

# The Decree

OFFICIAL STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF  
NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE

Editor-in-Chief — Kimberly Curseen

Copy Editor — Kevin Corbett

Advertising Manager — John Morgan

Staff — Greg Purcell, Jessica Brown, Tequalea Moore, Marcy Stover,  
Alan Felton, Jessica Cohoon, Charlotte Pettitt, Karolyn Braun

Advisor — Chris LaLonde

*The Decree* is located in the Hardees Building, North Carolina Wesleyan College, 3400 Wesleyan Blvd., Rocky Mount, NC 27801. Weekly staff meetings are held Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. in the Decree office.

Re-publication of any matter herein without the express consent of the Editorial Board is strictly forbidden. *The Decree* is composed and printed by the *Spring Hope Enterprise*. Opinions published do not necessarily reflect those of North Carolina Wesleyan College.

## Students off-base in hogging on-line

With Wesleyan's new World Wide Web connections, many students are faced with the decision — work or study? For some, the problem is finding the time to "surf the net" and concentrate on their studies, while others find it difficult to find computers available for typing papers due to those who are using them for the Internet.

While the Net is great for a school like Wesleyan because it allows communications with people all over the globe, some students are taking a dive grade-wise because they are learning the ways of the Net too well.

During the day it is almost impossible to find an open computer in the library because some students use up to two computers at a time to talk in the chat rooms. The same is true for the computer lab, which is full between classes. At night, everyone confines themselves to either the library or the computer lab, neglecting their studies. Everyone knows Wesleyan likes to see students use the library, but not like this. Such use is abusive, and perhaps it was time limits were set on the availability of the Internet.

The library has placed signs on each computer asking students to be courteous to those who need them for schoolwork, but does anyone listen? Is this enough?

The Web's live chat rooms are very inviting, and many students have abused its privileges by using slander and sending sexual messages over the wires. Such conduct gives Wesleyan students a bad image to those receiving such messages. Those concerns have been eased some since the chat rooms are occasionally monitored, and now a pass code is needed to use them.

The Internet is a great thing, and it can open many doors to help students find information to help them learn and even to meet friends. However, there must be limits. More than likely, after the newness of the Internet has worn off, so will the urge for students to use it so much. Until then, some discipline on behalf of all students must prevail.

Unfortunately, self-discipline is not a very popular thing for some students at Wesleyan. The Internet is just another example of how students can play while avoiding their studies. And this is not just a problem at Wesleyan but at every colleges in America, because students are learning how to be themselves.

We can't fix the problem everywhere, but we can address the issue at Wesleyan. Students must decide before it is too late whether to play or study, and many have yet to find the answer.



### Clothes don't equal change

## Uniforms miss the point

By DR. STEVE FEREBEE

Once upon a time long ago, a high school biology teacher said that if administrators allowed jeans in the classroom, most students would drop out, hitchhike to California, buy motorcycles, take drugs, and forget to go to football practice.

He loudly threatened to flunk me when I suggested that he mistakenly equated changing fashions with (possible) cultural disintegration.

Now I must stand against requiring public school uniforms as a "fix" for our social problems. I was sometimes bemused, sometimes flabbergasted, that people who make this argument also screech that the government has no right to "tell me what to do!" (Paraphrased from any Rush Limbaugh dittohead.)

A problem that politicians have is that some of us remember. The anti-Communist propaganda from the 1950's and 1960's, for example, convinced me that Communism was bad, bad, bad. But what do I remember that I was supposed to fear about Communism? Those drab uniforms they made their children wear!

I have since reconsidered the paternalistic lessons I unquestionably allowed to dictate some of my attitudes. But that fear of sapping my individuality has never left me, and I continue to nose it out suspiciously wherever its stink lingers.

The battle against multiculturalism, for instance, seems misguided. We are a country of various cultures: ethnic, religious,

*Dr. Steve Muses*

economic, geographic, sexual, and so on. The question is whether or not we will learn to live side by side. Allowing one culture to dictate who destroys us all.

We hear, mainly but not exclusively from "conservatives" (which lately means everyone because no one is willing to call himself a liberal, a fate worse than being a Communist in the 1950's), that the "crime problem" is created by a lack of strict "values" and "discipline." Now they are even talking about "recreating shame" as a weapon against wayward teenagers. The coded message is that nonconformity cannot be tolerated if we are to function as a cohesive culture.

School uniforms will give students pride, these critics predict. Uniforms cover the stigma of being unable to afford nice clothes. (That's a good one! If we make everyone look alike in the school system, no one will know that economic divisions are growing exponentially.) Drugs, misbehavior, sexual promiscuity — you

name it — the problem will be cured by making all public school students look the same. (You might also remember that some of these people would also do away with public school entirely because it tells their children how to act.)

Now, I admit to being puzzled, amused, even irritated, by some student fashions. Even for an old hippy, body piercing seems counterproductive. And I know that some schools are battlefields rather than learning fields. I acknowledge that a troubling disrespect for rules, for authority, for each other, plagues us.

But clothes will not solve these problems. Troubled adolescents dressed in navy slacks or skirts and white shirts or blouses are still troubled adolescents. Why are they troubled? Because Janey can afford better clothes than Juney? Because Johnny has artfully damaged jeans? I don't think so.

Instead of tinkering around with the surface of the problems and pretending we can find easy alterations, adults should consider their own behaviors. The clear-cut demands I expect from my students' brains and creativity will instruct them more successfully than what I make them wear to school.

### Letters to the editor policy

*The Decree* accepts only signed letters to the editors. Unsigned letters will not be printed. Letters should not exceed 400 words. Letters need to be placed in the campus post office and marked "Decree" or placed in the *Decree* office in the Hardees building. Letters must be received by Friday of the week prior to the next issue in order to be printed in that issue. *The Decree* reserves the right to edit or reject letters for grammar, libel, or good taste.