

Letters to the Editors

Dear Editors,

As we swept the streets of Old Salem Saturday after the tragic tornado, every Salem student felt a terrible loss. While this was an emotional time for us, the gawking tourist seemed to find perverted pleasure in the destruction. Not even the road blocks stopped them from venturing in and taking souvenir photos. It was especially frustrating when they trampled through freshly piled leaves. Occassionally, one would even stop to ask a ridiculous question, such as "Was it bad here on Friday night?" One man even exclaimed that our efforts were a lost cause. But were they? The tornado almost "drained Salem for all she's worth." But as we all worked together and the streets began to clear, we saw a glimpse of Salem's beauty that we all know and love. It was then that we realized that our loss is only temporary.

Signed,
Mary Alston Glenn
Rennie Rosenthal

The Positive Gesture

by Bridget Maley

I think I speak for all my classmates when I say Salem has been a home to us for four years. Now, as we prepare to leave and secure a place away from here, we find ourselves leaving at a time when most of us would love to stay and help Salem. I cannot explain the sense of loss that the senior class shares. This place, that is so beautiful to each of us in a different way, will never be the same.

But I feel that we must not end our years at Salem on a negative note. This would be atypical of the class of 1989. Many have expressed to me that our senior gifts should be rebudgeted to include the purchase of some new trees for our bare campus. I can not think of a more positive gesture, at this time, to share our love for Salem. We have cried together and consoled each other. Now we must pull together, get our work finished, and prepare for our commencement.

Dear Editors,

All spring I have heard exclamations about the beauty of Salem's campus. Friday night those exclamations changed to ones of panic and dismay. In the course of twenty minutes Salem's beauty was irrevocably changed.

However, as I helped the clean-up committee I saw Salem's beauty shining through the wreckage. I saw it in the faces of the young women risking life and limb (no pun intended) to remove the smaller branches from the destroyed trees so the maintenance crews could tackle larger matters like the square and Main Hall. I saw it in the faces of the residents of Gramley as we patiently spent Saturday afternoon in the basement waiting out another tornado warning. I saw it in the face of every person who loved Salem enough to put aside his or her personal grief to help save Salem. I realize now that the trees were indeed a beautiful part of Salem but the true beauty of Salem rests within those who love her.

Sincerely,

Amy Williamson

Dear Editors,

The last few days have been traumatic for us all. We have suffered a great loss in losing so many great trees which were a part of our college's heritage. The catastrophe has brought us closer together and uncovered the strength in our individual characters. We all need to be commended on how well we handled the situation. Public Safety and the administration have kept us well-informed, while housekeeping, maintenance, and the grounds crew have done a fantastic job of cleaning up the area and of ensuring our safety. The Refectory staff has done a great job with feeding those of us who remain on campus, despite many difficulties. The faculty has been very considerate to modify our exams. Finally, the students. We have all done our part on the clean-up effort. We have shared our food and flashlights, and have supported one another throughout the weekend. We have helped to maintain a "spirit" on campus. I hope that through this natural disaster we will learn to appreciate our campus' beauty more, and not take so many people and things for granted. I hope we will be able to maintain this "spirit" in the coming years.

An Appreciative Student,
Tara Newton

The President Expresses Concern

by President Thomas V. Litzenburg

In little more than twenty minutes last Friday evening the face of Salem was changed - and hardly in ways we would have wished. Over almost before it began, a violent storm made all too clear just how fragile are the tangible treasures that the Academy and College share with Old Salem. When the skies cleared the dawn came, much that we long have taken for granted had been rent asunder.

Salem Square stripped of its towering trees, Main Hall without part of its roof and porches, Strong Residence Hall wrapped about by menacing limbs, the grounds denuded of many of their familiar landmarks - on every side we are surrounded by reminders of just how whimsical and indiscriminate are the forces of nature. It is little wonder that we are stunned by the storm for it has left us with more than a few unwanted scars and scores of recollections that are bittersweet at best.

Still, for all that, we have much for which to be thankful. No one in the

village was injured and most of the property damage can be set aright. Admittedly, it will be a long time before Salem has quite the feel about it of a week ago - but have that feeling it once again surely will.

The affection that we and others have for this place is the certain promise that what has been damaged will be repaired and what has been lost will be replaced. We know full well who will make all this happen. None other than the very folks who have despaired and cried, who have pitched in and helped, who have called to express their concern, and who have begun to lend us financial support. Whatever else Salem may be, it is a community of good and caring people who ever are willing to be the stewards of all that we hold in common.

Valuable as they clearly are, the tangible treasures of Salem are never other than transitory. What truly counts the most about this community is the generous and courageous spirit that has informed it these past few days. That is what endures and its worth is inestimable.

