

# Should you feel safe walking the walk by yourself?

by Suzyn Smith

I've been warned many times by people concerned about my safety that walking across the walk is not a good idea if you're female and walking at night. People tell me this very seriously, sometimes even adding that there were two assaults on the walk last year.

I was thinking about the assaults one night as I came creeping out of the Lance office around four in the morning. I heard footsteps and a rattle of keys as someone who was walking down the hall around the corner drew closer and closer. Someone was coming! And it was the middle of the night and I was alone and female!

I pictured an evil ninja whose hobby was sneaking into small Southern liberal arts schools and making off with female freshmen. I slipped over against the wall, and slowly peeked around the corner.

"Ack!"

I jumped back, startled. So did my mysterious aggressor, who had been a lot closer

than I thought, about six inches from me. It was my adviser.

"Uh...Hi Pam..."

"Um...hello Suzyn."

We laughed about it, but it still bothered me. I used to answer phones at my Mother's office, a minority housing project in a neighborhood so bad that she wouldn't let me buy anything from the ice cream man because he sold "more than ice cream." I wasn't scared at all. It just never occurred.

Yet when a couple of people tell me rumors about assaults on the walk, I'm suddenly afraid of my own shadow. And my own adviser.

How seriously should students take warnings about crime at St. Andrews?

"Very seriously" Campus Police chief Eric Gibson says. "I'm cynical, but it's been my experience that it's not safe for anyone to walk anywhere alone."

Even as recently as a couple of years ago, St. Andrews was very safe. "I was here for two years and we never had any real problems

on the causewalk" ex-SAPC police officer Brian Maloney said, "We had some guys pushing and shoving each other around every once in awhile, but females? No."

St. Andrews students have felt safe crossing the walk since the walk existed, but times are changing and small towns like Laurinburg are increasingly affected by violence. Last year there were two assaults on the St. Andrews campus by an unidentified assailant who was never caught. One assault took place on the residential side of the lake by the wall at 2:00am and the other at twilight on "the campus run" a path through the woods frequented by the track team. The victims of both assaults escaped without serious physical injury, but it was clear that times have changed.

"I have no qualms about crossing the causewalk, but I get to take a gun to work," Gibson said.

The rumors about exactly what has happened on the causewalk in the past have made the issue all the more

confusing. Two years ago, a couple of girls allegedly faked assaults in an attempt to keep their boyfriends from leaving Laurinburg after graduation. Neither remains on campus, but that story is often mixed up with rumors about what happened last year as well as some alleged assaults during Ganza some time ago.

Rumors aside, the truth is that students don't have to live in fear as long as they are

careful. The campus police offer escorts to anyone who wishes to cross the lake, especially in the middle of the night. They also recommend taking such steps as traveling in groups and staying alert.

"You shouldn't be scared," Maloney says "but you should be aware."

And for goodness sakes, don't startle your adviser like that...

## Wald's corner

For various reasons I was skeptical and yet at the same time very intrigued to take the opportunity to write this last minute addition to the Lance. My reaction was tentative from the start because I've never written a column for the paper before, and because I was not sure of the reaction my thoughts would receive. In the end, my enthusiasm overcame the doubt and now all you lucky St. Andrews students can read the first and maybe the last installation of Wald's Corner.

The topic I would like to speak my mind about is happiness, the feeling of contentment that just holds a smile to your face. That's right, happiness. What did you think I was going to write about? The internet? The soccer team?

Nope, just something simple. Happiness. What it takes for you to feel good about yourself. And the key word in that sentence is "you." You...you...you...

If "you" need to play baseball to feel happy, then get your butt out to the sandlot and play some ball. If "you" need to write to brighten your day, pick up a pen. If "you" need to spend time with someone special to be content, then be with them day and night.

You know what makes you happy, so go ahead and grab it. Who cares what people think? People think too much as it is. Maybe if people stopped caring so much about what everyone else was doing, they could find the true happiness in their lives. Live life to the fullest every day, because you will never know when your clock will stop ticking. In the words of the Lizard King himself, Jim Morrison, "I'm getting my kicks before the whole house goes up in flames." All right, all right, some words of wisdom, and I'm out like shout.

-Matt Saurwald

## If you're going to walk the walk late at night, be smart...

### Go in a group

Wait until several people are crossing together and walk with them. There's safety in numbers.

### Stay near the lights

Try to walk in well lit areas. It would be difficult to see someone hidden in the bushes near the darker corners of the walk.

### Be alert.

Keep your eyes open for anything suspicious, If you see something suspicious, go to a well-lit area immediately.

Go back to the buildings and call campus police for an escort.