It is nothing more than apathy, or maybe worse, a fearful veiling of the truth.

A Litmus Test For Conservatives

Editors' Supplement

In his book *The Conservative Mind*, Russell Kirk traces the evolution of conservative thought from Edmund Burke to T.S. Eliot. In the first chapter of this seminal study of the conservative tradition, Kirk articulates what he believes to be the six canons of conservative thought, which should not be mistaken as principles of conservative parties. We think it would be very fruitful for those of us who acknowledge allegiance to conservative dogma (and perhaps even more so for those who claim to have a repugnance towards it) to contemplate whether we have genuine affections for the tenets in Burke's catalogue. Perhaps this exercise will provide insight into whether we are conservative by conviction, or conservative by inertia as James Angelos suggests in his article on page 8.

1. *Belief in a transcendent order, or body of natural law, which rules society as well as conscience. Political problems, at bottom, are religious and moral problems. A narrow rationality, what Coleridge called the Under-
standing, cannot of itself satisfy human needs. "Every Tory is a realist," says Keith Feiling: "he knows that there are great forces in heaven and earth that man's philosophy cannot plumb or fathom." True politics is the art of apprehending and applying Justice which ought to prevail in a community of souls.*

2. *Affection for the proliferating*

variety and mystery of human existence, as opposed to the narrowing uniformity, egalitarianism, and utilitarian aims of most radical systems; conservatives resist what Robert Graves calls "Logicalism" in society. This prejudice has been called "the conservative of enjoyment" -- a sense that life is worth living, according to Walter Bagehot "the proper source of an animated Conservatism."

3. *Conviction that civilized society requires orders and classes, as against the notion of a "classless society." With reason, conservatives have often been called the "party of order." If natural distinctions are effaced among men, oligarchs fill the vacuum. Ultimate equality in the judgment of God, and equality before the courts of law, are recognized by conservatives, but equality of condition, they think, means equality in servitude and boredom.*

4. *Persuasion that freedom and property are closely linked: separate property from private pos-*

session, and Leviathan becomes master of all. Economic leveling, they maintain, is not economic progress.

5. *Faith in prescription and distrust of "sophisters, calculators, and economists" who would reconstruct society upon abstract designs. Custom, convention, and old prescription are checks upon man's anarchic impulse and upon the innovator's lust for power.*

6. *Recognition that change may not be salutary reform: hasty innovations may be a devouring conflagration, rather than a torch of progress. Society must alter, for prudent change is the means of social preservation; but a statesman must take Providence into his calculations, and a statesman's chief virtue, according to Plato and Burke, is prudence.*

(Kirk, Russell. The Conservative Mind. 7th ed. Washington, D.C., Regnery Publishing Inc., 1985. pp. 8-9.)



Top Ten Sorority Rush Violations

10. Padded bras
9. Twirling your poodle skirt too high
8. Serving phallic cupcakes
7. Playing "I'm a female rat" under your carrel
6. An earnest smile
5. Revealing your women's forum membership card
4. Bare-ass paddling
3. Dropping prozac in the punch
2. Commandeering the stripper's briefs
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Five Fallacies of Undergraduate Thinking

FACULTY VIEWS

by John M. Gunn
Lewis Whitaker Adams Professor
Emeritus of Economics

1. "Nothing matters very much, and most things don't matter at all."

-Unnamed W&L senior, some years ago.

Did the man who made that statement mean it, or was it a pose, taken to avoid exposing his own serious thought? One day I asked him. He seemed surprised by the question, and he replied that he didn't know. Was that reply an extension of the pose?

Why would a student take such a pose? Why, indeed, do so many students assume a posture of supposed "sophistication," the suppression of enthusiasm or of commitment to anything whatever, the pose of the artificial *cool*?

If such an attitude were part of a wide-ranging experimentation with a variety of world views, and if it didn't persist too long, one might judge it as serving a constructive process of evolving maturity. Too often, however, I believe it reflects a lame excuse to avoid confronting the real issues and important choices that face the individual and the ones that face society at large--not a developing maturity, but rather the postponement or avoidance of maturity.

I believe that one of the major functions of Washington and Lee University for more than two centuries has been to develop in a large fraction of its students a sense

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of *noblesse oblige*, the sense that honorable and generous behavior is required of those of high birth, a sense of obligation that is complementary with the Christian concept of stewardship. It is a sense that has led thousands of our alumni to assume positions of responsible leadership in their communities, with "community" defined broadly, with regard to geography and to occupational, philanthropic, and public-interest groups.

(And if one takes the Jeffersonian view that there is a natural aristocracy of virtue and talent, then nearly all who will read this are stuck--it is unlikely that many who will read this will not be vain enough to suppose themselves to be part of that "natural aristocracy.")

Developing a personal system of examined values, in order to judge what matters, and how much, and what measures can serve to advance the things that matter most, is one of the central tasks of liberal education.

2. "I know a lot, but I am so insignificant and so remote from the halls of power that what I think has no impact beyond myself."

-Unnamed W&L senior, some years ago (not the same one, but a fraternity brother)

The Peace Corps has a wonderful slogan:

"If you want to change the world, start small."

There are other ways I might refute this second fallacy, but perhaps the best refutation I can offer is just to report that the man who made that declaration is now Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of a Fortune 500 company, vice chairman of the board of a major state-supported university, and community leader in several other aspects. It may be unwise to overestimate one's capabilities and possibilities, but it is also unwise to underestimate them.

3. The nerds don't get no respect.

Among the curious anomalies in common values of undergraduate students is the low esteem in which they often hold people who are perceived only as working hard. In part, this is surely a manifestation of a sense that "I could excel in my studies if I really wanted to, but I believe all-round development is more important." That is a lame excuse for one's own lack of accomplishment--and among other things, this is not an "either/or" choice.

Students who hold such views have it backwards. They admire the ones who seem to make good grades effortlessly and hold in mild contempt those who work hard for them. In reality, it's the ones who achieve by thoughtful, orderly, hard work that reflect merit on themselves, whereas the most their swifter achieving classmates can claim is, "I 'chose' my parents

childhood well, and at least, I didn't mess it up."

Most of the work of the world is done by the tortoises who walk the walk, day after day after day. When the hares also work hard, they are fortunate, and they usually achieve at high levels, but you'd better be cordial also to the nerds--one of them is likely to be your boss, and in fewer years than you think.

4. "I know how to hold my liquor!"

(The following is a true account, told freely by the principal. Since he now is deceased, however, and I am unable to get his permission to identify him, I will not do so here.)

More than three-quarters of a century ago a young man from a wealthy family won a Rhodes Scholarship. He was the first Rhodes Scholar from his university, and he felt strongly the responsibility he had to hold its reputation high.

On his first Saturday night in Oxford he set out to demonstrate that those trained at old State U could hold their liquor with the best of them. He said that he didn't recall anything after that, until he awoke in his own bed late Sunday afternoon, with a frightful headache and no knowledge of how he had gotten to bed.

Although he had been at Oxford less than a week, already he had developed a respect for his "scout," the servant that all Oxonians had then, each shared by a few

students. He knew that his scout would have learned of his Saturday escapade, and he dreaded their next encounter. To postpone it he arose early on Monday morning and hurried off to the library, where he hid out until late in the day. On Tuesday he followed the same pattern. On Wednesday morning he set out the same way, but he realized during the morning this could not go on all year, so calling up all his courage, he went back to his quarters to face the expected music.

He and his scout looked at each other for some time, each too embarrassed to speak. Finally the scout said,

"That's all right, sir. Many a young gentleman has been too drunk in his life--ONCE."

He said that it was the most effective reprimand he ever received.

When I was acquainted slightly with this gentleman, he was one of his state's leading business executives, member of its legislature and speaker of its house of representatives, civic leader in many regards. He said that he had never again in his life been inebriated to the point that he might be called "drunk." In one insightful moment, with the aid of a man of far more modest circumstances than his own, he had learned to "hold his liquor."

5. The "pecking orders" of fraternities and sororities are absurdities, hurtful in some of their effects, and insupportable by any rational thought; and many of the prevailing values of the fra-

ternity/sorority system, in total, are dreadful.

I write this as one who was a happy fraternity member, who sees great potential in the American collegiate fraternity/sorority system, but as one who sees also a system that seldom approaches its wholesome possibilities and a system that seems at times even to be at crossed purposes with its own ideals and its own best interests. The shallowness and arbitrariness of the grounds on which new members are selected and potential members excluded would be ludicrous if they were not so hurtful.

Moreover, the fraternities are poor predictors of future achievement. I suppose I know who are W&L alumni "of achievement" as well as anyone, and better than most. The members of some of the fraternities highest in the undergraduate pecking order are hardly ever heard from again after graduation, whereas that fraternity that over the past half century has been regarded often as least prestigious on campus has one of the larger concentrations of achieving alumni. Many of your schoolmates whom you will want most to know twenty years from now, those who will be the most prominent, the most polished, the ones whose friendship "could do the most for you," the ones who on solid grounds one should admire most--many of these are among those least regarded by the silly set of standards, whatever they are, by which undergraduates, and especially fraternity/sorority members, judge each other.

BYOB

By Glenn F. Miller, '98

COVER STORY



The Intrafraternity Council and the newly implemented BYOB policy have been much maligned in the student press recently. The criticisms, unfortunately, have not been the result of sober contemplation. Rather, the arguments have sprung from ignorance and obstinacy and thus have greatly misrepresented the IFC and distorted the policy. This article aims to clear up the distortions that have crippled the BYOB policy and discredited the IFC and to illustrate that the BYOB policy is both workable and necessary.

It should be said at the outset that the decision to adhere to the BYOB rules, which have been a longstanding provision of the IFC constitution, was a student decision. The impetus behind the new policy was the consensus formed last year by fraternity presidents and the IFC that it is time, in an effort to guarantee the longevity and the collegial nature of W&L's Greek system, to implement more responsible risk management measures. While the administration has enthusiastically embraced the BYOB rules, neither Dean Atkins nor any other member of the administration has forced the fraternities' hands on this issue. The BYOB policy is a product of student governance; it is a voluntary arrangement among fraternities to take simple steps to curtail wanton alcohol consumption and to shift liability from the fraternities to those individuals who choose to purchase and consume alcohol irresponsibly. The fact that the policy is designed with these laudable goals in mind makes its ridicule even more shameful.

Opponents of the BYOB policy view it as

the first step toward a dry campus. It's actually the opposite; it's a preemptive measure designed to make W&L more immune to the national trend toward alcohol-free chapter facilities. Under the policy, Washington and Lee's fraternity system no longer serves as a distribution mechanism for alcohol. The burden for purchasing and distributing alcohol has been transferred from the chapters to the individual brothers and any guests attending fraternity functions. Simply put, if you want to drink at a fraternity party, you must provide your own alcohol.

Unfortunately, many students have had trouble comprehending the system. The IFC deserves some blame for this misunderstanding, as it could have done a better job explicating the specific rules of the game for the benefit of both chapter presidents and freshmen. (For example, the ticket system was initially condoned and later prohibited.) The IFC's shortcomings notwithstanding, freshmen in particular remain lost. Either they have developed misconceptions of what BYOB entails, or more likely, they have adopted a nonchalant attitude toward the new rules, viewing the BYOB policy as an empty measure. In any event, many freshmen continue to accost brothers with outstretched hands and demand a beer when they arrive at band parties. Worse yet, some freshmen have been seen helping themselves to others' personal stashes of beer and liquor stored in coolers. This disregard for the policy prevents the fraternities from escaping the false impression that they are in some sense obligated to provide alcohol for one an all. Freshmen must dismiss the idea that fraternities are going to prostitute themselves to freshmen during rush and fund their drinking.

And the same goes for girls. Fraternities represent virtually the entire social scene at W&L. The band

parties they fund come at no small cost to individual brothers; an average band ranges between \$1500 and \$2500, plus the cost of the sound crew, plus the cost of mixers, etc. Now that brothers are footing alcohol bills with their own money, the prospect of having to provide alcohol for girls has become very expensive. Many guys may be willing to incur this added expense, some because they're gentleman and others because they believe their generosity will pay dividends. In any event, if brothers do decide to buy alcohol for girls, more power to them. My point is simply that they should not need to. The BYOB policy is equally applicable to girls.

The BYOB system will work, but it will require a cooperative effort. It is a student solution to a student problem, and appropriately, students will decide its fate. Fraternities are more than willing to provide places for guests to store the alcohol they bring, and, if asked at the appropriate time, upperclassmen are willing to make beer runs. If you are a freshmen and you know that you plan to attend a band party, call a brother in the house and ask if he'll pick you up a six pack. After all, that's going to be the drill after you pledge. Brothers would much rather go out of their way to pick up beer for freshmen than to listen to disgruntled freshmen lament all night how much a party sucks because the fraternity isn't supplying beer.

Too much time has been spent thinking up ways to circumvent the new alcohol rules. We need to stop being so selfish and oblique. We need to start working in concert to ensure a smooth transition to the new BYOB policy. Yes, the system is less convenient than in years past. But if it saves just one life and it preserves the Greek system on this campus, isn't inconvenience a small price to pay?

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Rushing to End the Problem

By Glenn F. Miller

CAMPUS ISSUES

Washington and Lee's problems of diversity stem from what is not going on between various racial groups on campus, not from what is going on between them. Ours is

a problem of omission, not of commission. W&L's problem is that social intercourse across racial lines is virtually non-existent, not that open hostility exists between students of different backgrounds.

Why is this campus free of the acrimony and confrontation that excite the diversity problem on campuses of similar size and racial composition? I'd like to think that the reason is that W&L students do not harbor strong racial prejudices. In all likelihood, however, W&L students are just as insular in their racial views as students at Duke, Hampden-Sydney, Hollins, or any other predominately white, southern school. The difference is that our prejudices do not become animated; they are kept in check by the better angel of our nature--civility. In this regard our civility is both a

more a reflection of discomfort than of disdain. Black freshmen and white freshmen tend to gravitate toward different tables in the D-Hall because they are hesitant to mix, not because they are repulsed by the idea. The first step toward bridging the racial gap is to increase the amount of interaction between racial groups. The best way to affect this change is to do it through the social scene. At W&L, this means the Greek system.

As it now stands, there are more golden retrievers represented in fraternity composite pictures than there are black students. The state is no less pathetic for sororities. In fact, it wouldn't surprise me if there are more black women at VMI than there are black women in our sorority system. The reason for this is not that the Greek system is a racist

institution that practices exclusionary bidding practices. Certainly the history and personality of some fraternities suggest that they are not interested in attracting black brothers, but this is not enough evidence to conclude that the system as a whole looks disapprovingly at the prospect of increased minority membership. If the fraternity system was truly discriminatory, it would be unlikely that a black student would be serving as a fraternity president and another black student would be sitting on the IFC.

I believe the reason that the overwhelming majority of minority students choose not to join the Greek system is two-fold. First, the unsavory experiences some black students have had during rush, although they may be few and far between and not indicative of the attitude of most houses, have deterred minority interest in the fraternity system. One pejorative comment uttered during rush by one person in one house is enough to alienate minorities from the sys-

blessing and a curse. On the one hand, it allows us to continue to harbor our prejudices without having to come to grips with them.

So just how unstable is W&L's racial fault line? Can civility continue to keep our prejudices at bay, or are we sitting on a powder keg? There's no reason why we need to sit around and find out.

The prejudices some white students have towards minorities and some minorities have towards whites are

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tem for many years; such things are not easily forgotten. The second reason is simply the prejudices that students have towards each other. More often than not, students are too uncomfortable to take the initial step needed for making social contact. I suspect many minority students are hesitant to step into fraternity houses and I don't know of many white students who promote their fraternity in the Chavis House.

As divided as this campus may be in terms of its social scene, we don't need tectonic initiatives to fix the fault line between the races. All we need is for the predominately white fraternities and minority students to meet each other halfway. Fraterni-

ties need to make an effort to invite minorities to the house for dinner in the same manner they invite the white students. And minority students need to give the rush process a chance; they need to stop viewing the Greek system in a monolithic manner. Minority students need to trust that most fraternities on campus simply want to attract quality freshmen, without regard to race, ethnicity, or religion.

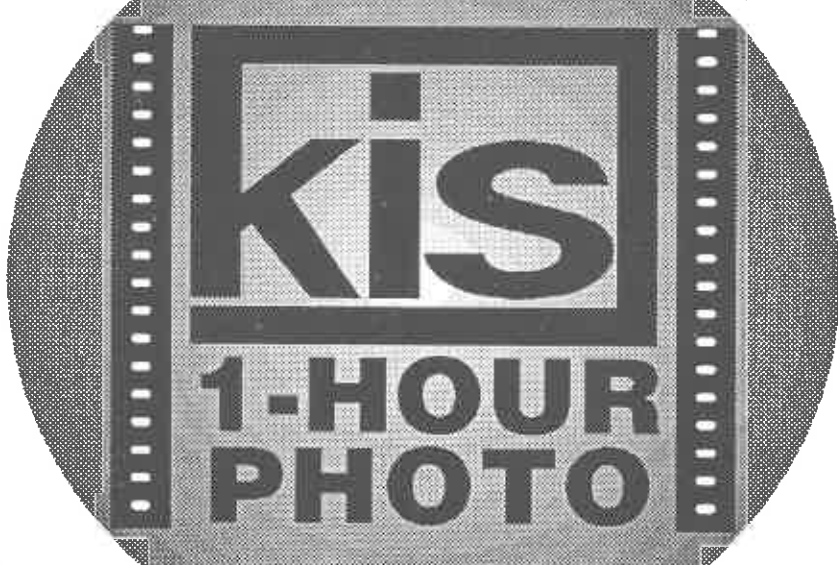
I believe the diversity problem on this campus will remain until white and minority students interact more frequently. If as few as a dozen black freshmen were to join the fraternity system this year, the positive effects would be dramatic. For

example, more black men in fraternities would probably lead to more non-Greek, black students attending fraternity functions, which would lead to more interracial interaction, which would lead to closer friendships being formed between black and white students, which would lead ultimately to the jettisoning of our prejudices. And once our prejudices are abandoned—once the discomfort level is lowered—things will take care of themselves.

The longer, though, we continue to mire in our complacency about the diversity problem at W&L; the longer we continue to let our prejudices function behind a veneer of

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civility the wider the social gap between black and white students will grow. And Washington and Lee University and each of its students, both black and white, will be the poorer for it.

Editors' Note: Programming for the Respect of Individuals and Diversity in Education (PRIDE) is considering ways to improve minority participation in rush. Anybody with innovative ideas on this subject is encouraged to contact a member of the PRIDE organization.

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SPECTATOR PROFILE

Dr. J. D. Futch



Home: Lexburg-on-the-Rhine

Age: "I was born when Bismarck was Reich Chancellor."

Hobby: Postage stamp collecting. "Is anything more interesting than the Vatican?"

Last Book Read: *The End of the Twentieth Century*, by John Lukacs

Why I Do What I Do: "For the sheer intellectual excitement of it. It just leaves one breathless."

Favorite Quotation: "Life is such a grand design--spring, summer, fall, winter, death. Whoever could have thought it up?" (Mart Crowley)

His Magazine: *Washington and Lee Spectator*