

W&L SPECTATOR

THE Student Journal of
Fact and Opinion

Tuition On the Rise ...

You'll Be Needing
More of These:



Also:
A DUI Policy Gone Wrong
What is a Conservative?

Volume XII Issue 2
Spring 2006

Letter from the Editors

This is the second issue of *The Spectator* in its present form. Our experiences as a staff have been interesting, challenging and, most of all, educational. We appreciate both the support and criticism we received after the last issue, both of which we have found to be valuable. The debate sparked by the last issue was what we had hoped for and anticipated, and we consider that to be a success in itself. Still, we hope to have come a long way in the last two months and that our additional experience is reflected by a better publication. We would also like to take this opportunity to answer some questions and respond to criticism of *The Spectator*.

The first point of clarification we wish to make concerns the origins of the magazine and its source of funding. *The Spectator* is funded in large part by Collegiate Network, an organization created to "focus public awareness on the politicization of American college and university classrooms ..." Assistance from CN is no more than a limited advisory role. They exercise no editorial control or discretion, nor have they ever attempted to. We appreciate CN's assistance and share their concern that universities in general have suffered from an often narrow-minded academic climate. Our other source of income is independent donations from alumni. We thank those alumni who have donated for their ongoing interest and support.

Second, we would like to respond to the accusation that the magazine is indeed "partisan," contrary to the claim made in our mission statement. We define partisan as "of or related to a party." This magazine has absolutely no affiliation whatsoever with the Republican or the Democrat parties or, for that matter, any other political party. It is thus, by definition, non-partisan.

That does not, however, mean that the magazine is un-ideological. Clearly, it is largely driven, intentionally so, by values that might be labeled "traditionalist," "conservative," and "libertarian," among others. Some of these values are closely linked to the ideological underpinnings of the Republican Party. Still, this magazine is not linked, officially or otherwise, with that party, nor does it desire to be so. Any appearance of such a link was an accident that, unfortunately, can largely be attributed to the editorial inexperience of the two authors of this letter.

Third, we would like to address the criticism that we do not assist in the creation of a "balanced education," and have thus somehow betrayed our mission statement. We believe that *The Spectator* does provide an element of balance. It does so by filling a void — whereas before the campus had zero conservative opinion journals, now it has one. Just as various academic departments and student organizations (including the *Trident*, the *Ring Tum Phi* and *In General*) all contribute to a rich and balanced education, so too does *The Spectator*. We do not claim to be balanced in the sense that we might provide a forum for both conservative and liberals to promote their ideas. We do seek, however, to encourage balance by providing an outlet for conservative student opinion where before there was none.

We appreciate the student interest in *The Spectator* and the ongoing feedback. Please continue to let us know what you think of our magazine. Have a great summer.

-Alex Weintz and Heather Hart

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W&L Spectator

Volume XII, No. 2 Spring 2006

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Mission Statement

The W&L Spectator is a non-partisan publication dedicated to promoting the free exchange of ideas. We, at staff, seek to serve the W&L community by infusing it with the ingredients necessary for a balanced educational experience. These ingredients include conservative, libertarian and classical liberal thought. We believe that peace is best achieved through strength, that utopia is nowhere, and that true equality is blind to race, creed, sex, and sexuality. We take it as our mission to expose the inadequacies of the non-traditionalist ideas that do not understand and fail to work with our student body. We strive to adhere to the beliefs of the student body that the administration often overlooks. We invite the active participation of any student or alumnae who shares our vision and would like to join our movement.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in the articles herein are solely those of each respective author. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of any other staff member or of Washington and Lee University.

The Spectator is a member of the Washington and Lee Media Board, which can be reached at mediaboard@wlu.edu

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Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors:

THE SPECTATOR RIDES AGAIN! This is good news, and it is off to a good start. The Letter from the Editors and from the two founders, Ray Welder and Paul Lagarde, set a tone that portends of good things to come. Let me add that these two gentlemen were followed by Cameron Humphries who brought great credit to the publication.

It was an honor and privilege starting in 1976 for me to serve as Director, Lee Chapel, and, since September 1998, as a volunteer in the Leyburn Library transcribing the Lee letter collection and the Trustees papers from the onset of General Lee's presidency of Washington College.

During this time frame, I sense that, in recent years, the University has changed considerably. Certainly many improvements have taken place, but recent changes throughout the institution give me great pause.

The articles in the Winter 2006 SPECTATOR lend support to this view. What was once a bastion of courtesy and friendliness is now one where dissension and discontent are now too common along with reservation and uncertainty.

The rudder orders given to the Contact Committee by members of the administration and faculty is an example of how things have changed.

During my years in Lee Chapel, Contact brought on the campus many prominent speakers that run the political gamut from General William Westmoreland to Spike Lee. Included were Senators Joseph Biden, George McGovern, Sam Irvin, Barry Goldwater and Eugene McCarthy. Other prominent speakers were G.Gordon Liddy, F. Lee Bailey and Sandra Day O'Connor. As far as I know, the Contact Committee or other sponsors were free to make these selections.

Not a bad record for a group of students given free rein to make choices. It certainly tops recent practices in the matter.

Robert C. Peniston

Rachael Makes a New Friend

Dear Editors:

I don't even know where to begin with Rachael Seidenschur's article, "On the Right." I haven't taken Women's Studies, so I can't offer commentary in that regard. I have, however, taken Intro to Poverty, and the books are still somewhat fresh in my mind from last Spring. Ms. Seidenschur's accusatory and sarcastic tone was immensely grating and greatly detracts from her argument, but even more damning to the article's argument is the way in which she chooses to condemn and write off the authors named. Lawrence Mead is not a liberal simply because he teaches at NYU. Working for the World Bank does not make Amartya Sen a liberal. Such notions are completely absurd, that some of today's most brilliant minds are completely incapable of escaping the political leanings of their own institutions. Certainly, Sen may identify himself as a "liberal" in many regards, but I am certain he would laugh at the notion that working for the World Bank makes him a "liberal." The article comes across as hopelessly simplistic and ignorant because of this mindless name-calling. Perhaps Ms. Seidenschur's next article should be to define what a liberal and a conservative are, exactly, since the division is so obviously clear to her. I'd certainly love to hear it. Until she does so, saying that someone is a liberal simply because he teaches at Berkeley will do nothing for her argument. While the topic had some potential, this article just never got off the ground.

Andrew Johnson

Miss Seidenschur's Response

First, I would like to thank Mr. Johnson for his input. I am also grateful to clarify a few issues about this debate. Also, you can call me Miss Seidenschur (I am a young, unmarried female and do not insist on being called Ms.—not surprisingly, I never gave into being politically correct!). I never said that Mead was a liberal. I said he was not a conservative because a person who advocates big government does not fit my understanding of what a traditional conservative believes. Please read more carefully next time.

Mr. Johnson, please do note that my condemnation of the authors came after ruminating for a long period on these topics, which is unlike your off-the-cuff criticism of my article. I also must add I found it very interesting that you consider my terming people as liberal a form of "mindless name-calling." I suppose I have something to learn from you. I did not know that calling someone a liberal was considered "name-calling." Well in that case, I insulted a great percentage of the professors at W&L without even realizing it. And finally Mr. Johnson, you criticized the tone of my article and claimed that it discredited my argument. Do you apply the same standards to your letter?

Smooth Sailing for Student Government

If you've been paying attention to campus government recently (and who hasn't?), you may have noticed that things are running pretty smoothly. The review of the school's alcohol policy earlier this year occurred without the expected crack down on parties, and the recent decision to guarantee spring term to all students was both welcome and surprising. Could it be that student leaders and administration higher-ups are actually on the same page?

It certainly was not always this way. During the 2002-2003 school year, it looked like the student body and the Board of Trustees were on a collision course over spring term and alcohol. President Burish seemed hell-bent on ending spring term and equally devoted to transforming W&L into a dry campus.

The on-campus tension that plagued those years now seems to have evaporated. Part of this might be attributed to Burish's departure and President Beckley's administrative style, which seems to be characterized by significantly less bluster. Another reason for the change in tone and recent policy successes, however, has been better campus government, led by students as well as faculty. Indeed, student organizations and government seem to have played a leading role in the recent successes.

Despite this major contribution, many students seem to be of the opinion that on big, controversial issues (spring term, alcohol, etc.), student government is relatively helpless. Student-run organizations, however, have proven the nay-sayers wrong.

In truth, all power does begin and end with the Board of Trustees, a group which assumes responsibility for the "governance and management of the institution." In some sense, students are indeed without these powers. The Board does have the power to introduce resolutions and vote on them, completely circumventing any attempts at student-run government.

That, however, hardly tells the whole story. The more "democratic" aspects of campus government are created when the board chooses to delegate certain powers to other organizations. These organizations are the Student Executive Committee and its faculty counterpart.

The Board also delegates a large amount of authority to school administrators. Some policy initiatives begin and end with this group. Where policy directly affecting students is concerned, the faculty has

further delegated authority to the Student Affairs Committee, composed of both faculty and student representatives. Student Affairs then grants authority to organizations like the SJC, the IFC and Pan-Hellenic. These organizations are student run, and largely responsible for the implementation of policies handed down by Student Affairs, faculty and the Board of Trustees.

Critics of campus government are right to point out that most student-run organizations and governing bodies are on the bottom of the administrative pyramid. Because of this, any standoff between students and faculty is going to be a short-lived affair. Students, however, are hardly helpless. The structure of campus government has real implications for how and when students can affect policy, but none of those include relegating student bodies to the sideline.

"The on-campus tension that plagued President Burish's tenure seems to have evaporated, due in no small part to good student government."

What it does mean is that students and their elected representatives need to work with the faculty and the Board of Trustees rather than against them. A case in point: the gutting of the Greek social scene two years ago was avoided precisely because student organizations adopted that strategy. The potentially extreme restrictions on the party scene were scrapped when the IFC started enforcing its own modest rules concerning underage drinking. The handing out of wristbands at parties, for example, is a small change which seems to have actually made it *less* likely that W&L will be a dry campus anytime soon.

The lesson learned was that students need to be active in governing and policing themselves if they don't want someone else to do it for them. So far, student organizations have done a good job applying that lesson.

Alex Weintz is a senior Politics major from Ossining, New York.

Mixed Signals: A DUI Policy Gone Wrong

The students and faculty of Washington and Lee are rightly concerned about a dangerous phenomenon that is all too common: drinking and driving. That concern, however, does not justify a policy that is, in its present form, both unfair and morally incoherent. The policy essentially puts students in a "double jeopardy" scenario, where they are being punished by both the state and the school. It also, bizarrely, has the effect of condemning drunk driving in certain locations at certain times, while turning a blind eye to other such instances. I guess there is a time and a place for everything ...?

It should be noted that the bulk of the school's Substance Abuse Policy is not riddled by the same flaws as its position on DUI's. In general, I support the three-strike system. The University, Interfraternity Council and Panhellenic Council have set certain guidelines for alcohol consumption; the three strike system acts as the necessary enforcement mechanism for these policies. Furthermore, I applaud the amount of student autonomy in the enforcement process, during which students are disciplined by bodies of their peers rather than administrators.

The Substance Abuse Policy, however, smacks of injustice where it relates to drunk driving. Let me first make it clear that I do not support drinking and driving for any reason or under any circumstance. At the same time, I believe that the university should have a fair and balanced approach to this problem, in contrast to its current policy which is both inconsistent and unjust. The

school's policy states that "independent of the three-strike system, the SJC may suspend or dismiss a student found to have driven a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs in the City of Lexington or Rockbridge County." This year there have been eight Student Judiciary Committee hearings, of which seven involved individuals accused of a DUI. The SJC found six of those students guilty of driving under the influence of alcohol and five guilty of conduct unbecoming of a Washington and

"W&L's Substance Abuse Policy has the bizarre effect of condemning drunk driving in certain locations at certain times, while turning a blind eye to other such instances."

Lee student. All of those found guilty received a strike, and some had to pay fines and serve community service hours.

While these punishments may seem moderate, I have several problems with the underlying policy behind them. First, while I understand that the university "supports the Commonwealth of Virginia's laws on the licensing, distribution and consumption of alcoholic beverages," I do not believe it is the university's job to enforce these laws. Presumably, a student appearing in front of the SJC for a DUI has already been arrested by the police and faces criminal charges in a local court.

Furthermore, there is no evidence to suggest that local courts are unable to deal with this type of crime. On the contrary, they deal with DUIs routinely. Therefore, unless campus security caught the student in question off-roading on the colonnade lawn, the issue is between the student and the state of Virginia. It does not concern the university.

In addition, trying an individual for a DUI in front of the SJC when he or she already faces the exact same charges in criminal court, where he or she will face state imposed fines, mandatory alcohol education, suspension of his or her license or even jail time depending on his or her BAC, seems redundant and unnecessary. Students are adults and, therefore, they should face the same consequences for their actions that any other adult would. They should, however, not face additional penalties merely because they are students.

One could argue that, even if it is wrong for the SJC to try a student for a DUI, it should still try a student convicted of a DUI for "conduct unbecoming of a Washington and Lee student." Theoretically, I would agree with this argument. However, I have several stipulations to offer. First, I believe that the term "conduct unbecoming of a Washington and Lee student" is intrinsically linked with the Honor System and, therefore, any alleged violation should be judged by the Executive Committee and not the SJC.

Secondly, if the university chooses to try DUI offenders for unbecoming conduct, it should try all students convicted of a DUI in

any location and not just those arrested in Lexington or Rockbridge County. After all, Rockbridge County is not the university's fiefdom. If the university truly supports the Commonwealth of Virginia's laws regarding alcohol, it should support these laws in every part of Virginia. Is a DUI in Roanoke or Charlottesville somehow less dishonorable than a DUI in Lexington? If not, and all DUIs in Virginia are dishonorable, than surely a DUI in any other state is also dishonorable? I would argue that any DUI committed by a W&L student in any state or country where that student is residing reflects, on his part, conduct

unbecoming of a Washington and Lee student.

Therefore, if the university wishes to reprimand students who commit this act, it should reprimand every offending student no matter where the event occurred. Of course, to enforce this policy the university would have to oblige students under the honor code to report any criminal charges brought against them while enrolled at W&L, or perhaps force them to submit a police report at the beginning of each school year. Such a policy would, of course, drastically increase the school's role as disciplinarian. And while such a change would not be desirable, it would at least represent a policy that is intellectually coherent.

Whatever alcohol-related role the school might play in the future, the current policy is unacceptable. It leads to situations in which an individual who drunkenly hit a state trooper during summer vacation was allowed to return to school without an SJC hearing, while another student arrested this fall for driving with a 0.08 BAC was assessed a strike and 25 hours of community service by the SJC, in addition to the criminal charges he or she already faced. Surely this is not the university's idea of a fair or just system?

Megan Morgan is a senior Politics and History major from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.



Going Up: W&L's Skyrocketing Tuition

With the end of the school year fast approaching, students, or rather their parents, are waiting for the announcement that will determine many of their major future financial decisions: next year's tuition. The Class of 2006 has seen Washington and Lee's tuition increase almost seven thousand dollars, a yearly rate of approximately ten percent. If the current trend continues, this year's freshman class is looking at tuition alone exceeding \$37 thousand, an expense most are loathe to incur. The tuition increase is a response to both external economic factors and internal pressures, a phenomenon hardly unique to Washington and Lee.

According to "Losing Ground," a national status report on the affordability of higher education, the nationwide average cost of attending college has grown more rapidly than inflation and is quickly outstripping corresponding increases in family income. Over the last five years, for example, average tuition has increased 40 percent, while the average household income is up only four percent. Though not yet disastrous, this is hardly a sustainable trend. Factors contributing to such increases are as wide and varied as the people they affect, though there are common themes. States feeling the influence of a sluggish economy are slashing budgets across all areas, including educational funding. Universities must find a new way to offset the reduction in state support. In addition, the dramatic rise in college attendance has increased competition for university enrollment, creating

what some refer to as a "seller's market." The most basic principles of economics suggest that the growing demand for a college education allows universities to increase prices across the board without having to worry about losing enrollment. This, combined with the cost-equals-quality myth, provides no encouragement for schools to reign in college tuition. The direct impact these issues have on Washington and Lee is debatable. However, it is unrealistic to expect the university to remain impervious to these external influences indefinitely.

Washington and Lee's Treasurer and Vice President for Finance Steven McAllister contended that there were three

"...the nationwide average cost of attending college has grown more rapidly than inflation and is quickly outstripping corresponding increases in family income."

primary contributors to W&L's tuition increase. As part of the administration's goal to improve the quality of the students' educational experience, they are hiring 21 additional faculty members: "With the decision also to add faculty to the institution, we believe we are building an even greater educational product for our students. If we team this with the advances that have been made in our facilities over the last decade or so, the cost component of our

education continues to grow far more rapidly than CPI."

Therein lies the second reason for the tuition increases: Washington and Lee found it necessary to increase their debt service, the principle and interest payment made on long-term debt. These payments go toward paying off the \$118 million debt accrued from financing Elrod Commons, Reid Hall, the fitness center, and, to some extent, the parking garage and sorority houses. These improvements in faculty and facilities are essential, not only in maintaining the high standards of learning W&L has established, but also in attracting talented and competitive prospective students and enriching Washington and Lee's reputation.

The third reason for the increase in tuition is the decision to increase support for student financial aid. The administration hopes that, rather than providing more aid to individual students, this new source of revenue will allow the school to provide aid to a greater number of students. This, in turn, could aid in diversifying the student body's socio-economic background, often accused of being fairly homogenous.

Increasing tuition to help students pay for college may seem somewhat counterintuitive. There has been, however, some evidence that the administration's strategy is working. Over the last 13 years, the university's discount rate, its total financial aid divided by its aggregate tuition, has grown from a mere seventeen percent to thirty-one percent, though some of

that is funded through the endowment and gifts. Ninety-nine percent of all demonstrated need is met, with the average financial aid package totaling \$22,468 and the average indebtedness upon graduation a mere \$17,374. Though these figures, courtesy of Collegeboard, represent the school's increased commitment to need-based aid, Washington and Lee still does not stack up well when compared against competitors like Amherst and Claremont-McKenna, both of which meet 100% of need and offer

significantly larger aid packages. These are not matched, however, by a substantially larger tuition.

It is also noteworthy that, contrary to popular belief, tuition covers only a fraction of the cost of running a university. Despite increases in tuition over the past several years, the percentage of the revenue it represents has remained relatively constant, hovering at or around 45%. The majority of expenses are funded through a variety of means, including the endowment, currently valued at \$565 million, and annual giving.

However, according to Mr. McAllister, this is not always enough. "While sources such as gifts and endowment provide significant support to the university, growth in these two areas typically runs at about 5% per year. If expenses are growing more rapidly, as they have been over the past several years, then tuition has to grow more rapidly to accommodate."

While lamenting the inevitable and perpetual nature of tuition increase, Mr. McAllister suggested that those in the W&L community view the tuition as a contribution to the future. "I think of tuition as a parents' investment in their child. ...If, as an institution, we do our job well, the student takes advantage of the opportunity, and the quality of the educational enterprise improves over time, then the investment yields a return that is a substantial multiple of the tuition."

The Fiske Guide to Colleges listed Washington and Lee as one of its Best Buys based on the quality of education compared to the cost of attendance. So, perhaps the outcry against rising tuition stems partially from the fact that few take advantage of all the opportunities for which they pay. I hardly need to extol the virtues of our institution; there is no reason, nor is there space, for such an undertaking. We should, however, keep in mind that Washington and Lee has the course offerings, the clubs, and the specialty programs common to substantially-larger campuses with the student-teacher ratio, the opportunities, and the freedoms of a small school. It is this unique sense of community fostered by Washington and Lee combined with an unparalleled education for which we are paying.

Jennifer Sanow is a freshman International Relations major from Leesburg, Virginia.



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Amnesty: The GOP's Incoming Disaster

Twenty years ago, Congress passed the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), a comically misnamed law that permitted illegal aliens to apply for legal permanent residence in the United States. Of the 5 million illegal aliens then living in this country, some 2.7 million achieved lawful permanent residence through IRCA, according to the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS). The following years saw Congress pass more, smaller amnesties, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service granted permanent resident status to 1.5 million illegal aliens in the 1990s. Yet, today, the Pew Hispanic Center estimates that 11.5–12 million illegal immigrants live in the United States.

The latter statistic is perhaps the most striking. Advocates of open borders assured Americans that, after the 1986 amnesty, America would resume enforcement of its immigration laws. IRCA was to be a compromise, or so its proponents promised. They lied. Of course, no reasonable person would ever believe those who claim that there is nothing wrong with having millions of people live in this country illegally.

No, say the libertines, illegal aliens are good for America. They are good even if they take free medical services from hospitals, thereby driving up the costs of medical care for people who pay; even if they take payments from social welfare programs for which they pay far less in taxes than Americans and legal residents; even if they constitute, according to CIS, nearly one-fifth of inmates in federal prisons — a fraction five times greater than their share of the general population; even if they depress wages in industries where Americans did work, for decent wages, until illegal aliens dragged those wages far, far down.

Stephen Ohlemacher of the Associated Press writes, "It is estimated that illegal immigrants fill a quarter of all agricultural jobs, 17 percent of office and house cleaning positions, 14 percent of construction jobs, and 12 percent in food preparation." Well, they clearly cannot be essential to the American economy for if they were, then those percentages would be much higher. The libertines argue that illegal immigrants take jobs that no one else will. No one else? Meaning, not Americans, and not legal immigrants? So who else is doing those jobs — aliens from outer space? Will those aliens get an amnesty, too?

But the fallout of illegal immigration is more than economic: In the age of terrorism and suitcase nukes, it is

suicidal to have open borders. In recent years, dozens of illegal aliens have perpetrated or attempted to perpetrate acts of terrorism against the United States. For instance, Mahmud Abouhalima, one of the perpetrators of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, received permanent resident status as an agricultural worker under IRCA. Mohammed A. Salameh, another illegal alien who participated in the 1993 bombing, similarly applied under IRCA but was rejected, yet he remained in the United States long enough to take part in the terrorist act.

"In the age of terrorism and suitcase nukes, it is suicidal to have open borders."

Blind to history and to simple common sense, the President, the Democrats and the Arlen Specter Republicans are pushing for a "temporary guest worker" program that they dishonestly insist will be coupled with serious efforts to enforce immigration law. As in 1986, so also now: There will be no such efforts. But this time, the public will not be deceived. A recent NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll found that 59 percent of Americans oppose allowing illegal aliens to apply even for legal "temporary" worker status. It remains to be seen whether the GOP is stupid enough to antagonize the public after years of inexcusably bad governance. If it is, then the Party will deserve its inevitable demise.

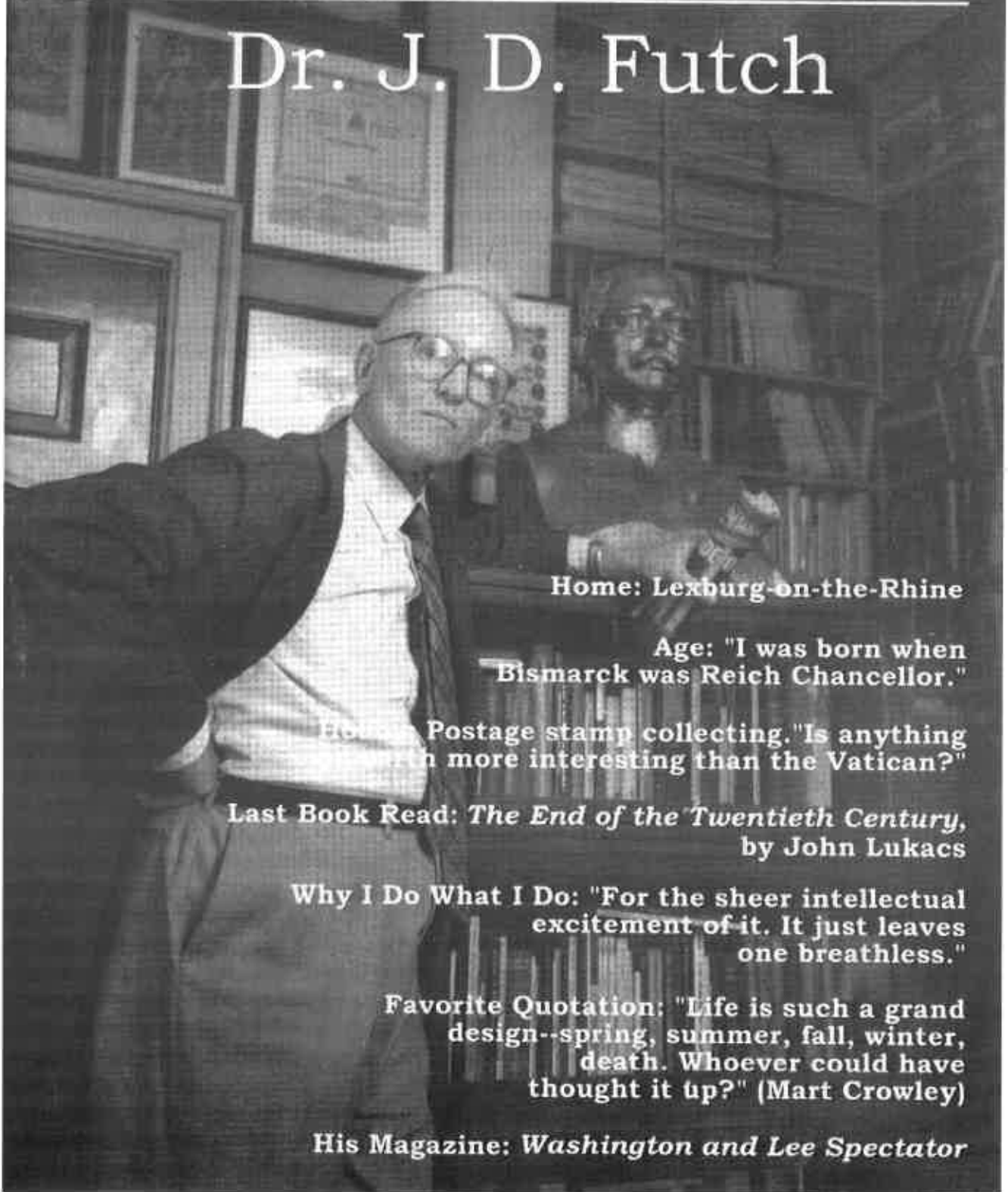
Alan Williams is a first-year law student from New York, New York.



Blast from the Past

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 worth 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*

What is a Conservative?

The terms liberal, conservative and moderate are some of the most often used yet least understood elastic phrases currently in use in the English language. Due to their almost daily use, especially at W&L, a good working definition of at least one might be in order. I'm not a moderate nor a liberal, so I won't attempt to speak for the motivations that drive someone to brand themselves or someone else with those monikers. I am, however, a conservative, and think that I might be able to offer some insight into the principles that motivate my voting habits and personal and political beliefs.

These principles don't necessarily apply only to conservatives or even to all conservatives. In fact, I think that Joe Lieberman, a Democrat, might even be more driven by these principles than Rudy Giuliani, a Republican. Conservatives believe in the importance of personal responsibility, the value of life, the presence of absolute truth that can be identified within a moral construct (i.e. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, etc.), that absolute power corrupts absolutely, that evil truly does triumph when good men do nothing, that economic opportunity is much more desirable than economic security and that the private sector of family, church and business can do most things better than the government. Unfortunately, entire books have been written on each of these subjects, and I can not hope to do justice to them in this short space.

One of the great pillars of conservatism is a respect for human life. It is one of the most fragile things on this earth and should be cherished and protected. I'm not just referring to abortion or euthanasia. While I find these things abhorrent and believe that life begins at conception, valuing life also affects other ideas conservatives hold. One of these is the death penalty.

It is because I value life so highly that I believe that the death penalty is one of the most important measures for protecting life. Conservatives are often accused of being hypocritical in this regard or employing circular logic. This is an unfair criticism. The reverence for life is rooted in an inalienable right to that life. Babies have that right; murderers do not. When one takes an innocent life, they forfeit their rights and should be faced with the most severe punishment available: death. The death penalty

reaffirms a societal commitment to protecting and revering innocent human life by exacting the ultimate price for those who take that life way.

Another core belief of the conservative is that absolute truth does exist. While many on the left would like to deny it, the very argument that "there is no absolute truth" is self-defeating as it is in itself an absolute statement. Most who accept the existence of absolutes identify themselves with a religion, usually Judaism, Christianity or Islam. By accepting the premise that there are definable absolute truths, lawmaking is transformed from an exercise in social relativism to one of the highest importance in establishing standards of societal conduct.

Western judicial and religious thought has been for centuries based on the truths espoused in the Bible, Torah, Hadith and Koran. By doing this, the founders of Western judicial philosophy established a law based on absolutes and not on an idea of social relativism. Conservatives fight tooth and nail to preserve this tradition because to rob Western society and law of absolutes is to rob it of the very foundation upon which it was built, and to simultaneously destroy a framework that has stood the serious tests of fascism, militant religious fundamentalism, communism, and absolutism.



Staff Writer David Kronenfeld Explaining the Virtues of Conservatism

picture from:

http://www.dialinformax.com/images/Michael_Moore.jpg

Another principle of conservatism is the importance of personal responsibility. An excellent case in point is the conservative opposition to needle exchange programs, where the state funds the trading of used drug needles for clean ones. Many liberals argue that such programs prevent the transmission of diseases such as HIV. Those programs, however, represent not only a tacit admission that illicit drug use is acceptable, but also place the responsibility for disease contraction on the state and not on the individual. Individuals who choose to use drugs should accept responsibility for their actions and

not rely on the taxpayer to fund the "safe" continuation of their illegal habit. While the program may be successful in preventing disease, it encourages an activity that is

"Conservatives believe in the sanctity of human life, the existence of absolute truth, and personal responsibility."

prohibited by law. Why should the public at large voluntarily pay for the illegal actions of others? Programs such as this should not be funded by the taxpayer, but instead

by private organizations and individuals.

While conservatives are often branded as cold-hearted and selfish for not supporting programs such as this, it isn't out of a hard heart that we oppose them; we merely believe that responsibility for one's actions lies with the individual and not with the state.

All of the above is simply scratching the surface of what I consider to be conservative thought, but I believe it may add clarity to a discourse that too often lacks focus.

David Kronenfeld is a junior History and Chinese major from Greensboro, North Carolina.

Political Quiz: How Right Are You?

1. The following is in the text of the Constitution: the right to _____

- a. party
- b. privacy
- c. bear arms

2. Terrorists hate us because:

- a. Steven Segal keeps foiling their plans
- b. we oppress them
- c. we are free

3. Cuba is:

- a. a nice place for a tropical vacation
- b. a communist paradise – just look at their literacy rate!
- c. a human rights hellhole

4. Social Security is:

- a. getting into the right frat/srat
- b. doing just fine, thank you, don't even THINK about touching it!
- c. going bankrupt - needs to be privatized

5. Roe v. Wade is:

- a. two different ways to cross a stream
- b. the protection of a fundamental human right
- c. a constitutional abomination

6. Iraq and Afghanistan are:

- a. 2 countries in Africa
- b. 2 countries Haliburton has targeted for their war for oil
- c. 2 countries that have been liberated from terrorists and are now working toward democracy

How did you score?

Mostly A's – You are politically clueless! Keep reading *The Spectator* to find out what is going on in the world!

Mostly B's – You are left! Keep reading *The Spectator* so we can correct your faulty thinking!

Mostly C's – You are right! Keep reading *The Spectator* to gain even more knowledge and learn how to espouse your beliefs!

Contributed by Senior Editor Alexa Moutevelis. Alexa is a senior Politics major from Ipswich, Massachusetts.

W&L's Mistaken Admissions Policy

The Spectator received a letter, portions of which have already been published in the *Ring Tum Phi*, written to Provost Williams by an aggrieved parent. We endorse, at a minimum, the author's call for more openness where the university's admissions policy is concerned. Whatever one believes should be the set of criteria used to judge applicants, we should all agree that disguising the true nature of the school's policies helps no one. We hope that republishing this letter generates more debate concerning W&L's admissions policies.

[To Provost Williams,]

As the father of a Washington and Lee University freshman, I am writing you, Co-chair of the Consolidation Committee, to express some concerns I have about the Strategic Plan, as regards the Admissions Department and increasing ethnic diversity, and its ensuing impact upon the University Honor Code.

In the Strategic Plan, the Admissions Task Force lists one of its charges as follows: increase American racial and ethnic diversity on campus to a level approximating the mean among rural, national liberal arts colleges. What discernable difference is there between this goal and a quota?

Sarah Kientz' article, "Minority Report," in the *Ring Tum Phi*, published on Parents' Weekend, reported that at Washington and Lee "... many believe that minority students are favored in the admissions process." Admissions Counselor Charlie Boisky admitted that the Admissions Department gives many incentives, including financial, to minority students to expose them to the campus and to get them to apply; however, everyone is on equal ground when it comes to applying to W&L. He further added that no students are accepted based on ethnicity and that "minority students are every bit as qualified as everyone else." Erin Hutchinson, Assistant Director of Admissions and Coordinator of

Minority Recruitment, said that minority status often comes into play when the department is "separating equals," or making decisions between two students who are equally as qualified.

Jonathan Webster [Associate Dean of Admissions] and I had a brief discussion at Glenelg Country School about that article. He indicated that he had not read the article but acknowledged that numerous types of incentives, including financial, are offered only to minority students in an effort to

"Washington and Lee, as well as most other American universities, wants to keep its policies of preferential admissions and other criteria used in selection conspicuously vague."

have them gain interest in the University and apply. He went even further by analogizing the preferences the Admissions Department offers minority students in admission by expressing, "It's no different from how we treat athletes or legacies." Those were his words, not mine. So that there was no misunderstanding he further explained "that it is the only way we can get them [minorities] in". He confirmed what the article suspected, and was unable to explicitly document:

namely, preferences are offered in admissions to minority students.

Washington and Lee, as well as most other American universities, wants to keep its policies of preferential admissions and other criteria used in selection conspicuously vague. There is rhetoric about the attributes of ideal candidates and student bodies, but little to show exactly how various attributes contribute to a student's chance of being admitted or of doing well. Admission officers seem to prefer to keep discretion to themselves.

Several arguments can be given for more forthrightness in admissions policies. Aspiring students, and certainly applicants, would benefit from more information about their chances of being selected, their prospects for success at the University and the characteristics of their potential classmates. The policymaking of the Admissions Department would be improved by the internal and external debates such public revelation would entail. Shouldn't Washington and Lee stand for forthrightness in why and what it does? Wouldn't our founders have demanded that? Isn't that what the Honor Code is all about? Lying is defined as anything other than "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Sincerely,
A Concerned Washington and Lee Parent

On the Right: Women Who Are No Good

On the Right is an opinion column

The Problem of modern feminism

I am not a misogynist, nor do I wish I were a male. However, I am disgusted by the members of my gender who demand attention and recognition, not for what they have accomplished, but for the body part God gave them.

There are two different factions of modern feminism. First, there are those who want the two sexes to be treated exactly the same (i.e. those who want to see women in combat). This group refuses to recognize that the sexes are biologically predisposed to have different strengths and weaknesses. Second, there is a group which wants special treatment because they are women. Both are pathetic, as well as wrong and disturbing.

The greatest problem I have with modern feminists' agenda is that it hopes to erase any differences between men and women. Modern feminists conclude, illogically I might add, that we (women) can only be treated equally once no differences exist between the sexes.

My point is a simple one: men and women are different. Likewise, they are good at different things. Modern feminists should not disguise the natural, biological differences between the sexes as examples of "woman-hating," chauvinism, or discrimination. It would be far more constructive to society if the feminists accepted these differences and recognized the value in diversity.

The Danger of modern feminism

The most frightening part of the modern feminist movement is that it actually harms women rather than helps them. When the femi-Nazis require that women receive special treatment (in education, the workplace, or wherever), they willingly concede that women are incapable of doing things on their own. The trouble with this is that it forces women to fall back on the crutch of being "the weaker sex" so that they can get what they want. Essentially, modern feminists say, "I cannot adequately perform the capabilities I am asked (and that is the man's fault). Therefore, I should receive special treatment, and you should make exceptions for me."

The differences between women and men do not make women incapable. You would think that modern feminists would understand this.

"It is morally repugnant that modern feminists want more women in high places, not because of their achievements, but because they are women."

And, on the topic of making exceptions because one is female, I do not want more women deans because they are women. I want more qualified deans and, if those happen to be women, then so be it. It is morally repugnant that modern feminists want more women in high places, not because of their achievements, but because they are women.

Rachael A. Seidenschnur is a senior Religion and Politics major from Little Rock, Arkansas.



Next on Pay-Per-View

Rachael Seidenschnur and
Congressman Cynthia
McKinney duke it out
over the meaning of
feminism.



picture from:
<http://www.michnews.com/artman/uploads/mckinney.jpg>

Out Loud

"To escape criticism, do nothing, say nothing, be nothing."

-Elbert Hubbard

"You can have anything you want - if you want it badly enough. You can be anything you want to be, have anything you desire, accomplish anything you set out to accomplish - if you will hold to that desire with singleness of purpose."

-General Robert E. Lee

"Conservatives defend freedom not because they believe in the right to do as you please, but because freedom is the precondition for virtue. It is only when people choose freely that they can choose the good. Without freedom, there is no virtue: A coerced virtue is no virtue at all."

-Dinesh D'Souza

"There is an inverse relationship between reliance on the state and self-reliance."

-William F. Buckley, Jr.

"Just because we are born equal doesn't mean we have to stay that way."

-Rush Limbaugh

"There is no such thing as hate speech. The term for it is speech."

-David French

"Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to stop and reflect."

-Mark Twain

"Thank God we don't get all the government we pay for."

-Will Rogers

"If you think health care is expensive now, wait until you see what it costs when it's free."

-P.J. O'Rourke

"Nothing is so permanent as a temporary government program."

-Milton Friedman

"Liberals claim to want to give a hearing to other views, but then are shocked and offended to discover that there are other views."

-William F. Buckley, Jr.