

"WHAT'S COMING NEXT YEAR"

Letters

By Robert Ward, NCSA President

Commencement will offer an opportunity for me to bid our graduating classes Godspeed. But for everyone else who will soon be leaving for the summer holiday I am using the *N.C. Essay* to tell you a bit about things to come.

There seems to me no doubt that the next year will put the nation to severe tests of a kind unknown since World War II. Every aspect of our economy is going the wrong way; and, as the economic picture worsens, the social problems that were already grave become graver. Again the leadership of our country has chosen to pursue a course of military escalation in Southeast Asia in betrayal of its campaign promises and with only the most dubious sanction of our democratic processes.

We all know too well the tragic outcome on campuses in all parts of the country. Once again I have been greatly encouraged by the stability and intelligence displayed by our students and faculty in a moment of crisis. Some have interpreted the lack of violent display as apathy. I would interpret it as the result of a real communal sense of the constructive and responsible without which no artistic effort can succeed.

EDITORIAL

WHO'S NEXT?

by Gwen Spear

Almost nothing about Jackson State College would remind you, ordinarily, of Kent State University, the one being primarily black and in Mississippi, the other being largely white and in Middle America. By race, as well as geography, they are miles apart, yet today it is the similarities between them that are striking. What is so particularly appalling about the killing of two Jackson State students, and the wounding of another nine, by police officers is that it could have happened in a way so strikingly similar to the shootings at Kent State, within two weeks.

The two tragedies began the same way, with student demonstrations. They evolved the same way, with the calling in of police and National Guard units, with an outbreak of violence, with the throwing of rocks and bricks at the security forces. Both ended in the same way. At Jackson State the Guard was held back, and the local and state police moved in; at Kent State, the Guard engaged the demonstrators. Essentially, it was horribly the same. The security forces were armed with live ammunition; they shot not to warn or to disperse, but right into the crowd. They shot to kill. According to the authorities, they shot, in both cases, without order, spontaneously, claiming self-defense.

So it was very much the same at Jackson State, except for one thing - we had just had Kent State. We had just had the example of sending tense, ill-trained Guardsmen with loaded weapons up against a group of student demonstrators. Not the least of lessons, already learned on other campuses, was that tear gas in ample quantities works better than guns.

Clearly the message that it will take more than 'marches, protest meetings, or demonstrations' has come to be understood. This is important. It is only terrible that it has taken such tragic events to show us the light.

Meanwhile the fact that we have continued the educational process without interruption through the turmoil is to everyone's credit. The spring marathon of recitals, concerts, examinations, and auditions has shown that great progress has been made and that still more is in store for the future. The 'Dream' at Summit school was indeed a dream. The evening of new dance works by students and new student works on the final chorus and orchestra concert were lively and well realized.

This year a number of important 'starts' have been made: the SCA Constitution-finally; a Tenure Policy for faculty; revised dormitory regulations, and the first meetings of the All-School Advisory Council. Also much planning for next year.

With the Student Center in operation, an improved food service and increased experience and know-how in our staff, campus living in the Fall will be very much easier.

We are negotiating with a number of important artists to spend some time on the campus next year. The first one that can be announced is a three-day Festival in honor of Aaron Copland's seventieth birthday in March. His three days on campus will include concerts involving all of our music groups, the premiere of one or two new ballets, a lecture and informal meetings with Mr. Copland, and a session devoted to his film music. The various events will be open to people from all parts of the State.

Now many of you are beginning to think about Siena, Asolo, and London. I am certain that all of these sessions will prove again highly stimulating and rewarding.

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At Jackson State this lesson was applied by not using tear gas at all. There was no first effort to disperse the demonstrators before they could become a menace to security forces. At Jackson State, white policemen went for their guns against black students.

We are being told, as we were told at Kent State, that snipers started the shooting, that security forces had to fire back to save themselves. The inevitable investigation is underway and if it establishes that the police at Jackson State were under fire, then this would go some way towards explaining why they might have been under extreme pressure to fire back out of fear for their lives. But this would not explain why tear gas was not even tried. It would not explain why the crowd was not warned and ordered to disperse before the police went for their guns. And nothing can explain the hardest fact of all about the Mississippi tragedy: it is not just that it was senseless and needless, but that only two weeks before Jackson State there had been Kent State.

To the Editor:

I wish this letter could be printed three times the size of normal print-then maybe someone would read it and possibly be a tiny bit ashamed.

The vast majority of students in this school consists of a bunch of lazy slob. Why is it that after seven people spent over 18 hours setting up for a dance (for everyone!) the same people worked until 5 A.M. striking (to clear for a 10:00 A.M. filming session that was never held.)

It was not as if we didn't ask for help - but it was like talking to brick walls! I know everyone had their excuses - I'm tired, I'm sick, I'm drunk, I'm stoned, I don't want to. WELL' WHAT ABOUT US? By the end of it (and some from the very beginning) we were sick and tired - not just only literally, also sick and tired of the disgusting student body in this school!

Some of us didn't even get to enjoy the full benefits of our efforts. Someone had to work lights and keep the refreshment table full.

Does it have to be this way?

Becky Slifkin

To the Editor:

I'm glad that the end of this year is here because after this weekend I don't think I could stand to stay here any longer.

We started weeks ago to plan a dance for the end of the year. This weekend seven people started at 6:30 Friday evening to set up, working around rehearsals so as not to cause any inconvenience to anyone. After working 18 hours to set up this dance, why did the same seven people have to work until 5 A.M. striking to clear for a 10:00 filming session Sunday morning that no one bothered to tell us was cancelled? Why then did no one make an effort to help us as we finished dragging the tables back into the cafeteria during lunch today. It's not as if there were no able-bodied boys in the cafeteria to help. The only comment we received for anyone was 'Why don't you carry them, it's so noisy when you drag them?' Because we were too damn exhausted and the tables are too heavy to carry anyway!

At one time I was proud of this school and felt I was a part of it. Now, I don't want any part of it! It is no longer a unit, but a group of selfish individuals.

I am sorry if this letter is not legible but I am too exhausted and angry to think straight.

Cathy Wonsavage