

Smoke Signals

The Student Newspaper of Chowan College

MURFREESBORO, N.C.

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Editorially speaking . . .

The SGA Elections have recently occurred. A number of candidates threw their hat into the ring, each having their own personal ideas on how this college should be run. It is a shame most of us will never hear their ideas. We will vote for people only because of their name, not because we like what they plan to do for the college.

Chowan College has avoided the American political process when it comes to the elections. Why doesn't the administration, SGA, or whoever allow the candidates to give speeches? Why must our election be nothing more than a popularity contest? I thought that the days of voting for people because of their name was over when I left high school. I suppose President Jackson and the Board of Trustees are saying that we (the students) aren't responsible enough to handle elections. We have to go to all of those convocations, why can't the Board and Dr. Jackson make a convocation so that the students can give speeches?

This brings me to the current SGA. What have they really done this semester? Not much really. With all of the changes going on around campus, major changes should have occurred. Most of the changes that we have seen were made by special groups formed by the administration, and the changes that SGA actually made were probably already made and finalized by the Board and Dr. Jackson. What I am saying is that the SGA has not capitalized on Chowan's situation. Students could be enjoying more freedoms and liberties if Ken McGinniss, the current SGA President, was more aggressive and if he capitalized on Chowan's shortfall and transformation to a four-year college. By all means, I don't want to say that the SGA or Ken has done a bad job, but I wouldn't say that they have done a good job. But then again, we go to Chowan. The SGA doesn't really have much influence on campus.

Chowan sure was original when they thought of the slogan, "Chowan: the Four-Year College." This will attract a load of applicants. If students don't come here for the great name, Chowan, then that slogan sure will attract them.

Why is the college named Chowan anyway? The name isn't attractive or anything like that, it is almost repulsive. Chowan should change its name along with all of the other changes that are going on. Something without the Indian connotation (the Indians get mad about stuff like that, you know!) Any name will be better, so I say that change should be made.
 —Daniel Brown

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

One week ago I was famished as usual. I decided to go to a well known fast food restaurant in Murfreesboro, which for the sake of this article will go unnamed, to eat. Unfortunately I forgot about the two day waiting period for hamburgers; however, I still had faith in the American way and in the American corporate pigs who monopolize the fast food industry.

Therefore I reluctantly ventured to the unnamed establishment to try and get a bite to eat. Now when I arrived at this place, a friend and I were talking and he asked the cashier if they were serving breakfast. At this point in the story I commented on how slow the service was. My exact words were: "Well if you order now you'll probably get your food by breakfast time!" Amazingly the cashier denied that the service was slow! She then made the comment, "Well I see you still come here don't you?" Forgive me, but as many of us know there isn't another fast food restaurant open at 1:30 in the morning. Believe me, if there was another fast food place to eat at around two in the morning I would be there, with a great big smile on my face, and I'd say, "Wow you guys are the greatest place in the world! Your food is not only served the same day, but also it's hot when you get it!" Finally I was fed up with the conversation (personally I've seen furniture with more personality than that woman!) so I decided to take a seat and wait indefinitely for the food my friend and I ordered.

Unfortunately that's not the end of the story. While I was seated, the workers (for lack of an actual description of what they do) Continued to list options for my situation. At one point this suggestion arose: "Why don't you go to McDonalds early and get your food, then take it home and put it in a microwave?" Now business administration is far from being my forte; however, I seriously doubt that I would want my employees diverting business to my biggest competition. If that seems ludicrous just wait, there's more. Suddenly the cooks cried anarchy

and stared shouting verbal spasms

that sounded something like this:

"Well then, I ain't gonna cook his burger! You cook it!"

"I ain't gonna cook it! You cook it!"

"No! You cook it!"

"No! You cook it!"

"Well, I guess he ain't gonna get no burger then!"

I sat dumbfounded. It was the first cook rebellion I had ever witnessed, and an extremely vicious one at that! Covering in fear, I crouched further down in my seat and took my verbal abuse. There was nothing I could do, the kitchen was mad frenzy of hatred.

Eventually a friend of mine smuggled a burger to my table. I was ecstatic with joy even though my burger was both haphazardly built and cold. Maybe it's me, but I thought my burger would be like the ones on the commercials. You know, built symmetrically and aerodynamically sound with just the perfect amount of garnishments, and handed to me by a smiling (and very happy to be employed) worker. I mean has anyone ever been in a fast food place that looked just like the ones on T.V. If so, please let me know where it is!

Before I close, I would like to discuss a few extra details about the establishment. First, isn't it convenient when they close the dining area (dining area, yeah that's a laugh!) and force everyone to use the drive in. Or how about the cleanliness of the dining area? One question: Is the dining area ever swept or do they just open the doors at intervals to let the wind blow the trash around? And finally, couldn't they have more than two people working in the place at night? It just might make the service a little faster.

Anyway, if any other students have had problems similar to mine, please call the following number and let them know. Who knows, with enough calls we just might make a change. If nothing else, maybe we can at least get the floor swept in there!

Regretfully, call 1-800-346-2243
 —Daniel Butler

Letter to the Editor

Following up from February's issue of "Editorially Speaking," I could not agree more with Jessica's remark that "the situation in Jenkins is wonderful, but it should not be unique." However, if we want racial harmony to really exist amongst the whole student body, then why do we have to classify students into whites, blacks, and foreign? Are we not all, as I quote from Dr. Mauvise Brett, "brothers under the skin?"

Call me idealistic but I would really like to see everybody integrating and coming together as a whole, to strengthen the bond that college mates should have. That would, I believe, inadvertently, raise the college spirit somewhat. I have yet to see the college population coming together totally for any event. Is everybody so divided that they can never be found together?

Well, there is one place they can all be found together—at the cafeteria, where everyone sits down for meals together. Unfortunately, many "foreign" students are always found together and very often, you will find the "blacks" clustered together too. As a foreign student myself, I find it absolutely difficult to come forth with the "whites," perhaps because I feel they have already established a circle of friends. Maybe I have not given them a chance, but will they give me one? Although many students are friendly, there are a few black sheep who absolutely behave as though the whole world owes them a living.

My first two days at Chowan brought hope for me. Everyone I passed smiled and said "Hi!" Perhaps it was because I was the "new kid on the block." But when school started that week, I tried smiling at some people who just breezed past me as though I was invisible! That shattered my then perfect bubble instantly.

I have since been able to recognize the people who will return my smile and those who will not. As for those who will not, I can only say that they have been very judgmental, and I wonder if it is because I am "yellow?" Racial harmony comprises of three basic ingredients—patience, tolerance and understanding. Everyone would like to believe that they are non-discriminating. Are you worthy enough to uphold these three criteria so that you can officially be labeled non-discriminating? That is left for everyone to see.

—Dawn Ang, Staff Writer

Special tribute paid to Black History Month

By Dawn Ang

The eleventh of February, 1992, in Daniel Hall, was a night of inspiration in many respects—the inspiring speech by Dr. Mauvise Brett and the Voices of Inspiration Gospel Choir singing. Truly, it was a very appropriate program in conjunction with Black History Month.

Dr. Mauvise W. Brett, a reputed educator in the Roanoke-Chowan area and also a member of the Chowan Board of Visitors is on the Who's Who list of many organizations. She simply exuded brilliance and charm in her speech on affirmative action. It was an epitome of inspiration, stirring emotions within all minorities, making them believe in what they used to think of as an attempt at achieving the impossible. And Dr. Brett's speech was not just aimed at making them think it was possible. Her presence in itself showed, already, that everyone, regardless of skin color, age, and sex can achieve success. Her family would be the best example. Married to the late John W. Brett, D.D.S., her children, two daughters and two sons, are all professionals now and very successful in their respective fields. Every person's success story is

based on his or her zeal to achieve, to strive towards excellence. It takes all sorts of people to make this world and also all sorts of people to attempt to improve it. Prejudice and racism in our time is sizzling out.

I believe that none of us of this generation would be willing to trade an arm to live in the 60s and before when racism and prejudice were prevalent. We have come a long way since then and can continue to make progress in this area only if everyone plays their little part with great tolerance and understanding.

"All the world's a stage,
 And the men and women merely players."

—William Shakespeare.

Yes, we have all been put on this world which is our stage and we all have our roles to play and moral duties to fulfill. A challenge has been put forth to us by Dr. Brett. So let's "go out there into that big world and show everyone just how good you can be!" Below is the speech made by Dr. Brett which many of you missed. Read it and believe that it all happened and the change that has taken place over this period of time.

Speech by Dr. Mauvise Brett

Please allow me to digress slightly from my stated topic to pay tribute to two men whom I have admired and who have died recently. They are Alex Haley and James Michener, a black writer and a Caucasian writer. Both received literary awards attesting to the excellence of their research and writing skills. Both dedicated years of their lives to studying cultures other than their own, and presented a "non-colonial" perspective of civilizations in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific Islands. If you have not read Alex Haley's *Roots*, or James Michener's *Hawaii*, *Caravans*, *Tales of the South Pacific*, or *The Voice of Asia*, to name a few, then I suggest that devoting some time to reading these would be well worth the effort.

In a sense, my profiling these two writers together actually ties into my theme tonight, which is "An Analysis of Affirmative Action." These writers were, in my opinion, brothers under the skin. They were objective in their appraisal of cultures different from the one in which they were reared. They were thorough in their research about these cultures, and they had learned. Both were literary giants and the facts that their skins were of different colors was totally irrelevant.

To me, that is exactly what affirmative action should represent—equal opportunity for all persons to be judged on the merits of their abilities. You are near the ages of two of my grandchildren, and I represent the generation of your grandparents. You, fortunately, do not remember the days of racial segregation in the southern states of this country and the indignities and unfairness that resulted for people with skin the color of mine.

I moved from Washington, D.C. to Hertford County in 1946 with my husband, John W. Brett of Winton. He had just earned a degree in dentistry at Howard University and was planning to begin practicing in Ahoskie. Let me tell you what Hertford County was like for a minority at a drugstore soda fountain, I was expected to stand my food was packed for me to carry outside. In other words, I could not eat at the counter. There were two movie houses in Ahoskie—the Earl Theater and the Richard Theater (now the Gallery Theater Building) in which we were permitted.

The Ahoskie Department Store had a rest room for "White Ladies", but none for me. In the 1950s, when I had children old enough to attend school, they were bused on the separate system set up for black children. They rode past the school nearest to their home to attend a school for black students that was poorly equipped in almost every way.

I began teaching in the Hertford County Public School in 1959. If I had applied to work at Ahoskie High School, which was less than two miles from my home, my application would not even have been considered because my skin was the wrong color for that "all

white" school. Affirmative action policies say that this cannot happen to people like me anymore. Under affirmative action, all persons have an equal opportunity to compete based upon their qualifications.

Hear me now, and hear me well. IT DOES NOT GUARANTEE ANYTHING beyond that. It does not say quotas must be established. Affirmative action does NOT mean you are guaranteed ANYTHING simply BECAUSE you are black. I agree that this is as it should be.

If you can prove that you are the best applicant for a job, you are entitled to that job. But best includes academic qualifications ALONG WITH the ability to get along with people, having acceptable work habits (punctuality, minimal absenteeism, appropriate dress, willing to work extra hours in emergency situations, etc.) In other words, affirmative action means you cannot automatically be denied the opportunity to compete on an equal basis merely because of the color of your skin.

In a recent senatorial race in North Carolina, a television advertisement showed the hands of a white man tearing up an application form as the narrator asked, "Will you be denied a job because affirmative action quotas say a less qualified black applicant must have the job?" Many people believe this advertisement a turning point in the outcome of that senatorial race. The fact is, however, that affirmative action DOES NOT set up quotas, meaning a definite number or percentage of minority persons must fill positions in an organization.

And let me emphasize something else—affirmative action policies do not apply exclusively to black. They apply to ALL minorities, and in some situations this includes women and senior citizens. In other words, I can no longer be denied consideration because I am black, or because I am a woman, or because I am over a certain age.

Does this mean I can go out and fight for my rights? I guess it could mean this, but fight produces little except a person's being disliked. Better, I recommend, that you prove your competence. Act friendly, or at least courteous even when you do not receive the same in return. And you may not always. Simply learn to ignore hostile attitudes and live above them.

And now for one final point. I maintain strongly that you should not want quotas. If persons believe you receive an appointment simply because a certain number from your group must be selected, then most people will not believe you are the best—even if you are. Think about that. You would not want that to happen, would you?

Is today's world perfect for people like me? No. But it is certainly much better than it was in 1946, and the opportunities continue to expand. Therefore, I challenge you young people to strive for excellence and go out there into that big world and show everyone just how good you can be!

Opposing views on President George Bush

The Liberal Scapegoat

By Daniel Brown

Since it's election year, every liberal, anti-Bush democrat will take their fair share at cheap shots at Bush and Quail. Maybe Quail deserves it, but Bush only deserves half of what he receives. Everything that didn't appease every American counts against Bush and everything that he did positive is totally forgotten. Just because the Democrats can't get into the Oval Office, they have to complain about every little incident that Bush probably has no control over.

Let's take the environment as an example. Sure, Bush is President, but what can he really do to improve the environment? He can introduce a bill to Congress, and they will have to approve it; and who is in charge of the Congress? The Democrats. So how can Bush be responsible for the environment?

The only thing he can do is veto a bill, and I don't think he has done that.

Of course, under the Congress are all of the big companies that are destroying the wetlands. I suppose they have nothing to do with it. Oh yeah, I forgot, it's election year—so everything is Bush's fault. Has he done anything for the environment? In a sense, he could have done much more, with the aid of Congress, large companies and the American people, but we live in such a diverse nation, the passage of any bill is difficult unless it is worded in a way that it will appease every Tom, Dick, and Harry.

Everything is excused, it's election year. The anti-Bush clan will Bush Bash until they drop dead. Maybe if it wasn't for all of the finger-pointing something could be accomplished.

A Real Stinker

By Daniel Butler

I'm sure that there is an abundance of gags and cheap shots that I could say about little Georgie, but I would like to let his record speak for just a moment. I remember when little Georgie-Pooh said that he was going to be an environmental President, and that he was going to protect good old mother earth! Well, there was a matter of wetlands that gave Georgie the perfect test to prove how much he cared for our environment. Unfortunately, little Georgie blew it.

You see, America is steadily losing wetlands and the valuable wildlife that thrives upon them. People are trying to drain the wetlands to provide ample space for something stupid like a shopping mall, or another fast food restaurant! Something had to be done, so what did our fearless leader do:

well he changed the requirements for wetlands. In other words, little Georgie made a change that would eliminate over 30% of lands that were designated as wetlands. Furthermore, old Georgie-porgie set up a rating system for wetlands that ranked them according to the ones which would need protection from the least to the most. Therefore, I'm sure the wetlands will receive help from the government as soon as they dry up!

Actually, George Bush wasn't the only one involved with the bill that changed the entire meaning of a wetland. Still though, it just irks me when candidates make all these lies and promises to get elected and then do whatever they want when they are appointed. So I guess little Georgie wasn't the only one to blame, but he still stinks!