

Letters to the Editor

An Open Letter

February 28, 1980

Dr. Thomas S. Elleman, Vice President
Nuclear Safety and Research
Carolina Power and Light
Company
Raleigh, North Carolina

Dear Dr. Elleman:

In light of your public affirmation Wednesday of your steadfast allegiance of the scientist's untrammelled quest for the truth through research and the clash of ideas in the intellectual marketplace, I would like to elicit your responses to several issues in an alternative and, it is devoutly to be hoped, more informative public forum than Wednesday's strange encounter. My proposal is to have this letter and your response published in the college newspaper as a means of extending the dialogue on nuclear energy and sharpening the debate, pro and con.

Without further prologue:

1) You began your presentation pessimistically and several times later you reaffirmed your pessimistic view about America's energy future. Between the lines, however, I detected that your pessimism stemmed from the "irresponsible" public, who in their benighted ignorance, were foreclosing the proliferation of nuclear fission, breeder, and fusion reactors. Is the stupidity of the masses the major source of your pessimism or did I misread your presentation?

2) One problem with the expansion of nuclear energy was not addressed by the panel at all: The effects on your political system. The nuclear energy ensemble by its complexity, scientific abstruseness, and potential for dangerous accidents tends to create a cadre of technical experts (the nuclear Priesthood, as Dr. Bell called them) who "know the truth" about nuclear energy and tend to be empowered (or what amounts to the same thing, tend to abrogate to themselves the power) to make the major or critical decisions concerning nuclear energy policy. For instance, it turns out that just seven people decided Sweden would "go

nuclear" back in the sixties (a decision recently rejected by the electorate at large). Moreover, since both the construction of a nuclear reactor and the disposal of high level radiation wastes are long (in the latter case, very long) term commitments, we must choose now what we will have to do in ten, twenty, thirty, a hundred, or even a thousand years

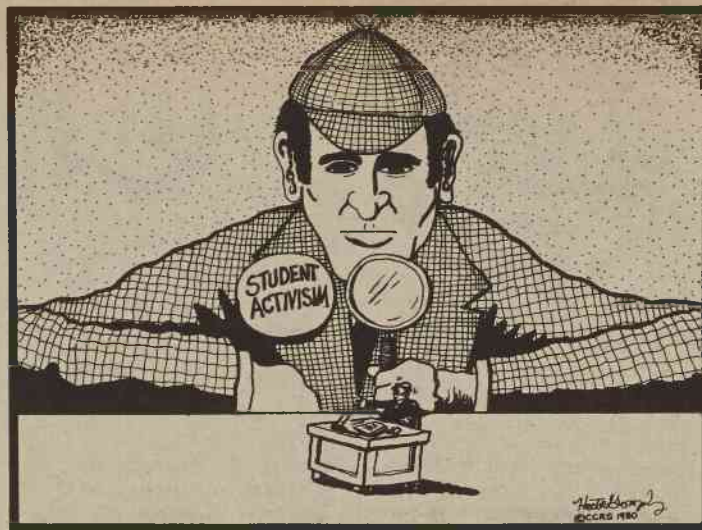
from now. Each such long-term commitment we undertake reduces the choices we can make subsequently. Reduction of alternative choices is one effective way to "phase out" functional democracy. We were told over and over again at the symposium that we today, here in North Carolina, the state that proudly proclaims on its license plates "First in Freedom" that we have no choice but to commit ourselves to more and more nuclear electrification. In short, we do not have freedom of choice in this matter anymore. Democracy does not apply to nuclear energy! Is not, then, the nuclear energy production, distribution, and consumption ensemble totalitarian and anti-democratic by its very essence?

3) Global thermal pollution as a waste product resulting from industrial development is now estimated to amount to 1-15,000 of the natural solar and planetary heat entering from outside our atmosphere. This is a small amount right now, but is growing at the exponential rate of 4 percent per annum, which means it doubles approximately every 18-20 years. At this rate, the atmosphere would warm up about 3 degrees within the next 150 years. Any additional growth at the rate would kill the biosphere (and that includes man, too). Thus global thermal pollution slaps a short run lid on the option of endless energy growth even IF WE USE TODAY'S SOURCES OF WHICH NUCLEAR IS BUT A VERY SMALL CONTRIBUTION. The question is this: Are not nuclear reactors of all types (especially the fusion reactor which can't even begin to

operate until unspeakably high temperatures are reached -- in excess of 90,000 degrees) notorious producers of global heat pollution (Three Mile Island's cooling towers, the steaming ditch at New Brunswick, etc.), and should they not therefore be only the last source of energy used instead of the first option?

Sincerely yours,
Kenneth V. Finney
Associate Professor
Department of History

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Where Do We Go From Here?

On 8 February, the Inter Fraternity Council (IFC) in cooperation with Ramada Inn, Goldrock, organized a party for the campus.

As a friendly, as well as business gesture, Ramada Inn rented two (not one) rooms at a reasonable rate; they assessed each person a small fee (\$1.20) to cover an endless supply of mixers and ice; also, the I.F.C. acquired \$.80 per student (thus the \$2.00 cover charge at the door) to alleviate some of the cost.

It appeared that most, if not all, the guests were enjoying the I.F.C.'s preRush social: talking, dancing, cavorting, eating, buzzing, observing, flirting, et al. Indeed, it seemed the party was a success. No fights. No depleted "resources." No problems, right? Wrong!

Unfortunately, some few could not simply walk away from the Ramada Inn with only a feeling of good cheer. They also were compelled to carry party "memories" with them, such as bottles of wine from the rack in the dining room, a coffee pot warmer (an essential for every dorm room), glasses, lanterns, and their fellow students' possessions. And those who wished only to be remembered, rather than take memories, left calling cards in the form of vomit all over the bathroom walls and floors. Others went out with a bang (or crash) by walking into a table in the dining room.

So where does all this lead

us? Certainly mishaps occur - are even expected to occur - whenever a large group gathers in this manner. Does that excuse the thievery, the lack of self-control over bodily functioning? Is being under the influence of alcohol a valid reason for deviant behavior? I contend that what did occur was totally unjustified.

First of all, though often used and rationalized to be true, alcohol is not a reason for socially unacceptable behavior. It is an excuse - a very poor excuse at that. As human beings we are held responsible for our actions; this includes while under the influence of drugs, whether alcohol or other. As young adults, especially in college, we should act accordingly.

Secondly, our actions not only reflect on ourselves, but also on the college itself. Like it or not we represent Wesleyan off campus as well as on. Imagine the overall impression of us Ramada Inn management got from the assinine behavior of a handful. Why should we even expect to again to be given the opportunity to use their facilities? Obviously we do not appreciate Ramada Inn's cooperation.

Where do we go from here? I suppose we could hit up another hotel for a room, rip them off, and proceed to the next location. I'm certain, though, that our reputation would travel farther than we and we soon would find that none within a fifty-mile radius

wants to let us in their doors.

The final point on the matter which greatly irritates me is the sheer lack of respect students show their compeers. The stealing at the conclusion of the party said to the I.F.C., "Thanks for the party, now go to Hell." Ramada Inn did not absorb the cost of the stolen items, the I.F.C. did! How can the I.F.C. or any other organization expect (or be expected) to give another such function when it must constantly set aside funds for damage, stolen items, and extra janitorial work? The situation is bad when students have to steal from their fellow students, such as happened that evening - especially considering the fact that we pride ourselves in being a small, personal institution.

How is such a problem resolved? There is no keyed answer. No, it is up to the individual to look at himself and decide whether he or she is willing to assume responsibility for his actions as an individual and as a college representative. It is also up to individuals who may already be "self-responsible" to prevent others from deviating from the norm.

If we want to continue holding social functions off campus which contain alcohol (as we must if there are to be any) then we must also accept the responsibilities included. It all boils down to the age-old adage, "Freedom with responsibility."

Richard S. Whiting
(Editor-in-Chief)

The Decree

OFFICIAL STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF
NORTH CAROLINA WESLEYAN COLLEGE

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IFC? IT'S GREEK TO ME!

During the first few weeks of February the small campus of North Carolina Wesleyan College undergoes a "minor" change. The campus experiences a "close encounter of the Greek kind" which is commonly referred to as, "Rush" and "Pledge."

In preparation for these events, the sororities and fraternities carefully organize parties for prospective rushees so that the rushees may see how each sorority and fraternity operates. Rush week should run smoothly because it is an important time for all the Greek systems if they wish to enlarge or replenish their individual groups. To insure that things do run smoothly, the sororities and fraternities are supervised by the Interfraternity Council (IFC).

The IFC is composed of the president of each greek organization and an additional

member from the groups. Heading up the IFC is Mike Madison who is this year's president. Other officers include Gail Hargett, vice president; and Jim Potts,

secretary-treasurer. The IFC is most active throughout the second semester because of pledge period. The main job of this governing body is to officiate over pledge activities but it may be involved in other aspects of campus life. "If something was needed to be done the Greeks were usually asked to help because nine times out of ten they did," says Madison. The Greek systems do a variety of service projects for the school, such as repairing bleachers and a variety of painting jobs to help beautify the campus.

One point that Madison stresses is that Greeks are just plain students. "The greek systems here are not like those in the movie Animal House; we're not

radical students as portrayed in the movie," states Madison.

Students who are not participating in pledge are not surprised when they catch glimpses of "free for alls" and wrestling matches between pledges and brothers-sisters.

Madison defends their behavior by adding "Our good clean fun should not be interpreted as vulgar and obscene."

The "good clean fun" that Madison speaks of pertains to the activities that the fraternities and sororities make their pledges do. These activities may at times seem absurd to a non-Greek, but they do have a specific purpose behind them. So don't be surprised if you see a group of pledges marching along in single file singing their pledge song.

Valerie Holland