

THE DIVINE RIGHT OF KING

By Gregg Craig
(substituting for Carl King)

Having been greatly impressed with Thoreau's life as studied under Dr. Howell, I recently undertook a field trip in which I resolved to imitate that great philosopher--Thoreau, I mean--and observe nature. After much debate I selected the College Pond for my place of study; not that I intended to build a shack and live there for several years, of course, but it did seem to be the ideal location. Besides, it is almost the only open country around here in which people have not planted corn, tobacco, or their ancestors. However, the best laid plans oft go astray, and mine proved no exception. Therefore, I am writing this piece not to relate my observations of Mother Nature but rather to tell how that old woman nearly finished me off, and to warn away all other naturalists.

First, as I approached the tranquil pond, I was attacked by a swarm of particularly undernourished mosquitoes which seemed to be out for blood. Waving my hunting knife in the air failed to discourage them, so I drew my revolver and shot two of the monsters before the others would leave. No doubt I should have quit after that episode, but dogged determination (or just plain stupidity) kept me going.

Next, I sat down beside the pond to rest, when out of the water shot a gigantic head on a long neck, making horrible sounds like Scottish bagpipes. The creature glanced down at me and said: "Hello, there! Hope I didn't disturb you!" At that moment my hair had turned white and I had shaken myself two feet into the ground, but I pretended that nothing unusual had happened and asked whom I was addressing.

"I'm called the Loch Ness Monster," it answered, "but not anymore. I moved out of there because of the tourists, the reporters, the scientists, etc. That place has really gone commercial! Do you think I'll be all right here?"

"You'll have lots of privacy at Elon," I said. "Nobody's ever heard of the place!" Having been thus assured, he disappeared beneath the surface and remained there. I chose that same moment to make a hasty departure through the nearest field and stumbled onto a moonshine still. A gun-bearing old farmer suddenly approached me and asked, "You know what this is, sonny?"

"Duh...duh...a time machine?" I answered, hoping to fake him out.

"Hmmm...and I s'pose you don't know nuthin' about rev'noo agents, either."

"Oh, no sir," I replied. "I don't know anything. I'm a student at Elon College." Fortunately for me, this man was an alumnus of Elon and realized that I was harmless. Without asking any more questions, he let me go.

As I made my way back from the pond, I felt reasonably safe after having already gone through more in one day than a Green Beret recruit. But my luck deserted me again: as I dragged myself up the stairs, I slipped on a Sprite can, fell backward through the window, and was run over by a garbage truck. Thus I have taken up residence in the county hospital, where I won't have to face anything more harrowing than a medical bill.