

"Sister, can you spare some change. . ."

Guest Commentary
by Aymi Franklin

The last rays of the sun took cover for the night in vacant alleys that were painted with impermeable shadows. And the chill of urban life swept across the streets as if it were a carousel colored brush fire. I rested my arms in the shape of an "X" across my chest, warning people who passed by not to come too close, not to rub up against my childhood memories, not to scratch the wound on my healing heart. Then I heard her hands and saw her pain. I heard the hands that had been collecting dirt, because at night when she laid her cheek to rest on the street of a cold city, her hands would clutch the soil which had been dropped by people who have a bed, who have warmth, who may even have love. Her eyes were the color of mint tulips, and her hair was arranged like the string of a kite. She singled me out of a crowded street, and she extended a dirty hand as she asked if I might have any spare change. A couple of cold silver coins could not make a woman happy, but I reached for my change purse which was made of a beautiful gold Japanese silk, embroidered with cheap red designs. I pulled out the only paper money I had, only paper money. I was expecting to place a dollar in her hand; then I would be on my way. My hands, with clean fingernails and sweaty palms, unearthed an

accidental \$20.00. I couldn't ask her for change, so I asked her to dinner. Her innocent facade immediately turned almost insolent. She told me she was just trying to get a pack of cigarettes.

Together we shared a pack of cigarettes and dinner in a downstairs restaurant of China Town. I tried to figure out my Chinese horoscope, and she told me about her family, her children. I was trying hard to concentrate on everything she was saying, but I kept thinking of the other 18 students that were taking part in the trip. I kept thinking that we all came to Washington D.C. to "Help the Homeless", but the homeless were scattered like fallen rose petals on almost every street corner of our nation's capitol! I started to lose the voracity of my appetite; the homeless woman facing me from the opposite side of the table beautifully blew out her life philosophies as she exhaled on a cigarette. The fork between my fingers turned into a malleable liquid confusion. I was not facing a "homeless" person; I was facing a woman, a mother, a lover, an individual. I was supposed to be facing an individual who had less than I do, less intelligence, fewer morals, and a fading soul. I was supposed to be thinking about how wonderful our government is to the people of our country when there is a shortage of 4 million low-income houses. How wonderful is it that 1 out of 4 teenagers are home-

less? How wonderful is it that 700,000 people of every race, creed, and gender are sleeping on the streets every night?

And here I was in a Chinese restaurant facing one of the most beautiful women I may ever meet. With the pain in her eyes she told me about trust, and truth, and how everyone must see the good inside of someone and how someone must see the good inside of everyone. In Washington D.C. I had dinner with a woman, an individual. In a cheap restaurant in the downstairs of China Town, where the Chinese horoscopes are saturated with soy sauce, I had a cigarette with a Tiger; she had dinner with a Dragon.

I would greatly like to acknowl-

edge Fran Lynch, a woman of great strength and soul. I would like to recognize all of the students who participated in the Spring Break trip: Brian Burris, Kate Crawford, Micheal Crochietiere, Maria Falgoust, Christopher Ford, Carl Gains, Billie Gallaway, Nancy Genes, Martha Gilliam, Hiromi Koiwai, Brandon Lonz, John Milner, Brandon Printup, Nao Takeuchi, Zinnia Torres, Takako Ueda, and Jennifer Williams.

I would also like to say thank you to the speakers that held our seminars and to the shelters where we were able to contribute a fraction of ourselves, the Olive Branch Community and the Community for Creative Non-Violence.

Inactivity in SGA

Chris Theokas
Clarion Staff Writer

On February 20 the Student Government Association (SGA) held its first meeting of the new semester. There were only four members at the meeting: John Milner, Christopher Theokas, the only two representatives out of 25, Christopher Ford, the president, and Dustin Calhoun, the vice president of Social Board.

The first order of business was the placement of the students on academic committees. The final decision was that the students would get a vote on who would represent them on these committees. This was to be a momentous occasion for the SGA. This would be the first major accomplishment of Christopher Ford's administration. This was to be the mark that was made on the campus by this year's SGA.

But there was only one problem with this plan. There was no one around to implement its passage to President Bertrand. With only four members of the SGA the ensuing letter would be more of a personal plea to the President than an official SGA request.

This is a problem that has plagued the SGA since its beginning: the lack of participation by its members and other students. The SGA represents the student body. It is open to all students all over the campus, and no one seems to care if it exists at all. Even after there were letters sent out, posters hung about the campus, and some word of mouth, there was, and is, little participation in the workings of the SGA.

There is a plan in the works to get Representative Charles Taylor to come and speak in an open forum. There is no tentative date set, but a forum with a representative of the United States would be momentous for any two-year college SGA. Imagine, an honest-to-God United States Representative com-

ing to field any intelligent questions that you may wish to ask him. The SGA expects there to be a considerable turnout for the event which would be a handful of the curious, and, of course, the core members of the SGA.

But the lack of participation by the student body and its members isn't the only thing that keeps the SGA behind in its duties. Last semester a proposal was presented to the SGA, before all the members fled, about the lighting situation between McLarty-Goodson and the Moore-Science buildings. Bobbie Jo Simmons felt that there was a need for more lighting between the two buildings, that it was dangerous for the women of the campus to walk alone there at night. Many of the SGA agreed with her.

And the plan went through. Almost everyone signed the letter that was going to reach into the upper echelons of the school's faculty hierarchy. It was to be the first visible accomplishment of the SGA for this year. But the semester passed by, and nothing had been done by its end. And soon the motion was forgotten.

Forgotten until this semester. The subject of the letter was brought to the attention of Christopher Ford at the February 20 meeting. Apparently, the letter had never been sent to anyone.

Later, Christopher Ford proposed reforming the syllabus structure, adding in stronger requirements for class work, and in the end creating a stronger curriculum for the college. The idea is a good one, one that would strengthen the college for the future, idealism at its best. The vision includes more money for academics and less for athletics.

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