

Everyone has role in making difference

By JUDY BOYD

What comes to mind when you hear the letters SGA? Depending on whom you ask, you may receive a wide array of answers, ranging from anywhere from Southern German Athletes to Sexy Grandmothers of America. You would hope, though, that if you asked that question at Wesleyan, the answer would be Student Government Association.

Those three letters do not mean anything unless there is a definite change connected to them. What kind of image does SGA have here on campus? Over the past

Students still cherish ideas

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gued that not only were the few people who actually saw Robert Mapplethorpe's homo-erotic photography harmed but also everyone in the world was less moral because homo-eroticism was like an infectious disease that spread from the original source.

Another woman made basically the same (but heterosexual) point about two Live Crew's *Nasty* album. They were, thank goodness, well answered both by other Southeastern Louisiana students and by members of the audience. The Southeastern students looked happy, because they had done what they had set out to do — involve people in a debate they thought was important.

The students I listened to and talked with this weekend care deeply about many ideas, and many have taken the extra time to educate themselves. They were also trying to educate each other at this conference. As with any group, many were not listening to each other; but some were soaking up information that would leave them different when they returned home.

Except for the tricky tenderesses of opening discussing the issues that AIDS makes necessary, none of these topics was new for young people in our country. I remember arguing about them when I was in college. And I suppose I could have come away depressed at our lack of progress. But at the end of the weekend, I felt a kind of pride in youth, in honors students, in Americans, and in human beings.

I guess I'm getting soft in my old age.

week, I have spoken with students and asked them why they do not show enough interest in SGA to come to the meetings. The responses were quite disconcerting:

"I didn't know we had them — what are they?"

"I didn't know we could come."

"Anything I say just goes in one ear and out the other."

"It doesn't matter what I say."

What kind of image is SGA projecting then, if these are the kind of statements that students are making?

In January of 1991, I became president of the SAC. When I talked to people about the organization and its activities, I would always have to clarify between the Student Activities Center and the Student Activities Committee. The letters SCA would certainly invoke an image, but usually it was that of a brick building on campus, not of an organization.

This was not the image that we as an organization wanted, so one of the first activities that we took was to change our name to CAB — The Campus Activities Board. From that point on, CAB developed a single image for itself, and there has been no confusion since.

Now I am not suggesting by any means that we change the name of the Student Government Association. However, when a student hears the letters SGA, an image should immediately come to mind about what those letters

represent. These three letters stand for Student, Government, and Association — the three elements that are linked together to create a successful organization.

The first link of this chain is the students. Each school year begins with a student body that is composed of both new faces and new leaders. Together, the students set off on a journey toward the ultimate goal of obtaining an education, both in and out of the classroom. This is not an ideal journey, since there are always areas that need examination along the way.

The issues that were important last year may not be to this new student body. The students have the right to raise and question an issue. However, along with this right comes an important responsibility: the willingness to work to bring about a change. To bring about a change is never easy; it requires both perseverance and flexibility.

The biggest danger that may be lurking in the shadows to deter students from making a change is Apathy. An apathetic attitude towards classes, activities, and the issues that concern everyone can prevent students from truly learning and growing as individuals within a community.

This is where the second link of the chain that emerges: the government. The Senate and Executive Officers are elected representatives and have a tremendous responsibility to their voters.

The government is charged with taking the issues that are brought forth by students and acting upon them in a timely and effective manner. However, the issues will not always be officially presented at our meetings on Monday morning.

The members of the government must utilize their positions to sense the undercurrents on campus. These positions should not merely be figureheads but one that challenges you to your very limits. Everyone here has certainly heard of the old adage, "All talk and no action." That is certainly one criticism that the SGA never wants to include as part of its image.

As members of the Senate you are not filling a chair. The Adult Degree Representative speaks for 149 students. The Hall Council presidents represent the interests of 373 students. The Commuter Representative casts a vote for 489 students! These students all have concerns, which when not listened to and acted upon, can lead to disinterest and eventual apathy. As leaders you must encourage a constant exchange of ideas, and then translate these ideas into action.

This leads to the final link the chain: the association between the students, the government, the administration, faculty, and staff. Each of the individuals in these areas has personal goals; perhaps to graduate on time, or to design

a new writing program, or to restructure the housing policy. These separate elements must then join together into an association and strive towards the common goal of reducing the level of apathy on this campus.

Each area can make its contribution in the most effective manner possible. For the Student Government Association can contribute in two ways: first by clearly defining the expectations of those in the Senate. In order to be a leader, you need to know what your position is and what goals you are expected to achieve. The second is to communicate to the students what SGA represents and is accomplishing throughout the year. As a result, the students will then have a definite image of what the role of SGA is here at Wesleyan.

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with the following challenge: to re-examine your position at Wesleyan, whether it is as a student, an officer, administrator, or faculty member, and determine your personal strategy for making Wesleyan a better community for everyone.

When it comes to the issues that are raised on campus, there is no "us" or "them." If it happens at Wesleyan, then it concerns everyone and each of us can make a difference.

(This is a reprint of newly elected SGA President Judy Boyd's induction speech.)

Reduce pork with line-item veto

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If you want to be a good porker, you need to get on the appropriations committees. Sen. Robert Byrd (D-WVa.) knows that well, and maybe his position as committee chairman has something to do with the fact that West Virginia gets more pork sent its way than any other state.

Despite the best efforts of the serious pork hunters in Congress, there is no way to stop the waste that comes out of Capitol Hill. No way, that is, unless we can force Congress to discuss it out in the open. What if the President could veto parts of bills? Can you imagine Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-Hawaii) explaining why the natives need \$2 million to perpetuate their traditions that have survived for centuries without gov-

ernment help? Or maybe Rep. Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.) could explain why Loyola University needed \$8 million in the Gulf War appropriation.

You can see why Robert Byrd, the prince of pork, resists the line-item veto. When Robert Smith joined the Appropriations Committee two years ago, according to Smith's account, Byrd told him that he should change his position on the line-item veto and quit announcing all of the pork in budgets. Smith reads some of the more amusing pork programs: \$15,000 to see why people cheat at tennis, for example.

He also believes that the line-item veto is already in the Constitution and that it will become a usable part of the government checks and balances system as soon as a President employs it.

In the 1800's, a budget was one or two pages. Today, they weigh 40 pounds or more. Any budget that is described in terms of how much it weighs is a problem. The legislative branch has assumed a role in micromanaging the government, which should be the role of the executive (thus the term "executive").

Congress doesn't even follow its own rules, which require all bills to be given out three days before the votes. Rep. Harris Fawell (R-Ill.) has often complained to the Rules Committee, particularly when spending bills come out 15 minutes before the votes. This is exactly what happened with the gulf War budget; it was handed out 15 minutes before the vote.

If Congress is going to violate its own rules and waste our money

while it's going about it, we have to give the President the power to fight them. I am one of those who believes that the President has the line-item veto. If the Supreme Court rules against the veto, we must give him the power to stop the waste. Otherwise, you can expect years and years of such useful programs as \$150,000 to find out what the Hatfield/McCoy feud was all about.

Who wants that? It is impossible to fight for long on a budget before the government is in danger of being shut down. The President is often forced to give in to this kind of waste in order to keep the government running. With the line-item veto, he would have more options, so we would have less waste.

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