

By: Dr. Inzer Byers

"I'll think about that tomorrow," Scarlett O'Hara declared. But in the case of the forthcoming election, her advice will not do. Elections are not merely for today; they are for tomorrow also. And the thinking about tomorrow must be done now. In truth, the 1984 presidential election poses three especially crucial questions about the kind of tomorrow we shall have.

The first question is, "What kind of society do we want America to be four years, ten years from now? And how do we best act now to help secure that kind of society?" Much campaign rhetoric thus far, has centered on the question, "Are you better off today than you were four years ago?" The accent is on the personal and on the individual pocketbook; the appeal is aimed especially at the wealthy and the moderately well-to-do. But the real question of the election is about the future of American society at large.

There have been economic gains for the nation during the last four years, notably the reduction of inflation and achieving an expanding economic base. The economic achievements, however, have been at a definite social cost. One cost was the recession. The 10% unemployment level reached two years ago has declined again; however, there are still more people unemployed now than four years ago. Also, while the financial well-being of many individual women has risen, we are today witnessing a massive feminization of poverty, and thus far no significant action has been taken to reverse this trend, such as support of equal pay for comparable work.

One further problem of major concern is the enormous deficit now facing America, a deficit greater than that amassed in all previous American history. That deficit, including the interest burden it brings with it, threatens not only our immediate economic future but that of future generations as well. It will take decisive action now and in the years immediately ahead to bring that deficit down drastically.

Whatever the past economic gains, the need for the future is a restored social vision, a vision that is both inclusive and compassionate. To look only at "What's in it for me today" is fundamentally inadequate as an approach to social policy. Only by looking at the whole of America can we truly determine and respond to the needs of our society both for today and for tomorrow.

A second major question has to do with the future composition of the Supreme Court and the impact its decisions will have on American life. During 1983-84, the Supreme Court has swung significantly in the direction of a sharply conservative, indeed at times reactionary, approach to the law and in particular to the Constitution. The rights of those accused of crime, whether innocent or not, are being narrowed; the control powers of the state are expanding. Recent Congressional action for preventive detention in certain federal criminal cases sounds an ominous warning of our need to protect our basic civil liberties. Also, the current court has moved away from stress on protecting civil rights. And there is mounting pressure on the court to reduce radically a woman's freedom of

choice in the case of abortion. Given the age and health of several Justices, it is probable that the next president will make two or more appointments, perhaps the most by any president since Franklin Roosevelt in 1937-41. The views of the two presidential candidates indicate they will move in sharply different directions in selecting justices for nomination. The presidential election this year may well determine the orientation of the Supreme Court for the next thirty years.

A third major question involves American foreign policy. Two major problem areas in particular need re-examination. One involves our relationship with the Soviet Union. The key issue here is how do we both protect national security and also promote meaningful negotiations for checking and then reversing the current arms race? One kind of policy thinking has stressed the importance of expanding sharply American armaments, both nuclear and conventional. When sufficiently overawed, the Soviets will seek negotiations on arms reduction, the argument goes.

Another policy approach argues that escalation of the arms race is not the best path toward future arms reduction. Indeed, given Russian fears that stem from two nearly disastrous invasions of their country in the 20th century, the result of our arms escalation may well be merely a strengthening of the case of the Soviet hawks for further armaments.

Our concern today must be both protecting security and also persuasively encouraging de-escalation of the arms race on the basis of mutual concern for survival. It is the hard work of negotiation to turn back the hands of the clock ticking toward nuclear destruction that must become a prime concern.

Another area for re-examination of our foreign policy is in Central America. Should we see the conflicts within these countries as essentially stimulated from the outside, proxy wars of a basic U.S.-Soviet conflict? Or does the internal strife arise largely from causes within the societies themselves? Again, it is time for a serious reappraisal of the causes of conflict. What are the legitimate questions which proponents of change are raising, and how can we help resolve those controversies in ways to promote vital, healthy, independent societies?

The problems for the future of American society are enormous indeed. The ones cited here are only some of the major concerns. Others such as environmental protection and the search for ways to promote the economic well-being of all Americans in a new age of scientific and technological change will call for no less serious consideration. To work out the hard answers for these difficult problems calls for leadership with broad social vision. Such leadership involves encouraging pride in America, but a pride based on facing and resolving the intricate problem of securing social justice in a complex, pluralistic society. Such leadership must also take responsibility for trying to de-escalate the arms race and promote survival of this spaceship that is Earth. If some of these problems are not dealt with quickly and effectively, the future may

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Do We Care At All?

By: Alice Griffith

This is my third year at Salem. I transferred from another women's college after my freshman year. My desire to be a part of Salem's tradition began when my sister attended Salem in the late sixties, early seventies. Ever since my sophomore year, I have grown to love Salem more and more. I attribute a great deal of my enthusiasm to participation in all Salem has to offer. I have been a member of several clubs and organizations on campus each year, not to mention my athletic involvement on the volleyball and equestrian teams.

As each year passes, I see less and less involvement and participation - an overall apathetic attitude among students. This apathy is in reference to participation in attendance at athletic events, membership in clubs and organizations, and even attendance at what are supposedly mandatory school functions such as S.G.A. I wish I knew why because it really hurts me. Salem College is a college of which each and everyone of us can be proud. There are special traditions here that no other school shares. I don't think students, upon entering Salem, realize that you only get out of something that which you put into it.

Students are probably tired of hearing about the sisterhood and the traditions so characteristic of Salem, but students and faculty members that talk so

enthusiastically of these attributes are those individuals who genuinely care about this institution.

Athletics is the first area which I would like to discuss. Having been a member of the volleyball team for three years now, I can attest to the fact that volleyball is not a well-attended sport on campus. Do students feel that supporting their peers isn't worth their time, or that academics are so pressing that they cannot take an hour or two to support the college, or even that their voice won't be heard, so why bother? I wish I knew the reasons why. I hope to express the sentiments of all the athletic teams when I say how wonderful it makes a team player feel when she knows how hard she has worked in practice, and when that game comes around, her peers are supporting her and cheering her on to victory!

In terms of school clubs and functions, there is also room for improvement. I don't think people care to attend these meetings because they feel that "someone else" will take care of things. Some honestly don't care about getting involved or having a voice on campus. I can't count how many people I heard before the last S.G.A. meeting comment "I hate these meetings... Let's blow it off!" S.G.A. is the one time we, as a student body can organize to hear about important issues on campus and make special announcements (Besides, why waste Leigh Flippin's time? it's not as if she has nothing else to do.) When there's only 450 or so boarding students and we can't even assemble all at once just one time per month, it's sad! Do we not care at all?

Editorial Decision '84

By: Liz McGehee

In light of our ancestor's unpleasant dealings with England over such injustices as "taxation without representation" our "founding fathers" designed a government for our new North American empire "instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." The Constitution they penned is a synthesis of all of humanity's experiences with popular sovereignty.

The type of democracy in which we live is based on the republican and democratic traditions of ancient Greece and the Roman Empire, on the social contract treatises of the political philosophers John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau, and on England's Magna Carta and bi-cameral parliamentary system of government.

Our political roots lie in governments that were "accountable to the people" and that stressed the need for participation of "the people" in the processes that shaped the events of their lives.

Today, the socio/political machine the Jefferson's, Washington's, and Franklin's deistically created is winding down. Thomas Jefferson, in particular, would be troubled by the apathy we exhibit regarding our right to vote.

The enfranchised American, Jefferson said, should be well educated so that he might weigh with objectivity the issues confronting the nation-as-a-whole and those pertinent to his own self-interests. To participate in societal decision making, one had to have a "stake in the society."

The yeoman farmer, the symbol of the agrarian myth that fostered our move to the western frontier and that continues to shape our foreign policy, was the rock upon which the American Republic was to be built. Agrarian labor supposedly made one virtuous--in addition to giving one a red neck and lots of calluses. The farmer was also concerned about the future; the seeds he planted this year had to be nurtured to ensure that they would produce crops in the next year. The farmer's future-regarding attitude, Jefferson added, should also be adopted by voters when they cast their ballots.

But few people in twentieth century America own land; only four percent work on farms. We live in the concrete jungles of the cities or in the polyethylene tranquility of the suburbs. We're too busy to read the local newspapers, listen to the radio, watch the nightly news, or discuss the Presidential debates. Between the time we spend eating our morning serving of Rice Krispies, writing term papers, or preparing for the concert we just have to see tonight, there never seems to be enough time left to use to inform ourselves of the events in Washington and in the world that daily shape our lives.

Rather, when we do vote, we vote for a candidate because our parents have voted for that candidate. Or we will vote for the person with the nicest smile and niftiest slogan, as we did when we elected President Kennedy in 1960 and Ronald Reagan in 1980.

Regardless of one's political beliefs, the individuals who form the Salem College community do have (as Jefferson would say) a "stake in the society" in which they live. For the first time in this nation's history, for example, a woman has been chosen to become the vice presidential candidate of a major political party. The issues of fairness, of war and peace, of religion in politics, of deficit control, of civil rights, and of education pervade the nature of our existence.

The right to vote gives us the opportunity to change those governmental and societal problems we don't like by electing law-makers who will be more responsive to our self-interests.

The editors of *The Salemite* therefore encourage the students of this college to become more aware of the issues that have been raised by both Democratic and Republican candidates in the 1984 campaign, then to vote intelligently and to vote with conscience on November sixth.

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