

Fair Play

Dear Chief...

Since the last issue of the Decree was published, much has been said about the nature and the content of the editorials, the cartoon, and the news coverage. Much has been said to our faces, much behind our backs. Many have responded favorably; many have criticized bitterly. And many, either more cautious or less political, have said nothing. Response to our comments is always welcomed and encouraged. However, criticism is of no value whatever unless the ultimate aim is constructive. And we can hardly hope to improve the content and nature of this newspaper unless we hear the criticisms offered. By virtue of the positions which we hold, we make known our opinions and our thinking. Those who criticize us should at least pay us the respect of letting us hear their opinions and thoughts. Childish backroom analysis of the Decree helps nothing. On the other hand, honest and constructive comments can be of great value.

We pride ourselves in being able to publish a four-page newspaper each week for the Wesleyan community. We have several hard-working and dedicated people who play a large part in making this possible. Most of our reporters and writers are unsalaried, and volunteer their time and energies each week with little or no recognition. We have only one goal in mind: to publish a newspaper which is entertaining, thought-provoking, responsible, and journalistically meritorious.

There are many roadblocks in striving to attain this goal. The greatest of these is the lack of any single, infallible source of information. We have a number of sources for our information, and we believe these sources to be reliable. However, when two reliable sources disagree concerning the factual information we seek, the results are sometimes erroneous or misleading. The same principle applies to editorial comment. We base our opinions on the information which is available. If our information is false or biased (and practically all meaningful information carries with it a certain degree of interpretation by the source), then the thoughts which we publish may be less than fully responsible.

We of the Decree staff do not claim perfection, although we strive for it. We do not contend that our news coverage and our editorial writings are without fault. We do not at all times have the information necessary to thoroughly investigate and report every phase of every event at Wesleyan. We work with our limitations of personnel, capital, and time. And we publish a newspaper which we believe to be generally accurate and entertaining.

We do not feel that it is the purpose of a newspaper to create controversy. However, where there is controversy, we shall attempt to analyze it. Where there is some force at work to disrupt the Wesleyan community, we shall attempt to identify this force, in the hope that the situation will be rectified.

One of the greatest of America's freedom is the freedom of the press. Many would argue, however, that the media are controlling and shaping the thinking of the American people. If this is true (and well it may be), then the American spirit and mind are not so free and independent as we might have hoped. The free press is a tool for reporting and analyzing the news. If the American people are gullible and insecure to the point where Walter Cronkite becomes some sort of god, then fears concerning the future of this nation may be well-founded.

As it is with a nation, so it is with a college. The Decree attempts to inform its readers and to stimulate their thinking. We do not attempt to mold public opinion. More often, we simply reflect it. If you feel that we deserve rebuke for what we write, let us know. Within our limitation of space, we shall publish any signed letter written to the editor. This is a free and open newspaper in a college which prides itself on freedom of expression. And this is how it should be.

To the author of "Foul Play", yes, something must be done: a few questions must be answered. Why was one member of the faculty singled out to lose his voting privilege? Who made the decision? The whole faculty? What were the criteria? Your next editorial would be more sound if you could furnish at least this much information on the clandestine activities surrounding the persecution of Mr. Mottershead.

Shirley Hilderbrand

Editor's Reply

A complaint was made by a faculty member that Mr. Mottershead was not a full-time faculty member and therefore should not have voting rights.

The administration made the ruling that according to faculty rules, his vote should indeed be suspended. He was, however, granted the right to appeal this decision to the faculty.

The faculty, on the basis of this appeal, decided to give Mr. Mottershead special voting privileges, even though he is not, in legal terms, a full-time faculty member.

To the brainchild of "Fair Warning": What makes you think that the numerical results of any kind of poll indicate any thoughts and reasons behind the vote? If I were to vote favorably for retention of the "D" and "plus" in our grading system, would that indicate that I fully understood all the consequences of such a grading system? Perhaps I want the "D" retained so that I can rationalize, "Gee, a 'C' is OK work; at least I didn't get a 'D'." And perhaps I want the plus maintained so that I can edge in those few extra QP's. For all you know, this paltry reasoning might be exactly why those 300 or so students voted as they did in that referendum. You can only guess what the results of that vote might REPRESENT -- especially if there has been no open discussion or debate of a topic before a vote is called. If students were asked their ideas of the purpose of a grading system, the benefits and drawbacks of the present grading system, and what kind of system they would design, if any; then you might be able to say that at last we students have thought and said what we thought. You speak far too highly of a poll where half the students did not necessarily show what they thought or why, but merely said true or false to an open-ended question.

Shirley M. Hildebrand

Editor's reply: In answer to the first question posed to the writer of "Fair Warning," I do

Notice-Seniors

Graduation applications are in the Registrar's Office and may be picked up any time. They must be returned on or before December 1, 1971.

not believe that I ever said the results of the poll indicate anything about the reasons and thoughts behind the vote. I wrote (in the last sentence of the first paragraph) these words, "Who knows better what students think than the 370 students who voted?" Unless each one of those students deliberately lied I would assume that their responses had been carefully considered (ie: that the students had thought about what they were doing), and on the basis of their thoughts, they indicated their opinions in the referendum. I would never presume, however, to read the minds of all 370 students and thereby understand their reasons for their actions; I may be a "Brain Child" but I am not a mind-reader.

In answer to the second part of this letter, I would answer that whether one votes for retention of the "D" and the plus or against it, he can never demonstrate his understanding of any of the consequences of a grading system on a paper ballot. If 370 Wesleyan students are guilty of what you describe as "paltry reasoning" on this academic question, what will their responses be when they get the opportunity to design their own educational programs? Will their so-called "paltry reasoning" attack them again rendering them unable to write logical proposals for

track three? I give the Wesleyan student body credit for being able to express their own opinions. I also believe that the majority of students would rather indicate their thoughts in a referendum and have them published and presented to the faculty than have their opinions gleaned by some of the other methods that I listed in the editorial. If I spoke too highly of the referendum to suit your tastes, then I may owe you an apology; however, I believe that the students of Wesleyan College accept the student referendum as a valid method of gaining student opinion it has proven the most successful.

Dear Chief,

In the past editions of the DECREE I have noticed the letters from residents in Nash dorm concerning the cleanliness of the dorm. As another resident of Nash I must say that I agree with their statements whole-heartedly. My main complaint is that it seems to me a building, or to be more specific, a room in a building, that is used frequently by a large number of people should be cleaned more than once a week. The bathrooms, and until recently, the lobby, of our dorm are not kept clean which is ab-

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Just a few things I picked up at home to tide me over til Christmas

The Decree

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