

THE OPINION PAGE

THE COMPASS

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The Compass welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be sent to ECSU Box 815, Elizabeth City, NC 27909. All letters must be signed and include the writer's address and telephone number. They may be edited for length, clarity, and taste, as well as accuracy and grammar. Because of limited space, not all letters can be published.

An issue of involvement

"Don't ever take sides against the family in front of an outsider again!" Micheal Corleone, a rising crime boss in *The Godfather* told his adopted brother. It made sense. A rift between family organization members is best taken care of within that unit. Allowing outsiders to intervene and misrepresent the problems to the public is inappropriate and makes groups of people vulnerable to the 'divide and conquer' concept. To place this into perspective, let us remember that ECSU is an historically and predominantly black college. That alone makes us vulnerable to attacks from biased individuals and representatives from the media. Today, ECSU is more integrated than it's ever been (25% white according to *The News and Observer*). Inevitably, the racial makeup of the school will become an issue in the minds of many individuals. And for some the temptation to impose their own biased views on the campus will be an all too easy force to give in to.

In March, a front page story in the state's leading newspaper implied that white students are not made to feel welcome at ECSU. ECSU has white students on athletic teams, in the Music Department, in the Pickwick Society, in the Honors Program and even Greek organizations. They are involved, they are active, they are enjoying ECSU. Black or white, we are all Vikings.

We must all do our part to remove the negative ideas many people associate with an HBC. This will only be possible if we keep in mind that each member of our family is a valuable member, regardless of color.

The changing racial make-up of the school should not be a source of conflict, nor of automatic, unfounded criticism; rather, it should be a source of pride, even a source of our strength. Due to our integrated status, Elizabeth City State University is in a unique position in the UNC system. We can, by working together, and by taking time to understand each other, and talk through problems, set a positive example for other schools to follow.

But *The News and Observer* article about ECSU should serve as a reminder that far too many people form their ideas of our institution in their own fears and/or phantasies rather than in fact. Let us remember to beware of these individuals, and refrain from allowing them to manipulate us as well.

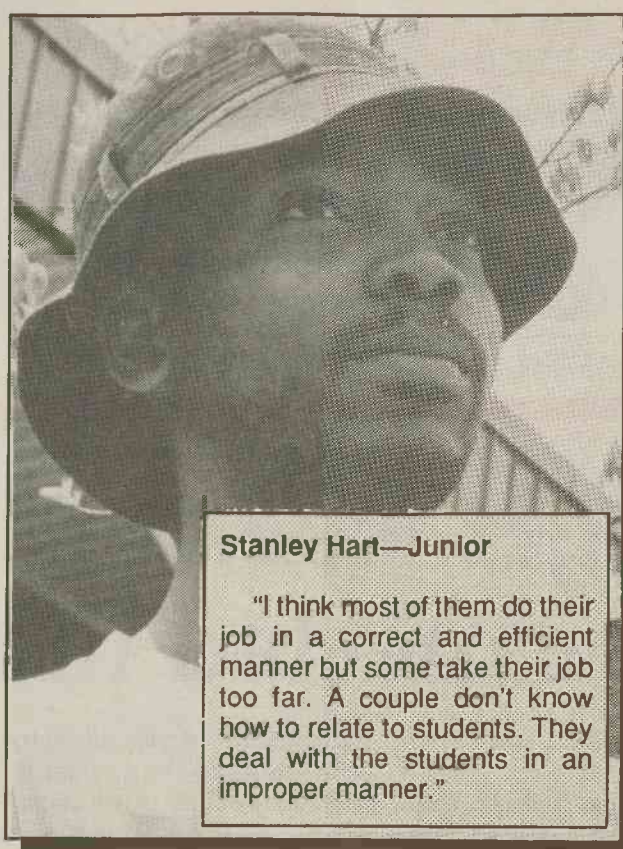
Poetry Corner

Untitled

I am the strongest of all women,
I am strong in faith...
I am strong in determination...
I am strong in self conception...
I am strong in all eyes except one,
the eyes of those I need to be strong with me.
I am strong in the business world,
I am strong in the political arena,
I am strong in the educational forum
I am strong in the Family unit
except I cannot continue my Family alone! I need your strength beside me.
I am strong in the never ending struggle for a better tomorrow,
I continue the struggle and the strength I need to win lies within you.
I am the strongest of all women.
And I am weak for you...
I am weak for your companionship...

I am weak for your security...
I am weak for your balance...
I am weak for you and yet you will not stand...
For I am the strongest of all women;
yet weakened daily when you do not stand...
I am weak for your soft brown eyes to look at mine
I am weak for your bright white smile to greet me.
I am weak for your deep voice to speak to me.
I am weak for your hands to hold me.
I am weak for you to walk side by side
I am weak for your unwillingness to stand in our struggle!
I am the strongest of all women
Who are you?
Where are you?
When will you stand?
How much more will I endure alone before your strength encompasses mine!

Mingnon S. Manns



Stanley Hart—Junior

"I think most of them do their job in a correct and efficient manner but some take their job too far. A couple don't know how to relate to students. They deal with the students in an improper manner."

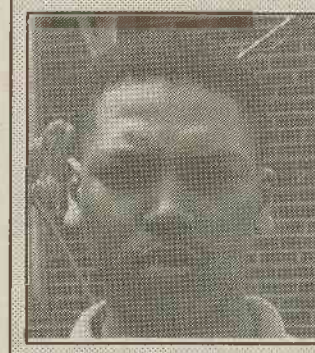
Lorie Burrell—Senior

"I feel we need more security because they spend more time riding in the city instead of protecting the students. They are more concerned with giving out tickets instead of protecting student's property."



Talk of ECSU:

How do you feel about ECSU's Campus security?



Tim Moseley—Junior

"I don't think they're real cops. I'd like to commend them for giving us a lot of slack. I don't like their attitude problem."

Cindi Blount—Junior

"The recent vandalism crisis has drawn attention to campus security. Perhaps the most intense problem is their screening process to access on and off campus. They should be more alert."



Dear Liz...

Too often men with "weak wrists" and "light touches" have been labeled as homosexuals. Some mothers have held their sons too closely. They've been powdered and pampered because nothing was ever good enough for "little Johnny."

So Johnny didn't go out and play football because "he might get his clothes dirty" or, worst of all, "he might get hurt playing as rough as boys do." Moreover, with the absence of a stern father figure, some little boys didn't learn how to be "macho" and walk like a man.

But this doesn't give society the right to stamp "gay" on every guy who has a soft voice and happens to walk funny.

Being a "sissy" and being a homosexual are two different things. Likewise, not all women with mustaches and deep voices are lesbians. Homosexuality goes far beyond what the average person conceives. Research

has shown that homosexuals have themselves often become victims of their need for companionship, many at a vulnerable age.

Imagine a little girl of three years old being fondled by her female babysitter. As time passes, her mom shows her affection by massaging genitals while letting the child suck on her breasts. Then on top of that, her oldest sister whom she sleeps with, allows the child to use her sucking instincts one more only this time on her sister's genitalia. Being introduced to this type of lifestyle may confuse any child for a lifetime. Consequently, the child grows up and experiments with the knowledge that has been imparted to her at such a young age. The child will very easily participate in lesbian activities because she has been made to believe that it's right and, why not, "Mommy did it!"

Some gays feel comfortable around the same sex more so than the oppo-

Gays are often victims of their need for love

site sex. Being turned down or other painful experiences have caused them to become "numb" to ever reaching out for that type of love again. As a result they have decided to try something new. Homosexual relationships are not just for sexual pleasure but for emotional bonding and support. They have been known to endure for 11 years or more with the same mate. Homosexual relationships are just as fulfilling with each other, it seems, as heterosexual relationships. At this point, homosexuals have found the friendship, trust and security in their mate that all human beings desire.

Homosexuality is not prevalent or openly expressed here at ECSU. However that doesn't mean that no one is gay. On bigger campuses they are "out of the closet" and proud of it! They have a big voice, (rights) and support groups. Here, if someone were to come "out of the closet" they would be made a public example, given

"down the country" and utterly persecuted!

For what reason? For being different, for being open and honest, and for making their own sexual decisions. Really, these are characteristics we all should have. But homosexuals cut against the grain they deviate from the "norm" and that makes our skin crawl.

However, homosexuals are people too, with needs, fears, and hopes and dreams, just like us.

Before we can judge someone else's lifestyle, we need to search for our own skeletons in the closet! Who on this side of heaven can set the guidelines for how others should live? Who is that close to perfect?

Since there is a Supreme Being who sees and knows all, no one is exempt when it comes to being judged for we all stand at the mercy of the court.

Profile

Today's schools are 'miseducating' our kids

By Sharon Chappell

America needs a whole new agenda for its public schools according to Dr. John A. Murphy, speaker for the teacher education conference, held March 28 at the K.E. White Center of Elizabeth City State University.

"We are miseducating our minority children," said Murphy. "So many people say, 'Why don't we just go back to the good old days?' The problem is—that is what we are doing."

According to Murphy, today's schools have not kept pace with the dramatic demographic shifts of recent years. They are trying to teach a group of students that does not really exist anymore.

"The needs of students today are vastly different than in the past," said Murphy. "Many of our children are traumatized by drug dealers. Many witness violence and death daily."

"Also, the socio-economic-cultural demands are incredible today. The gulf between the rich and poor is the widest in recorded history."

Because of these factors, the drop out-rate in many of our urban centers is 50% according to Murphy. And the statistics are worse for minority children.

Black males, for example, are twice as likely to die in infancy, and nine times as likely to be neurologically impaired. One out of every six black males will be arrested by the time he reaches age 19. And murder is the leading cause of death for black males between the ages of 15 and 30.

Declaring that there are more black males in prison than there are in colleges and universities, Murphy added that it costs \$2.5 billion a year to keep these men in prison.

"This country could send every one of them to Harvard for \$1.2 billion," said Murphy. "And after gradu-

ation they would return \$64 billion to the tax rolls."

Murphy believes that the Effective Schools Model, developed by Ron Edmonds, can help schools significantly reduce this problem. As Superintendent for Prince George's County Public Schools, Murphy implemented this model in 1984.

His goal was to reduce the gap in California Achievement Test scores between blacks and whites and to increase high level performance classes for all.

He challenged the school board to fire him if he did not succeed by 1990.

The testing ground for the Effective Schools Model was going to be the Columbia Park area school. Its performance would be compared to the performance of the University Park area school.

The Columbia Park school which served kindergarten through sixth grade had boarded-up windows, graffiti on its walls, drug dealers in a nearby "open air market", a crack house directly across the street from the principal's office, and a high crime rate. Ninety percent of the children in this school were from families on some form of welfare. And 99% of the students were black.

The University Park school was a modern, one-level school which also served kindergarten through sixth grade. The homes in this area of town ranged in value up to \$200,000. And its neighborhood was 70% white and 30% black.

In 1984 the Columbia Park school students, on the average, were scoring at the 50th percentile. Murphy's goal was for this score to move up to the 75th percentile by 1990.

After both schools took the CAT in 1990, their scores differed by only one percentile point. The University Park students scored at the 91st per-

centile while the Columbia Park students scored at the 92nd percentile.

Murphy gives credit to the Effective Schools Model for this impressive change. This model consists of seven parts: create and maintain a safe, orderly climate; develop instructional leadership; develop and maintain good home-school relations; have frequent monitoring of student progress, maintain time on task, focus on teaching and learning; and accept accountability.

Murphy added to this his own five point strategy: identify the problem, accept ownership of the problem, build a foundation for pride, begin incremental changes, and ultimately cause a revolution.

To accomplish these goals, he called a staff meeting. In this meeting he stressed site-based management. Most school districts use a top to bottom approach in management, but Murphy emphasized that this trend should be reversed.

In other words, the central office of the school system should stop thinking in terms of giving orders and start thinking in terms of helping. Teachers were given red buttons that had "Priority" printed on them and central office personnel were given green buttons that read, "How can I help?"

Under Murphy's leadership the school board bought every second grade teacher four IBM "talking" computers. The advantage of these computers was that they would start each child off each time he used them at exactly the point at which the child left off.

The school system borrowed \$5 million to do this and paid it all back in slightly over five years.

Murphy implemented a program that required 85% of the school system's students to take algebra before they left middle school and he also

instituted new requirements for faculty. To do this he started with principals by requiring them to go to school for four hours every month and four days every summer. He also required that the principals be good communicators and coordinators with analytical ability.

These principals in turn trained their teachers in the Effective Schools Model.

For the University Park and College Park experiment, Murphy chose a principal who had been a classroom teacher. And as other principals in Prince George's County required replacing, he continued to use this strategy.

Murphy developed a program for carefully screening principals. This included a ten week screening and training program.

Another strategy was to expand the school day to 6:30 p.m. and the school year to 200 days. And he allowed each teacher no more than 20 students. Undergirding these was an elaborate educational support network—reading and math specialists and guidance counselors.

In this program teachers had some time off each day for staff development and to encourage "creative thinking."

But Murphy did more than just implement programs within the school system. He also helped people in the community to admit, "We've got a problem in our schools."

Through a well planned television advertising campaign, Murphy told the community that "school problems are really community problems."

But the worst problem is the lack of financial support from state and federal legislatures.

"We must get Congress to really make a commitment to education," said Murphy.