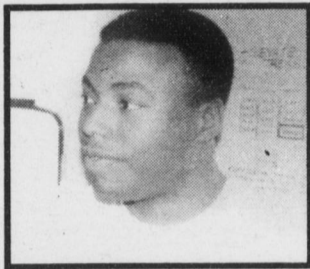


The Inquiring Photographer

What did you do over fall break?

photos by David Jester and Scott Attar



We went on a work trip to Bryson City, NC and worked with a domestic violence shelter and got to meet a lot of people that had had a lot of difficulty and trouble in their lives. We got to give them something back. We helped them out and we worked really hard. I'm glad I had a fall break. I wish it were longer because I didn't have time to do the school stuff that was necessary and there was so much more that we could have done there.

—Taj Greenlee, sophomore



Fall break was slick. I hung out in Philly and New York and saw all the kids. It definitely could have been longer. What can I say about it? It was awesome. I didn't do any work and when I came back here I had to do all the work the night before. It was actually a really good time to have fall break because I needed to get away.

—Naomi Seckel, first year



I went up to Virginia on a vision quest. We went out to Mount Rogers. It's a national park. It's really cool. There are a lot of wild ponies and stuff like that running around. Real nice, real windy, real cold. We spent six days up there, three of those on a solo fast. I did a lot of hiking and a lot of star-gazing. It was a real good break from the normal routine. It was a different experience from what I normally have, more spiritual.

—Benton Wade, first year

How different are the parties?

LINDSAY OLDENSKI
editorials editor

"I wasn't born Republican, Democrat, or yesterday."

I laugh whenever I see this bumper sticker, even though it doesn't apply to me. I was born Democrat.

As a six-year-old I was shocked that Mondale lost the '84 election. My parents and all the other adults I knew were voting for him. Even as I grew apart from, and began to question some of my parents values, I never found a Republican candidate I could agree with.

In a time when many voters are afraid to wholeheartedly endorse Clinton (more than a few of his "supporters" claim to back the president only because he is not Bob Dole) I'm not shy about admitting that I actually like the incumbent. I support his views on many issues, and he's gotten a lot more positive legislation passed than the Republicans like to admit.

So why didn't I vote for him when I sent in my absentee ballot last week?

Because, to quote another bumper sticker, "under Republicans man exploits man, under Democrats it's just the opposite." As I reached the legal voting age I began to not only follow current issues, but also to examine what politicians were doing for positive change. I began to listen to the voices from the sidelines. The ones who pointed out that Republicans and Democrats are two sides of the same coin. That the government has not changed much in the past 50 years and is not likely to change much more simply by shifting the figurehead one notch to the right or left.

My conclusion? That if a solution is truly to be found to problems in education, homelessness, violence, and global issues then the structure of our government must change. We need to learn to think in a whole new way.

Now, I'm not talking about a full-scale revolution or over throw of the government, nor am I expecting change to occur this November. When I cast my vote for Ralph Nader of the Green Party, I did it with the knowledge that he would not win the presidency. The decision was a difficult one, and I'm still not completely sure that I did the right thing. I just felt a need to vote my conscience, select the candidate that I felt had the best solutions for this country's problems. Hopefully, others will do the same on November 5, and the smaller, less bureaucratic parties will get enough media attention to be serious contenders in the future.

But if Bill Clinton loses Florida by one vote, I may end up eating my words.

A flame with racist fire

LINDSAY OLDENSKI
editorials editor

St. Petersburg, Florida.

It's not the deep South.

And it's sure not the inner city.

It's my home town. And on Thursday, October 24, it was the site of a violent race riot.

An 18-year-old black man was shot and killed by a white police officer for stealing a car. The area this occurred in is known as South St. Pete, even though it is not at the southernmost point of the city's peninsula. The poor, mostly black area referred to as South St. Pete is tucked in between beach resorts, tropical tourist traps, and rich white people's water front homes. It is only minutes from the site of the recent vice-presidential debate. But life in these neighboring areas is a different as night and day. Black and white.

Most middle-class white folks in St. Pete are not bigots. Neither are the rich ones in the beach houses. They support equal rights and are glad that their children attend integrated schools. They do not consider themselves racist. But they have never been pulled over by a cop because of the color of their skin. They've never lived next door to a crack house or been scared to let their children play outside. In the safety of their own lives, they've neglected to notice the racism and injustice in their city.

I become dizzy tossing issues back and forth in my mind, trying to to grasp some shred of truth, to discern what is truly at the heart of the conflict.

A white police officer shot and killed a young black man in a black neighborhood. Smells like racism.

But the black man was hardly an innocent victim. He was a chronic thief and a drug dealer who had been in and out of juvenile detention centers since he was nine.

But the crime of car theft by no means warrants the death penalty.

The cop must have been scared for his own life, and with reason, too. The hostility that black residents of South St. Pete feel towards white cops is no secret. The riot is evidence of this.

The irony of their simultaneous cries for peace and justice and hurling of broken bottles did little to advance the rioters' cause

But there must be some reason for the hostility. And while violence and drug dealing are most prevalent in low-income black neighborhoods, their causes and solutions may lie in white America. TyRon Lewis, the man who was killed, and others who share his lifestyle, must have gotten the idea somewhere that crime was the only way they'd be able to have a life equivalent to those on the other side of the tracks.

The policeman was wrong to shoot Lewis.

But the black citizens who burned build-

ings and assaulted officers were wrong, too.

Protesters who advocated violence and hatred, who called black police officers traitors, no more represent the majority of blacks than the cop with the gun represented the majority of whites. Any black person who called for peaceful protest or an end to the burnings was instantly silenced by his peers. Yet the irony of their simultaneous cries for peace and justice and hurling of broken bottles did little to advance the rioters' cause.

Perhaps the greatest wrong of all came from city officials whose primary concern was about how this "incident" would affect St. Petersburg's image. They spoke of covering up the conflict, attracting attention back to our new baseball team and beautiful beaches. They pretended that no wrong could happen here, not seeing that this attitude was one of the key causes of the riot. By ignoring concerns, city officials allow tensions to snowball. Rather than preventing conflict, they wait until after it happens and cover it up with denial.

Ignoring racial tension will not make it go away. Neither will giving it the wrong kind of attention. Good may come of this terrible violence if it forces people to examine the racism in society and confront it head on. But if onlookers use the occurrence to reinforce their stereotypes that cops are racist and blacks are violent, then a dozen charred buildings and a young man's life will not be the only things lost in the riot.