

# Tokenism and a Female Hardhat

First of a Two-Part Series

BY PAT STABLER

"Ah," I might hear you say, "she cracked through the sex barrier and worked in that bastion of male segregation, the blue collar job. Congratulations to her for helping to break that down."

This kind of simplified reaction is typical of many people's response to my ten and a half weeks of working with an all male road maintenance crew. In fact, it probably would have expressed my sentiments at the beginning of the summer, but the job served to completely change my perspectives on this subject which will comprise my next article.

Several weeks ago, I saw an episode of Kojak in which Angie Dickenson played a police officer who was temporarily to homicide in order to follow through on a rape case that had developed murderous qualities. The woman's desire for acceptance and respect both as a person and an officer consumed most of the air time. She was successfully defensive, angry, pleading and finally astonished and dazed as she was carried off the battlefield of a New York City park in the arms of Kojak. I am not interested in analyzing her role and its degrading and revolutionary importance, but on the intense focus made on the subject of her being a woman in her position. This corresponded exactly with my recent summer work experience.

Due to a fairly egalitarian up-bringing, I had always seen myself as an individual with my sexuality integrated into that person. But, like Dickenson's character in the

predominately male work environment, I was forced continually to be aware of my being a woman which involved insulting connotations and expectations that I had always avoided before. The actual tasks were primarily menial in nature, mowing, shoveling dirt and picking up trash, though often exhausting I performed them adequately. Even so, I was constantly aware of a situation where I was alternately and contradictorily something to be taken care of and appreciated, something of contempt. The crew became, for me, an emotionally draining war into which I would enter enemy territory every morning. I was treated judiciously by the superintendent, yet always engaged in combat with myself or the others over the rights and restrictions which the men and I had set up governing my behavior.

The original reaction of the crew was mostly indifference. This indifference is the normal treatment of newcomers to the rigidly hierarchical social structure. Nevertheless, as I determinedly interacted with the men in an effort to befriend them, I found myself behaving and feeling far differently than I had expected.

In some sociological literature I have read, tokenism has been observed to force the "token" to take on differing stereotyped attributes in a desire for acceptance. A male nurse would tend to perform the heavier, "dirtier" tasks, while a female professor may find herself "mothering" her department. Similarly, I would do and say things that were typically female, even while having some sort

of vague mission of enlightenment as to freedom in sex roles. I was hesitant in attempting jobs I was not sure I could perform, and often deferred to the men. I found it easy to give up jobs when they got too difficult, and in less tangible ways tried to be sure that my sexuality was carefully identified. I was an outsider nonetheless.

By the last week of the job, we had set down patterns of behavior that were workable, but I realized that becoming a real member of the group would have taken a great deal of time.

A token, such as myself, coming into a segregated work situation is in a vulnerable and frightening position. We are all used to acceptance and comradeship from fellow employees, and the token must find some mode of behavior that will engender that. In the process, certain issues, such as sexuality and racism, will have to be dealt with, and the final workable pattern will often leave the token emotionally exhausted from walking a tight-rope of inconsistencies. I believe very strongly that jobs should be open to any qualified candidate. Tokenism will not cause sufficient changes in attitudes and prejudices to aid that end. It will fail by the co-workers seeing the token either as an example of the rule (i.e. the token has taken on a "traditional" mode of behavior) or as an exception (the token has attempted some other behavior) that merely proves the rule.

(Next week - Blue collar workers: Are they so different, and if so, why?)

## Bryan — Rolling Along

This is for the benefit of those who could not, would not, or forgot to come to the Bryan Dorm meeting the night of September 5 at 9 p.m. At any rate members of Bryan Dorm, the Dana Houses, and some Fraziers met in Bryan Lounge for nearly 45 minutes. Bob White began the meeting by introducing Kathy Smith, the new co-ordinator of Bryan.

Bob White quickly got down to the business at hand by discussing a new policy on dorm damage. It seems that all the furniture in

the suites have been marked this year with that suite's number. It is hoped that this will eliminate "borrowing" another suite's furniture when yours is missing. If you do happen to "lose" a piece of furniture, you may be charged for it if you don't notify your intern that it is missing. And, if furniture from other suite's is found in yours, you may find yourself reporting before the Guilford County Judicial Court for theft.

Then, while wearing a Pabst Blue Ribbon T-shirt, Bob White began to explain what he termed the "high spots"

of the new alcohol policy. This entailed a reiteration of the policy as it appeared in the *Guilfordian* two weeks ago with a question and answer

session. White said that he is interested "in the spirit of the law, not the letter" and is concerned with blatant transgressions. The times one would be written up are when there are "flagrant violations." The penalty for a violation would depend on the person's cumulative offense record and would vary from a reprimand to a dismissal.

## Collum's Column

I had planned to tell you something about Ma and Pa's trip to the big city — Greensboro. What I didn't know, though, was that, on their mule-ride from Climax, Mississippi, they'd get stuck in the mud. I also didn't know that my apartment would flood. Whoa, Noah!

Well, when I got home from my Esperanto class, I found books floating out of my bedroom my cats building a raft, and my own version of a water-bed — a water-soaked mattress. After bailing, I pondered the situation and reminisced about a time when I had actually prayed for rain. What peril had unfortunately descended on one so foolish as I? Was it a punishment for missing my first two weightlifting classes? Or for drinking Red, White, and Blue beer, and I use the term loosely. Anyway, my rubbers came in handy, since the carpet was puddled from wall to wall.

I added up the damages from my water-logged abode and realized that, if I stretched it a bit, I could come up with five or six months' rent. It might just turn into a money-making venture.

Friday night, I visited Pammy Jo. Oh, yeah, she's moved to third floor Binford. Maybe she will live it up. She was telling me, while we were walking to the tut-tut-Pizza Hut, that Bertie Lou, up there on three, was thinking of starting a Campus Association of Garden Clubbers. In fact, after they write a constitution, they plan to petition the community senate for \$200 for seed money. Bertie's working on some new rose hybrid, akin to the Peace Rose, but Binford style. I think she's been sitting on too many thorns in the Milner flower garden. When Bertie Lou gets going, she'll turn Guilford into a garden of earthly delights, not meaning obvious pleasures of course. We'll be in a better position to tell once her flower makes its debut.

As for any day student readers, be sure to follow senate elections. In case you are interested, day student senators are still needed.

I guess it's time to close. "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman" is calling. Perhaps, next week, we'll explore the hot issue: "when are the day students going to the Old Rebel Show?"

Big Col

Coming soon: How I lost on a yes/no ballot.

## Biophiles Bag It

BY BRIAN CAREY

An average college club does not usually schedule any activities for earlier than noon on a Saturday morning, due to the sleeping habits of their members. In this respect, the Biophile Club broke stride September 10 and began their semi-annual Guilford College Lake cleanup at ten in the morning.

Though hampered by webs of spiders and sleep, the dedicated members dutifully trudged around the perimeter of the lake, collecting litter from the water's edge to the center of the woods. Approximately twenty members and friends, led by president Charles Haworth and moderator Dr. Fulcher, participated in the cleanup.

Using plastic bags supplied by the Maintenance Department, the group followed trails and paths which they were definitely not the first to discover. While beer cans and bottles were by far the most common item, several people attempted to attain the unoffered prize for "The Strangest Discard." Ward-

robes were increased with several pairs of shorts and underclothing (Custer's Last Stand?); kitchens were outfitted with an old blender and beaters; and several recreation rooms were furnished with records, cushions, and golf and tennis balls.

By 11:30, the club had completed the circuit. Although the previous days' deluges had succeeded in making some of the trash inaccessible, twenty-five bags had been filled with a variety of garbage, including the remnants of several good parties.

Afterwards, the club discussed their next outing for the following Saturday while relaxing with punch and cookies. This trip will be to Hanging Rock Park and will include a picnic and general recreation.

With this final item of business out of the way, the group went their separate ways: Dr. Fulcher, to deposit the full bags; Charles, to find another dirty lake; and the rest, back to bed.