

What Goes On In An Area Meeting

The North Carolina Area Leadership meeting was held March 12 in Spencer Hall of the Women's College of the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. The purpose of the meeting, which is an annual affair, was to discuss the problems and new projects which the various colleges had been carrying on during the year.

The meeting opened in the morning at ten o'clock with Misses Celestine Smith and Mary Jane Willett, the national student secretaries of the southern region, in charge.

Miss Smith gave us a colorful account of her trips during the summer to India and Canada, and then the college problems and new projects were discussed. A very interesting but pathetic incident was cited by a student from Bennett. The members of a Y. W. C. A. in a little village in Nebraska were so concerned and interested in the race problem that they wrote to the Bennett College Y. W. C. A. asking for information concerning the Negro and Negro life, as they had never seen or had any contact with our race.

The evening was given over to the business, and after the discussion of the problems which the two commissions submitted to the group as a whole, and the workable solutions mapped out, the election of a chairman of the leadership student council and two faculty advisers; a tentative meeting place for the group next year; and the possibility of a joint meeting with the Y. M. C. A. of North and South Carolina was taken up.

Miss Eunice King of the Woman's College, who has wide experience in this type of work, was elected chairman of the committee; Miss Yergan of Shaw University, Miss Vital of Guilford College, and Miss Rymer of Woman's College were suggested as faculty advisers, two of whom would be appointed by the chairman in the near future.

An impressive prayer service in St. Mary's House marked the closing of this meeting, and the group left there knowing full well that they had experienced and shared a genuine fellowship with the opposite race, and of which they are optimistic enough to believe that it will take on a deeper meaning time on time.—LARRY RUTH JAMES.

The Still Small Voice

There are silent depths in the ocean which the storms that lash the surface into fury never reach. People who have learned to control themselves, who do not live on the surface of their being, but who reach down into the depths, where, in the stillness the voice of God is heard; where they absorb the great principles of life, are not affected by the thousand and one storms and tempests—domestic, financial, social, political—which cause so much suffering and unhappiness, and mar so many lives. In the depths of their being they find the divine stabilizing power which carries them poised and serene even through a hurricane of difficulties.

Against Capital Punishment

For a dozen years the grim profession of executioner has been the livelihood of Robert G. Elliot. People naturally assume that he approves of capital punishment, but the assumption is wrong. Legal slaying has no more bitter foe than the man who throws the switch for six states.

I have often wondered how the man whose job it is to end so many lives feels about capital punishment. In *Collier's Magazine* issued October 22, 1938, Robert Elliot states clearly his opinion of capital punishment. In addition to that he tells of several harrowing experiences in the death chamber.

Mr. and Mrs. Elliot were not avid movie fans so they did not frequently go to see a movie. When they did go they seldom knew the name or theme of the picture until they had arrived there. They avoided as much as possible those dealing with crime and capital punishment. On one Friday night upon arriving at the theatre they found that the picture was about crime. The plot was as follows:

"A young man was convicted of murder on circumstantial evidence and was sentenced to die. Five minutes after the switch was thrown, after the man had been pronounced dead, the telephone rang. It was a call from the executive mansion ordering a reprieve for the consideration of new evidence. The guilty person had confessed that he had committed the crime, but the call had come too late; an innocent man had died."

On leaving the movie, Mr. Elliot remarked to his wife that it wasn't at all impossible that such a thing could happen in real life but he hoped he would never have the experience of learning he had killed an innocent man.

The following Monday morning he was at the prison where a single execution was scheduled. The youth walked firmly toward the chair, he was strapped in it, the head electrodes were placed on his shaven head, the mask was put over his face—the switch was thrown. There a pause, a tension hung in the air. At the precise moment the switch made its contact, as the current sizzled, as the body stiffened under a 2,200 volt shock—the telephone rang. Mr. Elliot was frozen stiff, his blood chilled, as his mind flashed back to the picture he had seen only three days before. Was the same thing happening in real life as it had been produced on the screen? Was he killing an innocent man, a man not guilty of the crime for which he was convicted? The current rippled through the boy's body, his heart was torn beyond recall. The switch was opened as Mr. Elliott prayed that his fears were not to be justified, that there had been no mistake in condemning this young man to die. The principal keeper picked up the telephone, he turned to announce that the prison operator had called the wrong extension. Never in his life does Mr. Elliot wish to experience another such three minutes.

He says despite every human effort to keep the death room free from mishaps, accidents have occurred that make the deaths that men die there even more horrible than they would otherwise be.

How would it feel to have electrocuted an innocent man? Let me ask you how you would have felt if you had played the role of Mr. Elliot in the following incident?

Jerry Weeks had been convicted for murder on circumstantial evidence. He had been friendless throughout his trial. Even his wife had assisted to convict him; his only friend was a Salvation Army chaplain who was convinced of his innocence and was therefore very much interested in him.

On November 21, 1921, the day Jerry was to be executed, the chaplain asked the warden's permission to question Weeks after he was placed in the chair. Although this was a peculiar and unusual request, it was granted. After Weeks had been strapped into the chair the chaplain stepped before him. "Jerry," he said, "you have only a few more minutes to live. What you say now cannot save you. But I have been your friend. Answer me truthfully. Are you guilty of this murder?"

The condemned man replied, "You are my friend. I will not lie to you. In the name of my mother in heaven I am innocent." The chaplain stepped back with a bowed head. Mr. Elliot's right hand, not wholly steady, threw the switch. Just how would you have felt after such a confession?

"The happiest day I'll ever experience," Mr. Elliot states, "if I live long enough to see it, will be the day capital punishment is wiped from the statute books." When asked by friends as to whether he thinks capital punishment is necessary and should be inflicted, his answer is an emphatic "no." He firmly believes that the time is coming in the United States when capital punishment will be a grisly memory in all states as in Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin.

"Slowly but surely," he says, "the public's attitude toward the legal taking of life is changing. Although I may not live to see it, I hope my children will see the day when legal slayings, whether by electrocution, hanging, lethal gas or any other method, are outlawed by the United States."

How many of you are against capital punishment? How many think it is all right or necessary to protect the lives and interests of the people of our country? If Maine, Minnesota, Michigan and four other states can get along without it, why not the entire forty-eight states?

While some believe in "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," I agree with Mr. Elliot. I do not think capital punishment in any form or by any method is necessary to safeguard our homes and property. I, too, am against capital punishment.

—MARY RUTH MILLER.

From Servants To Dictators

As John M. Clark states: "Man has brought upon the face of the globe a new race, one of machinery." This race has changed the lives and fortunes of many. Some of these changes have been favorable while others have been destructive; yet, man in his imaginative way of thinking has named this change progress. So highly has this race of machines been exalted that once in a while the nation stops on its way to celebrate birthdays of some of the members of this race.

When the first machine was invented man declared it to be his servant. Immediately he began to improve and educate it to do greater work. It is true that at this point man looked upon machinery as a controllable monster.

About this time the Industrial Revolution was well on its way: Man was carried so fast by the influence of machinery that he had no time to think whether he was being carried toward the starry skies of heaven or toward death's desert valley. Being intoxicated by the sweet perfume of industrialism man dedicated his life to the improvement of machinery. Rapidly he improved and advanced the growth of this machine race. Finally, in speaking of machines in 1928, Mr. Millikan made this statement: "We ourselves may be vital agents in the march of things." It is this idea which has caused man to forget the individuals and has forced him to turn his mind to the improvement of machines. Thus, machines have become his masters. When we look on the bright side of the situation we see nothing but man harnessing the forces of nature making them slaves to him in the form of machines. But if we would only look beneath the surface of things we should see that machines are influencing man's life and directing his destiny. Thus man finds himself in a terrible situation that he cannot account for, and facing problems of which he can find no solutions.

He has become the victim of a "machine age" in which overproduction and unemployment prevail. Why? Because of being led and influenced by the machine race which is not leading him toward the starry skies of heaven but toward death's desert valley. Machines which were once known as the servants of men have become their dictators. They are directing the destiny of nations.

—ISAAC J. AVENT.

The Delta Jabberwock will be presented by the Alpha Lambda Chapter of the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Friday night, April 14, 1939, at 8:15 o'clock in the Benjamin N. Duke auditorium. The Jabberwock is for the purpose of giving a scholarship to some outstanding young woman of this school. It is a series of dramatic skits given by the Greek-letter organizations of the city and promises to be very entertaining. Don't fail to see it. The admission is twenty-five cents for adults and fifteen cents for students.

Current Quotations:

Harold W. Dodds, President of Princeton University: "No nation has placed such a value on formal education as the United States, but the emphasis has been on the word *formal*, not on *education*. We have put too much trust in diplomas. By attaching to the diplomas unmerited monetary and social importance we have created an artificial bull market in education which is endangering the true values of the liberal arts idea."

Alexander Meiklejohn, faculty member of the San Francisco School for Social Studies: "The deepest question in American life today is not economic nor political, it is educational. It is the question of the thinking power of a democracy."

Charles F. Kettering, President, General Motors Research Corporation: "From my own experience, I have no objection to our present educational system and the way in which the teaching of facts is handled. The only thing that we don't tell the children is how little we know. We should tell them that what we teach them is the best we know, but that we know very little. I know no educators who will admit that. Consequently these young people take entirely too seriously what they have learned in school. They know everything there is to be known and therefore they won't try to experiment."

*Historical Background of Kappa Guide Right Week

Kappa Alpha Psi adopted the Guide-right movement as a national program of the fraternity at the Grand Chapter in session at Louisville, Ky., in December, 1922, and the spring of 1923 marked its first year of actual promotion.

Prior thereto the idea had originated with the St. Louis Alumni Chapter as a local program upon the suggestion of Brother Leon W. Steward, a former national director of the movement. Through his contacts with Negro boys in the Y. M. C. A. activities in St. Louis and other cities, Brother Stewart caught a picture of Negro youth coming up to high school graduation virtually stranded by indecision as to their vocational objectives in life and was able to convince his fellow brothers in St. Louis that providing a vocational guidance service for such youth would constitute a worthwhile venture for their chapter.

The St. Louis brothers finding that idea a good one, suggested it as a national service program for the fraternity as a whole at the Louisville conclave through Brother J. Jerome Peters, one of our past grand polemarchs. The idea was adopted and we are now in our sixteenth year of development with the movement. Truly, it has come to be looked upon, both within and without the fraternity as Kappa Alpha Psi's most outstanding contribution to the progress of the race.

*Taken from Kappa Alpha Psi Journal, March 1, 1939, under the caption "Marked Guide Right Interest Seen" by R. J. Reynolds.