

Cassandra's Comment

A problem that has plagued small communities is the tendency for the residents to gossip and start malicious rumors. This problem is not confined to small communities, but is more harmful in them because of the familiarity between the people. Everyone knows or has heard of each other. Therefore, when gossip is repeated, many people know who is being talked about and tend to believe the rumors. This causes trouble for the victims of rumors because they usually develop bad reputations that can ruin their social standing in a small community and deny them some opportunities such as jobs, church membership, active social lives, or participation in many community functions.

North Carolina Wesleyan is a typical small community and is plagued with such gossip and malicious rumors. Causes of gossip range from trivial jealousy in many respects to outright hate and vengeance.

Some of the stereotyped images resulting from repetition of gossip are "campus

whores," "alcoholics," "homosexuals," "straights," and many more. Some of the reputations of such people who are labeled with these stereotyped roles hinder their academic, as well as their social lives on campus.

When girls come to Wesleyan, they are usually subjected to being called a whore at some time or another. Rumors begin when a girl goes out with several guys or a guy "with a reputation." The girl then has to contend with embarrassing rumors that may cause her to lose friends and possibly permanently ruin her chances to date anyone on campus.

I was, personally, subjected to an entirely different type of gossip. Somehow everyone began to hear about "that girl." Rumors proposed that I could fly, my face glowed in the dark, I caused someone to be thrown out of school, I made car doors open and close with supernatural force, and other similarly unbelievable tales. However ridiculous they were, the magnitude and quickness of the rumors circulated caused people to believe them. Temporarily, I lost all chances to make friends because everyone was

scared to talk to me. The dorm was in a general uproar because I was rumored to be "possessed."

The detrimental affects are typical of the damage that gossip and rumors cause in a small community. Fortunately, many rumors are discredited soon after they start, but if the gossip is especially damaging, the labels and their effects can last and cause trouble for a length of time. Also, the labels become common knowledge in a small community.

Wesleyan students do tend to gossip. The destructiveness is not always obvious, but while it is not causing external problems, it can be emotionally painful or upsetting to the victim. There is no way to completely halt rumors and gossip, but people need to investigate serious allegations and discriminate between idle gossip and true statements in order to stop the detrimental affects of such statements.

Becky Bame

Responsibilities

Responsibilities. Everyone has them. The trouble is, no one wants them or so it seems at this campus. It seems as though the students and faculty members have taken a stance which can be described as hypocritical, to say the least. Not only have the students been pressured by the faculty, but the faculty has been pressured by the students into taking away most of the student's responsibilities.

Do students want freedom with or without responsibilities? If I were to ask some of you this question, you would undoubtedly say with, but apparently your feeling is opposite to what you say. In other words, many students here want the freedom to do whatever they wish, regardless of whether it's against the rules or not. If that's so, why did they come here in the first place? Why didn't they go to a state-supported school which allows nearly uninhibited behavior? I will never be convinced that the freedom to anything one pleases is sup-

ported by the idea of responsibility.

N. C. Wesleyan College is supposed to be a Christian college supported indirectly by the Methodist Church, and as such, it should be teaching its students how to bear responsibility, as well as how to discipline themselves. The best education in the world is no substitute for the moral responsibilities each person has in this society. The recent Washington sex scandals and the Watergate episode prove my point. These men had the knowledge of how the Federal government was established, however, because of their flawed nature and some good newspaper work, these men were found ultimately discovered and brought to trial.

College is not a Sunday School, and people aren't tied to home anymore. The college can not legislate morality. All it can do is establish certain guidelines for its students to follow. It is up to the individual to accept or reject them.

Mike Collis

A Safe Refuge?

Wesleyan College is alive and recuperating, and any further progress rests entirely in the hands of concerned and interested students, professors and faculty. I am not talking about financial progress. Any businessman given authority can see to it that our pipes flow hot water, and that the shrubs are cut for Parent's Weekend. Maintenance is at an all-time high, and the fountain is pretty at night to cars passing on the highway. It would seem that our financial crisis is over. I hope it is.

What I am more concerned about, however, is that our recuperation after the crisis hasn't relegated our purpose as a college to second place, behind the need to campaign for funds. I am beginning to fear that our need for money is compromising academic standards, and that present policies exist to undermine the foundation upon which higher education rests. The foundation of freedom to pursue intellectual thoughts, and the opportunity to witness ideologies foreign to an institution with "Methodist" and "money" uppermost in its mind.

What I largely fear is that if present policies of heedless censorship and biased decision-making go unchecked, Wesleyan will become no more than a four-year boarding school nursery.

We students are here, it would seem, to become better educated, and to prepare ourselves for the outside world; a world where everything is not well-ordered, and where many people do not have "christian" scruples. We should be learning to be independent decision-makers, to learn for ourselves

what is right and wrong, what is moral and immoral. These things are not to be inherited, rather they should be determined individually. When even well intended censorship threatens, the only result can be a perpetuation of ignorance, not a cancellation of it. When a college revolves around "interests" outside of the personal and intellectual development of its students, it is no longer a college, but a breeding ground for physically mature infants.

To be sure, Wesleyan is in many ways an oasis of safety. We are "protected" against many aspects of the harsh world we will soon enter. "Dangerous" elements are painstakingly extracted from our field of reference, in order that we make contact with only those "desired" elements. But do we want "divine" intervention, and freedom from responsibility? I think not! It is all very well that we have regained some semblance of financial well-being, but must our intellectual well-being suffer the cost? Not if we, as individuals, refuse to adopt those attitudes and priorities that upset our personal integrity.

There is a safeguard against any further damage to Wesleyan as an institution, and as a community of individuals. That safeguard is the knowledge that we ourselves are what Wesleyan is truly made of, and that we alone can alter the course it appears to be taking.

There is also a comfort in the fact that as human beings, we ultimately determine what we will make of ourselves.

Jan Wilson

Saccharin Ban

There has been a great deal of argument over the years concerning our federal government and the immense bureaucracy within it. Many agencies have come under attack on grounds ranging from their procedures to the very need for their existence. The Food and Drug Administration is no exception. Recent developments have revitalized the critics of the FDA, and it appears that various components of the government will once again begin to take a hard look at the agency's functions. One aspect of the FDA which is found particularly objectionable is its dictatorial influence over the everyday lives of Americans. A very sensible opinion circulating in recent years is that the FDA should be required to work more closely with the Congress in important matters and at the same time, a serious reevaluation should be made concerning its procedures and conclusions.

The developments alluded to above are the tests and conclusions leading to the FDA's ban of saccharin, a white powder approximately five hundred times sweeter than sugar, which is widely used as a low-calorie sweetener. Canadian researchers found that laboratory rats showed a high incidence of cancer after having been given extremely large quantities of saccharin. Apparently, these tests alone precipitated the ban. The FDA admits that in order for a human to receive as much saccharin as did the test rats, his saccharin intake would have to be astronomical. Furthermore, there is no way to link the sweetener's effect on rats to its possible effect on humans. That notwithstanding,

the FDA decided to deny to the consumer a product he has found beneficial as well as totally harmless for decades.

This is not the first, nor is it likely to be the last example of questionable judgements made by the FDA. It once made a statement that marijuana was deadly because it produced adverse symptoms in lab animals. The fact that these animals were given enough marijuana in a concentrated form to keep the entire state of North Carolina stoned for months escaped the average concerned reader of this statement.

Yet there is another area in which I believe the FDA has, under the guise of consumer protection, failed to best serve the American public. This is in its refusal to allow foreign companies to market products in the United States, which are known to be effectively in use in other parts of the world. CBS News reported that we may be

five to ten years behind some other countries in the treatment of some common illnesses.

There is no point in arguing for the eradication of the FDA, for the benefits it has brought society are immense. For instance, it has worked very hard to maintain quality standards for drugs, and ethical standards in dealings between drug companies and hospitals and private physicians. It has succeeded in protecting the American consumer from clearly dangerous products as well as unnecessary medication. Its tests have shown precisely what we can expect a particular drug to do and not to do. Still, some popular input into the FDA's decision making would be a great step forward for consumerism. As it is now, we have no choice but to accept FDA dictates concerning what we may and may not consume.

Fred Frohbose

The Decree

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