

Create Your Own Philosophies

by Joseph Rosenblum
Guest Editorialist

College administrators, particularly library directors, pay obeisance to libraries, calling them the heart of the campus. The anatomical reference is flattering but inaccurate; undergraduate libraries could be more accurately described as the vermiform appendix, which might readily be removed without danger - indeed, perhaps some benefit - to the organism.

Amherst College Library until 1852 was open only once a week for the withdrawal of books. At Brown in 1843 an undergraduate could remove a book from the shelf only with special permission. A college in Maryland allowed no borrowing at all; it had tried the practice but found too many students taking advantage of the privilege.

Ah, how we laugh at these anti-diligent practices. How much more enlightened we think we are, with our libraries open eighteen hours a day, our open stacks, our unlimited borrowing privileges. Do we ever pause in our laughter to consider that perhaps our present practices are subversive to true learning, that a closed library might be better for undergraduates than an open one? We should.

For the primary function of a liberal arts education should be to allow the student to think, to think for himself rather than to

be thought for. To this purpose libraries are inimical. Ralph Waldo Emerson warned against the easy reliance on the thoughts of others: "Meek young men grew up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the view which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon, have given; forgetful that Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books." How much easier, though, to read than to think. How much easier to see what Brooks or Millgate says about *The Sound and Fury* than to wrestle with that novel to discover its beauty, passion, and meaning for oneself - and how much less truly educating. How much easier to read what critics say about Picasso or Mozart than to look at the pictures or listen to the music - and how impoverishing. One may sound educated by quoting another, but what does that truly signify? A trained parrot may do the same. Our original thoughts are within ourselves, not printed in any book.

Libraries discourages thought; they also discourage reading. I do not refer merely to the often noisy and unattractive surroundings they offer or to their terrible treatment of books with embossers and inky stamps that turn works of art into pieces of junk, discouraging though these conditions are. Even worse, however, are the many Nor-

thwest Passages to knowledge - Masterplots, encyclopedias, and the like. What does snow represent in Joyce's "The Dead"? No need to ponder this question or even read the story; just look up "Snow" in *A Dictionary of Symbols*. Is *A Hundred Years of Solitude* a good book? Don't read it; read *Book Review Digest*. With Barlett's *Familiar Quotations*, who needs to read the classics; with *Roget's Thesaurus* who needs a good vocabulary?

Oliver Wendell Helmes observed that if all the materia medica were dumped in the ocean, it would be so much the better for people and so much the worse for the fish. The same might be said of the great majority of the books in college libraries. The educational enterprise would be more apt to fulfill its goal of producing analytical minds if students were encouraged not to use libraries - an anti-bibliographic instruction course should be required of all entering freshmen. It may not, alas, be true that "One impulse from a vernal wood/May teach you more of man,/Of moral evil and of good,/Than all the sages can." But looking at a vernal wood will teach more botany than a book about vernal woods; thinking about moral evil and moral good is much more likely to instill ethics than reading what X says about Y's views on Z's interpretation of Aristotle. Brown had the right idea.

ing him/her in if there had been a witness to the event.

So, first I am writing to ask if there was a witness to the event. Second, I thought I'd write a brief history of the jacket so the thief could become more familiar with his/her new possession.

As I said earlier, the jacket is an Army Air Force A-2 Flight jacket. (I bet you didn't know that) It was made in Brazil (an old place for a U.S. military jacket to be made) and it is less than four months old. (But you can tell that just by looking at it, can't you?) It originally listed for \$140 but I bought it for \$66. (Not bad, eh?) It's a size 40 Regular so it won't fit many people larger than that. (Incidentally, I'm 5'10" and 163 lbs., so if it doesn't fit why don't you return it.) The pockets were empty and the two snaps on the neck to use. (Sorry for the inconvenience, I should have broken them in first thing) I don't think I ever used the zipper so I don't know if it was functioning properly. (You could drop me an anonymous letter and let me know) Better yet, why not sign it.)

Well, I just wanted to make sure you knew the history of the jacket in case someone asked you about it. I used to get alot of com-

pliments on it; I'm sure you will also. Just make sure you mention that you stole it.

I guess there are some good things that resulted from this. I wrote a letter to the school paper, I have more room in my closet and due to the knitting on the cuffs, I won't be able to wear my gloves easily. Now I can wear my gloves all I want.

Thanks again and take care of the jacket. Someday you can tell your kids you stole it.

Jim Dunton

See Unicorns

To the Editor:

We have been appalled of late to see this paper and the good name of our fair school besmirched by a few extremists. Such characters go around claiming to have been seen unicorns - a ludicrous notion. Are we really expected to believe, for example, that David Nash has had frequent, meaningful, and interdisciplinary social intercourse with a beast that simply does not exist? Come on!

The fact of the matter is that unicorns are extinct. According to a top-secret document leaked to us by a former high-ranking EPA official, the last living specimen of the unicorn species (*Horsus patutti*) died in 1967 in a private zoo. There is also no evidence whatsoever for the ex-



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Rain Aids Offensive Behavior

Dear Ms. Editor,

This letter is one of protest against the disgusting condition in which Milner dorm was to be found on the Sunday morning after Serendipity. Actually the problems to be outlined have been major problems all year long which only came to a climax on this past weekend. Granted, Milner is a large dorm with many and various types of students living under its massive roof. Perhaps only a few - maybe 10% of its occupants are responsible for giving it the epithet of "Animal House of Guilford" - but this weekend the epithet became more truly a euphemism.

I hold in the highest regard our diligent housekeeping staff, who, Monday morning - as on every Monday morning, braved the filth and returned the building back to its general condition with laudable success. Except I pity them as they first entered the building after Serendipity.

The place was horrible! Even the rats and cockroaches had moved out. The entire building had been redecorated in mud. The mud, however, was not strictly confined to the floor, but its stains stretched from ceiling to floor and across the length of every hall. Trash cans were upturned and overflowing on nearly every hall. Spilled beer left an odor which was detectable from the library - and wet the floors until Monday's mopping. The drunken "yardapes" who chose to go "mud sliding" at 3:00 a.m. on Sunday weren't satisfied at wallowing in their own filth like hogs, but had to share their grime and disorderly grunts with the other residents until well beyond daybreak on that "Muddy Sunday."

These inebriated animals herded themselves in obnoxious fashion - while fully clothed and clad in mud - to the showers at all odd hours. The new sport soon became interior decorating. The object of this game was to sling soiled clothing at the newly painted walls, ceilings, and doors and to see what profound artwork could be created in the patterns formed by the splattered silt. Needless to say the showers were unusable the next day as 1/8 to 1/2 inch of silt was clogging and

istence of either "sea unicorns" or "lunicorns". What's next? "Grain unicorns" (barleycorns)? Little green unicorns from Mars? The next thing you know, young Mr. Nash will try to tell us that he's fallen in with a roving band of "Moonie-corns" (unicorns which hang around airports and sell flowers). How ridiculous can you get?

Respectfully,
David Randall Teague
Henry A. ("Rick") Watson II

covering the floor of each shower stall. One stall on 3rd north was even trashed with oyster shells, which when they were cleaned up filled a large trash bin...needless to say they smelled throughout the weekend. A recycling company could have made a mint had they collected the shattered bottles and cans - empty of brew which littered not only the stairwells, but the halls and bathrooms as well.

To top off the Serendipity celebration - as if drunken disregard wasn't enough for the 10% of hardcore animals - out right vandalism set in. "F... you's", and other such childish messages were written on the walls and doors. Shaving cream decorated some halls while bottle rocket and smoke bomb odors permeated others. A favorite form of dorm destruction found itself in the bathrooms where the object of urination was to wet the facility, the wall, the sides of the stalls, the toilet paper, and the floor rather than utilize the standard procedure of aiming into the facility and flushing it.

These problems are common in Milner but as I've said earlier - rarely is it this bad, and only a few anonymous soul (less) persons are responsible for such an image of Milner. Last weekend, however, was the worst.

A common complaint I hear from my fellow residents is that the college administration doesn't have any interest in Milner - I get requests for carpeting, and improved bathroom facilities. (They all applauded the Christmas paint job.)

My reply to all Milner residents concerning such complaints and requests is this: How do you expect the administration to even consider further improvements when such attacks of vandalism, and disorderly conduct as well as disrespect by the few of the many are so frequent. There is no excuse for what happened this past weekend. Sure, mud on the floor is to be expected on a rainy weekend as we had - but not on the walls and ceilings.

And to the housekeeping staff...I speak on the behalf of the 90% of decent folk who tolerate the inconsiderate drunkards that reside among our ranks - we give you our thanks and praise for a job well done - not just last Monday - but on every weekday. You all deserve the medal of valor.

Sincerely,
Mac Herring

Features Credit

To the Editor,

I would like to thank Chip Pittman, Cathy Troester, Alan Cox, and Arnold "Bo" Markley for their creative insight and help in the features section this semester.

David Nash